**JOINT PRESS RELEASE**

**ICRC - 1254**

**LEAGUE - GEN - 1975/1**

**Wednesday, 7 January, 1976**

**ASSISTANCE FOR SAHRAOUI VICTIMS**

Recent events in Western Sahara have created a serious humanitarian problem.

Some 40,000 Sahraouis have fled their homes. At present 20,000 are living near the border with Algeria, and another 20,000 have sought refuge in Algeria near Tindouf.

Living conditions of the refugees in Algeria are bad, those of the displaced Sahraouis in Western Sahara tragic. Sixty per cent of the 40,000 are children.

The International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies have launched two separate relief operations, the ICRC assisting the displaced Sahraouis in Western Sahara, the League, the refugees in Algeria (in close cooperation with the Algerian Red Crescent).

The most urgently needed relief goods are: 3,000 tons of food, including baby food, 1,500 tents, 60,000 blankets, clothing (temperatures at night are often below zero), medicaments, including anti-tuberculosis products and disinfectants.

Today, the ICRC and the League launched a joint appeal to a number of National Societies and governments for financial and material support for the two relief operations.

The League received an appeal from the Moroccan Red Crescent for help for some 30,000 Moroccans who have had to leave Algeria.

P.S. Photos and slides available.
Forged ICRC Documents in Thailand

Geneva (ICRC) - Forged travel papers purporting to be issued by the International Committee of the Red Cross have been circulating for some time in Thailand, where they are sold to refugees from Indo-China trying to emigrate to Europe.

These documents bear ICRC stamps and the forged signature of the ICRC representative in Bangkok. They also have false visas for France.

Two groups of refugees have fallen victim to the forgers, and are now stranded in Cairo and Orly airports, waiting for a country to be found that will give them a home. Some of these people have paid up to 700 dollars to obtain the false travel papers.

The ICRC condemns this trade, and points out once more that it is not part of Red Cross responsibilities to transfer refugees from one country to another. In certain situations, however, when a country has been found to receive them, the ICRC may give refugees help in moving from the country of refuge to the country where they will finally settle by supplying travel documents. These are not transport tickets, but identity documents, valid solely for the duration of the journey. They are, of course, provided free of charge.
ICRC AIRCRAFT FOR LEBANON

Geneva (ICRC) - An aircraft chartered by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) will take off from Basle at 8 o'clock this evening, bound for Lebanon with about ten tons of such emergency medical supplies as blood substitutes, surgical and transfusion equipment, antibiotics and dressings.

On arrival in Beirut on Saturday morning the cargo will be taken over by the ICRC delegation, which will see to delivery to hospitals and dispensaries in the town.

The ICRC will do whatever is possible to channel substantial and effective assistance to the victims, particularly the wounded and people who have had to abandon their homes, but it looks to governments and national Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies for the tangible support which is indispensable to the success of its relief operations.
Geneva (ICRC) - The second session of the Conference of Government Experts on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons, convened by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) opened on 28 January in the Conference Centre at Lugano. The session attended by some 120 legal, military and medical experts from about 40 countries, will continue until 26 February.

At the opening meeting, presided over by Mr. Jean Pictet, vice-president of the ICRC and president of the Conference, speakers included Mr. Benito Bernasconi, president of the state council of the canton of Tessin, Mr. Ferruccio Pelli, mayor of Lugano, and Dr Eric Martin, president of the ICRC.

The three speakers expressed hope that the Conference would arrive at concrete and positive results.

During the first session of the Conference at Lucerne in 1974, the experts, after wide-ranging discussions, drew up a list of weapons to be studied, including incendiary weapons, small-calibre projectiles with high muzzle velocity, blast and fragmentation weapons, delayed-action weapons and weapons of the future.

At Lugano, the experts will attempt to define rules aimed at limiting or forbidding the use of such weapons with particularly cruel effects.

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Press release No 1258b
2 February 1976

DENIAL CONCERNING WESTERN SAHARA

Geneva (ICRC) - Various press reports in the last few days have stated that a delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had witnessed the napalm bombing of a Sahraoui refugee camp in the Western Sahara. The ICRC wishes to point out that no statement on this subject has been made by any of its representatives, and that none of its delegates has visited this area since December 1975.

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Press release No. 1259b
3. February 1976

LUGANO CONFERENCE ON WEAPONS

Geneva (ICRC) - The Lugano Conference of Government Experts on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons, convened by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), devoted its first two days to a general discussion on the way it could organize its work.

