

7

PRESS DIVISION
19, avenue de la Paix
CH-1202 Geneva
Phone (022) 734 60 01
Telex 414 226
Telefax (022) 734 82 80
comrex_pr@gva.icrc.org
http://www.icrc.org



Communication to the press No. 96/01
5 January 1996

**BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA:
PARTIES HAND OVER LISTS OF PRISONERS**

Geneva (ICRC) - On 4 January 1996, during a meeting held at Sarajevo airport, each of the parties to the former conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina handed over lists of the prisoners it was holding to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), to the other parties, to the Joint Military Commission (JMC) and to the High Representative. The ICRC immediately started to process the lists, using its own database.

The parties also formally renewed their commitment to allow the ICRC free access to prisoners and places of detention. In the coming days, ICRC delegates deployed on all sides of the former confrontation lines will carry out a new series of visits to all prisoners in all places of detention in accordance with Article IX(e) of Annex 1-A of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which states: "The Parties shall ensure that the ICRC enjoys full and unimpeded access to all places where prisoners are kept and to all prisoners. The Parties shall permit the ICRC to privately interview each prisoner at least 48 hours prior to his or her release for the purpose of implementing and monitoring the plan, including determination of the onward destination of each prisoner".

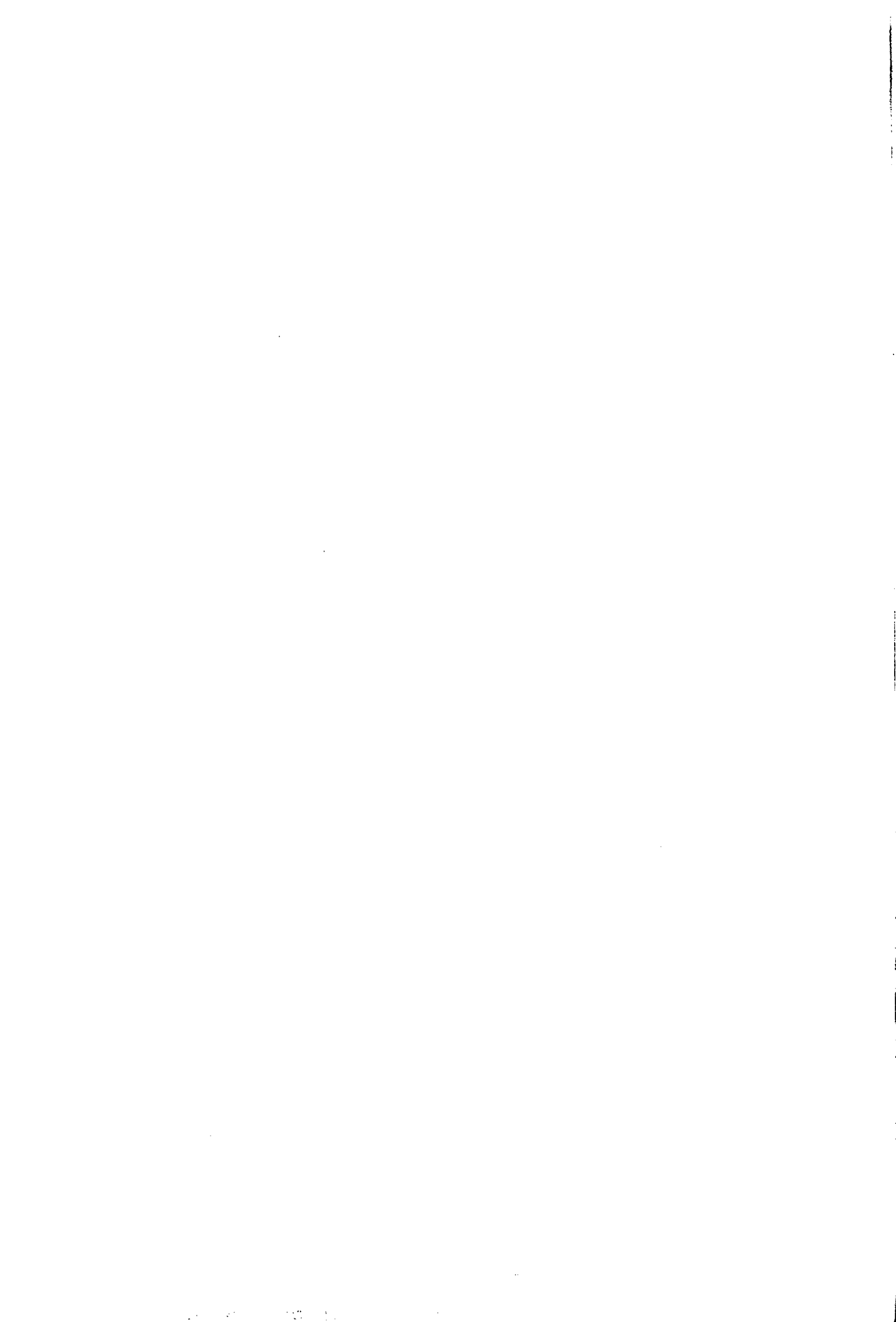
In consultation with the parties and the Implementation Force (IFOR), the ICRC is currently drawing up a plan of operation for the release and transfer of prisoners, which will be submitted to the parties during the next JMC meeting at Sarajevo airport on 8 January 1996.

