Press Release No. 1309
9 February 1978

TCHAD HOSTAGES : ICRC REPLY

Geneva (ICRC) - Referring to declarations made through the press on 6th and 7th February 1978 by Mr. Abubakar Mahamat Abderaman, commander of the FROLINAT "Western Armed Forces" requesting the intervention of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in connection with the capture of two Swiss and French nationals, the ICRC replies as follows:

Having taken note of the willingness of the captors to respect the Geneva Conventions, the ICRC draws attention to the fact that under the provisions of those conventions the taking of hostages is formally forbidden. Under these circumstances the ICRC appeals to the captors to release their hostages immediately and without condition. The ICRC is prepared, if necessary, to offer its services to facilitate this release.

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Press release No. 1310b
20 February 1978

RED CROSS ASSISTANCE FOR THE VICTIMS OF
THE RHODESIA/ZIMBABWE CONFLICT

Geneva (ICRC) - Following a medical survey conducted in Mozambique in December by Dr. Rémy Russbach, Head of the Medical Division of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Mr. Thierry Germond, delegate, relief supplies have been sent by sea and air to the Mozambique Ministry of Health.

On 8 February two heavy-duty ambulances provided by the Swedish Red Cross were unloaded in the port of Beira. On 20 February an aircraft on charter to the ICRC landed in that town with 11 tons of relief goods to a value of 127,000 Swiss francs. This consignment comprised two more heavy-duty ambulances, 300 complete hospital beds, 850 bed-sheets, 620 blankets, and four 50-bed marquees, provided by the National Society of Federal Germany and by the ICRC. These supplies will be distributed to the hospitals treating the conflict victims.

An ICRC delegate in Mozambique will see to delivery of these donations to the government authorities.

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Press release No 1311b
17 March 1978

ICRC SPECIAL MISSION TO SOMALIA

Geneva (ICRC) - On 16 March, the head of the Medical Division of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Dr. Rémi Russbach, and the ICRC regional delegate for East Africa, Mr. Ulrich Bédert, left for Mogadishu.

The ICRC representatives will examine with the Somali authorities all the various questions relative to protection, to the development of medical assistance and to the needs of the persons affected by the conflict in Ogaden.

Dr. Russbach and Mr. Bédert will also have talks with representatives of the Somali Red Crescent and of international organizations working in Somalia, to co-ordinate relief programmes for displaced civilians.

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Press release No. 1312b
20 March 1973

SOUTH LEBANON - ICRC EFFORTS

Geneva (ICRC) - In view of the events in southern Lebanon, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has approached the parties involved to remind them of their obligations under the four Geneva Conventions of 1949. The essential provisions of the Conventions include the role of the ICRC as a neutral intermediary, the protection of prisoners (Third Convention), protection and assistance for the civilian population of occupied territory (Fourth Convention), the search for missing persons, and the exchange of news between members of dispersed families.

The ICRC has been active for several years in the Middle East where it has at present thirty-three delegates: in Israel and the occupied territories (17 in tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Gaza) and in Lebanon (11 in Beirut and 5 - including a doctor and a nurse - in Tyre). The ICRC has recently distributed medical supplies to the main hospitals and dispensaries in Tyre, and a survey is at present being conducted despite the military operations in order to assess needs in the region.

The main problem confronting the ICRC at present is the tens of thousands of displaced persons making their way to Beirut. Its delegation in the capital is in constant touch with the government, the National Red Cross, the "Palestinian Red Crescent" and other organizations.

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Press release No 1313 b
22 March 1978

SOUTH LEBANON : ICRC APPEAL

Geneva (ICRC) - On 22 March 1978, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) appealed to National Societies and governments to provide as swiftly as possible the necessary material and financial support for an extension of its activities in Lebanon. The appeal is for a preliminary 1.3 million Swiss francs for purchases of medicaments, for operational expenses, for 180 tons of milk for infants and for 20,000 blankets.

In Lebanon, sixteen delegates of the ICRC have taken emergency measures to provide aid for the victims of the events. In Tyre, where some 4,000 inhabitants have remained, the ICRC delegation, together with the Lebanese Red Cross and the "Palestinian Red Crescent", has opened an emergency centre for the wounded. An estimate has been made of the movement of civilians in the regions of Saida and Beirut. The ICRC is co-operating in Beirut with the Lebanese Government, Lebanese Red Cross, "Palestinian Red Crescent", UNRWA and other organizations in providing assistance to about 150,000 displaced persons.

The ICRC is thus in urgent need of funds and asks the international community to provide it with the financial support it requires to ensure co-ordinated and efficient aid for the victims of the fighting, within the Government's general plan of assistance.

