COLLECTION

COMMUNICATIONS À LA PRESSE

COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

1994

anglais
CONFLICT IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH: ICRC SENDS EMERGENCY MEDICAL SUPPLIES

Geneva (ICRC) - Since 10 December 1993 there have been renewed outbreaks of fighting on all fronts in Nagorno-Karabakh, with hundreds of casualties on both sides. Many hospitals in the area are running out of indispensable surgical materials. The ICRC has therefore decided to step up its assistance to the region and is today dispatching an aircraft carrying 6.3 tonnes of medical supplies (bandages, sutures, catheters, analgesics, disposable items, etc.).

The consignment is due to reach the ICRC’s main logistics base for the Caucasus in Tbilisi (Georgia) tomorrow, 11 January. The supplies will be sent on by road and distributed immediately to hospitals in the area affected by the fighting.

+++++
CONFLICT IN CROATIA: 26 DETAINES RELEASED UNDER ICRC AUSPICIES


Fifteen of these prisoners were released by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and 11 by the Republic of Croatia.

This release was carried out in accordance with the August 1992 Budapest agreement reached by the two parties to the conflict at ICRC initiative.
Geneva (ICRC) - The last eight persons detained by the UNOSOM forces in Somalia were released today in Mogadishu and handed over to delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). They were taken to the ICRC delegation in the Somali capital, where they were met by their families.

Over the last eight months the ICRC has visited 206 prisoners held by UNOSOM. In addition, delegates visited a US pilot and a Nigerian soldier captured by a Somali faction. These two prisoners were also released under ICRC auspices, in October 1993.
BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: ICRC CAR BLOWN UP IN BANJA LUKA

Geneva (ICRC) - In the early morning of 17 January 1994, an ICRC vehicle parked in front of an ICRC residence in Banka Luka was blown up by a remote-controlled explosive device. The violent blast seriously damaged the house and set surrounding trees on fire. Fortunately nobody was injured. The local authorities have started an inquiry.

Shocked by this violent attack on property clearly marked by the Red Cross emblem and deeply worried about the safety of its staff based in Banja Luka, the ICRC has decided to suspend its humanitarian activities in the area until further notice. Some of its staff have also been temporarily withdrawn.

It is hoped that thorough investigation and proper steps by the relevant authorities to increase security will very soon enable the ICRC to resume its activities in aid of the victims of the conflict.
MEXICO: ICRC READY TO RESTORE MEDICAL SERVICES IN CONFLICTUAL AREAS OF CHIAPAS STATE

ICRC (Geneva). - Medical services in the conflictual areas of Chiapas state, Mexico, have temporarily broken down, and civilians are unable to move freely to towns outside the conflict zone. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is ready, at the request of both parties, to help re-establish those services in places the parties agreed on. Under this programme, health posts would be run by Mexican medical staff under ICRC supervision. Medical activities would gradually be restored in response to needs as assessed by medical staff, for example:

- outpatient consultations and treatment,
- transfer to nearest hospital for patients requiring hospital care,
- gradual resumption of health programmes, in keeping with national health policy (campaigns to vaccinate the population and control disease),
- sanitation work.

The ICRC has asked the parties concerned to undertake to respect the neutrality of health posts and to withdraw all armed units from around them with a view to allowing the programme to get under way and to establishing a climate of confidence and peace.

Furthermore, the ICRC, in accordance with the mandate conferred on it by the international community, has visited 72 people detained in Chiapas state, with the agreement of the authorities concerned.

The ICRC is ready to visit other detainees, held by the EZLN (Zapatista National Liberation Army), and to act as a neutral intermediary should there be an agreement on the release of detainees.

It should be remembered that the purpose of ICRC visits is not to obtain the release of detainees but to monitor their condition of detention.

+++
ICRC CONDEMNS LATEST ATROCITY IN SARAJEVO

Geneva (ICRC) - Today's shelling of the marketplace in Sarajevo killed more civilians and wounded more people with a single blast than any other incident in the Bosnian capital since the start of the war 22 months ago. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) strongly condemns this latest outrage, which contravenes the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law that all parties to the conflict have pledged to respect.

The ICRC has taken immediate action, delivering IV fluids, gauze, sterile compresses, sterile operation theatre sheets and gowns to the city's main hospitals. Blood bags and transfusion sets have also been delivered.

Today's indiscriminate attack, the cause of horrendous carnage, is the latest in a long series of atrocities committed against the civilian population in Sarajevo. A mortar fired yesterday into a queue of people waiting to collect humanitarian aid in nearby Dobrinja killed ten people and injured seventeen.

++++
ICRC AIRLIFTS WOUNDED OUT OF SARAJEVO

Geneva (ICRC). An aircraft belonging to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) left Sarajevo at 5.40 p.m. today with 88 people aboard. Most of the passengers are casualties of yesterday's shelling of Sarajevo market - nine of them seriously wounded - and the others are relatives. The aircraft is presently en route to Ramstein/Frankfurt, where the German Red Cross has mobilized to provide the necessary assistance, in particular to the families.

The ICRC aircraft, which is carrying out this evacuation, arrived in Sarajevo from Zagreb with a cargo of 6 tonnes of medicines and medical supplies for hospitals in the town.

+++
Communication to the press No. 94/8
12 February 1994

MEXICO: ICRC RESTORES MEDICAL SERVICES IN CONFLICT AREAS OF CHIAPAS STATE AND VISITS A PRISONER HELD BY THE EZLN

Geneva (ICRC) - On 11 February, medical teams of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) began working in the San Miguel and Guadalupe Tepeyac areas of Chiapas state to restore medical services disrupted by the conflict. This action is being taken under agreements reached with both the Mexican authorities and the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN).

