COLLECTION "COMMUNIQUE DE PESSE" C I C R 1979 - 1980

Nos 1348 à 1408

ANGLAIS
Press release No. 1348
4 January 1979

CONFLICT IN CAMBODIA - ICRC OFFERS ITS SERVICES

Geneva (ICRC) - Greatly concerned at the fighting in Cambodia and anxious to ease the suffering inflicted on civilian and military victims, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has decided to remind all the parties involved of the provisions of the Geneva Conventions and to offer them its services.

In particular, the ICRC hopes to visit the prisoners and to receive a full list of all persons captured.
Joint press release
12 January 1979
ICRC No. 1349
League 2/1979

REFUGEES: INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS APPEALS FOR ACTION

Geneva (League/ICRC) - The attitude of the international community towards the crowded boat-loads of Vietnamese refugees clearly shows the inadequacy of our world. Unwanted and rejected, these refugees symbolise the difficulties which today's society faces in responding to the most basic humanitarian needs.

Red Cross, throughout its history, has worked with other organisations to try and help refugees, specially during the difficult period which precedes their arrival in the countries where they will resettle. But these new homes can only be provided by governments. It is they, who both individually and within the international system, must find the long term solutions which are so urgently needed. The Red Cross principles of humanity and impartiality can also serve as a basis for acceptable solutions by the parties involved in the refugee problem.

Public opinion has been aroused by the fate of refugees in South-East Asia, but there are similar situations in other parts of the world. The information media reveal the extent of these human tragedies and ignorance is no longer an excuse. Today the international community has the necessary means at its disposal to give refugees the assistance they require and to restore their dignity.

In 1979, International Year of the Child, Red Cross will give children special attention but it will continue to help without distinction all those in distress - and this includes refugees. The Red Cross urgently appeals for a universal understanding of their plight and calls on governments to take the necessary action.

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CHAD - ICRC EVACUATES CASUALTIES BY LORRY AND AIRPLANE

Geneva (ICRC) - In the last 48 hours delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have organized two lorry convoys in N'Djamena and a flight from N'Djamena to Abeche and back to take casualties of recent fighting to the central hospital and also to deliver emergency medical supplies.

Alarmed at the fighting which broke out in the Chad capital on Monday, the ICRC, on Tuesday, broadcast an appeal urging combatants to observe fundamental humanitarian principles and reminding them that they should protect the wounded, the women and children and hospitals, ambulances and Red Cross vehicles so that the Red Cross might discharge its mission of helping conflict victims promptly and without obstruction.

On 14 February an ICRC convoy took medical supplies from the military base to the central hospital where there were about forty wounded.

The following day, during a truce, the ICRC took more casualties and medical supplies to the central hospital and, after obtaining the agreement of both parties, evacuated 20 wounded persons from Abechê to N'Djamena by air.

In addition, the ICRC delegation at N'Djamena provided powdered milk for the central hospital and for civilians (including many children) sheltering in the military base and in a hotel.

A consignment of emergency medical supplies will shortly be sent to N'Djamena from Geneva.
Press release No 1351
20 February 1979

CHINA-VIET NAM CONFLICT: ICRC REMINDER

Geneva (ICRC) - Following the armed clashes which broke out a few days ago on the border between China and Viet Nam, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) sent a note on 19 February 1979 to the Governments of the People's Republic of China and of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam reminding them of their obligations under the Geneva Conventions.

The ICRC also stated that it was ready to perform the tasks incumbent upon it under the Conventions in such situations, in particular with regard to military and civilian prisoners and missing persons.

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Press release No 1352
1 March 1979

UNESCO DIRECTOR-GENERAL AT ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - The Assembly of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), meeting at the institution's headquarters in Geneva under the chairmanship of Mr. Alexandre Hay on 1 March, received Mr. Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, Unesco Director-General, and several senior officials of that organization. Mr Henrik Beer, Secretary-General of the League of Red Cross Societies, also attended the meeting.

The purpose of the visit was to forge closer links between Unesco and the Red Cross world with a view to more extensive co-operation, particularly in the teaching of the Geneva Conventions and Human Rights.