**Further information: Rubén Ortega, ICRC Geneva, tel. ++4122 730 2454
Pierre Gauthier, ICRC Sarajevo, tel. ++38771 656 894**

++++



INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS



PRESS DIVISION
19, avenue de la Paix
CH-1202 Geneva
Phone (022) 734 60 01
Telex 414 226
Telefax (022) 734 82 80
comrex_pr@gva.icrc.org
<http://www.icrc.org>

ICRC

COMMUNICATION TO THE PRESS

Communication to the press No. 96/02
9 January 1996

**BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA / RELEASE OF PRISONERS ICRC PLAN OF ACTION
NOT YET SIGNED BY ONE OF THE THREE FORMER WARRING PARTIES**

Geneva (ICRC) - Within the framework of the Joint Military Commission (JMC) meeting held at Sarajevo airport on 8 January 1996, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) submitted to the former warring parties a plan of operation for the release and transfer, as provided for in Annex 1-A, Article 9, of the Peace Agreement, of prisoners currently detained in connection with the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

According to this plan,

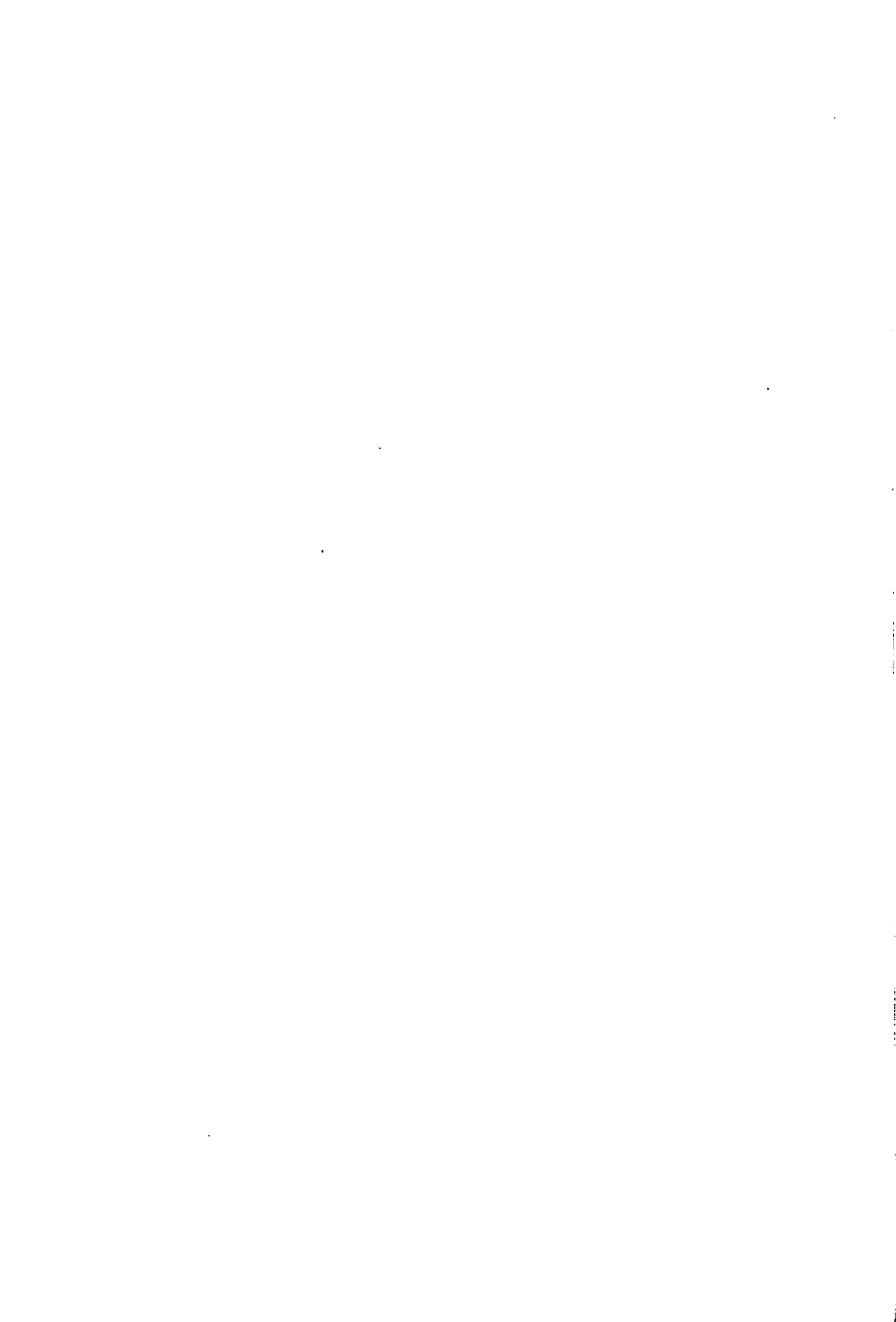
- The ICRC will have unimpeded access to all places of detention and to all prisoners for the purpose of determining, through private interviews with them, the onward destination of each prisoners;
- The release of some 900 prisoners will take place on 15 and 16 January 1996;
- The prisoners concerned are all those already notified by the parties to the ICRC on 4 January 1996 and all those subsequently added by the ICRC.

