CHECHNYA: ICRC LAUNCHES APPEAL FOR 55 MILLION SWISS FRANCS

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) today appealed for 55 million Swiss francs (US$ 42.8 million) to cover the costs of its operation in Chechnya. The amount is based on a recent assessment of needs carried out by ICRC delegates in the northern Caucasus. The ICRC has been working in Chechnya since early September 1994. To date it has provided 31 tonnes of medical materials to about 20 hospitals in Chechnya itself, in Ingushetia and in Dagestan. It has also distributed food supplies for displaced people in the region, and registered prisoners being held by the Chechen forces.

Today’s appeal is sufficient to cover costs for the coming six months. During that period the ICRC plans to meet urgent needs and, in a second phase, to provide initial assistance to those returning to their homes. Its plan of action is specifically:

- to register all prisoners being held by the two parties and to visit them regularly in accordance with standard ICRC procedures;

- to continue providing hospitals with emergency medical supplies (it will not, however, be necessary to send out any surgical teams, given the number of qualified doctors and nurses in the region), and to restore the water supply in several hospitals;

- to provide food and other supplies to 400,000 people displaced or otherwise affected by the conflict. 100'000 family parcels will be distributed monthly. Each parcel contains 20.5 kg of food supplements (rice, vegetable oil, sugar, cheese, corned beef), sufficient for a family of four people for one month.

- to provide those who have returned to their homes with plastic sheeting, candles and jerrycans;

- to enable civilians in Chechnya to re-establish contact, via the Red Cross message system, with relatives in neighbouring republics or in other countries;

- to inform combatants and the general public about the rules to be respected in time of conflict and the principles governing Red Cross action. Delegates specialized in spreading knowledge of international humanitarian law will be assigned to this task.

The ICRC presently has 20 delegates in the northern Caucasus. Their number will increase to about 50 by the end of January.

The success of the ICRC’s plan of action will also depend on the willingness of the local administrative authorities to facilitate the delegates' work.

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Communication to the press No. 95/2
Geneva, 2 February 1995

PERU/ECUADOR: ICRC VISITS TWO PERUVIAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN ECUADORIAN HANDS

Geneva (ICRC) - On 1 February the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) visited two Peruvian prisoners of war held by the Ecuadorean armed forces. The visit was carried out according to the ICRC’s customary procedures, and the two prisoners were registered and were able to write Red Cross messages to their families.

The Ecuadorean Red Cross has conducted an initial survey of the needs of families forced to leave their homes because of the fighting, and has constituted stocks of blankets, mattresses and clothing for the displaced. Blood transfusion centres have also been set up near the combat zones. The ICRC is providing support to the Ecuadorean Red Cross in its assistance activities.

In Peru, where the ICRC has maintained a permanent presence since 1984, delegates have had interviews with representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and are currently trying to enter into negotiations with the Peruvian Ministry of Defence. In Ecuador, an ICRC delegate went to Quito on 28 January for discussions with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence.

On 30 January the ICRC handed over to both governments a memorandum requesting them to abide by the provisions of international humanitarian law, in particular to care for the wounded, respect the civilian population and authorize the ICRC to visit prisoners of war.

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ICRC LAUNCHES ITS EMERGENCY APPEAL FOR 1995:
628 MILLION SWISS FRANCS

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross today launched its emergency appeal for 1995. The Geneva-based institution will need 618 million Swiss francs (483 million US dollars) in order to cover the costs of its operations in around 30 conflict-stricken countries, as well as the expenditures of its 21 regional delegations. The ICRC's Director of Operations, Mr Jean de Courten, today informed the representatives of the donor community about the programmes that the ICRC is carrying out worldwide.

The ICRC's initial field budget of 563 million Swiss francs has already been modified early this year because of the situation in the northern Caucasus, for which the ICRC launched a special appeal on 19 January for 55 million Swiss francs.

The African continent tops the list, with a total of 272 million Swiss francs needed for operations there in 1995, followed by Eastern Europe and Central Asia with 110 million, Western Europe and Central Europe (89 million), Asia (79 million), Middle East and North Africa (42 million) and the Americas (26 million). The former Yugoslavia with 82 million Swiss francs, followed by Angola with 81 million, Rwanda with 66 million and Chechnya with 55 million are the theatres of operation with the highest individual budgets. The 21 regional delegations carry out operational activities, especially visits to detainees, in the region they cover, and also work to enhance knowledge of and respect for international humanitarian law.