The activities now under way include:

- medical consultations and outpatient treatment;
- transfer to hospital of more serious cases;
- gradual resumption of health programmes;
- sanitation work.

Also on 11 February, the ICRC gained access to a prisoner held by the EZLN since the early days of the uprising. In accordance with its usual procedures, the ICRC talked in private to the prisoner, who was also able to send a message to his family. The ICRC had already visited 72 prisoners held by the Mexican authorities in Tuxtla Gutierrez on 19 and 20 January.

Should an agreement be reached on the release of prisoners, the ICRC stands ready to act as a neutral intermediary between the parties in conformity with its mandate.

The ICRC has seven expatriate staff in Mexico, five of them based in areas affected by the conflict.

+++
Communication to the press No. 94/9  
17 February 1994

ISLAMIC CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION AND INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS SIGN COOPERATION AGREEMENT

Geneva (ICRC) - The Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Dr Hamid Algabid, and the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Mr Cornelio Sommaruga, today signed a cooperation agreement between the two institutions at ICRC headquarters in Geneva.

Under the terms of the agreement, the ICRC, in keeping with OIC practice, will be able to attend, as an observer, Islamic conferences and technical meetings organized under OIC auspices. By the same token, the OIC and the ICRC may agree to organize conferences or seminars on matters of mutual interest.

Following the signing ceremony, Secretary-General Algabid and President Sommaruga exchanged views on certain humanitarian problems affecting countries of concern to their two institutions.

The OIC, whose headquarters are in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, has 51 member States belonging to the Muslim world in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Europe. It also admits many observers.

++++
PERU: ICRC WITHOUT NEWS OF STAFF MEMBERS IN AIR CRASH

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) still has no news of two staff members who were aboard an aircraft that crashed shortly after taking off from Tingo María on 25 February.

The aircraft, which belonged to the Peruvian company "Expreso Aéreo", was en route for Lima. The accident happened in a mountainous area and 48 hours later rescue teams had still not been able to reach the wreckage and the victims.

The two ICRC staff members on board are Dr Angela Gago Gallego, 34, a medical delegate, and Mrs Julia Nelly Narrea Tornorio, 50, a Peruvian employee.

Dr Gago Gallego is the medical coordinator at the ICRC delegation in Peru, and Mrs Narrea Tornorio is the secretary in charge of the ICRC office in Tocache, a town north-west of Tingo María.

The head of delegation has gone to Tingo María to try and obtain more information about the disaster.

The ICRC is anxiously awaiting further news.
Communication to the press No. 94/11
Geneva, 11 March 1994

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: ICRC DENIED ACCESS TO MAGLAJ AND TESANJ

Geneva (ICRC) - Contrary to previous arrangements, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was prevented from reaching the enclaves of Maglaj and Tesanj on 10 March. It has made constant efforts to do so since October 1993.

The ICRC considers this obstruction of humanitarian action in such grave circumstances as totally unacceptable.

Deeply concerned about the plight of the population in the besieged areas, the ICRC has repeatedly requested the various parties to the conflict to grant the necessary security guarantees, proclaim a cease-fire and allow its convoys to reach Maglaj from Zepce and Tesanj from Teslic.

Although the ICRC had been granted all the requested assurances during meetings in Banja Luka, Sarajevo and Tuzla, on 10 March it was denied access to both Maglaj and Tesanj. In view of the above, the ICRC calls upon all the warring parties to allow it immediate and unrestricted access to all victims of the conflict.

++++
BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: NINE CIVILIANS MURDERED IN PRIJEDOR

Geneva (ICRC) - The head of delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Bosnia-Herzegovina today went to Prijedor in the Banja Luka area, where nine Muslim civilians have been murdered in the last two days. According to unconfirmed reports received by the ICRC, there have been other murders in the region.

The ICRC strongly condemns these atrocities, which are in blatant violation of the most basic rules of humanity. The institution today sent an urgent message to Dr Radovan Karadzic requesting immediate measures to restore security to the Prijedor area and calling for an end to such intolerable acts of violence against minority population groups.

++++
RWANDA: ICRC CARRIES OUT EMERGENCY MEDICAL ACTIVITIES

Geneva (ICRC) - The civilian population in Rwanda is currently the victim of spiralling violence, in particular in Kigali, the capital, where delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have observed a large number of dead and wounded.

Today 8 April, a five-member ICRC medical team - one doctor, three nurses and a delegate - provided urgently required medical material to Kigali Hospital, the capital’s largest medical centre. The delegates also brought wounded civilians to the hospital and were assisting wounded soldiers.

The ICRC has 26 delegates in Rwanda. They are working with Rwandan Red Cross first-aiders. A surgical team made up of a doctor, an anaesthesist and three nurses is standing by to leave Geneva for Rwanda as soon as the situation permits.

Deeply concerned by the state of affairs in the country, the ICRC is sparing no effort to come to the aid of the victims. The head of its delegation in Kigali has contacted, among others, the Rwanda armed forces chief of staff with a view to obtaining the security conditions required for any humanitarian work.

The ICRC appeals to the authorities of Rwanda to do all in their power to bring a halt to the violence.
Communication to the press No. 94/14  
Geneva, 10 April 1994

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN GORAZDE ALARMING

Geneva (ICRC) - According to latest reports from delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) present in Gorazde, the situation in the besieged enclave is seriously worsening. Since the intensification of the military operation on 29 March, 103 people including 15 children and 30 women and elderly persons have been killed and more than 430 wounded. An estimated 2,000 civilians have fled over 30 destroyed villages in the south of the Gorazde enclave.