During a five-hour meeting, the plan was accepted by the representatives both of the HVO (Hrvatskog Vijeca Obrane) and of the VRS (Vojske Republike Srpske). The representative of the ABiH (Armije Republike Bosne i Hercegovine) put forward conditions to be fulfilled prior to his signature.

The ICRC will do its utmost in order to ensure, within the agreed time frame, that all the parties release all the prisoners as provided for by the relevant provisions of the Peace Agreement signed by the parties in Paris, France, on 14 December 1995.

++++







Communication to the press No. 96/3
9 January 1995

DAGHESTAN: ICRC SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT SITUATION IN KIZLIAR

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is very concerned about the situation in Kizliar, in the Autonomous Republic of Daghestan. Given the large number of civilians affected by the events, and the serious risk of the situation getting out of hand, the ICRC appeals to all persons and parties concerned to respect the rules and principles of international humanitarian law, in particular the following:

- A distinction must be made between combatants and military objectives, on the one hand, and civilians and civilian property on the other. It is therefore prohibited to attack civilians or their property.
- Hospitals and other medical facilities must be respected in all circumstances; it is prohibited in particular to attack them or to use them for the preparation or commitment of hostile acts.
- No act may be committed that might affect persons who are not taking part in the hostilities. It is prohibited in particular to take such persons hostage or otherwise to make use of them in carrying out military operations.
- Both medical personnel and the red cross or red crescent emblems must be accorded due respect.

The ICRC has stocks of medical supplies in the northern Caucasus, including Daghestan, and stands ready to provide medical assistance.

++++



1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11



Communication to the press N° 96/04
29 January 1996

RELEASE OF PRISONERS IN FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

Geneva (ICRC) - This statement on the release of prisoners in former Yugoslavia was made at 10 a.m. GMT by Mr Beat Schweizer, ICRC Head of Delegation, Sarajevo.

Over the past two days more than 500 prisoners have been freed by all sides. These former prisoners are now reunited with their families, some of them after a separation of several years. In this respect, the ICRC wishes to express its appreciation for the efforts made by all parties. The releases of the past days are an important part of the implementation of the peace agreement and have become a reality thanks to very strong support by the High Representative and the international community. The ICRC particularly wishes to thank the IFOR units for their support during the operation.

After these latest releases, however, over 100 people are still held in connection with the conflict, 63 of whom are the subject of war crime investigations by one or other of the three parties. In accordance with its mandate, the ICRC will continue to visit all these prisoners.

It will likewise act on all information obtained concerning any other prisoners. To this effect, lists of known prisoners who remain unaccounted for have been transmitted to the parties and the ICRC expects answers as to the present whereabouts of these people. It has still not been granted access by the Bosnian government to people held in the military wing of the prison in Tuzla.

Furthermore, a working group comprising the three parties and representatives of the international community will be set up shortly to ascertain the fate and whereabouts of thousands of other persons still unaccounted for. The families concerned have the right to be given precise answers as soon as possible.

++++



PRESS DIVISION
19, avenue de la Paix
CH-1202 Geneva
Phone (022) 734 60 01
Telex 414 226
Telefax (022) 734 82 80
comrex_pr@gva.icrc.org
<http://www.icrc.org>



COMMUNICATION TO THE PRESS

Communication to the press No. 96/5
2 February 1996

ICRC CONDEMNS BOMB ATTACK IN COLOMBO

Geneva (ICRC) - The bomb attack in the centre of Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, on 31 January left scores of people dead and more than a thousand injured. All the victims are civilians who happened to be in the buildings directly hit or in nearby streets.

The ICRC delegation in Colombo immediately dispatched emergency first-aid supplies to the city's hospitals. Volunteers of the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society gave assistance to people trapped inside the burning buildings, helped take the wounded to hospital and informed the victims' families.

The ICRC condemns this deliberate attack on civilians, which is a serious violation of the rules of international humanitarian law. It urges respect for these rules, so that civilians will no longer be targeted by such acts.

++++



INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

RESS DIVISION
avenue de la Paix
1-1202 Geneva
phone (022) 734 60 01
telex 414 226
telex (022) 734 82 80
emrex_pr@gva.icrc.org
http://www.icrc.org



Communication to the press No. 96/06
7 February 1996

ICRC EMERGENCY APPEAL FOR 1996: 570 MILLION SWISS FRANCS

Geneva (ICRC) - Despite the cash-flow problems announced a few months ago, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) closed its 1995 accounts with a deficit of no more than 8 million Swiss francs for its field operations. Its field budget for 1996 amounts to 570 million Swiss francs.

The ICRC launched a renewed financial appeal in September 1995. To cover the expected deficit (estimated at 150 million Swiss francs at that point), top-level representatives also travelled to various capitals to raise additional funds. Several governments made a special contribution, while others became major donors for the first time. By the end of 1995, these combined efforts had helped to put the institution's finances back on a more even keel.

The ICRC nonetheless remained concerned about its financing for the years to come and had taken steps to improve fundraising in a wider circle of donors, including governments, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and other sources, said the head of its External Resources Department, Christian Kornevall, at a press conference in Geneva on 7 February.