Relief activities in aid of more than 2 million displaced people account for 39 per cent of the 1995 budget, whilst 24 per cent of the appeal will cover the costs of visits to more than 100,000 detainees in over 60 countries as well as the activities of the ICRC Tracing Agency that forwards several million family messages each year between relatives separated by conflict and traces several hundred persons per year, that got lost during the conflict. Medical activities will take up 18 per cent of the budget; they include two ICRC hospitals and five other hospitals with ICRC surgical teams, where more than 30,000 surgical operations are carried out each year, as well as orthopaedic activities (30 projects in 17 countries). 980 expatriates are currently working in the field, seconded by more than 5 000 local employees. The rest of the budget goes to dissemination of international humanitarian law, co-operation with National Societies, operational support, overheads and contingency planning.

The ICRC's headquarters appeal 1995 for 138 million Swiss francs (106 million US dollars) was launched at the end of December 1994. This budget enables the institution to direct and coordinate the worldwide activities of its delegates and to mobilize the resources needed. Posts at headquarters are divided into two major areas: operational support for emergency activities conducted in the field, and long-term tasks aimed at ensuring greater protection for victims of conflict.

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ECUADOR/PERU: PRISONERS OF WAR REPATRIATED

Geneva (ICRC) - The authorities of Ecuador and Peru requested the good offices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for the release of prisoners of war held by the two parties to the conflict.

The release operation involved two Ecuadorian POWs held in Peru and seven Peruvian POWs held in Ecuador.

In accordance with the ICRC's customary procedures, which had been accepted by both sides, delegates spoke with each of the POWs in private prior to his repatriation. The men were returned to their respective countries on 1 March, under the auspices of the ICRC.
SARAJEVO/BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: ICRC CALLS ON BELLIGERENTS TO RESPECT RED CROSS EMBLEM

Geneva (ICRC) - Several aircraft carrying humanitarian relief supplies have been deliberately targeted and hit by gunfire in Sarajevo during the last few days. On Saturday 11 March a plane chartered by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was struck by a large-calibre bullet. Fortunately, no one was hurt. This incident, the first of its kind to involve the ICRC, constitutes a grave breach of the Geneva Conventions and prompted the institution to suspend its relief flights to the Bosnian capital. The ICRC had been making daily flights to Sarajevo since November 1993, bringing in aid for victims of the conflict on both sides of the front line.

It is not known who was responsible for the attack. The ICRC is duty bound to remind the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Bosnian Serb authorities of their obligations and of the commitments they have made to respect and guarantee the safety of personnel, installations and means of transport protected by the Red Cross emblem.

In view of the unacceptable increase in the number of security incidents affecting its operations and those of other humanitarian organizations working to help the victims of the conflict, the ICRC once again calls on the belligerents to scrupulously respect the Geneva Conventions, in accordance with their obligations and as they have repeatedly undertaken to do.

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CHIAPAS: ICRC CONTINUES ASSISTANCE TO CIVILIAN POPULATION

Geneva (ICRC) - In view of the latest developments in Chiapas, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has received full support from the Mexican Government to continue providing humanitarian aid to the civilian population, in accordance with its mandate.

The ICRC is working in cooperation with the Mexican Red Cross. Mobile medical teams are helping displaced civilians and people who have now returned home, providing medical consultations, carrying out child vaccination programmes and organizing transport to hospital for serious cases. The ICRC is also training health workers and supplying them with basic medicines.

A relief programme is under way for displaced persons and civilians who have returned to their homes. Some 45 tonnes of food, kitchen utensils, soap, blankets and farming tools are currently being distributed.

On 6 March the ICRC began visiting persons detained in connection with the Chiapas events. ICRC delegates were able to talk with them in private, in accordance with its customary working procedures.

The ICRC has visited a total of 23 detainees in prisons in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Veracruz and Mexico City. The visits were facilitated by the Mexican Secretaría de Gobernación and the National Commission for Human Rights.
Geneva (ICRC) - On 20 March 1995 the Turkish armed forces launched a large-scale military operation in northern Iraq. As soon as this became known to it, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) approached the Turkish representatives in Geneva to express its grave concern about the plight of the civilians living in the area. The ICRC immediately reminded the Turkish authorities of their obligation to comply with all the provisions of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, in particular those of the Fourth Geneva Convention on the protection of civilians.

In spite of these formal representations, the Turkish authorities still have not authorized the ICRC to enter the areas affected by the ongoing military operations. The ICRC is therefore unable to carry out an impartial and independent survey of the situation of civilians, nor can it act on behalf of the wounded and captives.

In these circumstances, the ICRC again calls on the Turkish authorities to comply with the terms of the Geneva Conventions, which Turkey has signed, and to immediately authorize the ICRC to conduct its humanitarian mission unhindered.

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EMBARGO 18h00 - GENEVA TIME
Rwanda: ICRC sounds alarm on appalling prison conditions

Geneva (ICRC) - Diplomatic representatives were invited to the Geneva headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on 31 March by ICRC President Corneliio Sommaruga to hand them an appeal and to inform them of his organization's serious concern about the appalling situation in Rwandan prisons.