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Press release No 1314
30 March 1978

ICRC DELEGATE KILLED IN LEBANON

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has learnt with dismay of the sudden death in a motor accident on the night of 29-30 March 1978 of Mr. Louis Gaulis, one of its delegates based on Tyre in Lebanon.

Mr. Gaulis, born in 1932, was married and had two children. He was a poet and dramatist of some repute. His first mission for the ICRC was in 1972, when he went to Bangladesh. In 1973 he was a delegate in Viet Nam and 1974-75 in Cyprus. He joined the Lebanon delegation on 20 January this year.

This tragic death of a man who combined exceptional creative gifts with an outstanding personality is keenly felt. Louis Gaulis was also a raconteur, able to convey in poetic fashion mingled with humour all the subtlety and feelings of men. In the discharge of his humanitarian work, he gained the affection of all his colleagues, of all the people he dealt with and of all those he helped. His loss is grieved by the whole ICRC which extends its profound sympathy to his widow, his children and his relatives.

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Press release No 1315
5 April 1978

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR LOUIS GAULIS

Geneva (ICRC) - A memorial service for Louis Gaulis, a delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) who was killed while on mission in south Lebanon, will be held on 7 April at 2.15 p.m. in the Temple of St. Gervais.

The autopsy by the Geneva Institute of Forensic Medicine, as recently announced, showed that Louis Gaulis was killed instantaneously by a severe injury to the head; there was no trace of injury by gunshot.

The ICRC and Mr. Gaulis' family nevertheless thought it necessary to make the following statement on the most likely causes of the accident, based on detailed informations obtained on the spot.

While driving at night in the rain along unlit roads in Tyre to join his colleagues at the delegation headquarters, Mr. Gaulis probably passed some armed men whom he no doubt was unable to see but who, having unfounded suspicions about him, fired at him. The impact of two bullets was visible under the rear fender. It may be that to escape Louis Gaulis rapidly accelerated, a supposition which seems to be borne out by the tyre marks on the road. He probably leaned to one side to present a smaller target and perhaps lost control of the car which first struck a lamp standard and then a wall. His head struck the dashboard, and he was killed instantly.

Both the ICRC and Louis Gaulis' family agree that nothing suggests a deliberate attack on a Red Cross vehicle. However, they do consider that Louis Gaulis fell while on active service in the exercise of his functions as an ICRC delegate.

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Geneva (ICRC) - The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Mr. Alexandre Hay, on an official visit to Algeria from 3 to 5 April, was received by the President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, H.E. Mr. Houari Boumedienne, with whom he discussed the difficulties encountered by the ICRC in its efforts to protect and assist all the victims of the conflict in the Western Sahara. Mr. Hay also conferred with representatives of the Polisario Front.

Having received authorization to visit the prisoners held by the Polisario Front, the ICRC has made arrangements to do so immediately.

Preparations have also been made to visit the prisoners detained in Mauritania and Morocco.

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FIFTY-SEVENTH DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME FROM THE EMPRESS SHÔKEN FUND

Geneva (ICRC - League) - The Joint Commission entrusted with the distribution of the income of the Empress Shôken Fund met on 5th April 1978 at the League of Red Cross Societies under the chairmanship of Mr. Roger Gallopin, member of the ICRC. Mr. Akitane Kiuchi, Chargé d'Affaires a.i., Permanent Delegation of Japan to the international organizations in Geneva, and the Secretary General of the League, Mr. Henrik Beer, were also present.

The Shôken Fund was constituted in 1912 by Her Majesty the Empress of Japan with the purpose of providing assistance to National Societies in their humanitarian work, especially in peace-time. The Fund has been increased several times by donations from the Japanese Imperial Family, the Japanese Government and the Japanese Red Cross Societies.

This year's income has been allocated to seven National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Latin America, Middle East, Africa and Asia* to help them obtain equipment and carry out their tasks in fields of training, blood donation, disaster relief and medico-social activities.

The Joint Commission recorded its gratitude to the Japanese Red Cross Society and through them to the Japanese Imperial Family and the Japanese Government, for the valuable contribution and support in the development of many National Societies the world over. On behalf of these National Societies, the Joint Commission conveys to the Japanese Government and the Japanese Red Cross the sincere gratitude of all members of the International Red Cross Movement.

* Colombia, Egypt, Fiji, Lebanon, Liberia, Sudan, Trinidad and Tobago.
Press release No. 1318b
6 April 1978

RED CROSS RELIEF IN SOUTH LEBANON

Geneva (ICRC) - A plane on charter to the International Committee of the Red Cross left Frankfurt on 6 April with 20,500 blankets (35 tons) for displaced persons in south Lebanon.