The experts all expressed the wish that the Conference would achieve concrete results, by drafting texts that would form the basis for international agreements. They said that to be effective, any prohibitions or restrictions should be universally applicable and that their observance should of course be subject to a corresponding observance on the part of an adversary. It was pointed out, however, that it was necessary to seek a balance between humanitarian requirements and military imperatives.

On 2. February the Conference started its deliberations on the category of incendiary weapons. During the general discussions, several experts expressed the view that the civilian population must be protected against such weapons, for instance, by the prohibition of their use in densely populated areas. Some other experts said that the fate of combatants should not be neglected and that any prohibition should therefore refer especially to anti-personnel, as opposed to anti-matériel weapons. The view was also expressed that priority should be given to the prohibition of weapons having a very extensive incendiary capacity (for instance, a large volume of napalm) as compared with smaller capacity weapons (such as flamethrowers).

The Conference set up a working group to continue the examination of these various proposals.
Press release Nr. 1260b
11 February 1976

Required immediately:

16 MILLION SWISS FRANCS FOR ICRC OPERATION IN ANGOLA

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) needs 16 million Swiss francs at once if it is to continue its humanitarian activities in Angola. This has become apparent from the report drawn up by the ICRC on the situation in Angola, and presented today to Governments and National Red Cross Societies.

The sum of 16 million francs would finance the ICRC's work in Angola for the first six months of 1976. The breakdown is as follows: 3.7 million for medical supplies, 8.5 million for foodstuffs, 1.8 million for other types of material aid, and 2 million for operational costs.

The budget above is based on the new plan of operations in Angola worked out in the last few days in ICRC headquarters in Geneva. Under the plan, the present three medical teams will be supplemented by ten mobile medical units to be sent out shortly; and help for the refugees on the northern and southern borders of Angola is to be increased.

According to the ICRC's estimates, there are now about 255,000 people in Angola in urgent need of help.

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Geneva (ICRC) The Conference of Government Experts on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons, taking place at Lugano under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), is now studying various proposals concerning three categories of weapons: delayed-action and treacherous weapons, small-calibre projectiles with high muzzle velocity and blast and fragmentation weapons.

The experts supported the idea of recording the locations of mine fields and making these locations public after the end of the hostilities and also of providing mines launched by projectiles or aircraft with automatic self-destruction systems. A consensus was also reached on the absolute prohibition of booby-traps, especially those involving objects in everyday use which explode when touched.

With regard to small-calibre high-velocity projectiles, some experts noted that these produce extremely serious and painful wounds. The causes of these effects are not yet completely known however and further research will be conducted in this field. The Conference was informed of practical tests under way in various countries, especially in Sweden, Indonesia, Austria and Switzerland.

In discussing blast and fragmentation weapons, and in particular bombs containing spherical fragments, the experts agreed that these should only be employed against precisely defined military objectives. In addition, it was proposed to forbid the use of projectiles producing splinters or other fragments which medical examination could not detect in the human body.

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Press release No 1262b
13 February 1976

BEIRUT - INAUGURATION OF ICRC FIELD HOSPITAL

Geneva (ICRC) - An ICRC field hospital in the southern sector of Beirut was officially inaugurated on 13 February, with the participation of prominent representatives of the Lebanese Ministry of Health, the Lebanese Red Cross and the "Palestinian Red Crescent".

Establishment of the hospital was made possible by contributions from the Red Cross Societies of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. The hospital, with a capacity of some 120 beds, was set up in a particularly impoverished area.

Care for the wounded and sick is provided by a surgeon, two doctors and six nurses, all from Scandinavian countries.
Press release No. 1263b  
26 February 1976

LUGANO CONFERENCE OF GOVERNMENT EXPERTS ON WEAPONS CLOSES

Geneva (ICRC) - The second session of the Conference of Government Experts on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which opened at Lugano under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on 28 January 1976, ended today. After four weeks of discussions, a report containing a number of proposals on the prohibition or restriction of use of certain weapons was adopted by the experts of forty-three countries.

The proposals that were most warmly received by the Conference included one that prohibited the use of booby-traps and of projectiles the fragments of which cannot be detected by a medical examination of casualties hit by such projectiles. Some measure of agreement was also obtained regarding the possibility of applying rules to the laying of mines by remote control, so as not to endanger civilian lives. Various proposals were submitted on the prohibition or restriction of incendiary weapons. With regard to small-calibre projectiles with high muzzle-velocity, it was felt by the experts that they should be subjected to further tests, in order that their various effects on human bodies might be more accurately known and compared.