Education for peace, which should reach young people as well as adults, is a necessity to which the international community should devote itself entirely, Mr. M'Bow told the ICRC Assembly, adding that every possible means should be mobilized to exorcise the spectre of war.

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Press release no. 1353
14 March 1979

MIDDLE EAST: PRISONERS RELEASED UNDER ICRC AUSPICES

Geneva (ICRC) - On 14 March 1979 from 6.30 to 10.30 a.m. GMT, an operation for the release of prisoners took place at Geneva under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). This action was due to the initiative of the Israeli authorities and of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC).

An aircraft landed at Geneva-Cointrin Airport with 66 Arab civilian detainees released by the Israeli authorities, while a second aircraft brought one Israeli prisoner of war, who had been captured on 5 April 1978 in South Lebanon and had now been released by the PFLP-GC. At the same time ten more Arab civilian detainees were released by Israel in the Middle East.

During their captivity, all these prisoners had been visited periodically by ICRC delegates. Their release is the result of negotiations by the ICRC lasting several months.

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RHODESIA/ZIMBABWE: THE ICRC CALLS UPON THE PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT TO ASSUME THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

Geneva (ICRC) - Mr. Alexandre Hay, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), held a press conference on Tuesday, 20 March 1979 at 11 a.m. Mr. Hay read out the text of a pressing and solemn appeal made by the ICRC to all the parties to the conflict in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, calling upon them to respect and to observe most scrupulously the fundamental humanitarian principles and to allow the ICRC to carry out fully its tasks for the protection and assistance of war victims.

An unprecedented step taken by the ICRC was its decision, in the persistent climate of wanton cruelty characterizing the conflict in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, to give a public, specific and detailed enumeration of the measures to be taken to put an end to the rising tide of ruthless violence of which the civilian inhabitants in the combat zones, the displaced persons and the members of families dispersed by the hostilities suffered most.

"This departure from our habitual policy of diplomatic circumspection is deliberate", said Mr. Hay. "Our commitment is to those who suffer, not to those who cause the suffering. For too long, we have witnessed, on the part of both sides of the conflict, the systematic violation of the code of human conduct. The degree of misbehaviour has risen to such levels, that the ICRC feels it can no longer remain silent.

The ICRC appeals to all parties to cease attacks against the civilian population (killings and ill-treatment, setting villages on fire), to spare the lives of those who surrender, to treat humanely all captured enemy combatants and to respect the protective emblem of the Red Cross.

The ICRC specifically requests the Transitional Government in Salisbury to put an end to the executions of captured members of the nationalist forces and of persons sentenced to death for offences of a political character; to allow the ICRC delegates to visit, in their places of detention, all captured members of the nationalist forces, political detainees, persons detained under martial law, and civilians forcibly removed from their homes in the war-affected areas and temporarily detained in camps; and to authorize the ICRC to provide medical care without discrimination to all wounded and sick war victims, and to resume the distribution of relief supplies in those areas where they have been forbidden by the security forces.
The ICRC requests the Patriotic Front to cease the killing of captured enemy combatants and of civilians; to cease the shooting down of civil aircraft; to refrain from abducting civilians, in particular children, and taking them across the border to neighbouring countries; to allow those who wish to do so to return to their homes, and to allow the ICRC to visit captured enemy combatants, register all civilians in refugee camps, search for missing persons, forward family messages and carry out the repatriation of various persons on humanitarian grounds.

The ICRC appeal has been sent to all the States parties to the Geneva Conventions, and in particular the United Kingdom, the five "Front-line" States, the members of the United Nations Security Council, the Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, the United Nations Secretary-General.

The ICRC hopes that the world-wide significance of its appeal and its dissemination at the highest levels will arouse the international community to take heed of the intolerable situation which exists in the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe conflict.

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Press release No. 1354
6 April 1979

NEW NATIONAL RED CROSS SOCIETY

Geneva (ICRC) - On 4 April 1979 the International Committee of the Red Cross announced its recognition of the Swaziland National Red Cross Society.

This brings to 126 the number of recognized National Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies.