Other large consignments provided by various National Red Cross Societies are on the way to or have reached Beirut. They include 43 tons of babyfood, 15,000 blankets and 4 tons of clothing. Cash contributions in response to an appeal on 22 March have reached 3.2 million Swiss francs, so that the ICRC may mobilize the men and material necessary to develop its activities in south Lebanon in the next few months.

A survey of needs in the region occupied by the Israeli armed forces has been carried out. ICRC delegates have been to 140 villages to organize the collection and distribution by voluntary workers of family messages. There is little need for food and medical assistance as the Israeli forces are for the time being coping with the situation in compliance with the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

In Beirut the ICRC is purchasing large quantities of relief supplies for the relief action undertaken by the Government, the Lebanese Red Cross, the "Palestinian Red Crescent", UNRWA and other specialized agencies of the United Nations for Lebanese and Palestinian displaced persons in south Lebanon.

A Lebanese journalist, wounded in south Lebanon and treated in an Israeli hospital, was repatriated to Beirut on 6 April by ICRC delegates.

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Press release No 1319b
7 April 1978

ICRC PRESIDENT RECEIVED BY THE KING OF MOROCCO

Geneva (ICRC) - The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Mr. Alexandre Hay, was received by H.M. King Hassan II of Morocco on 6 April 1978 in Fez. At this meeting the humanitarian problems arising in particular from the Sahara conflict were discussed.

King Hassan gave the ICRC authorization to see 99 Algerian prisoners captured by the Royal Moroccan Armed Forces at Amgala. The ICRC has also been authorized to visit the POLISARIO Front combatants captured since the beginning of the conflict who are still in captivity, as well as a number of others who have since been released on the spot.

A delegation of the ICRC is in Morocco and will at once start carrying out these visits.

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Press release No 1320
27 April 1978

Opening of the Round Table Meeting of Institutions awarded the Nobel Peace Prize

Geneva (ICRC) - At 10 o'clock on Thursday morning, 27 April, at the International Labour Office, a Round Table meeting began under the chairmanship of H.R.H. Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, attended by representatives of nine institutions which have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The institutions are: the Institute of International Law (1904), the International Peace Bureau (1910), the Quakers (1943), the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (1965), the International Labour Organisation (1969), Amnesty International (1977), the League of Red Cross Societies (1963) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (1917, 1944 and 1963). Three journalists representing three major trends of world opinion are also attending the meeting, namely Mr. Vikenti Matveev (URSS), Mr. Pierre Salinger (USA) and Mr. Tarzie Vittachi (Sri Lanka).

The Round Table, organized by the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies, is intended to be the occasion of an exchange of opinions on the contributions which the nine institutions make to peace, and to remind the world of the efforts to promote peace exerted by Henry Dunant, the Red Cross founder and the recipient of the first Nobel Peace Prize in 1901. This year, 8 May will be the 150th anniversary of Henry Dunant's birth.

Following Thursday's private session there will be an open session held at the Governing Body Room (Salle du Conseil) of the International Labour Office on Friday, 28 April at 8.15 p.m. during which the conclusions of the meeting will be presented to the press as well as to the public.

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Joint press release
5 May 1978

ICRC NR. 1321
League NR. 5

Henry Dunant was born 150 years ago

Geneva (ICRC) — Message, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the birth of Henry Dunant, founder of the red cross, from the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Mr. Alexandre Hay and the President of the League of Red Cross Societies, Mr. Justice J.A. Adefarasin:

Henry Dunant, founder of the red cross, was born 150 years ago on 8th May 1828.

On this day we wish to recall what Henry Dunant achieved in 1859 at Solferino where, acting as the first red cross volunteer, he witnessed the bloodshed of battle, the horror of the wounded left to their fate and the total contempt for disarmed soldiers. In the absence of organized relief, he improvised assistance to the wounded of both sides, equal in suffering and united in distress.

Since that time the red cross has developed into a worldwide movement with some 250 million members all keeping alive Dunant’s example of solidarity and humanity. Although now better prepared to face their task than were the pioneers at Solferino, red cross volunteers are motivated by the same spirit that fired the founder of the movement.

On the occasion of World Red Cross Day this year we wish to associate with our movement all those who believe that man is able and willing to help his brethren in distress by giving their support to our efforts. We urge them to join all those who, in Africa, Europe, America, Asia and the Pacific, serve the red cross by helping their fellowmen and thereby fighting against indifference, injustice and violence.

To all, the red cross says, “join in”.

To the millions of voluntary workers both young and old, both men and women, who are active in the 125 red cross, red crescent and red lion and sun societies, we say that their efforts are an essential and an inexhaustible source of encouragement for the whole Red Cross movement.

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Geneva (ICRC/League) - The ceremony commemorating the 150th anniversary of the birth of Henry Dunant, founder of the Red Cross, took place on 8 May in the Piaget auditorium of University II, Geneva. It was attended by the leading members of the International Red Cross, the Swiss federal authorities, the Geneva cantonal and municipal authorities, members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the European Office of the United Nations, and a large public audience.