The report on the Lugano Conference will be transmitted immediately to Governments, to the Diplomatic Conference on Humanitarian Law, the third session of which is due to open at Geneva in April next, and to the United Nations General Assembly. The work of the Lugano Conference experts constitutes a significant step forward in the process which should lead to the formulation of internationally accepted and applicable rules on the use of conventional weapons.

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Press release No. 1264b
10 March 1976

VISIT TO PLACES OF DETENTION IN PORTUGAL

Geneva (ICRC) - A delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), from 23 February to 5 March 1976, again carried out a mission to Portugal, with the object of seeing all the political detainees there.

The delegate, Mr. François Payot, visited the prisons of Caxias, Alcoentre, Porto, Trafaria, Santarem and Penisco, and the prison hospital of Sao Jcao de Deus. In each of those places he spoke in private with detainees.

The previous series of visits to places of detention in Portugal took place in December 1975.
Joint Press Release
Friday, 12 March 1976

FIFTY-FIFTH DISTRIBUTION OF THE INCOME OF THE EMPRESS SHOKEN FUND

Geneva (ICRC-League)
The Joint Commission for distribution of the revenue from the Empress Shoken Fund met on 12 March 1976 in Geneva under the chairmanship of Mr. Roger Gallopin, President of the Executive Council of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and in the presence of H.E. Kiyohiko Tsurumi, Ambassador of Japan, and Mr. Henrik Beer, Secretary General of the League of Red Cross Societies.

The Empress Shoken Fund was created in 1912 by a gift from Her Imperial Majesty the Empress of Japan to support Red Cross relief actions, particularly in peacetime. Since then the Japanese Government and the Japanese Red Cross Society have made regular gifts to the fund.

The income distributed this year will enable six National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Asia, Africa and Latin America to improve their equipment and extend their blood transfusion and emergency relief activities, health promotion programmes and telecommunications, thanks in particular to the acquisition of ambulances, other vehicles and radio transceivers.

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Press release No. 1266b
24 March 1976

ICRC AND DISPLACED PERSONS IN ANGOLA

Geneva (ICRC) - Just before the retirement at the end of March of the South African troops protecting and administering the camps for displaced persons near the southern frontier of Angola, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) drew the attention of the South African Permanent Mission to Geneva and of the Government of the People's Republic of Angola (RPA) in Luanda, to the danger to the displaced persons during the period of transition to control by the Angolan authorities.

There is, indeed, a serious risk that uncontrolled armed groups roaming the region might loot the camps and ill treat the inmates.

The ICRC reminded the RPA Government that its mission for the benefit of displaced persons was only to provide them with material assistance, and it stated that it was prepared to continue doing so after the retreat of the South African troops if requested.

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Relief Activities in Angola:

THE PRA TAKES OVER

Geneva (ICRC) - The authorities of the People's Republic of Angola (PRA) have informed the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) of their wish to have the assistance programmes for the benefit of the Angolese population carried out by national agencies, preferably through the National Red Cross Society now being reorganized. No date has been proposed by the Luanda authorities for the take-over.

At the end of February the ICRC had submitted to the PRA a six-month post-war emergency programme of assistance to supplement the humanitarian work which the ICRC had been carrying out since June 1975. The new programme was to provide mainly medical assistance to give the authorities time to set up a national medical infrastructure.

Upon receipt of the PRA reply, the ICRC decided to recall the personnel on stand-by. It also examined arrangements for phasing out its activities in Angola.

As it has done since it first went into action in Angola, the ICRC will maintain close contact with the National Red Cross and with the League of Red Cross Societies so that, when the time comes, it may contribute to the future assistance programmes within the terms of reference of each institution.

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Press release No. 1267b
25 may 1976

ICRC LAUNCHES APPEAL FOR LEBANON: 21 million Swiss francs needed for relief operation

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) needs worldwide financial assistance if it is to continue and increase its humanitarian activities in Lebanon. For the next four months it needs 21 million Swiss francs. To raise this amount the ICRC has launched an urgent appeal to governments and Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

According to the ICRC, the supply of medicines to Lebanese hospitals crowded with war wounded is of utmost importance; often even the most elementary drugs and instruments have run out in these hospitals. In addition, some 150,000 Lebanese desperately need food and medical assistance; these are mostly displaced people who have lost their homes in this civil war.