In Gorazde's 35-bed hospital, a team of two local surgeons and an MSF anaesthetist have performed an average of 10 major and 30 minor operations per day in the last 12 days.

ICRC delegates have delivered to the hospital all their emergency stocks of medicines and surgical material, including gauze, sterile dressings, infusion sets and a complete emergency medical set sufficient for the treatment of 100 war-wounded.

An ICRC convoy carrying urgently needed additional medical supplies is awaiting clearance from the authorities in Pale for permission to enter Gorazde, but has so far been refused access to the town.

On 9 April 94, ICRC and UNHCR staff distributed the remaining 128 MT of wheat flour to the enclave's 64,000 inhabitants. The ICRC continues to supply the hospital and the community kitchen with bulk food.

The ICRC solemnly calls on the warring parties to respect the basic principles of the Geneva Conventions especially the rules pertaining to the protection of the civilian population, of installations essential for survival such as water supply facilities, of medical establishments and their personnel, and of installations the destruction of which could endanger the lives of the inhabitants.

Moreover the ICRC reminds the parties that it has to be notified of all persons captured during hostilities. This applies to both parties and includes those detainees currently held by the authorities in Gorazde but whose whereabouts remain unknown.

The ICRC demands immediate access to Gorazde for humanitarian convoys, respect for the Red Cross emblem and full security guarantees so that its personnel may carry out their protection and assistance work for the detainees and the civilian population.

+++++
ICRC SURGICAL TEAM ARRIVES IN KIGALI

Geneva (ICRC) - A surgical team of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), comprising a doctor, an anaesthetist and three nurses, arrived today in Kigali from Bujumbura to strengthen the ICRC’s presence in the Rwandan capital. The team travelled with a convoy carrying 18 tonnes of emergency medical supplies, largely provided by the Belgian Red Cross. A French medical team from Médecins sans Frontières with five tonnes of medical materials was also with the convoy. The situation permitting, a second convoy bringing in three ICRC nurses and additional medical supplies is planned for Thursday 14 April.

Since the announcement of the death of the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi, chaos has reigned in the Rwandan capital, leaving thousands dead or wounded. The ICRC’s 26 delegates on the spot and first-aid workers of the country’s Red Cross Society launched an emergency operation within 30 hours of the outbreak of the violence. Hundreds of wounded have been evacuated to the city’s main hospital for treatment. Some of them were subsequently taken by the ICRC to a hospital 40 km from Kigali.

The arrival of the new surgical team has enabled the ICRC to open a new emergency medical facility, with 200 beds, two operating theatres and two rooms for minor surgery, in a building near its delegation in the capital.

With the help of municipal officials, the ICRC today organized an initial distribution of 40 tonnes of food to Kigali’s population.

As fighting continues in the Rwandan capital, the ICRC calls on all the parties involved to spare the civilian population, and to respect international humanitarian law and the work of the Red Cross.

++++
RWANDA: SIX WOUNDED KILLED IN A RED CROSS AMBULANCE

Geneva (ICRC) - Early this afternoon in Kigali armed militiamen shot to death, in the presence of members of the armed forces, six wounded people who were being taken by Rwandese Red Cross volunteers to a field hospital set up yesterday by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

This outrageous act has compelled the ICRC and the Rwandese Red Cross to suspend the collection of casualties in the capital, where the most elementary rules of humanity are being flouted.

The ICRC strongly appeals to all combatants, in particular the armed militia and their leaders, to put a stop to the carnage both in Kigali and in the provinces affected by the violence, and to allow the Red Cross to assist the wounded without discrimination.

++++
- all persons taking no active part in the hostilities must be protected and treated humanely;
- it is prohibited to kill or wound adversaries who have laid down their weapons;
- the wounded and sick must be collected and cared for by the party into whose hands they have fallen;
- captured combatants are entitled to respect for their lives and physical and mental well-being;
- humanitarian and medical personnel and medical units and transports must be protected. The red cross emblem is the visible symbol of protection and must be respected at all times.

+++
Communication to the press No 94/17
Geneva, 16 April 1994

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: ICRC PLAN FOR HUMANITARIAN ACTION IN GORAZDE

Geneva (ICRC) - The situation of the civilian population in Gorazde has grown increasingly desperate since late March. The two delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the institution's 10 local employees in the town are doing their utmost to assist the wounded, the civilian population, people displaced by the fighting and those detained by the various parties to the conflict.

On the left bank of the Drina river, the ICRC team has set up a first-aid station near its delegation for the many displaced people pouring into the town centre.

Since the fighting resumed, the number of victims has mounted day by day, with 240 dead and 934 wounded so far. On 15 April alone, 31 were killed (two children and 13 women and elderly people) and 87 wounded (11 of them children and 43 women and elderly). The influx of casualties has far exceeded the capacity of the Gorazde's 35-bed hospital, and surgical supplies have been virtually exhausted.

ICRC teams from Belgrade, Pale and Sarajevo are standing ready to leave for Gorazde and take relief to the many victims, as soon as all the parties have given the necessary authorizations. The ICRC's plan of action has four priorities:

- to make representations on the spot to all the parties involved in order to ensure that they treat civilians correctly in all circumstances;

- to organize road convoys to take in the medical and food aid so urgently needed by the victims;

- to arrange the evacuation of casualties whose condition requires treatment unavailable in Gorazde;

- to gain unrestricted access to persons captured by any of the parties, in order to register them and interview them without witnesses, thus ensuring that their conditions of detention are in keeping with the Geneva Conventions.