The funding needed to meet the ICRC's operational commitments in 1996 was similar to last year's: Africa remained the largest theatre of operations, requiring 276 million Swiss francs, followed by Asia (88 million) and Central Europe (73 million). Director of Operations Jean de Courten pointed out that these figures were not an accurate reflection of the actual volume of work carried out in a given region. Indeed, the activities conducted in behalf of detainees and to protect conflict victims, in Latin America and the Middle East for example, did not necessarily appear on financial statements. Assistance (28% of expenditure), activities for detainees and the restoration of family ties (27.6%), together with several medical programmes (16%), were the priority items on the field budget for 1996.

For the ICRC, the early weeks of the current year had been marked by activities to implement the Dayton Peace Agreement on Bosnia-Herzegovina, the organization's vital work in Rwanda's prisons and the airlift set up to help the civilian population of the Afghan capital Kabul. All this showed once again that the international community must be able to count on an international organization such as the ICRC. Jean de Courten stressed the need to ensure that the victims of all conflicts received assistance and that due account be taken of the ICRC's role as a neutral intermediary.

++++



INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS



PRESS DIVISION
19, avenue de la Paix
CH-1202 Geneva
Phone (022) 734 60 01
Telex 414 226
Telefax (022) 734 82 80
comrex_pr@gva.icrc.org
http://www.icrc.org



Communication to the press No. 96/07
25 February 1996

SIERRA LEONE - ICRC PROVIDES TRANSPORT FOR GOVERNMENTAL AND RUF DELEGATIONS

Geneva (ICRC) - On 24 and 25 February 1996 the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), acting as a neutral intermediary, provided transport for representatives of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) from areas under their control to Abidjan, where they are due to participate in the first bilateral meeting with representatives of the government of Sierra Leone.

A helicopter bearing the Red Cross emblem went to two locations in the Sierra Leonean jungle to collect the members of the delegation and take them to Kissidougou in the Republic of Guinea. From there an aircraft, also under ICRC protection, was waiting to fly the RUF representatives to Abidjan. When the negotiations are over, ICRC delegates will supervise the return of both the governmental and the RUF delegations.

The operation was organized by the ICRC at the request of the government of Sierra Leone and the RUF, and has received the support of the authorities of the Republic of Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire.

The ICRC has been working in Sierra Leone and other parts of the region for several years, during which close and regular contact has been established with all parties concerned by the conflict. It considers this operation as being part of its broader activities there.

++++



INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

PRESS DIVISION
19, avenue de la Paix
CH-1202 Geneva
Phone (022) 734 60 01
Telex 414 226
Telefax (022) 734 82 80
comrex_pr@gva.icrc.org
<http://www.icrc.org>



Communication to the press No. 96/08
25 February 1996

ICRC CONDEMNS KILLING OF CIVILIANS IN ISRAEL

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) strongly condemns today's bombings, in which more than 20 civilians were killed and many others injured, in particular in West Jerusalem.

In recent appeals the ICRC has called for an immediate halt to attacks that deliberately target civilians. It is deeply concerned by the recurrence of such murderous acts, which constitute a serious violation of the basic principles of international humanitarian law.

The ICRC reaffirms that attacks against civilians are strictly prohibited and renews its appeal for the elementary principles of humanity to be respected.

++++



INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

PRESS DIVISION

19, avenue de la Paix
CH-1202 Geneva
Phone (022) 734 60 01
Telex 414 226
Telefax (022) 734 82 80
comrex_pr@gva.icrc.org
<http://www.icrc.org>

The ICRC logo consists of the letters 'ICRC' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, centered within a black square. The square is filled with horizontal white lines, creating a striped effect behind the text.**COMMUNICATION TO THE PRESS**

Communication to the press No. 96/09
29 February 1996

INDONESIA: ICRC VISITS HOSTAGES IN IRIAN JAYA

Geneva (ICRC) - On 29 February three delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), one of them a doctor, visited the 12 people held hostage for 53 days by the OPM (Free Papua Movement) in Irian Jaya, Indonesia. Food, clothing and medicines were distributed to the hostages during the five-hour visit. The group comprises six Indonesian, four British and two Netherlands nationals. Each of the persons visited was examined by the ICRC doctor and given treatment as needed, and individual reports on their state of health will shortly be communicated to their families. The ICRC team also collected family messages and photos.

The delegates travelled by civilian helicopter, and on their return journey took with them a tribal chief who was seriously ill. He was subsequently hospitalized in Wamena.

The same day, in parallel with the medical visit to the hostages, further talks were held with Mr Kelik Kwalik, one of the local OPM leaders. During the three weeks that it has been using its good offices in Irian Jaya the ICRC has endeavoured to facilitate dialogue among all the parties concerned, that is, the OPM, the Indonesian authorities and the British and Netherlands governments.

++++



PRESS DIVISION

19, avenue de la Paix
CH-1202 Geneva
Phone (022) 734 6001
Telefax (022) 734 82 80
comrex_pr@gva.icrc.org
<http://www.icrc.org>



COMMUNICATION TO THE PRESS

Communication to the Press 96/10
Geneva, 28 March 1996

ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES: NOT AN INDISPENSABLE WEAPON OF HIGH MILITARY VALUE

Geneva (ICRC) - There is no clear evidence that anti-personnel landmines are indispensable weapons of high military value. On the other hand, their use in accordance with military doctrine is time-consuming, expensive and dangerous and has seldom occurred under combat conditions. These are some of the main conclusions of the study "The Military use and effectiveness of anti-personnel mines" commissioned by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) which was released today. The conclusions, based on a survey of the actual use and effectiveness of these weapons in conflicts over the past 55 years, were drawn up by Brigadier Patrick Blagden, a former combat engineer and weapons researcher with the British Royal Army, and a group of high ranking military experts from eight countries.