So far the ICRC has sent some 350 tonnes of relief to the Lebanon – mainly medicines. These goods valued at about 6 million Swiss francs were for all the victims, to whichever side they belonged.

The ICRC has 25 delegates in the Lebanon, including 11 Nordic Red Cross doctors and nurses who run the ICRC field hospital in Beirut.

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LEBANON: DESPERATE NEED FOR FUNDS

Geneva (ICRC) - On 8 June 1976 the representatives of government missions in Geneva met at the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to hear Mr. Roger Gallopin, President of the ICRC Executive Board, describe the International Committee’s work in Lebanon, with special emphasis on the four-month action programme for which 21 million Swiss francs is required.

Mr. Gallopin stressed that the ICRC needed immediate financial support from the Community of Nations, since the funds made available so far were exhausted. He made it clear that without substantial financial backing the ICRC would be compelled to reduce the scale of its activities and perhaps even to recall its delegates in the near future.

To conclude, Mr. Gallopin urged governments to give their replies quickly, and expressed the hope that the ICRC's appeal would meet with a generous response.
Press release No. 1269b
21 June 1976

ICRC RELIEF TO LEBANON

Geneva (ICRC) - A DC-8 and a DC-6 chartered by the International Committee of the Red Cross took off on 21 June for Larnaca (Cyprus) with 42 tons of relief supplies for the victims of events in Lebanon.

Part of these cargoes of medical supplies and milk powder will be forwarded by sea to Jounieh, and part will carry on in the DC-6 to Beirut airport.

These two flights will bring to more than 300 tons the quantity of relief supplies sent to Lebanon by the ICRC since it started its operations in that country last autumn.

At present the ICRC staff strenght in Lebanon is twenty-five and relief reaches Beirut and the provinces. The ICRC operates a field hospital in the capital and a mobile medical team in the Akkar region.
Press release No 1270b
1 July 1976

PRESIDENT OF THE
INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

Geneva (ICRC) - On 1 July 1976, Mr. Alexandre Hay, President elect of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) assumed office, succeeding Professor Eric Martin, President since 1973.

Mr. Hay was born in Geneva in 1919. He is a lawyer who held several positions as a Swiss diplomat before being appointed to the Swiss National Bank, of which he became Director General in 1966.

After several months service to become familiar with the activities of the Red Cross in general and of the ICRC in particular, Mr. Hay, until the end of this year, will exercise the presidential function jointly with Mr. Roger Gallopin, President of the Executive Board; from 1977 he will assume the presidency of the ICRC alone.
Press release No. 1271b
5 July 1976

ICRC MUST EVACUATE WOUNDED IN BEIRUT

Geneva (ICRC) - In view of the appalling conditions in the Tall-al-Zaatar camp in Beirut, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), with the consent and co-operation of the parties involved in the conflict, organized a convoy to evacuate all the wounded from the camp.

The convoy, numbering 30 vehicles, crossed the lines on 5 July 1976, but soon ran into heavy gunfire, despite the guarantees of a cease-fire received from both sides, and had to turn back.

The extreme seriousness of the situation makes it imperative to evacuate the wounded. The ICRC urgently requests all parties to the conflict to do all in their power to enable it to accomplish its humanitarian work.
LEBANON : ICRC AIRCRAFT LANDS AGAIN AT BEIRUT

Geneva (ICRC) - On 6 July the DC-6 chartered by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) began a shuttle service carrying relief supplies, mainly medicaments and foodstuffs, from Cyprus to Beirut.

The aircraft left Switzerland on 5 July with five tons of dressing materials and physiological saline solution and five tons of powdered milk, and with special permission touched down at 12.10 p.m. GMT in Beirut. It will stay in the region for two weeks to take emergency supplies to the Lebanese capital.

At the same time, similar supplies are continuing to go by sea to Jounieh.
Press release  No. 1273b
16 July 1976

A WORD OF EXPLANATION BY THE ICRC ON ITS RECENT VISITS TO PLACES OF DETENTION IN URUGUAY

Geneva (ICRC) - Several Uruguayan news media in June mentioned the visits which two ICRC delegates made in April to several places of detention in Uruguay. They attributed to the ICRC statements which it has never made, such as "the prisons in Uruguay are models".