In view of the worsening situation as reported by its delegates on the spot, the ICRC renews its urgent appeal to all the parties to the conflict and the international forces concerned to make certain that the combatants apply the fundamental rules set out in the Geneva Conventions. It reminds them in particular that:

- civilians and civilian objects must be spared and protected in all circumstances and must not be subjected to indiscriminate attack;
ICRC MEDICAL CONVOY REACHES KIGALI

Geneva (ICRC) - A second road convoy of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has reached Kigali. It arrived in the Rwandese capital late on 22 April after leaving Bujumbura, in Burundi, the previous day. A convoy transporting surgical supplies made the same journey on 13 April.

Today’s convoy also carried about twenty people including a number of doctors and nurses. The medical supplies on board will be used to treat the hundreds of casualties now in the two Kigali hospitals under the protection of the Red Cross emblem. The supplies will also go to a hospital near the town of Gitarama, where two delegates today began caring for around one hundred victims.

In addition, two ICRC teams today entered Rwanda from Zaire, one making its way to the Gisenye area, north of Lake Kivu, and the other to Cyangugu to the south of the lake. In Cyangugu the delegates had access to some 5,000 displaced people, some of them injured, in a stadium without sanitary facilities. The ICRC is preparing to bring assistance to them.

+++++
NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT: ESCALATING VIOLENCE AND FURTHER POPULATION MOVEMENTS

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is extremely concerned about the serious turn of events on the northern and eastern fronts in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. According to official sources, in less than three weeks of very heavy fighting 50,000 inhabitants of the Agdam, Terter and Goranboy areas have fled their homes, thus swelling the ranks of over 600,000 already displaced in Azerbaijan. The clashes have left hundreds dead or wounded on both sides, most of them combatants.

In the Agdam and Terter districts, where the fighting has been particularly fierce, the ICRC has distributed 2,000 plastic sheets as well as tents to provide shelter for displaced persons camping along the roads. An initial distribution of 2,000 family parcels was completed last week.

In addition to the assistance originally intended for 15,000 people displaced by recent incidents in areas near the conflict zones (Agdam, Terter and Beilagan), ICRC delegates will distribute 10,000 family parcels and 10,000 blankets to the new arrivals.

ICRC nurses are closely monitoring the situation in hospitals situated near the front lines in both Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. Medical supplies have already been provided to several hospitals which have seen an influx of war-wounded in recent days.

In December 1993 and the first two months of 1994, owing to the intensity of the fighting and the very high number of casualties the ICRC was faced with a medical emergency unprecedented in the Caucasus. Nearly 21.5 tonnes of medical supplies were distributed in the space of two months.

The ICRC delegates on the spot are based in Stepanakert (Nagorno-Karabakh) and Baku (Azerbaijan). In addition to their activities in behalf of the wounded and displaced persons they make constant representations to the authorities, requesting notification of and access to all captured combatants.

++++
Communication to the press No. 94/20
Geneva, 3 May 1994

RWANDA: 21 ORPHANS AND 13 RED CROSS VOLUNTEERS KILLED

Geneva (ICRC) - Twenty-one children were killed in Butare on 1 May during an attack on an orphanage. The children had been transferred from the Kakiru orphanage in Kigali to Butare because it was believed they would be safer there. This outrageous act took place in the context of the violence that has swept the Butare area in recent days. Thirteen volunteers of the Rwandese Red Cross - three of them in the orphanage - have also lost their lives in the most atrocious circumstances.

Appalled by the massacres in Rwanda, which have already claimed more than 100,000 lives, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) conveys its deepest sympathy to the families of the volunteers and to the Rwandese Red Cross, whose conduct has been exemplary throughout the current crisis.

+++
RWANDA: 350 ORPHANS EVACUATED TO ZAIRE

Geneva (ICRC) - Yesterday, on 3 May, 350 children and 25 accompanying adults were evacuated from an orphanage in Gisenyi in northern Rwanda to the town of Goma in Zaire, where they were taken into the care of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The evacuation was made possible by the presence of the Rwandese Minister of Social Affairs and logistic support provided by the Rwandese army chief of staff. Government troops escorted the convoy to the border with Zaire.

"I'm certain this is a miracle" said the nun in charge of the orphanage to an ICRC delegate, expressing profound relief. The ICRC had supplied the orphanage with food aid for several days prior to the evacuation.
YEMEN: ICRC EVACUATES 800 SOMALI REFUGEES

Geneva (ICRC) - On 24 May 1994 the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) evacuated 800 Somali refugees from the Al Kud camp, some 50 kilometres east of Aden, and took them out of the combat area.

Since fighting broke out between the Sana’a and Aden armed forces the Al Kud refugee camp had come under fire several times, and according to refugee representatives there had been hundreds of casualties. Following an initial visit to the camp on 14 May, ICRC delegates decided to evacuate the 1,500 refugees still there. Since then, hundreds of refugees have left by their own means.

Yesterday’s evacuation was possible only after many contacts with the authorities of Sana’a and Aden in order to determine where the refugees could be taken and to obtain all the necessary security guarantees for the operation itself.

The 800 refugees were transported in vehicles marked with the red cross. They have been grouped in four different localities east of the town of Zinjibar, several dozen kilometres from the front.

UNHCR is organizing accommodation for them and will ensure that they receive adequate supplies.
Geneva (ICRC) - In view of the scale of the tragedy in Rwanda, where between one and two million displaced people are without any means of subsistence, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has had to increase its budget estimate for operations in the country. A further 65 million Swiss francs are needed over and above the initial 1994 budget of 39 million, bringing the total to 104 million Swiss francs. At present this is the institution's largest budget for the current year.