Addresses were delivered by Mr. Alexandre Hay, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross; Mr. Pierre Aubert, Federal Councillor; Professor Hans Haug, President of the Swiss Red Cross; Mr. J.A. Adefarasin, President of the League of Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies; Mr. Claude Ketterer, Mayor of Geneva, and Mr. Willy Donzé, President of the State Council of the Republic and Canton of Geneva. Every speaker paid tribute to Henry Dunant, to his bold and even visionary ideas and to his work which continues in a world a prey to violence and divided against itself.

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TWENTY-FOURTH INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS CONFERENCE TO BE HOSTED BY THE PHILIPPINE RED CROSS

Geneva (League/ICRC) - Accepting the Philippine National Red Cross Society's invitation, the Standing Commission of the International Red Cross has chosen Manila as the venue for the Twenty-fourth International Red Cross Conference in 1981.

This Conference, held every four years, is the highest deliberative body of the Red Cross movement. It is composed of delegates from National Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies, the League of Red Cross Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and States parties to the Geneva Conventions. This will be the first time the Conference meets in the Far East since the Tokyo meeting in 1934. The Twenty-third Conference was held last October in Bucharest.

The Standing Commission, comprising nine members and chaired by Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh (British Red Cross) normally meets twice a year in Geneva.
DISARMAMENT: AN ICRC APPEAL

Geneva/New York (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has made an appeal to the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on disarmament.

By the very nature of its work, the ICRC is a witness to the incalculable suffering caused by increasingly murderous conflicts.

Reminding the General Assembly of its appeal following the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the ICRC restates its alarm at the growth of destructive power capable of annihilating life on our planet, and at the senseless waste of the arms race.

It appeals to the General Assembly to make the special session the start of new hope for the international community.

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Press release No. 1325b
19 May 1978

THREE ICRC EMPLOYEES ASSASSINATED IN RHODESIA/ZIMBABWE

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has the painful duty of announcing the violent deaths of two of its delegates and of an African employee attached to its delegation in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe.

The bodies of delegates André Tièche and Alain Bieri and of their companion Charles Chatora were found in the Inyanga district not far from the Nyamaropa mission in the afternoon of 18 May. They had been shot in the head while on their way by car to the mission.

This tragic news has been confirmed by the Inyanga district Chief of Police and by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Salisbury.

The head of the ICRC delegation, François Perez, and the medical delegate Dr. Georges Muheim, left Salisbury by air this morning to repatriate the bodies.

André Tièche had been in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe since the end of January this year; Alain Bieri joined the delegation on the 10th of this month.

The ICRC expresses its condemnation of these murders of its employees in the exercise of their humanitarian mission and conveys its condolences to the families whose grief in their tragic loss it shares.

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REPATRIATION OF THE BODIES OF TWO ICRC DELEGATES KILLED IN RHODESIA/ZIMBABWE

Geneva (ICRC) - The bodies of two delegates of the international Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), André Tièche and Alain Bieri, who had been found on 19 May 1978 in the district of Inyanga, were brought back to Salisbury in the evening of the same day. The body of the African field officer, Charles Chatora, who accompanied the delegates, was brought to Umtali.

With the limited information actually in its possession, the ICRC is not in a position to pronounce itself on the circumstances under which its delegates have met their tragic death.

The bodily remains of André Tièche and Alain Bieri will be repatriated to Switzerland on Tuesday, May 23, and a post mortem will be performed upon their return.

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Press release No. 1327b
23 May 1978

THE MORTAL REMAINS OF THE ICRC DELEGATES KILLED IN RHODESIA/ZIMBABWE
REPARTRIATED

Geneva (ICRC) - The mortal remains of the two delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Alain Biéri and André Tièche, killed on 18 May in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe arrived in Geneva early in the morning of 23 May. A brief ceremony in their memory took place on the runway at Cointrin airport, in the presence of the families, senior officials of the ICRC and of the League of Red Cross Societies, and a representative of the federal authorities. The President of the ICRC, Mr. Alexandre Hay, laid a red and white wreath on each coffin draped with the red cross flag.

Alain Biéri will be buried in Lausanne on Thursday 25 May after a service at the Montoie cemetery at 1.45 p.m. André Tièche will be interred in the presence only of his family. A requiem mass in his memory will be celebrated by European and African priests on Friday 26 May, at 10.30 in the Church of St. Nicolas de Flüe in Geneva. Representatives of the authorities and of the International Red Cross will attend these religious services.