Mr Sommaruga said that overcrowding was the main cause of a steady deterioration in prison conditions, which were becoming more critical day by day. The ICRC was currently making regular visits to over 30,000 detainees in 135 places of detention, he said. The prison population was growing by 1,500 every week, and in a number of institutions there were now up to four inmates per square metre of floor space throughout the compound and up to six persons per square metre in the dormitories.

Such inhuman overcrowding has many consequences, which include disastrous hygiene conditions - and therefore the rapid spread of diseases, supply difficulties and exacerbated tension between the detainees. Indeed, in addition to the high death rate due to the conditions themselves, the situation has already given rise to incidents which have claimed the lives of a number of detainees.

The ICRC has taken practical steps to try and prevent this tragedy from continuing. Delegates are providing emergency supplies of food and water to the detainees, carrying out sanitation work and supporting the prison health services. In the past the ICRC has made several appeals to the Rwandan authorities and to the international community, in particular on 14 December last. It also issued a memorandum on 1 March 1995 specifically dealing with the conditions of detention. Despite this, no real move has yet been made to ease the extreme overcrowding.

The ICRC therefore today renews its appeal. It calls on the States party to the Geneva Conventions to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law and urges them to do everything necessary to remedy the situation. In particular, it solemnly appeals both to the Rwandan government and to the international community to set up new places of detention, as this is the only way to alleviate the present overcrowding. The ICRC further insists on the pressing need to restore the rule of law and a functioning judicial system.

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CHECHNYA: TWO ICRC CONVOYS REACH CHATOI AND NOYAYURT HOSPITALS

Geneva (ICRC) - A convoy of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) arrived on 31 March in the town of Chatoi in the mountainous region of southern Chechnya controlled by pro-Dudayev forces. ICRC delegates provided the hospital in Chatoi with enough emergency medical supplies to treat about 500 casualties. This was the first time that an ICRC convoy was able to cross the lines between the areas controlled by Russian Federation troops and those in the hands of pro-Dudayev forces via Grozny and Urus Martan. The convoy encountered no security problems and the Red Cross emblem was respected.

At the beginning of the week another ICRC convoy managed to bring in from Daghestan enough emergency medical supplies to treat some 400 casualties. The supplies were delivered to the hospital in Noyayurt and to four other hospitals and dispensaries in the area.

In view of recent developments in the fighting in southern Chechnya, the ICRC has transferred one of its offices from Shali to Noyayurt, near the border with Daghestan. It seeks to provide further medical assistance and to undertake the distribution of food aid in south-eastern Chechnya in the near future to help meet the overwhelming needs in the area.

In the past few days the ICRC has transferred 3,200 family parcels from its regional warehouse in Nalchik (Kabardino-Balkaria) to Khasavyurt (Daghestan). It will transfer an additional 3,600 parcels from its warehouse in Rostov to Khasavyurt in early April. All told, this will enable the ICRC to distribute food aid and other relief supplies to 35,000 people, including thousands of displaced persons who have recently arrived in the area after having fled the new outbreak of hostilities in southern Chechnya.

The ICRC has in recent weeks provided relief assistance to 70,000 people in Grozny, where it also has an office, and it is continuing to assist some 112,000 displaced persons in Ingushetia.
ICRC PRESIDENT CALLS FOR HUMANITARIAN MOBILIZATION IN SOUTHERN CAUCASUS

Geneva (ICRC) - The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Mr Corneliu Sommaruga, visited the southern Caucasus for the first time from 3 to 11 April 1995. He went to Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, where he had in-depth talks with government authorities at the highest level. The visit was part of the ICRC's drive to mobilize all the States party to the Geneva Conventions to tackle humanitarian issues, focusing on States affected by conflict or unrest. This campaign is at the centre of the ICRC's concerns.

Humanitarian questions relating to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict were raised with President Levon Ter-Petrossian in Armenia and President Geidar Aliyev in Azerbaijan, and with senior officials of the ministries concerned. During the discussions the ICRC's activities in the region were reviewed. The talks also gave the ICRC President the opportunity to remind the highest State authorities in Armenia and Azerbaijan, and also a leading Nagorny Karabakh official whom he met in Yerevan, of the importance that the ICRC attaches to the release of all detainees and their return to their homes. Now, almost a year since a generally respected cease-fire brought an end to active hostilities, it is a matter of urgency to release the women, children, elderly people, the sick and the wounded still being held. On 11 February last, negotiators representing Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh undertook to do so; this commitment has been met by Armenia and partly by Azerbaijan. The ICRC earnestly hopes that the Nagorny Karabakh authorities will follow suit and that the Azerbaijani government will decide to free the remaining detainees falling within the agreed categories.