In recent weeks the ICRC has distributed food to 200,000 displaced people in different parts of the country. Under the new plan of action some 750,000 displaced people will receive food aid, amounting to 8,000 tonnes per month. Logistic bases have been set up in Rwanda itself and in Burundi, Uganda, Zaire and Tanzania to facilitate access to the beneficiaries, who are totally dependent on humanitarian aid. Blankets, plastic sheeting for shelter, soap, and jerrycans for carrying water will also be distributed to 100,000 families.

The hospitals where ICRC surgical teams are working should be able to care for 1,000 seriously wounded. Support will be given to other health facilities to help them meet the medical needs of 750,000 people.

The supply of clean water is a top priority. During the coming weeks the ICRC will do its utmost to keep the country's major water treatment plants in service.

If possible, the ICRC will launch a programme in September, to distribute seeds and agricultural implements to 70,000 families.

The ICRC currently has 87 delegates working for its Rwanda operation, both on the spot and in neighbouring countries. One of their main tasks will be to continue making representations to the various parties to the conflict in order to stop the massacres, and to secure respect for the civilian population.
RWANDA: MORE THAN 600 CHILDREN EVACUATED FROM BUTARE

On 5 and 6 June over 600 children were evacuated to Burundi from Butare in southern Rwanda. More than half were orphans who at the beginning of the crisis had been transferred to Butare from the Kakiru orphanage in Kigali for safety. They came under attack in Butare on 1 May, when 21 children and 13 volunteers of the Rwandese Red Cross lost their lives.

This latest evacuation was organized by Terre des Hommes, while the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) provided the logistics necessary to receive the children in the border town of Kayanza. A total of 311 children have already been taken on by Red Cross trucks to the Burundi capital Bujumbura, where they are being cared for by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and Terre des Hommes. In the next few days the children will be transferred to the Zairian town of Bukavu, where suitable accommodation has already been found.

Daniel Philippin, head of the ICRC delegation in Burundi, stressed the fact that the operation would not have been possible without the help of officers of the Rwandan army and representatives of the civilian authorities.

The number of children in Rwanda who have been displaced or orphaned is a matter of both immediate and future concern, calling for sustained attention. The ICRC is currently providing assistance in the form of food, cooking utensils, blankets and mattresses to three orphanages in Goma (Zaire), Gisenye and Nyanza, where over a thousand Rwandan children have taken refuge. On Sunday 11 children were evacuated from Kabgayi to the orphanage in Nyanza, and others will probably follow.

++++
BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: ICRC STANDS BY TO ORGANIZE PRISONERS' RELEASE

Geneva (ICRC) - The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has invited the leaders of the parties to the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina to send representatives to Sarajevo airport on 11 June 1994, in order to discuss practical arrangements for the prompt release of all persons detained in connection with the conflict.

This initiative follows the agreement to that effect concluded by all the parties on 8 June in Geneva, under the auspices of Mr Yasushi Akashi, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General.

++++
ANGOLA: ICRC APPEAL INCREASED TO OVER 100 MILLION SWISS FRANCS

Geneva (ICRC) - The humanitarian situation in Angola, which had been improving in recent weeks, is likely to suffer a serious setback owing to the latest upsurge in fighting. The nutritional status of the population affected by conflict and drought remains extremely precarious. The only way to avert a major catastrophe is to resume humanitarian flights, which were suspended two weeks ago.

Since early 1993 the ICRC has had 62 delegates and 1,400 local employees working in the Huambo, Kuito, Ganda and Luanda areas. Monthly distributions of around 4,000 tonnes of food have enabled the ICRC to cover the needs of 350,000 people. This programme, together with distributions of soap, blankets and clothing for 100,000 families, will have to continue at least until the harvest in April 1995. On 8 June the ICRC therefore launched a revised appeal to donors amounting to 102 million Swiss francs.

The new budget also provides for large-scale medical activities. The ICRC regularly supplies existing facilities with medical equipment and medicines. Medical assistance will undoubtedly have to be stepped up in Kuito, where the situation has seriously deteriorated since the fighting resumed. So far it has not been possible to gain access to the wounded.

Also in Kuito, a water supply programme has been launched in cooperation with OXFAM. Eight wells have already been sunk in order to provide the population and health facilities still in operation with at least a basic supply of drinking water, and further wells will be dug shortly.

The ICRC is currently visiting 300 prisoners held by both sides in about ten places of detention. Negotiations are under way with both parties to the conflict in order to gain access to all prisoners.

The Angolan population greatly appreciates the exchange of Red Cross messages between the two conflict zones. Some 3,000 messages a week are collected and distributed by the ICRC. The network will soon be extended to all accessible areas in the country.

To ensure a maximum yield from next year’s harvest, in the autumn the ICRC will be distributing sorghum seed and farming tools.

++++
YEMEN: ICRC SHIP ON STANDBY OFF ADEN

Geneva (ICRC) - Fighting between the armed forces of the parties to the conflict in Yemen has continued throughout the week in and around Aden. Hundreds of wounded, mainly soldiers, have been taken to the town's hospitals, which are overcrowded. Medical staff on the spot are doing their best to cope, but lack the material and medicines necessary to treat the casualties.

Four delegates and a doctor from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) are currently in Aden, where they are assisting Yemeni medical personnel by distributing medicines and dressings to the hospitals. The ICRC's stocks are running low and must be replenished without delay.

On 7 June already the ICRC had tried to reach the port of Aden to unload a consignment of medical supplies, but the situation prevailing at the time did not allow the operation to take place.

Today, 11 June, an ICRC ship with two delegates and 2.5 tonnes of medical supplies is standing by off Aden. The ICRC is awaiting guarantees from both parties to be able to unload, as soon as possible and in all safety, the assistance urgently needed by the victims of the conflict.