The ICRC cannot dissociate the memory of Alain Biéri and André Tièche who, together with their African colleague, Charles Chatora, sacrificed their lives for a peaceful cause, ready to face the risks of which they were aware. All who knew Alain Biéri and André Tièche agreed that both had in different ways the qualities of kindness, intelligence and modesty which accounted for their pleasant personalities. Both were dedicated to the Red Cross cause which they served with courage, determination and enthusiasm. The ICRC can never forget that these delegates laid down their lives in discharging the mission entrusted to them, and it pays a deeply-felt tribute to their memory.

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Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has launched an appeal for Swiss francs 20 million (U.S. dollars 10 million) to finance its operations throughout Africa during the next six months.

The ICRC is deeply concerned by the steadily worsening situation in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe; by developments in such neighbouring countries as Mozambique, Botswana and Zambia; by the resurgence of hostilities in the Horn of Africa; by the conflict between the Government armed forces and the National Liberation Front (FROLINAT) in Chad; by the horrifying events in Zaïre; and by the plight of the victims of the conflict in the Sahara.

It has called on the parties to the various conflicts to respect the Geneva Conventions and accord the ICRC the necessary facilities to discharge its responsibilities towards the victims, and on the signatories to the Geneva Conventions to fulfil their own obligations by providing the necessary funds.

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Press release No. 1329b

25 May 1978

SERIOUS THREAT TO RED CROSS MISSION

Geneva (ICRC) - On Thursday 25 May 1978, the Executive Board of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), with its President, Mr. Alexandre Hay, in the chair, met to discuss a preliminary report received on the murder of the two ICRC delegates, André Tiéche and Alain Biéri, and of their African colleague, Charles Chatora. The report hints that this vile and cowardly act was possibly deliberately aimed at crippling the humanitarian mission of the Red Cross. If so, the situation is of the utmost gravity, and the ICRC will do everything to discover the whole truth regarding this triple crime and the identities of the murderers, who for the moment are unknown.

The Director of the ICRC Operations Department, Mr. Jean-Pierre Hocké, has been instructed to approach the highest authorities of all parties to the conflict and ask them to ascertain the fullest details of this incident and take immediately all measures for ensuring the absolute observance of the sign of the red cross and for the safety of the delegates of the ICRC, so that they may pursue their humanitarian activities in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. The Executive Board approved the decision taken by the responsible ICRC officials to send to Rhodesia/Zimbabwe a Swiss expert in criminology and one of its legal staff who has specialized in English Law.

The International Committee of the Red Cross solemnly reminds all States signatories to the Geneva Conventions that, on signing or acceding to these Conventions, they undertook not only to respect, but also to ensure respect for the Conventions. No effort should be spared to ensure that the sign of the red cross and the persons bearing the emblem continue to enjoy protection even in the midst of combats, failing which the last hope of putting a limit to war's inhumanity will vanish.

The ICRC Executive Board wishes to say once again that it shares the great grief of the families of the deceased and conveys to them its condolences, with its assurance that the ICRC will ever bear in memory the three delegates who laid down their lives in the discharge of their mission.
Press release No. 1330

2 June 1978

The ICRC in Chile: a clarification

Geneva (ICRC) - In connection with the demonstrations taking place in various countries relating to missing persons in Chile, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) wishes to make the following clarification:

Since September 1973, the ICRC has not ceased to concern itself with the problem of missing persons in Chile and has constantly approached the Chilean authorities concerning them. The last time such a step was taken was on 16 May 1978 with regard to an updated list containing the names of 620 persons whose disappearance had been reported to the ICRC and regarding whom the ICRC has asked for news from the Chilean authorities.

It is correct to say that five persons did actually occupy the offices of the ICRC delegation in Chile from 25 May, paralysing all activities which the ICRC has been performing for the benefit of persons who are still affected by past events. However, from the day those five persons have been on hunger strike, the ICRC has provided, with the help of a doctor of the Chilean Red Cross, daily medical assistance for the strikers. Three of them have already left the delegation of their own free will and are being given appropriate treatment in hospital. There are therefore at the present moment two persons on the premises of the ICRC delegation.

Fearing counter-demonstrations, threats of which had been announced to the head of the delegation, and to provide protection to the hunger strikers, the ICRC asked for supervision of the area outside the delegation building to be provided by the Santiago Police, who despatched two of its men. It is therefore incorrect to say that the delegation has been "surrounded" by security forces.

In accordance with directives, approved by the ICRC, relating to occupation of ICRC premises, the head of the ICRC delegation in Chile, Mr. François Robadey, has taken all necessary steps to prevent the ICRC offices becoming a centre of discussion on the present situation in the country. The ICRC's whole work is dedicated exclusively to the benefit of victims, and it must do its utmost to preserve its neutrality and avoid by all means that it should be used for political ends by one or the other of the parties involved.