Mr Sommaruga also had talks with Eduard Shevardnadze, President of the Republic of Georgia, on the humanitarian implications of the Abkhaz conflict. Their exchanges of views covered not only the ICRC's activities and concerns in this context, with particular reference to the protection of detainees, but also the issue of anti-personnel mines. These are claiming victims in Abkhazia, especially in the Gali area, as well as in regions affected by the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. While in Tbilisi the ICRC President opened the ICRC orthopaedic workshop, which has a counterpart in Gagra, Abkhazia. Civilians and others injured by mine explosions are fitted with artificial limbs at these centres.

President Sommaruga expressed his concern about the new upsurge of violence in Abkhazia, around Gali, and stressed the importance of the ICRC's humanitarian work in behalf of non-Abkhaz civilians living in the region.

In all the countries he visited the ICRC President emphasized how crucial it was for States to spread knowledge of the basic principles of international humanitarian law, which, he underlined, their armed forces must observe in the event of fighting.
During his visit Mr Sommaruga had constructive discussions with the region's Red Cross and Red Crescent organizations. In Armenia, near the border with Azerbaijan, he observed the distribution of relief supplies to vulnerable people. This operation, conducted under the auspices of the ICRC, is part of an American Red Cross programme to provide assistance, in cooperation with the Armenian Red Cross, to 7,000 families living along a border subject to sporadic cease-fire violations. In Azerbaijan, the ICRC President went to the Barda and Fizuli districts to assess the situation of displaced persons along the front line between Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh, and to observe the activities carried out in the area by the ICRC sub-delegation in Barda, partly with the assistance of the Azerbaijan Red Crescent.

President Sommaruga's visit to the southern Caucasus gave rise to several favourable developments. The three heads of State declared their intention, at this time of political and economic difficulty for their respective countries, to meet their commitments with regard to international humanitarian law and to facilitate the ICRC's humanitarian work in the region.
RWANDA: ICRC WARNS ABOUT POSSIBLE HUMAN DISASTER IN SOUTHERN CAMPS

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) today expressed deep concern about the deteriorating situation in the camps for internally displaced persons in Gikongoro prefecture.

The military operation launched on 18 April to close these camps generated panic among the displaced population, resulting in the death of 10 people, including several children. The ICRC deplores the events that led to these deaths and calls for measures to prevent the recurrence of such incidents.

Approximately 125,000 people are currently massed in small areas within the Kibeho, Ndago, Munini and Kamana camps, without access to food, water or shelter. The humanitarian situation could deteriorate extremely quickly, and peoples' lives could be threatened by dehydration and epidemics. The ICRC appeals to the authorities concerned to treat the civilian population according to the humanitarian principles.

The Chief of Staff of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) today gave assurances that the ICRC would be allowed to bring assistance to the people of these camps. "The ICRC is ready to provide emergency aid until a suitable solution can be found", said ICRC head of delegation in Rwanda

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SIERRA LEONE: RELEASE OF 16 PEOPLE HELD BY RUF

Geneva (ICRC) - On 20 April the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) handed over to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) the 16 persons it had been holding following military operations in northern and southern areas of Sierra Leone between November 1994 and January 1995. The handover took place on the border between Sierra Leone and Guinea.

The people concerned, six British, three Swiss, one German and six Sierra Leone nationals, immediately boarded ICRC vehicles and are on their way to the Guinean capital Conakry, where they will be met by representatives of their respective countries.

The release operation succeeded thanks to the cooperation of all the parties involved, in particular the governments of Sierra Leone and Guinea and the RUF, which had asked the ICRC to act as a neutral intermediary.

The ICRC remains concerned about the whole range of humanitarian problems in Sierra Leone, and hopes to secure the cooperation of the government and the RUF in developing its activities for civilians affected by the conflict.

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HUNDREDS OF DEAD AMONG THE DISPLACED PERSONS IN SOUTHERN RWANDA

Geneva (ICRC) - Within the last five days the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has witnessed a steady deterioration of the situation in the displaced camps around Gikongoro, resulting in thousands of casualties in Kibeho camp.

ICRC delegates reported throughout the day increasing violence in Kibeho camp that has been surrounded since the 18th April by forces of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), attempting to return the displaced to their communes of origin. The encircled persons became more and more desperate, having been confined under extreme conditions for the last few days. Some have tried to force their way through the army cordon. Automatic rifle fire and grenade explosions were observed by ICRC delegates late Saturday afternoon, resulting in the loss of hundreds of lives and a very large number of wounded.

Earlier in the day, ICRC delegates witnessed an exodus of displaced persons from Kibeho camp towards Butare. In late afternoon, wounded and dead could be seen alongside the road. By nightfall, at least 15'000 people were left behind in Kibeho camp. Given the circumstances, their fate is uncertain.