++++
Communication to the press No. 94/29
Geneva, 28 June 1994

RWANDA: UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

Geneva (ICRC) - Thousands of children in Rwanda are homeless, separated from their families, waiting to receive humanitarian assistance. Some of them have found refuge in orphanages, others in camps for displaced people. In many cases children at risk have had to be evacuated to countries outside Rwanda to save their lives. It has been reported that some children have been transferred abroad without the necessary precautions being taken to record their identity.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) together with UNHCR, UNICEF and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have therefore drawn up guidelines on how to deal with this situation. These guidelines are based on the principles contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977.

As far as possible children should be helped on the spot, in their own cultural environment. In exceptional circumstances transfer out of the country can be envisaged.

In any event, children leaving their country of origin must be properly identified and registered. Systematic registration makes it possible to keep track of them, inform interested persons of their whereabouts and facilitate family reunifications. The ICRC’s Central Tracing Agency will centralize the registration cards of all the children concerned.

In the meantime, many relatives have approached the ICRC seeking news of their children. Such information can be provided only if all the children evacuated are registered. On the other hand, as soon as security conditions allow, tracing will be initiated to reunite separated children with their families in Rwanda or abroad. Priority will be given to finding the relatives of children who have been registered.

++++
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING SIGNED BETWEEN PLO AND ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - Mr Farouk Kaddoumi, head of the Political Department and member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), was received today 13 July at the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) by ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga. During their meeting Mr Kaddoumi and President Sommaruga signed a memorandum of understanding between the PLO, for the benefit of the Palestinian authorities, and the ICRC. The document specifies the status and activities of the ICRC in the territories under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian authorities.

The memorandum of understanding provides for the continuation and development of the ICRC's humanitarian tasks with respect to protection, assistance and cooperation with the Palestinian Red Crescent. In particular it enables the ICRC to visit all persons detained by the Palestinian authorities.

The ICRC has been working in Israel and the occupied territories since July 1967, where it has been conducting activities pursuant to the Fourth Geneva Convention. It assists and protects the civilian population, in particular persons detained in Israel and the occupied territories. It also implements cooperation programmes with the local health services and the Palestinian Red Crescent, in coordination with several National Red Cross Societies.

During the meeting, President Sommaruga confirmed the ICRC's intention to continue its activities pursuant to the Geneva Conventions in the territories that remain under the control of the Israeli armed forces.

++++
DEMONSTRATIONS IN EAST TIMOR: ICRC ASSISTS WOUNDED AND DETAINEES

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) came to the aid of people wounded or arrested during demonstrations which took place yesterday 14 July near the university campus in Dili (East Timor). A number of students received first aid on the spot and one of them was evacuated by the ICRC to Dili’s civilian hospital. About 20 demonstrators were arrested. ICRC delegates immediately went to see them in the police stations and military compounds where they were being held and also visited several wounded at the military hospital. All the people arrested were subsequently released. The ICRC did its utmost throughout the day to facilitate the dialogue between the demonstrators and the authorities, while maintaining contacts between those arrested and their families.

The ICRC has been working in East Timor since 1979. It currently has four expatriates and 27 local staff at its office in Dili. In addition to conducting a sanitation programme in cooperation with the Indonesian Red Cross Society and organizing regular visits to detainees, the ICRC is carrying on its traditional task as a neutral intermediary on behalf of the civilian population for all problems of humanitarian concern.

++++
Communication to the press No. 94/32
Geneva, 20 July 1994

SOMALIA: ICRC MOVES OFFICES TO NAIROBI

Geneva (ICRC) – The delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Somalia closed down its offices in Mogadishu on 14 July and has now moved to Nairobi. The principal reason that prompted its decision, taken in late June, was that conditions were becoming increasingly dangerous for ICRC expatriates, in particular because of the growing number of abductions by small uncontrolled groups. The risks were judged excessive in comparison with the limited scale of the delegation’s activities.

From its base in Nairobi, the delegation will carry out regular ad hoc missions to various parts of Somalia. ICRC Tracing Agency activities will also be maintained, as will sanitation projects, medical programmes and efforts to disseminate the humanitarian principles. Other tasks may be undertaken depending on developments in the situation.

++++
EASTERN BOSNIA: FORCED POPULATION TRANSFERS CONTINUE

Geneva (ICRC) - On the night of 28 August a group of 432 Muslims from the Bijeljina area were forced by Bosnian Serb authorities to cross the front line into Bosnian government-held territory near the town of Tuzla.

This was the eighth such transfer since mid-July, bringing to 1,102 the number of Muslim civilians driven out of the area. As before, most of them were women, children, elderly, sick or disabled people. They were forcibly taken from their homes and stripped of all their belongings. In addition, they had to pay large amounts of money for their transport.

A team from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) immediately took first-aid supplies to the scene. The displaced civilians, some of whom had been ill-treated, were in a state of total exhaustion as a result of their terrible ordeal. The most urgent medical cases were evacuated to Tuzla hospital.

Also since mid-July, the ICRC delegation in Bijeljina has received numerous reports that men of military age were being arrested and many of them forced to join work units often deployed near the front lines.

In view of these developments, the ICRC has been making repeated representations at all levels to remind the Bosnian Serb authorities of their obligation to respect international humanitarian law. So far these approaches have been in vain.

The ICRC therefore calls once again on the Bosnian Serb authorities to put an end to forced transfers of civilians and to guarantee the security and dignity of minorities on their territory. It also urges them to allow people wishing to leave to do so under decent conditions, and requests immediate and unimpeded access to all arrested persons.