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ICRC protection activities in connection with the Western Sahara conflict

Geneva (ICRC) - From the time when the conflict in the Western Sahara broke out, several hundred men are estimated to have been made prisoner by one or the other of the belligerents. These captives are mainly members of the Royal Moroccan Armed Forces and of the Mauritanian Armed Forces, combatants belonging to the Polisario Front and members of the Algerian Armed Forces.

In December 1975, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) approached the various parties concerned and offered its services to ensure that its traditional activities of protection would be carried out for all prisoners.

Until the end of 1977, those steps had produced only limited results. In December 1975, ICRC delegates visited twelve prisoners held by the Polisario Front, in September 1976, they saw 57 Moroccans and Mauritanians out of an unspecified number of prisoners. In Morocco, the delegates visited on three occasions 99 Algerian soldiers held in Rabat. During the visits to those different categories of prisoners, the ICRC delegates spoke with prisoners of their choice without witnesses. In January 1976, ICRC delegates saw 63 combatants of the Polisario Front captured by Mauritanian Armed Forces, and again in January 1977 they saw 126 more Polisario combatants also in the hands of the Mauritanian Army, but they were not allowed to speak with them in private.

Deeply concerned at the difficulties faced by ICRC delegates in handling the grave humanitarian problems caused by the conflict, ICRC President Alexandre Hay took steps in April 1978 to go himself to North Africa, with the aim of meeting the high authorities of all the parties concerned. As a result, these high authorities agreed in principle to authorize the delegates of the ICRC to carry out their tasks of providing protection in accordance with the conditions under which those duties were traditionally undertaken, in particular that they should visit all prisoners and should be allowed to speak with any of them without witnesses. Accordingly in April 1978, they were granted authorization to visit 86 combatants of the Polisario Front captured by the Royal Moroccan Armed Forces and in May, to visit 205 combatants of the Polisario Front held in Mauritania.

On the other hand, despite the assurances given to the ICRC President by Polisario Front leaders, the delegates have still not received to date the authorization to pursue their mission of protection for the whole of the Moroccan and Mauritanian prisoners. The ICRC points out that these prisoners have not been visited since September 1978 and that very many families have not received any news whatsoever of their missing relatives. The ICRC consequently expects the detaining authorities to grant it finally the necessary facilities to enable it to conduct its humanitarian mission, in conformity with the promises made to Mr. Hay in April last.

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Press release No. 1332
15 June 1978

LIBERIAN PRESIDENT AT THE ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - While on a private trip to Switzerland, the President of the Republic of Liberia, H.E. Dr. William R. Tolbert, who is also the High Patron of the Liberian Red Cross, paid a visit on 15 June to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

President Tolbert was accompanied by the Honorable Charles A. Clarke, Minister of State, and several senior members of his Government. He was welcomed by the President of the ICRC, Mr. Alexandre Hay and by other members and directors of the ICRC.

After signing the visitors' book the Liberian Head of State and his suite discussed various matters with the ICRC representatives. President Tolbert and the distinguished guests then visited the Central Tracing Agency.

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Press release No. 1333b

7 July 1978

FIGHTING IN EAST BEIRUT—ICRC APPEAL

Geneva (ICRC) — The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is greatly concerned by the violence of the fighting which has been going on for several days in the eastern quarters of Beirut. It protests vehemently against the use of weapons which cause such large loss of life among the non-combatants of a densely populated town.

The ICRC expresses its indignation also at the non-respect of the Red Cross emblem which should be observed for the protection of the medical personnel, units and vehicles which, from the outset, have been repeatedly under attack. In spite of their operational organization in Beirut, neither the ICRC nor the Lebanese Red Cross is able to provide dispensaries and hospitals in the area of fighting with the aid they need.

The ICRC appeals for the full respect of the most fundamental humanitarian principles and for the Red Cross to be permitted to carry out as soon as possible and without hindrance its mission of assisting the victims.

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REPATRIATION OF POWs BETWEEN ANGOLA AND SOUTH AFRICA
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - On September 2, 1978 the People Republic of Angola and the Republic of South Africa have proceeded, under auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), to the repatriation of 8 POWs detained in Angola and 3 POWs detained in the Republic of South Africa.

By this act the two parties have expressed the determination to respect the spirit and the letter of the Third Geneva Convention.

Taking the opportunity of this operation, the two parties have held a meeting to discuss a number of questions of common interest. The two parties, as well as the ICRC, wish to express their gratitude to the authorities and the people of N'Giwa (Angola) for their active contribution to the success of this operation.

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Joint press release

ICRC No. 1337
League No. 19

5 September 1978

ICRC AND LEAGUE OF RED CROSS SOCIETIES IN NICARAGUA

Geneva (ICRC-League) - In the last few days the situation in Nicaragua has deteriorated: the number of people in need of assistance and protection has rapidly increased.