The ICRC wishes it to be clearly understood that its delegates were permitted to visit four places of detention and a hospital under military control during their mission in Uruguay. Moreover, contrary to established practice, the delegates were not allowed to interview detainees of their choice without witnesses. This departure from the normal standard was a concession which the ICRC made, with a view to facilitating the resumption of its visits to places of detention in Uruguay, after their interruption in 1974.

In view of the restriction on the number of places visited and the conditions under which the visits were carried out, the ICRC was unable to make an objective and complete assessment of conditions in places of detention in Uruguay; a fact which the ICRC drew to the attention of the authorities.

The ICRC adds that it never issues any comment on the material or psychological conditions observed by its delegates during visits to places of detention.

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Press release No. 1274 b
24 July 1976

ICRC APPEAL FOR EVACUATION OF WOUNDED FROM TEL AL ZAATAR CAMP

Geneva (ICRC) - After several attempts, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has not yet succeeded in evacuating the thousand or so wounded persons who are trapped in the camp of Tel al Zaatar in Beirut. No cease-fire has lasted long enough.

On 23 July, three ICRC delegates entered the besieged area and managed to make an assessment of the most pressing humanitarian needs. They came to the conclusion that, in view of the considerable practical difficulties, three to five days would be needed to evacuate the wounded. Unless the wounded are removed, their condition will rapidly deteriorate, as the doctors in the camp no longer have the necessary medical supplies for their care.

A truce lasting for such a long period could be made to work only if all the parties involved showed their sincere and common determination to find an answer to this harrowing humanitarian problem. The ICRC urgently calls upon them to conclude immediately, and to order their troops to observe, a total cease-fire. This is the only means of saving these casualties.
EVACUATION OF TEL AL-ZAATAR WOUNDED: ICRC WARNING

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had planned to start evacuating the wounded from Tel al-Zaatar Camp in Beirut on 29 July. However, the minimum safety conditions required to protect the lives of the casualties and of their rescuers not having been ensured, the ICRC had once again to postpone the operation.

On 26 July the ICRC had sent all parties concerned a communication, calling upon them to take all necessary steps, and instruct their troops accordingly, so that the removal of the wounded, which had become a matter of paramount urgency, might be carried out as soon as possible.

Unfortunately certain factions have not given their agreement to the evacuation. The ICRC warns them that, by their refusal, they will have to bear the very grave responsibility of causing hundreds of wounded persons to be doomed to certain death.
EVACUATION OF THE WOUNDED OF TALL AL-ZAATAR BY THE ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - Today 3 August 1976 the first wounded have been evacuated from the Palestinian camp of Tall al-Zaatar in Beirut under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). A total of 91 wounded have been evacuated so far. It is foreseen to resume the operation August 4 and to transfer 150 casualties.

12 ICRC delegates helped by 16 first-aiders of the Lebanese Red Cross and ten drivers carried out this evacuation.

The casualties were carried on stretchers from the camp to the ICRC trucks and ambulances which were waiting outside. Then the twelve-vehicle convoy left Tall al-Zaatar to cross over into west Beirut.

According to a first estimate the casualties number over a thousand and they are in very poor shape. Some of them are in need of surgery - impossible in the camp - and have been waiting for weeks to have their wounds properly cared for.

The "Palestinian Red Crescent" has set up an emergency hospital in the Arab University in west Beirut to give all necessary treatment to the evacuees.

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Press release No 1277b
6 August 1976

ICRC CEASES EVACUATION OF TEL AL-ZAATAR WOUNDED

Geneva (ICRC) - The attempt on Friday morning, 6 August, to continue removing the casualties from Tel al-Zaatar had suddenly to be called off after only another 74 people had been taken to safety and treatment.

When the ICRC convoy reached the besieged camp panic-stricken men, women and children in the hundreds ran out of the camp to the football field where they fought to board the waiting lorries which were to take only the wounded.

At the same time, snipers started firing at the wounded lying on stretchers. Four of the casualties were hit by bullets.

In these circumstances the ICRC delegates could not continue loading the wounded into the lorries and therefore gave orders to the drivers to leave. The lorries managed to do so with some wounded and a number of civilians who were clinging to the lorries.

In view of these incidents, and after consulting its delegates in Lebanon, the ICRC called off the attempts to evacuate the wounded from Tel al-Zaatar. In conveying this decision to the parties to the conflict, it stated that the only humane thing to do was to remove all civilians, as well as the wounded, from the camp. It pleaded with the parties to agree on how this was to be done.