On Saturday, all attempts by the ICRC to deliver emergency supplies of water and food to Kibeho camp failed, at first due to the lack of cooperation from the authorities on the spot, later on due to the security situation. ICRC medical evacuations were not authorized either.

The ICRC appeals to the Rwandan authorities to refrain from further indiscriminate acts of violence in Kibeho and the other camps. At the same time the ICRC appeals to the authorities to be granted immediate and unlimited access inside the different camps to provide the displaced with urgently needed medical and food aid.

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Communication to the press No. 95/14
30 April 1995

ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES: DEATH OF A PALESTINIAN DETAINEE

Geneva (ICRC) - Abdelsamad Salman Hassan Hreizat, who was being held at the Jerusalem Internment Centre, died at the Hadassah hospital in Jerusalem during the night of 24 to 25 April 1995. On the basis of information relating to the circumstances of Mr Hreizat's death, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) contacted the Israeli Ministry of Justice on 30 April 1995 and reiterated its request to receive the results of the inquiry.

The ICRC has been visiting Palestinian detainees held by the Israeli authorities for many years, especially while they are under interrogation. The ICRC has submitted numerous detailed reports to the Israeli authorities, urging them to prohibit any form of physical or mental pressure on detainees, including pressure to collaborate and interrogation by fellow detainees.

Deeply shocked by Mr Hreizat's death, the ICRC once again calls on the Israeli government to ensure that Palestinian detainees under interrogation are treated in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention.

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CROATIA: ICRC APPEALS FOR RESPECT FOR THE CIVILIAN POPULATION

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has mobilized its entire staff based in Zagreb, Knin, Okucani and Banja Luka to bring immediate aid to the victims of the fighting that resumed on 1 May in the western sector of Croatia.

Following the offensive launched by the Croatian armed forces on the town of Okucani, in western Slavonia, thousands of civilians have been forced to flee the fighting and now find themselves in an extremely precarious situation. Meanwhile, indiscriminate shelling on both sides of the front, in which hospitals have also come under fire, has resulted in many civilian casualties in Okucani, Gradiska, Pakrac, Sisak, Karlovac and Zagreb.

In view of this sudden, alarming deterioration in the situation, the ICRC once again appeals to all parties involved in the fighting to comply with the fundamental rules of the Geneva Conventions and international humanitarian law. In particular, it urges them:

- not to target the civilian population or items indispensable to its survival;
- to respect and treat humanely all persons not, or no longer, taking part in the fighting, in particular combatants who have surrendered or been captured;
- to guarantee freedom of movement for all Red Cross personnel and medical staff seeking to come to the aid of the wounded, whether civilian or military;
- to respect and ensure respect for the red cross emblem itself and all staff and installations placed under its protection.

The ICRC has already distributed 2,000 food parcels and 4,000 blankets to 2,000 persons displaced by fighting in Nova Topola, in Bosnia to the south-east of Gradiska. Emergency surgical and other medical supplies have been distributed to the hospitals in Okucani, Gradiska, Nova Topola and Banja Luka. Further ICRC operations are planned for tomorrow, 3 May, in Dubica, to the southwest of Gradiska, Nova Topola and Gradiska itself.

Over 40 delegates and 200 local employees are currently deployed in these humanitarian operations.

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ARMENIA: ICRC OVERSEES THE RELEASE OF 27 AZERBAIJANI PRISONERS

Geneva (ICRC) - On 12 May 1995 the Armenian authorities released 27 Azerbaijani prisoners captured during the Nagorny-Karabakh conflict. This release was carried out under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). ICRC delegates had spoken with the prisoners individually beforehand to ensure that they had freely chosen their destination, and one delegate accompanied them from Erevan to Baku. Two other prisoners will be transferred to a place of their choice in the Russian Federation in the coming days. Last week a sick prisoner was released and also repatriated with the assistance of the ICRC.

On 8 May 1995 the Nagorny-Karabakh authorities freed 15 Azerbaijani prisoners. Over recent weeks the Azerbaijani authorities have also released eight people captured during the same conflict. The ICRC assisted in each case.

The release of prisoners one year after the cease-fire agreement is an encouraging move. It is to be hoped that all those still being held in the context of the conflict will also be released soon.

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AZERBAIJAN: 35 PRISONERS RELEASED UNDER ICRC AUSPICES

Geneva (ICRC) - Thirty-five Armenian prisoners held in connection with the Nagorny Karabakh conflict were released by the Azerbaijani authorities on 13 May 1995 under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). After ICRC delegates had spoken with each one individually to ensure that they agreed to being repatriated, they were flown aboard an ICRC-chartered aircraft from Baku to Yerevan, where they arrived on 14 May.

This operation followed the release by the Armenian authorities on 12 May 1995 of 29 Azerbaijani prisoners, who were also repatriated by the ICRC.