The military use of anti-personnel mines in actual conflict has so far received almost no attention in published military studies. Therefore the ICRC took the initiative to commission an expert study that presents a compelling set of conclusions on the actual use of anti-personnel mines since 1940. These conclusions were unanimously supported by senior commanders with broad experience in landmine warfare at an ICRC expert meeting in February 1996 and are being endorsed by a growing number of senior military officers from around the world.

The ICRC study concludes that properly establishing and maintaining an extensive border minefield is time consuming, expensive and dangerous and has rarely occurred in actual conflicts. In order to have any efficacy at all they need to be under continuous observation and direct fire, which is not always possible and is often not done. Under battlefield conditions the use, marking, and mapping of mines in accordance with classical military doctrine and international humanitarian law is extremely difficult, even for professional armed forces.

The commanders who have endorsed this report found that the use of anti personnel mines in accordance with the military doctrine which has justified their use has occurred infrequently and only when certain conditions were met: (a) both parties to the conflict were disciplined professional armies with high sense of responsibility and engaged in a short - lived international conflict; (b) the tactical situation was fairly static; (c) forces possessed adequate time and resources to mark, monitor and maintain minefields in accordance with law and doctrine, (d) mined areas were of sufficient economic or military value to ensure that mine clearance occurred and (e) sufficient political will existed to implement the above conditions.



The ICRC study points out that the emerging generation of remotely delivered anti-personnel landmines are not solely defensive weapons but will probably be used in huge quantities to saturate targets which are likely to include civilian areas. Even so, the mobility of professional armies will not be significantly hindered. Remotely delivered anti personnel mines are likely to cause vastly increased civilian casualties, even if such mines are designed to be self-destructing...This is so for several reasons: e.g. they will be dangerous during their intended active life, the reliability of self-destructing devices is unlikely to be verified and is likely to be insufficient and it is virtually impossible to map and mark remotely delivered mined areas.

In addition to examining the use and effectiveness of anti-personnel mines in 26 conflicts the ICRC study also considers an often overlooked aspect of landmine warfare: the cost and dangers to forces using these mines. The study suggests that the cost to forces using anti personnel mines, in terms of casualties and limitation of tactical flexibility, is higher than has been generally acknowledged. The implications of technological innovations in landmine design, which could have a dramatic effect on future mine warfare and on the level of civilian casualties, are examined from both military and humanitarian viewpoints. Possible alternatives to anti-personnel mines, including a number which are already in use among armies in both developed and developing countries, are also considered.

The results of this study confirm the ICRC's position that the military value of anti-personnel mines is far outweighed by their human and social costs and reinforces both its call for a ban and its world-wide campaign against this weapon.

++++

For more information please contact Peter Herby, ICRC legal adviser, tel: ++41 22 730 2729 and Johanne Dorais-Slackmon, ICRC campaign coordinator, tel: ++41 22 730 2319

PRESS DIVISION
19, avenue de la Paix
CH-1202 Geneva
Phone (022) 734 6001
Telefax (022) 734 82 80
comrex_pr@gva.icrc.org
<http://www.icrc.org>



COMMUNICATION TO THE PRESS

Communication to the Press 96/11
Geneva, 30 March 1996

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA : TRACING OF PERSONS UNACCOUNTED FOR

(Sarajevo, ICRC, 30 March 1996) - The operational process for the search of persons still unaccounted for as a result of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina was initiated today during a meeting held in the Office of the High Representative in Sarajevo, under the chairmanship of the ICRC, and in presence of, among other, Members of the Contact Group and the IFOR.

On this occasion, the former warring parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina were presented with lists of some 10'000 cases of missing persons. All of these cases had already been submitted to the parties in bilateral representations by the ICRC.

The ICRC will continue to collect all relevant information from additional families about further missing relatives.

Political divergences related to the Parties' representation in this process remain. There was however a common will to address the legitimate anxiety of the families, as provided for by Article V, Annex 7, of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

++++

For further information please contact:
Anne-Sophie Bonefeld at ICRC Sarajevo on tel. + 387 71 656 894
or ICRC Geneva Press Office on tel. + 41 22 734 60 01



INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

PRESS DIVISION
19, avenue de la Paix
CH-1202 Geneva
Phone (022) 734 6001
Telefax (022) 734 82 80
comrex_pr@gva.icrc.org
<http://www.icrc.org>

ICRC

COMMUNICATION TO THE PRESS

Communication to the press No. 96/12
3 April 1996

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: RENEWED ICRC APPEAL FOR RELEASE OF REMAINING DETAINEES

Geneva (ICRC) - After the release of 22 prisoners last night - 15 Bosnian Serbs freed by the Republic of Croatia and 7 Croats freed by the Bosnian Serbs - 88 people who have been visited and registered by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) are still held captive today by the former belligerents in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Their continuing detention is contrary to the rules of the Geneva Conventions, which call for prisoners to be released without delay after the cessation of active hostilities. These rules have been endorsed by the former belligerents themselves, both when they signed the Dayton agreement in Paris and at subsequent international follow-up meetings.