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Press release No 1278b
12 August 1976

TEL AL-ZAATAR: 1,000 CIVILIANS EVACUATED BY THE ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - When the Palestinian camp of Tel al-Zaatar fell on 12 August, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) managed to improvise the removal to the "progressive" zone, in dramatic circumstances, of about a thousand civilian Palestinians who were in the Christian sector of Dekouané. These people, most of them women and children, had crossed the lines under the protection of the ICRC in fifteen vehicles.

In view of the chaotic conditions in and around Tel al-Zaatar, no estimate can be made of the number of people who have fled or of those still remaining in the camp.

On Friday, 13 August, the ICRC will make every effort to help the civilians and the wounded still in Tel al-Zaatar, and to protect the prisoners held by the Christian forces.

The ICRC delegation has already started to ensure that the prisoners are treated with humanity, and the delegation has been given an assurance that it may visit the prisoners.

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"Palestinian Red Crescent" allegations - 
ICRC puts the record straight

Geneva (ICRC) - On 21 August the "Palestinian Red Crescent" published in Beirut a statement that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had shown bias in the distribution of relief for the benefit of the conflict victims.

The ICRC states emphatically that in accordance with its basic principles its relief work is carried out for all victims; the only criterion is need.

Relief distributed in 1976 has so far been as follows:

"progressistes" and Palestinians 356 tons
Conservatives 191 tons
local organisations working in both sectors 203 tons

Moreover, the ICRC's action does not consist solely of the provision of relief supplies. At present forty-seven delegates are working to protect and assist victims, as witness the Tel al-Zaatar and other operations.
Joint press release
14 September, 1976

RED CROSS REPATRIATION FLIGHTS FROM VIETNAM

Geneva (ICRC/League) - The latest flight organized by the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) to repatriate foreigners from Ho-Chi-Minh Ville has arrived in Bangkok early this morning. The arrival on board a chartered DC 8-63 of 215 foreigners wishing to return to their country of origin marks the end of the third series of ICRC repatriation flights from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

938 Indians, 155 Taiwanese, 130 Yemenis, 106 Pakistanis, 48 Koreans and 12 Indonesians were flown out of Ho-Chi-Minh Ville during this series of flights.

In all, since the end of 1975, the ICRC has repatriated over 3000 people from Vietnam.

All these flights were part of the joint Indochina programme conducted by the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies. Under this programme, started at the end of 1972, relief supplies to a value of 125 million Swiss francs have been distributed to victims of the war in Indochina.

Following this third series of repatriation flights, the joint ICRC-League office in Ho-Chi-Minh Ville will be closed. All problems of interest to the International Red Cross will henceforth be dealt with directly by the ICRC-League delegation in Hanoi, the capital of unified Vietnam.

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Press release No. 1281 b
28 October 1976

POLISARIO FREES TWO FRENCH PRISONERS

Geneva (ICRC) - On 27 October 1976, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) handed over to the French authorities two French nationals who had been released by the Polisario Front (Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguía el Hamra and Rio de Oro - Western Sahara). The ICRC had called for their release on purely humanitarian grounds.

As soon as news had been received in December 1975 that these two men were missing, the ICRC, with the support of the French Red Cross and the Algerian Red Crescent Societies, took steps to obtain confirmation of their capture and then asked for permission to be granted to their families and ICRC delegates to visit them. This was authorized and the visits took place in May and September 1976.

In addition, to date 31 Moroccan and 38 Mauritanian prisoners in Sahraouï hands have been visited by the ICRC, which is pursuing its efforts to see all the prisoners.

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Press release No. 1282 b
5 November 1976

ICRC PRESIDENT RECEIVED BY MR. GISCARD D'ESTAING

Geneva (ICRC) - The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Mr. Alexandre Hay, was received on 5 November 1976 by the President of the French Republic, Mr. V. Giscard d'Estaing.

At the meeting in Paris, Mr. Hay described how the responsibilities entrusted to the ICRC had expanded in recent years and felt that the financial support extended to the ICRC by the States signatories to the Geneva Conventions should be increased proportionately.