ICRC STRONGLY CONDEMNS SHELLING OF CIVILIANS IN TUZLA

Geneva/Sarajevo - (ICRC) - Yesterday's shells onto the city centre of Tuzla killed at least 60 people, many of them between 15 and 25, enjoying one of the first summer evenings of the season in street cafes.

This horrendous event caused more civilian casualties than any other single incident in Tuzla since the start of the war.

Says Beth Coe, an ICRC delegate who was on the spot right after the shelling: "It was hell. There was chaos everywhere. People who had survived the blast were running around desperate and in shock."

In an immediate response to the emergency, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) at 1 am brought urgently needed medical and surgical supplies to Gradina hospital, where most of the casualties were evacuated.

Today the ICRC is handing over more medical material to the 1 800 bed Gradina hospital.

The ICRC strongly condemns last night's attack against defenceless civilians, which represents yet another major violation of the International Humanitarian Law.

For further information please contact Nina Winquist at ICRC Sarajevo on ++38771/656 894, Amanda Williamson or Lars Lemche at ICRC Zagreb on ++3851/612 444 or Josue Anselmo at ICRC Belgrade on ++38111/761 063.

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RENEWED ICRC APPEAL AS FIGHTING RESUMES IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) deeply deplores the tragic events that have taken place in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the past few days. Dozens of civilians have been killed or wounded in the resumed bombing of Tuzla, and a hospital was hit in Doboj. Fighting in the Brcko corridor, in the southern part of the Bihac enclave, and in Gorazde and Srebrenica now threatens the lives of thousands of civilians.

In view of this escalation of military operations involving Bosnian government forces, Bosnian Serb forces and international forces, the ICRC once again urges all the parties to comply fully with the provisions of the Geneva Conventions and the customary rules governing the conduct of hostilities.

The ICRC enjoins them in particular:

- to refrain from attacking civilians and to safeguard them from the dangers arising from military operations;
- to refrain from attacking, destroying, removing or rendering useless items indispensable to the survival of the civilian population;
- to spare the lives of persons no longer taking part in the fighting and of those who surrender, and to treat humanely all captured combatants, to whom the ICRC must have access without delay;
- to respect and ensure respect for the Red Cross emblem so that medical staff and Red Cross personnel can carry out their humanitarian tasks.

The ICRC is present on both sides and will continue to do its utmost to bring neutral and impartial assistance to all victims of the conflict. It will take every requisite step to persuade the warring parties to grant the means and guarantees it needs to fulfil its humanitarian mission.

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BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA/SARAJEVO
ICRC VISITS SERB COMBATANTS HELD BY UNPROFOR

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) today visited four members of the Bosnian Serb forces who were captured by the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) on 27 May during fighting on the Vrbanja bridge. The ICRC received assurances that the detained combatants would be treated in accordance with the provisions of the Third Geneva Convention of 1949. The institution's team consisted of two delegates, a nurse and an interpreter. The visit was carried out, in Sarajevo, in agreement with the UNPROFOR command.

The ICRC, which is present on all sides of the fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina, has made representations through its delegation in Pale in an effort to gain access to the members of the international forces captured and currently held by the Bosnian Serb forces.
Communication to the press No. 95/21  
8 June 1995

ECUADOR/PERU  
ICRC CALLS FOR COMPLIANCE WITH GENEVA CONVENTIONS

Geneva (ICRC) - Despite repeated approaches by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the ongoing negotiations between the governments of Ecuador and Peru have not yet led to an agreement on the release of prisoners of war and civilian detainees protected by the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions respectively and by Protocol I additional thereto, or of other persons held in connection with the recent armed conflict and its aftermath.

The ICRC therefore draws the attention of the two States concerned to their obligations under those treaties and to the rights that international humanitarian law clearly confers on prisoners of war and detained civilians.

At present two soldiers are being held in Ecuador and two in Peru. The ICRC requests that action be taken at once under Article 118 of the Third Geneva Convention, which stipulates that prisoners of war shall be released and repatriated without delay after the cessation of hostilities. On 1 March last seven Peruvian and two Ecuadorian prisoners of war were simultaneously released and repatriated under the auspices of the ICRC.

As regards the civilians still being held by either side, the ICRC will continue to use its good offices to facilitate an agreement between the governments of Ecuador and Peru, and is confident that a satisfactory humanitarian solution will be found.

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Communication to the press No. 95/22
Geneva, 9 June 1995

NAGORNY KARABAKH CONFLICT:
15 AZERBAIJANI PRISONERS FREED UNDER ICRC AUSPICES

Geneva (ICRC) - On 8 June, the authorities of Nagorny Karabakh released 15 Azerbaijanis who had been detained in connection with the conflict that has been raging in the area since 1988. The release took place under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Delegates based in Stepanakert, Nagorny Karabakh, accompanied the released prisoners to the front line where, in the presence of the authorities, they were placed in the care of delegates based in the Azerbaijani capital Baku. Each prisoner had been interviewed by delegates prior to his release to ensure that he was going to the destination of his choice.