The fact that there is no valid reason for keeping these prisoners in detention makes this failure to comply with the rules of the Geneva Conventions all the more unacceptable. Moreover the former belligerents, in their persistent demands for reciprocity, are repeatedly taking certain detainees to sites for their possible release and then back into detention again, thus imposing unbearable psychological pressure upon them and their families.

The ICRC therefore appeals once again to the former belligerents to release immediately and unconditionally all people still held in connection with the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina and whose detention has not been requested by the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague.

++++



INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

PRESS DIVISION

19, avenue de la Paix
CH-1202 Geneva
Phone (022) 734 6001
Telefax (022) 734 82 80
comrex_pr@gva.icrc.org
<http://www.icrc.org>

The ICRC logo consists of the letters 'ICRC' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, centered within a black square. The square is filled with horizontal white lines, creating a striped effect behind the text.

COMMUNICATION TO THE PRESS

Communication to the press No. 96/13
Geneva, 12 April 1996

LIBERIA: ICRC COMPELLED TO WITHDRAW MONROVIA DELEGATION

Geneva (ICRC) - On Friday 12 April the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) decided to withdraw the four expatriate delegates still present in its Monrovia premises. Because of the total anarchy reigning in the centre of the city, the delegation found it impossible to continue its activities for victims of the conflict. The ICRC, one of the last organizations to remain operational in the Mamba Point district of the capital, was unfortunately not spared the wave of looting that has swept the area. It had to transfer the casualties being treated at the delegation to a Liberian hospital outside the town centre.

In the extreme violence now holding sway in Monrovia, the ICRC is forced to recognize that there is no longer any authority that has the power or the will to ensure respect for the most basic rules governing conduct in time of armed conflict. It fears the worst for the city's civilian population.

++++



INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

PRESS DIVISION

19, avenue de la Paix
CH-1202 Geneva
Phone (022) 734 6001
Telefax (022) 734 82 80
comrex_pr@gva.icrc.org
<http://www.icrc.org>



Communication to the press No. 96/14
19 April 1996

ICRC CONDEMNS SHELLING OF CIVILIANS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) firmly condemns the shelling of civilians who had taken refuge in a UNIFIL base in the village of Qana. The attack, in which more than 100 people were killed and as many wounded, further demonstrates the vital need to respect civilians. On 16 April the ICRC made a solemn appeal to the belligerents to comply with the rules of international humanitarian law, including the absolute ban on indiscriminate attacks of a nature to strike civilians or civilian property.

The ICRC draws attention to the fact that there are still almost 60,000 civilians in the areas of southern Lebanon where military operations are taking place. The orders to evacuate an entire region - in this case contrary to international humanitarian law - issued to the inhabitants of villages in southern Lebanon, do not exempt Israel from the obligation to respect the civilians still on the spot.

++++



PRESS DIVISION

19, avenue de la Paix
CH-1202 Geneva
Phone (022) 734 6001
Telefax (022) 734 82 80
comrex_pr@gva.icrc.org
<http://www.icrc.org>



ICRC

COMMUNICATION TO THE PRESS

Communication to the press No 96/15
Geneva, 22 April 1996

NOW BACK IN LIBERIA, ICRC CALLS FOR FUNDAMENTAL REAPPRAISAL

Geneva (ICRC) - Two delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) arrived in Monrovia from Freetown on Sunday 21 April aboard a helicopter loaded with emergency supplies. The main task of the two delegates, who spent the night outside the city centre, is to support volunteers from the Liberia National Red Cross Society in their work to identify the most pressing needs of the country's people.

This mission has begun eight days after the ICRC delegation's premises, in the Mamba Point neighbourhood, were looted and the delegates were consequently withdrawn. In the present situation there are no plans to base an ICRC team in Monrovia. Working with the ICRC's local Liberian employees and using those vehicles that it has proved possible to recover, the Red Cross will endeavour to take the injured to the city's hospitals and to collect the dozens of bodies that are strewn around the streets, presenting a serious health hazard.

The ICRC feels that the present needs can be met only through a large-scale operation, but that no such operation can be carried out unless steps are taken to ensure the safety both of the victims and of those coming to their aid. The humanitarian agencies' supplies, equipment and vehicles have been regularly and systematically stolen and used to increase the means at the disposal of the warring factions.

In view of the fact that the civilian population has been spared no suffering or humiliation over the past six years - and in particular since the present fighting started on 6 April - the ICRC feels that a thorough reappraisal is needed. It therefore calls on the community of States to take into account the particular nature of this type of conflict in its urgent search for ways to restore order and stability.

++++



INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

COMMUNICATION TO THE PRESS

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 1500 GMT

Communication to the Press 96/16
Geneva, 3 May 1996

ICRC VIEWS AMENDED LANDMINES PROTOCOL AS "WOEFULLY INADEQUATE".

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) considers as woefully inadequate the initial diplomatic response to the devastating effects of mines, as represented by the results of the Review Conference of the 1980 UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), to be confirmed at its closing session today in Geneva. The horror of the immense human suffering caused by landmines is set to continue, and the amended Protocol II will do little to change this situation.