++++
CHECHNYA: TENSION RUNNING HIGH

Geneva (ICRC) - Following two outbreaks of fighting between troops loyal to President Dudayev and various opposition factions, a delegate and a doctor from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) went to Chechnya from 7 to 12 September to assess the medical situation. According to the accounts they heard, at least 25 people were killed and as many wounded in the clashes. Tension remains high and the hospitals, which are managing to cope for the moment, could rapidly be overwhelmed should the fighting resume.

The ICRC team went to the capital, Grozny, and to three areas held by the various groups vying for power. They distributed emergency medical supplies (antibiotics, anaesthetics, perfusions and dressing materials) to five hospitals in Grozny, Argun, Tolstoyurt, Nadarechny and Urus-Martan, enabling each to treat 80 patients.

The delegates were received by the authorities in Grozny and by leaders of the rebel factions, all of whom showed a clear understanding of the ICRC's role as a neutral intermediary.

An ICRC medical team already went to Chechnya in August and distributed medical supplies for some 300 people as a precautionary measure.

++++
Communication to the press No. 94/35  
16 September 1994

CONFLICT IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH: CIVILIAN HOSTAGES RELEASED

Geneva (ICRC) - On 7 September three Azeris (two elderly men and a woman) and three Armenians (two women and a little girl) were repatriated aboard an aircraft of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to Baku and Yerevan respectively. Yesterday, 15 September, 24 Azeri women and children were released by the authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh in Garwend, a village on the front line between Azerbaijani and Karabakhi forces. They were handed over by a team of three ICRC delegates based in Stepanakert to delegates who had come from Barda in Azerbaijan.

The youngest of the released civilians was an 18-month-old baby born in captivity, and the oldest a 78-year-old woman. The ICRC was the only organization in contact with them during their detention, visiting them regularly to monitor their living conditions and enabling them to send Red Cross messages to their families.

The release operations took place under an agreement reached in Moscow on 13 August within the framework of peace negotiations between the parties to the conflict, whereby both parties undertook to free women and children held hostage. The ICRC trusts that these encouraging developments herald the release of all male hostages - civilians, soldiers, the sick and the wounded - still detained in connection with the conflict.

++++
BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA:
ETHNIC CLEANSING ENTERING LAST STAGES IN BIJEMLINA

Geneva (ICRC) - More than 2,500 Muslims were forced to cross the front line between Bijeljina and Tuzla on 18 and 19 September. During the transfer two people were killed and many others required urgent hospital treatment on their arrival. Delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) helped transport the weakest individuals from the front line to the nearby village of Babina Luka, where they provided first aid.

During the three days prior to these events, ICRC delegates based in Bijeljina were finally granted access to 220 Muslims arrested during previous expulsions and forced to work in the Lopare region. In the opinion of the ICRC, the number of detainees in the area may be much higher.

The ICRC notes that expulsions are continuing on a large scale despite repeated assurances given by the highest Bosnian Serb authorities. It fears that ethnic cleansing is entering its last stages in the Bijeljina area. Following the appeal made by its President on 7 September, the ICRC calls once again on all parties to the conflict and on the international community to put an end to the unacceptable practice of exclusion of minorities which is causing so much human tragedy.

+++

+ + + + 
ANGOLA: ICRC HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS IN HUAMBO AREA TO CONTINUE DESPITE PARTIAL STAFF WITHDRAWAL

Geneva (ICRC) - Following recent events around the town of Huambo on the Angolan Planalto, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has decided to maintain a team in the area to reassess humanitarian needs. Until a few days ago the ICRC was conducting large-scale food and medical relief programmes there, bringing assistance to 400,000 people affected by the conflict. Since the events, the vast majority of these people have fled Huambo and its surroundings.

In the coming days the ICRC team, which consists of four delegates, including a nurse-nutritionist and an agricultural engineer, will seek to determine the emergency needs of the local population, for whom conditions have worsened as a result of the recent fighting.

In the evening of Friday 11 November, an ICRC-chartered DC3 evacuated 51 expatriates stranded in the premises of the ICRC delegation in Bomba Alta near Huambo. They were flown to the coastal town of Benguela together with members of Médecins sans Frontières, Concern, Save the Children Fund (UK), the Catholic Relief Organisation, Oikos, UCAH and UNICEF.

++++
TAJIKISTAN: PRISONERS RELEASED UNDER ICRC AUSPICES

Geneva (ICRC) - Twenty-three members of the Tajik opposition held by the Dushanbe authorities and 27 government soldiers detained by the opposition were released simultaneously on 13 November under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The releases followed an agreement reached between the two parties during the most recent negotiations held under United Nations auspices in Islamabad, Pakistan, from 20 October to 1 November 1994.

The operation took place at the Khorog airport in the semi-autonomous province of Gorno-Badakhshan, in eastern Tajikistan. The delegates on the spot were able to carry out the simultaneous releases in accordance with the ICRC's customary procedures: they interviewed each detainee in private in order to register his identity and ensure that he was going to the destination of his choice.

+ + + +
AIRLIFT TO AFGHANISTAN

Geneva (ICRC) – The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) organized a series of emergency flights to Kabul on 11, 12 and 13 November, taking in 80 tonnes of medicines and medical supplies for overcrowded hospitals in and around the Afghan capital. A Hercules-type aircraft, placed at the ICRC’s disposal by the Indonesian government, made three round trips between Jalalabad and two airports north and south of the city. Two further flights went from Jalalabad to the towns of Herat and Mazar-i-Sharif. Distributions began as soon as the emergency aid was unloaded. Another two flights to the Afghan capital are scheduled for Tuesday 15 November. Five trucks carrying 70 tonnes of medical supplies had already made their way from Peshawar to Kabul on 7 November.