In May this year, the authorities of Nagorny Karabakh freed 15 prisoners and the Armenian and Azerbaijani authorities released 27 and 35 prisoners of war respectively. All had been visited by the ICRC.

The ICRC welcomes these latest releases and earnestly hopes that all those still detained in connection with the Nagorny Karabakh conflict will soon be set free.

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PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY VISITS ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Cornelio Sommaruga, today received the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Miguel Angel Martinez, at ICRC headquarters. Mr Martinez was accompanied by the Head of his Private Office, Erik Leijon, and the Secretary of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography, Simon Newman.

In the course of their talks the ICRC President expressed his desire to see closer relations between the two organizations and, more particularly, cooperation in promoting knowledge of international humanitarian law. He also stressed the significance of the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent, to be held in Geneva next December. "The resolutions adopted by that important humanitarian forum must make a very practical contribution to alleviating the suffering of thousands of war victims, and any politicization of the event must be avoided", he said. Mr Sommaruga went on to review the current operations of the ICRC, which is today working in over 60 countries around the world. He mentioned the problem of anti-personnel mines, on which the ICRC is seeking a total ban, and described the financial difficulties facing the institution this year.

Mr Martinez for his part said that the Council of Europe, an organization whose role it is to uphold human rights and the rule of law, made compliance with humanitarian law one of its main concerns. The Parliamentary Assembly regularly discussed the work of the ICRC and had often called on member States of the Council of Europe to support Red Cross activities by promoting the Movement's Fundamental Principles and contributing financially to its work. Mr Martinez announced that the Assembly would be studying a new report on the subject in 1996 and invited Mr Sommaruga to speak before it on that occasion. Stressing the need to enhance cooperation between the two organizations, Mr Martinez said that he hoped the ICRC would take an active part in organizing a seminar on international humanitarian law that the Assembly would be organizing in Prague in the spring of 1996.

It was agreed during the visit that arrangements, including annual meetings in Geneva and Strasbourg, would be made for regular structured cooperation between the two institutions.

Mr Martinez also visited the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum.

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BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: ICRC CALLS ON BELLIGERENTS TO REACH A MINIMUM CONSENSUS ON HUMANITARIAN ISSUES

Geneva (ICRC) - Prompted by the current crisis in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Cornelio Sommaruga, convened a meeting of the diplomatic representatives of the 15 Member States of the United Nations Security Council in Geneva today, 16 June 1995, to express the ICRC's deep concern about the plight of the civilian population. He informed the diplomats of an ICRC appeal addressed the same day to the parties to the conflict urging them to reach, unconditionally and without delay, a minimum consensus on humanitarian issues that transcends their differences.

The text of the appeal is as follows:

"Once again the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina is extremely serious. The fighting has steadily escalated ever since the cease-fire expired at the end of April and no tangible progress has been made towards a political settlement. As a result, humanitarian needs have reached overwhelming proportions. Unfortunately, as demonstrated by the events in the Visoko area, there seems to be no prospect of improvement. On the contrary, the outlook is bleaker than ever and civilians continue to be the main victims.

Each day indiscriminate shelling kills more and more people trapped in towns under siege. In Tuzla, Sarajevo and Gorazde, in Doboj and Kalinovik, children, elderly people and even the wounded and sick in hospitals are taken as targets. Faced with this unspeakable horror, the population has no choice but to try to survive by hiding in the ruins, terrified and destitute, as in Sarajevo and Gorazde, or to flee, as others have done in the Ozran and Grahovo mountains.

For weeks now, almost all convoys carrying urgently needed food and medical assistance for civilians and the wounded have been held up by the belligerents. In many places, living conditions for civilians taking no part in the hostilities have reached a critical level. The airlift to Sarajevo has been suspended for ten weeks - twice as long as any previous interruption - while one third of the civilian population is dependent on food aid from outside. Hospitals are admitting increasing numbers of casualties and medical supplies are running out. In the city, water, gas and electricity have been cut off. In these circumstances, the ICRC has been obliged to suspend its food distribution programmes in schools and in the network of community kitchens.

In view of this unacceptable situation, for which all the military and political authorities of the parties to the conflict bear some responsibility, the ICRC appeals to the parties' sense of humanity and urges them to restore among themselves, unconditionally and without delay, a minimum humanitarian consensus that transcends their differences.