Of the measures adopted today, the ICRC considers several to be of particular importance: extension to non-international conflicts of the scope of Protocol II on landmines; clear assignment of responsibility for mine clearance to those who lay them; improved recording requirements; and improved protection for humanitarian workers.

However, the limitations adopted on the use of landmines are, from the ICRC's point of view, very modest. They will encourage the production, transfer and use of a new generation of mines, while not prohibiting any existing types other than, eventually, non-detectable anti-personnel mines. The ICRC deeply regrets that, for the first time in a humanitarian law treaty, measures have been adopted which, instead of entirely prohibiting the use of an indiscriminate weapon, both permit its continued use and implicitly promote the use of new models which will have virtually the same effects. Given its mandate and humanitarian responsibilities, the ICRC cannot endorse this development.

In contrast, at its initial session in Vienna this Conference adopted a new Protocol IV banning blinding laser weapons. This represents a landmark for international humanitarian law: particularly abhorrent weapon has been prohibited before being used on the battlefield and its transfer across borders has been completely outlawed.

./.



Much remains to be done. The ICRC believes that this Conference has focused the attention of governments on their humanitarian responsibilities regarding landmine use, and public conscience world-wide has stigmatized - as with - poison gas anti-personnel mines. In addition, a growing number of States have reviewed the balance between military utility and humanitarian concerns, and declared support for a total ban as well as announcing their unilateral renunciation of production, transfer and use of anti-personnel mines and plans to destroy stockpiles. A number of countries and regional bodies are known to be considering such steps.

The victims of the landmine carnage of recent decades will find little solace in the results of the Review Conference. The horrific level of landmine casualties in recent years is set to continue unless governments do far more than required by the agreement adopted today. Intensified public and political efforts, at national and regional levels, must be undertaken to end the landmine crisis. The ICRC suggests that future political efforts should integrate hitherto separate elements of the international: ongoing work towards a total ban; the renunciation by States of production, stockpiling and use; an end to all transfers; and assistance in mine clearance.

The history of the development of humanitarian law is one of ongoing dialogue between legitimate military needs and the humanitarian concerns of all civilized society. The ICRC has sought to keep the spotlight on the human implications of the options under consideration. The ICRC looks forward to working on this issue together with governments, military establishments and other humanitarian organizations and to uniting with them at the next Review Conference with a single purpose: the total prohibition of anti-personnel mines.

To date 35 countries have supported an immediate global ban on anti-personnel mines; 16 have renounced their use by their own armed forces; four have suspended use; and at least five are destroying their stockpiles.

A complete text of the speech by ICRC Vice-President Eric Roethlisberger to the final plenary session of the Review Conference is available upon request. (Embargo until 1600 GMT)

**Further information: Johanne Dorais Slackmon, ICRC Geneva, Tel.: ++ 41 22 730 2319,
or down-load from the ICRC website: <http://www.icrc.org>**

++++

COMMUNICATION TO THE PRESS

Communication to the press No. 96/17
9 May 1996

IRIAN JAYA, INDONESIA: ICRC LIMITS ITS ROLE TO GIVING AID TO HOSTAGES

Geneva (ICRC) - On Thursday 9 May, after repeated attempts to secure the release on humanitarian grounds of 11 hostages held for more than four months by the Free Papua Movement (Organisasi Papua Merdeka - OPM), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) decided to abandon its role as neutral intermediary between the parties. After the failure of today's final attempt to have the hostages freed, the ICRC delegates left Guezelema and informed the Indonesian, British and Netherlands authorities of the results of their latest discussions. The ICRC will stay on in Irian Jaya to provide medical assistance to the hostages - five Indonesian, four British and two Netherlands nationals - and will remain at the parties' disposal.

On 9 February last, at the request of all the parties concerned, the ICRC's regional delegation in Jakarta agreed to act as a neutral intermediary in order to facilitate and maintain dialogue among the parties and to provide the hostages with humanitarian aid.

ICRC delegates were able to visit the hostages for the first time on 29 February, taking them food, clothing and medicines. An ICRC doctor monitored their health, and letters and photos of the hostages were forwarded to their families. Further visits took place on 26 and 27 March, 17 April and 5 May.

The ICRC regrets having had to take this decision, in particular because of its concern for the health of the hostages, who are living in difficult conditions. It feels, however, that the conditions for dispassionate discussion no longer exist.

The ICRC draws attention to the fact that the taking of hostages is contrary to the principles of international humanitarian law and reiterates its request to the OPM for the unconditional release of all the hostages on humanitarian grounds.

**Further information: Tony Burgener, ICRC Geneva, Tel.: ++ 41 22 730 2317,
or down-load from the ICRC website: <http://www.icrc.org>**

++++



PRESS DIVISION
19, avenue de la Paix
CH-1202 Geneva
Phone (022) 734 6001
Telefax (022) 734 82 80
comrex_pr@gva.icrc.org
<http://www.icrc.org>

The ICRC logo consists of the letters 'ICRC' in a bold, sans-serif font, centered within a square frame of horizontal lines.