While on a recent mission in Nicaragua, Mr. Jürg Vittani, Director of the League Relief Supplies Bureau participated in the National Red Cross action when hostages were being held in the National Palace. Following that mission, the League appealed on 29 August to ten National Societies to supply the Nicaraguan Red Cross with the material assistance it needed to restore its operational ability.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), consistent with its traditional role as a neutral intermediary, directed its regional delegate for Central America and the Caribbean, Mr. Raymond Chevalley, to go to Managua to assess needs for protection and assistance operations in Nicaragua. He arrived in the capital on 31 August and immediately conferred with the Nicaraguan Red Cross and with Government authorities on a plan of action.

In agreement with the League, the ICRC has taken over the co-ordination of relief with the National Society. On receipt of Mr. Chevalley's first report, the ICRC appealed to a dozen National Societies for 445,000 dollars to finance assistance in the form of food and medicaments. The ICRC delegate urged the parties to the conflict to respect the Geneva Conventions, the emblem of the Red Cross, and the humanitarian work of the Nicaraguan Red Cross relief teams.

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LEAGUE OF RED CROSS SOCIETIES / INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

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Joint press release

15 September 1978

TWO RED CROSS RELIEF WORKERS KILLED IN NICARAGUA

Geneva (ICRC/League) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the League of Red Cross Societies have unfortunately to announce the death of two young voluntary relief workers of the Nicaraguan Red Cross, between Leon and Managua on 14 September. Jose Dolores Estrada Granizo and Martin Alberto Flore Salazar were killed when their vehicle, one of a Nicaraguan Red Cross convoy, was attacked some 65 km from Managua. Every vehicle in the convoy was conspicuously marked by the Red Cross emblem.

The ICRC and the League pay tribute to the courage and abnegation of the two victims and of all the Nicaraguan Red Cross relief workers who, with admirable dedication, are carrying out their humanitarian task in the tragic events now occurring in their country.

The ICRC regional delegate, in an audience granted him on 12 September by the president of the Republic, Mr. Anastasio Somoza, requested and obtained the assurance that the mission and emblem of the Red Cross would be respected throughout the country.

The two international institutions of the Red Cross are profoundly disturbed by the murder of these two relief workers in the exercise of their humanitarian mission. The Report sent by the ICRC delegates on the spot shows that this was no accident but a deliberate attack on the Nicaraguan Red Cross. The ICRC and the League again appeal to all parties to guarantee without reserve the respect of the humanitarian mission and emblem of the national and international Red Cross delegates.

Both institutions assure the Nicaraguan Red Cross of their support and solidarity in the country's grievous ordeal and express their deep sympathy with the victims' families whose grief they share.

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Press release No. 1341

2 October 1978

LEBANON - ICRC APPEALS FOR TRUCE

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross is alarmed at the worsening situation in Lebanon. Fighting has resumed, Beirut has again become the target of indiscriminate shelling, and once more the civilian population is in the thick of the battle and suffering heavy loss of life. The activity of hospitals, dispensaries, ambulances and medical services generally has been brought to a standstill by artillery fire.

The ICRC urgently appeals to the belligerents to take measures immediately to ensure that hospitals and medical personnel may continue their work unimpeded and in safety, to agree upon general or at least local truces to permit endangered civilians to seek safety elsewhere, and to cease forthwith the indiscriminate shelling of the civilian population.
Press release No. 1342
5 October 1978

LEBANON - APPEAL FOR TRUCE

Geneva (ICRC) - The delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Lebanon launched on 4 October 1978 an appeal to the parties concerned to conclude a truce for the evacuation of the wounded in the eastern part of Beirut. The ICRC and the Lebanese Red Cross are finding it increasingly difficult to go to the relief of the combat victims. The ICRC emergency dispensary in the Ashrafieh district - which has already taken in dozens of wounded since the end of September - could not be reached with fresh supplies of medicaments and food on 4 October because of the intense gunfire.

Another matter of concern for the ICRC and the Lebanese Red Cross is the situation of tens of thousands of east Beirut inhabitants who have fled to the mountains. A credit of 500,000 Swiss francs has been opened to enable the ICRC delegation to make local purchases of goods in aid of these refugees.

In Geneva, the ICRC is taking steps to reinforce its delegation in Lebanon, which at present is composed of a dozen delegates and about thirty Lebanese employees. It intends to despatch at short notice a dozen more delegates, doctors and nurses. In addition, an appeal is in preparation asking donors (mainly governments and National Red Cross Societies) to come forward with more funds.

This appeal will be launched as soon as a cessation of the very severe fighting will allow an estimate to be made of the number of wounded, homeless and displaced persons.