The ICRC asks the belligerents to take the following measures immediately, in accordance with international humanitarian law:
1. restore the water supply to Sarajevo and its suburbs;
2. allow the unhindered movement of convoys of emergency medical supplies intended for the treatment of all wounded without discrimination;
3. allow the unhindered movement of aid convoys operating in an impartial and neutral manner to bring food supplies to the civilian population;
4. issue instructions that the civilian population be spared the effects of the fighting, in particular by putting a stop to indiscriminate firing on civilians.

In the spirit of this appeal, the ICRC invites all the parties to join it at once in seeking, in a strictly humanitarian framework, a minimum consensus on humane behaviour. The ICRC must be able to rely on such a commitment in its resolve to pursue its activities in the field. The survival of thousands of civilians is at stake.
Geneva (ICRC) - Following several years of discussions with the authorities of the Union of Myanmar, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) made an offer of services to the Yangon government on 27 May 1994 requesting access to security detainees in the country. The SLORC (State Law and Order Restoration Council) sent its reply to the ICRC on 21 March 1995. This reply was not satisfactory, as it took no account of the customary procedures for visits to places of detention followed by the ICRC in all the countries where it conducts such activities.

Since that time the ICRC has tried to persuade the SLORC to reconsider its position, but in vain. The institution therefore submitted a memorandum to the authorities on 16 June 1995 acknowledging the failure of the negotiations and announcing that it would close its office in Yangon during the course of July 1995.

The ICRC also informed the SLORC that it was prepared to resume the dialogue on a constructive basis as soon as the Myanmar authorities invited it to do so.

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AFGHANISTAN: THE ICRC REGRETS THE ACCIDENT THAT SERIOUSLY WOUNDED ONE OF ITS COLLABORATORS.

Geneva (ICRC) - The ICRC regrets the accident that seriously wounded one of its collaborators, Mr Hubert Patry, 30 years old and originating from Geneva. The accident, through a lost bullet, occurred in the afternoon of Saturday the 17th of June, in Mazar-i-Sharif, in the north of Afghanistan.

The wounded delegate was evacuated first to the military hospital in Peshawar (Pakistan) and subsequently to Geneva. His condition is stable.

The ICRC has no reason to believe that it was the sought target.

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JAMMU AND KASHMIR: THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA GRANTS THE ICRC ACCESS TO DETAINEES

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Government of the Republic of India signed a Memorandum of Understanding in New Delhi, on 22 June 1995, which allows the ICRC access to all persons arrested and detained in relation with the current situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

The purpose of ICRC visits is to monitor the conditions of detention and treatment of detainees. These visits also help to restore contact between the inmates and their families. The ICRC's findings and reports are transmitted only to the authorities concerned.

In March 1994, the ICRC had been invited to assess humanitarian needs in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. A similar mission had been conducted on the Pakistani side of the Line of Control. The agreement reached on 22 June in New Delhi is the response to the ICRC's offer of services to the Indian authorities after these missions.

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ICRC PRESIDENT IN BELGRADE

Geneva (ICRC) - In view of the critical humanitarian situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, on 16 June 1995 the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) launched a solemn appeal to the parties to the conflict. The ICRC urged the belligerents to restore among themselves, unconditionally and without delay, a minimum humanitarian consensus transcending their differences.

In the context of the institution's efforts to ensure that the civilian population in war zones can receive the assistance to which they are entitled, ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga had a meeting in Belgrade with the President of Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic, on Wednesday 21 June. Mr Sommaruga also met the Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Radoje Kontic. During these talks, President Sommaruga presented the content of the ICRC's appeal and expressed the institution's concern regarding the current humanitarian crisis in Bosnia.

Following this positive and constructive exchange of views, the highest authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and of Serbia pledged their support for the impartial approach of the Red Cross in its activities, and called for the unhindered movement of humanitarian convoys and free access to affected areas. They also commended the efforts made by the ICRC and its humanitarian commitment as a significant factor in the process of normalization of relations in the war-torn regions.

During his stay in Belgrade Mr Sommaruga also had contacts with the co-chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, Mr Thorvald Stoltenberg and Mr Carl Bildt.

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Communication to the press No. 95/29
30 June 1995

ECUADOR-PERU: SIMULTANEOUS RELEASE OF DETAINES

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had been approached as a neutral intermediary by the authorities of Ecuador and Peru with a view to the simultaneous release under its auspices of persons detained in connection with the armed conflict between the two countries. On 30 June 1995, the Peruvian authorities thus freed 2 Ecuadorian prisoners of war and 2 civilians held on grounds of espionage, while the Ecuadorian authorities released 2 Peruvian prisoners of war and 5 civilians held on grounds of espionage, as well as 4 other civilians in custody for various penal law offences.

Such releases under ICRC auspices are part of the mandate assigned to the organization by the 1949 Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol I of 1977. Since the clashes that took place in January, the ICRC has remained in contact with the authorities of both countries to help resolve matters of humanitarian concern.