COMMUNICATION TO THE PRESS

Communication to the press No. 96/18
Geneva, 10 May 1996

NAGORNY KARABAKH CONFLICT: 109 DETAINEES RELEASED

Geneva (ICRC) - On 8, 9 and 10 May 1996, the authorities of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh released 109 detainees captured in connection with the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. The release operation took place under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

ICRC delegates were able to speak individually to all the captives, in order to make sure that they were being transferred of their own free will. They also made the necessary travel arrangements for them and accompanied them on board the aircraft of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Mr Yevgeny Primakov, who played an active part in ensuring the success of the operation.

The ICRC welcomes these releases and thanks all those who facilitated the operation, particularly the Russian Federation for its initiative, supported by the Minsk Group.

Since 1992, the ICRC has visited more than 800 people held in connection with this conflict and has itself transferred over 240 of them, under agreements reached between the parties.

**Further information: Nicolas Borsinger, ICRC Geneva, Tel.: ++ 41 22 730 28 48,
or down-load from the ICRC website: <http://www.icrc.org>**

++++



INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS



COMMUNICATION TO THE PRESS

Communication to the press No. 96/19
24 May 1996

NATIONAL RED CROSS AND ICRC ACTIVE IN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Geneva (ICRC) - A team of delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) arrived in Bangui, the capital of the Central African Republic, from Yaoundé, Cameroon, and N'Djamena, Chad, early Friday afternoon aboard two vehicles loaded with first-aid kits, surgical supplies and sutures, dressings, perfusion materials and basic medicines. The delegates immediately went to the city's hospital where volunteers of the Central African Red Cross have been maintaining basic medical services since the disturbances broke out on 18 May.

The team, which includes a nurse, will provide support for the remarkable work being done by the National Society, whose first-aiders have already evacuated and treated over a hundred casualties. The ICRC will also carry out a survey of the most urgent needs so that with the agreement of the parties it can tailor its future action, whether in the form of medical and material assistance or visits to persons deprived of their freedom, to requirements on the spot.

Given the deterioration in the situation in the Central African Republic, the ICRC reminds all the forces present of their obligation to comply with the rules and principles of international humanitarian law, in particular:

- to protect and respect persons not taking part or no longer taking part in the fighting, especially civilians, persons who have been captured or have laid down their arms, and the wounded;
- to refrain from launching indiscriminate attacks and, in the conduct of military operations, to make a clear distinction at all times between combatants and military objectives on the one hand, and civilians and civilian objects on the other;
- to respect and ensure respect for the red cross emblem, and in particular hospitals and medical personnel, vehicles and units.

**Further information: Rolin Wavre, ICRC Geneva, tel. ++4122 730 2826
or ++4189 202 3660**

++++



PRESS DIVISION
19, avenue de la Paix
CH-1202 Geneva
Phone (022) 734 6001
Telefax (022) 734 82 80
comrex_pr@gva.icrc.org
<http://www.icrc.org>



Communication to the press No. 96/20
4 June 1996

THREE ICRC DELEGATES KILLED IN BURUNDI

Geneva (ICRC) - Two vehicles of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) came under fire on Tuesday, 4 June, about 4 p.m. local time, near the village of Mugina, in the Burundi's northern province of Cibitoke, as they were returning to the capital Bujumbura. Three ICRC delegates - Reto Neuenschwander, aged 39, Juan Ruffino, aged 36, and Cédric Martin, aged 32 - were killed during the attack.

The population of Cibitoke - an area particularly hard hit by the fighting - is in great need humanitarian action, and the ICRC is assisting tens of thousands of people there by providing drinking water, medicines and other essential items.

The International Committee would like to convey its profound sympathy to the families of the three delegates, who gave their lives for the ideal of solidarity with the victims of the conflict in Burundi. The ICRC is extremely shocked by this tragedy and strongly condemns the attack, with its flagrant failure to respect the red cross emblem.

++++



INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

PRESS DIVISION
19, avenue de la Paix
CH-1202 Geneva
Phone (022) 734 6001
Telefax (022) 734 82 80
com_pr@gva.icrc.org
http://www.icrc.org



ICRC

COMMUNICATION TO THE PRESS

Communication to the press No. 96/21
Geneva, 11 June 1996

ICRC WITHDRAWS ITS DELEGATES FROM BURUNDI

Geneva (ICRC) - The last remaining delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) left Bujumbura this afternoon, 11 June 1996. The ICRC was compelled to take this decision because of threats to its expatriate staff following the deliberate attack in which three of them were killed on 4 June.

The ICRC has asked the Burundi authorities to conduct a thorough and objective inquiry into that tragic event and will maintain regular contacts with them pending the results. At present the ICRC does not have sufficient information to say how long its activities will be suspended, but is maintaining its infrastructure in the country. It has asked the authorities to ensure the safety of its local staff and to safeguard its property.

The ICRC regrets having to take this step because it will deprive - hopefully only temporarily - the victims of the conflict in Burundi of urgently-needed aid. ICRC operations were focusing in particular on medical and sanitation work (evacuation of the wounded, medical assistance for health centres, water distribution, and repairs to piping systems and wells). In addition, 250 tonnes of seed were handed out to 125,000 people in 1996 and 180,000 displaced persons received blankets and plastic sheeting. ICRC delegates were making regular visits to 2,700 detainees in 48 places of detention. Finally, more than 12,000 unaccompanied Rwandan children were registered and 1 130 of them have already been reunited with their families.

++++



INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