The airlift was negotiated with all the parties concerned in order to respond to needs arising from the critical situation in the Afghan capital, where over the past two months heavy fighting has left 1,100 people dead and more than 23,000 wounded.

Since the beginning of the year the ICRC has stepped up its deliveries of medicines and other medical supplies to 10 hospitals and 35 clinics and dispensaries in and around Kabul. It is also supplying aid, mainly food, to thousands of people displaced by the fighting. This programme has had to be scaled down temporarily, however, because since June security conditions have prevented food convoys from reaching the Afghan capital.

++++
TWENTY-NINE TIMORESE TRANSFERRED TO PORTUGAL

Geneva (ICRC) - On Thursday 24 November the ICRC arranged for the departure to Portugal of 29 persons from East Timor who had been occupying the parking lot of the United States embassy in Jakarta for the last 12 days. The transfer from the embassy to the airport, organized in close cooperation with the Indonesian authorities, took place rapidly, and the young Timorese boarded an aircraft which is due to arrive in Lisbon on 25 November.

The ICRC was asked to take action in its capacity as a neutral intermediary between all the parties concerned. Beginning on Saturday 19 November, ICRC delegates met the individuals occupying the US embassy compound and ascertained in particular that they wished to go to Portugal. Following assurances received from the Indonesian authorities, arrangements for the transfer were finalized.
COMMUNICATION TO THE PRESS

N° 94/41  N'EXISTE PAS
Communication to the press No. 94/42
Geneva, 7 december 1994

CHECHNYA: ICRC GAINS ACCESS TO PRISONERS

Geneva (ICRC) - As a result of negotiations conducted over the past few days, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has gained access to people detained in connection with the armed conflict in Chechnya. On Tuesday 6 December, an ICRC team began to visit prisoners held by the Groznyi authorities.

Alarmed by reports it has received of bombing which has claimed civilian victims, the ICRC has also intervened to draw attention to the rules of international humanitarian law that govern the conduct of hostilities.

In addition, the ICRC has sent off emergency surgical supplies to Chechnya sufficient to treat a thousand wounded in case of further fighting, and is standing by to increase its medical aid as necessary. After the clashes of 26 November, delegates immediately delivered emergency medical supplies to three hospitals in Groznyi and to one in Urus-Martan, and on 1 December contingency stocks to provide medical treatment for 500 wounded were distributed in Groznyi.

There are now seven delegates at work throughout Chechnya, assessing the needs of people displaced or otherwise in distress with a view to launching an assistance programme.
AN OFFICIAL CALL FROM THE ICRC: REMEMBER RWANDA!

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) officially called upon the international community to prevent a recurrence of the horror that affected Rwanda only a few months ago. Mr Cornelio Sommaruga, the ICRC president handed over a memorandum to this effect on Wednesday (14.12.94) to the representatives of the permanent missions accredited to the United Nations in Geneva. In this memorandum brought to the attention of all governments, the ICRC expresses its concern that further delay in bringing about a durable solution to the prevailing crisis would "leave the door open to an escalation of violence and a resumption of hostilities in the region".

Among the factors responsible for this instability, one can name the highly problematic and destabilizing presence of vast numbers of refugees in neighbouring countries and the potential disputes for land and property left vacant in their wake within Rwanda... Today, Rwanda has indeed neither the resources nor the means necessary for a resumption of administrative and economic activity, which would restore a measure of confidence among the people and offer them some prospects for the future.

Humanitarian assistance has attempted to alleviate the desperate plight of the population but cannot in any way answer the fundamental requirements of the Rwandan people.

The ICRC believes that it is primarily the task of the governments and the various parties in the Great Lakes region and especially the Rwandans themselves to consider the enormous responsibility that is theirs vis-à-vis a decimated, scattered and exhausted population.

Moreover, the ICRC calls upon the States which are Rwanda's traditional partners to arrive at a consensus that transcends particular interests and to generate the necessary political resolve, financial means and human resources without which even the best settlement plans are doomed to failure.

Full text of ICRC memorandum follows.

Further information: Kim Gordon Bates, ICRC Geneva, Tel. ++ 41 22 730 2265
ICRC AIRCRAFT CRASHES IN ANGOLA

Geneva (ICRC) - A DC3 cargo plane chartered by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) crashed shortly after 7 a.m. local time today, 15 December, near Lobito airport in Angola’s Benguela province. The 42-year-old American pilot, Daniel Forbes Reid, and the 33-year-old Swiss copilot, Roland Halter, were killed. The plane belonged to SL Aviation Services.

An official investigation will be undertaken to determine the cause of the accident.

The plane was carrying 4.6 tonnes of food aid intended for civilians in the town of Ganda, a 30-minute flight away. Eye-witnesses said that it seemed to experience difficulty on take-off and crashed just beyond the runway.

The ICRC is profoundly distressed by this accident which claimed the lives of two people engaged in a humanitarian operation vital to the survival of thousands of people, and conveys its deepest sympathy to the families of the victims.

+++
ICRC CONVOY REACHES GROZNY

Geneva (ICRC) - A convoy from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) delivered surgical supplies to hospitals in the Chechen capital Grozny on 17 December after travelling from Nazran, in the Ingush Republic. The supplies are enough to enable the hospitals to cope with 700 casualties.

The ICRC has ten delegates in the northern Caucasus. In addition to their activities to help the wounded, they are keeping close watch on the situation of displaced people in the region. Surveys have been carried out recently in the areas adjacent to Chechnya, in particular the Ingush republic and Daghestan, and relief is planned for the thousand of people who have sought refuge there.

++++