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ICRC IN SOUTH AMERICA: REORGANIZATION OF SOUTHERN CONE DELEGATION

Geneva (ICRC) - The changing situation in the Southern Cone of South America has led the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to restructure its organization in that region. The delegates resident in Chile will be transferred to Argentina, and from October all activities in the Southern Cone will be directed by the regional delegation in Buenos Aires.

Since September 1973, when it opened its delegation in Chile, the ICRC has carried out in that country 1,123 visits to about 18,000 detainees. Most of these people were visited at regular intervals. The value of the material and medical assistance given them amounted to 1.7 million Swiss francs, while that of the assistance provided to some 3,000 detainees' families totalled 4.4 million Swiss francs.

The ICRC decision to transfer its Chile delegates to Buenos Aires was conveyed to the Chilean Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Interior and Justice by Mr. Sergio Nessi, delegate general, when he was in Santiago from 26 to 28 September. The ICRC will maintain a liaison office in Chile and continue its humanitarian mission there by periodically visiting people still in detention and seeking persons reported missing.

The Chilean authorities agreed to this arrangement and assured the ICRC of every necessary facility for the discharge of its humanitarian task.

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Press release No. 1344
8 November 1978

ICRC APPEAL FOR AFRICA

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has just launched an appeal for 15 million Swiss francs. This sum is required for the six-month financing of the humanitarian project to meet the needs resulting from the various conflicts at present causing havoc in Africa.

The persistent worsening of the situation in countries directly or indirectly affected by military operations calls for a wider field of protection and of assistance to the hundreds of thousands of victims: these include displaced persons, refugees, wounded, sick, prisoners of war, and political detainees. Sixty-five delegates, assisted by about a hundred African collaborators, are to-day stationed in a dozen different countries.

The ICRC, the only operational humanitarian organization in some parts of the African continent, stresses the importance of this humanitarian mission and trust that the States signatories to the Geneva Conventions will furnish the urgent support which this mission demands.

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Press release No. 1345
20 November 1978

RHODESIA/ZIMBABWE: CLARIFICATION OF ICRC POSITION

Geneva (ICRC) - Contrary to a statement attributed to an ICRC delegate in Salisbury which appeared in the international press, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has stated that it has no plan "to assist an estimated 100,000 Rhodesian citizens to flee the country should the guerrilla war make life unbearable for Whites".

Furthermore, no discussions have taken place between the ICRC and Australia and New Zealand on this subject.

Nevertheless, the ICRC has made it clear that it stands ready to protect and assist, as is its duty in war time, those in need without any discrimination.

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THE KING OF SWEDEN VISITS THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS

Geneva (ICRC/League) - During a private visit to Switzerland, Their Majesties the King and Queen of Sweden, on 5 December 1978, were welcomed at the International Committee of the Red Cross headquarters by ICRC President, Mr. Alexandre Hay and members of the Committee and the Directorate. After signing the visitors book, they exchanged views with ICRC representatives and paid a short visit to the Central Tracing Agency.

The King and the Queen then went to the headquarters of the League of Red Cross Societies, where they were received by the Secretary-General, Mr. Henrik Beer, and his chief associates. A discussion on the orientation and organization of current League activities and on its principal relief operations followed the signing of the visitors book.

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THE PROTOCOLS ADDITIONAL TO THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS COME INTO EFFECT

Geneva (ICRC) - The two instruments of international humanitarian law which supplement the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 for the protection of war victims - namely the two "Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions" - come into effect on 7 December 1978. Protocol I relating to international armed conflicts has been signed so far by 56 States, and Protocol II relating to non-international armed conflicts by 52 States. Two States, Ghana and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, have also ratified them.

On the entry into force of the Additional Protocols, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has launched an appeal to the Governments of the States parties to the Conventions asking them to ratify the two texts. By doing so, they will show the world how important they feel it is that humanitarian rules be better observed on the battlefield. They will thus conform to the desire of the nations to see basic guarantees for humanity being universally accepted.

These Protocols, which take into account the realities of numerous conflicts since the Second World War, were negotiated in Geneva between 1974 and 1977 at a diplomatic conference convened by the Swiss Government. They reaffirm and develop considerably the rules for the protection of war victims, and especially of civilians. While, for example, the Fourth Geneva Convention protects civilians against the arbitrary power of the enemy or of the occupying authority, Protocol I extends the rules of humanitarian law to the protection of civilians against the effects of hostilities. It also extends the category of prisoners of war to include henceforward both members of the regular armed forces and, under certain conditions, non-uniformed guerrillas, and it improves the protection of recognized civilian medical units, transports and their personnel, by giving the protection similar to that hitherto reserved for military medical personnel and units. Protocol II supplements and develops substantially the rules to be observed in non-international armed conflicts.

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