Mr. Hay, who was accompanied by Mr. Laurent Marti, ICRC delegate, was later received by Mr. de Guiringaud, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The Swiss Ambassador to Paris, Mr. Pierre Dupont, asked the ICRC President to lunch, to which several eminent persons were also invited, including Mrs. Simone Veil, Minister of Health, Mr. Couve de Murville, President of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Assemblée Nationale, and Mr. Marcelin Carraud, President of the French Red Cross.
Press release No. 1283 b
7 December 1976

SOUTH AFRICA: ICRC VISITS PLACES OF DETENTION

Geneva (ICRC) - Delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) began on 7 December 1976 a series of visits to persons detained under the Internal Security Act in South Africa. This assignment was arranged following talks in Pretoria between the ICRC delegate general for Africa and the South African Minister of Justice, who granted authorization for the first time for visits to be made to this category of detainee.

The ICRC also approached the South African authorities that it might be allowed to visit persons detained under the Terrorism Act or other security regulations in force in South Africa. The ICRC hopes that discussions on this matter will be successful and that it might thus obtain access to the majority of persons detained for security reasons.
MR. GALLOPIN RETIRES FROM ICRC EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Geneva (ICRC) - Mr. Roger Gallopin's mandate as President of the Executive Council of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) expires at the end of this year.

From January 1, 1977, Mr. Alexandre Hay will preside the ICRC Assembly as well as its Executive Council.

In his capacity as member of the ICRC, Mr. Gallopin will continue, within the Assembly, to take an active part in the work of the institution.

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Press release No. 1285
14 December 1976

ICRC President returns from a mission to Latin America

Geneva (ICRC) - The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. Alexandre Hay, accompanied by Mr. Serge Massi, ICRC delegate general for Latin America, has just returned from a two-week tour which took him to the Argentine, Uruguay and Chile.

In Buenos Aires, where he conferred with the President of the Republic, General Jorge Videla, the other members of the military junta and several Ministers, Mr. Hay was assured that the ICRC would be allowed to organize an assistance programme at once, particularly for persons deprived of their freedom.

On the other hand, in Montevideo, the President of the Republic, Mr. Aparicio Mendez, accompanied by the members of the junta of the commanders in chief of the armed forces, told Mr. Hay that he did not wish the ICRC to continue its activities in Uruguay for the time being, mainly because international conventions made no provision for such activities.

In Santiago the ICRC President was received by the President of the Republic, General Augusto Pinochet and by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, of the Interior and of Justice. Mr. Hay expressed the ICRC's appreciation for the facilities granted to ICRC delegates since September 1973, reviewed the work of the ICRC delegation in Chile, and outlined the objectives for the coming year.

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Press release No. 1286 b
17 December 1976

ELECTIONS IN THE ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - During its year-end meetings, the Assembly of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) elected the members of the Executive Board for the next four years.

In addition, it co-opted as a new Committee member Mr. Richard Pestalozzi. Mr. Pestalozzi, who was born in Zurich in 1918, graduated from the University of that city as a Doctor of Laws. In 1944 he joined the Federal Political Department for which he held posts in Berne, New York, New Delhi and Paris. From 1964 to 1971 he was deputy to the Federal Council's delegate to the Swiss organization Coopération technique. In 1971 he was appointed Swiss Ambassador to Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Malawi.

From January 1977, Mr. Pestalozzi will be on indefinite leave from the Federal Political Department. In addition to being a member of the ICRC, he will be the Special Assistant to the President of the ICRC, Mr. Alexandre Hay, in a full-time capacity at ICRC headquarters, starting on 1 February.

The Executive Board elected by the Assembly will be presided over by Mr. Hay; he will combined this function with that of President of the ICRC. The Board's other five members will be Mr. Victor Umbricht (Vice President), Mrs Denise Bindschedler, Mr. Jean Pictet, Mr. Thomas Fleiner and Mr. Richard Pestalozzi; the latter two are new members.

The Assembly also paid a tribute and expressed its profound thanks to Mr. Roger Gallopin, the retiring President of the Executive Board.

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Press release No. 1287b
20 December 1976

RECOGNITION OF TWO NEW NATIONAL RED CROSS SOCIETIES

Geneva (ICRC) - On 16 December the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) officially recognized the National Red Cross Societies of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas (Bahamas Red Cross Society) and of the People’s Republic of the Congo (Congolese Red Cross).

With the reunification of the National Societies of the Republic of South Vietnam and of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on 31 July, the recognition of these two new Societies brings to 123 the total number of officially recognized National Red Cross Societies.

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