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Press release No. 1355b
6 April 1979

NEW MEMBERS OF THE ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) — The Assembly of the International Committee of the Red Cross on 4 April co-opted three new members, namely Miss Andrée Weitzel, who was head of the women's auxiliary service of the Federal Military Department, Berne, from 1953 to 1977; Mr. Maurice Aubert, Doctor of Laws, banker, President of the Grand Council of the Republic and Canton of Geneva until January this year, and President of the Institut universitaire d'études du développement in Geneva; and Mr. Rudolf Jaeckli, Doctor of Science, geologist, former company manager and director of various development projects in the Middle East.

Thus reinforced, the ICRC has 21 members.

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Press release No 1356 b
27 April 1979

FEDERAL POLITICAL DEPARTMENT HEAD VISITS ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - On 27 April 1979, Mr. Pierre Aubert, Federal Councillor and Head of the Swiss Federal Political Department, visited the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Geneva. Mr. Aubert was accompanied by Mr. Marcel Heimo, Ambassador and Director of the Swiss Office for Co-operation in Development and Humanitarian Aid, Mr. Olivier Exchaquet, Ambassador and Head of the Swiss Permanent Mission to the International Organizations in Geneva, and a number of members of his staff. Mr. Aubert was welcomed at the ICRC by its President, Mr. Alexandre Hay, Mr. Jean Pictet, Vice-President, Mr. Richard Pestalozzi, Special Assistant to the President, and the members of the Directorate.

Mr. Hay reviewed with his eminent visitors the activities of the ICRC throughout the world and discussed other issues of mutual concern, including a number of questions relating more particularly to international humanitarian law. Mr. Pierre Aubert and his staff also visited the Central Tracing Agency.

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Press release No 1358
15 May 1979

AGREEMENT FOR THE EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS BETWEEN CHINA AND VIET NAM UNDER ICRC SUPERVISION

Geneva (ICRC) - The Governments of the People's Republic of China and of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam have agreed to repatriate wounded and sick prisoners at the Sino-Vietnamese frontier on 21 May. The National Red Cross Societies of both countries will co-operate in the operation and the International Committee of the Red Cross, having been invited to attend, will send representatives to each of the parties.

Consistent with the Geneva Conventions, ICRC delegates have visited Vietnamese prisoners in southern China where they saw 1,620 prisoners in six camps and in a hospital.

The Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam has agreed to the ICRC's visiting all the Chinese prisoners. ICRC delegates will therefore shortly join the permanent delegate in Hanoi for this temporary mission.

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Press release No 1359
21 May 1979

ICRC: REPATRIATION BETWEEN CHINA AND VIET NAM

Geneva (ICRC) – Pursuant to an agreement between the People's Republic of China and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, 120 Vietnamese prisoners and 43 Chinese are being simultaneously repatriated today. Some of these prisoners returning to their homelands under the auspices of the National Red Cross Society of each country are wounded or sick. Delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) are present.

The operation is taking place at the border post known as "Friendship Gate" on the railway between Nanning in China and Lang Son in Viet Nam.

An ICRC delegate is with each of the parties and attends the talks between the two National Societies on arrangements for possible further repatriations.

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Press release No 1360
29 May 1979

ICRC VISITS CHINESE POWs IN VIET NAM

Geneva (ICRC) - A mission of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) comprising the resident delegate in Hanoi and two delegates sent out from Geneva, visited 186 Chinese soldiers held prisoner in a camp near Thai Nguyen in the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. The visit, which took place on 26 May in accordance with the 1949 Geneva Conventions, enabled the ICRC delegates to talk in private with the prisoners.

On 28 May, at the "Friendship Gate" border post on the railway between Nanning in China and Lang Son in Viet Nam a second repatriation operation enabled 118 Vietnamese and 20 Chinese to return to their countries. The two National Red Cross Societies have made arrangements for the repatriation of all prisoners in June. As they have done so far, ICRC delegates will be present on both sides.

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NICARAGUA: RED CROSS APPEAL

Rio de Janeiro, 5 June 1979 (ICRC/League) - The eleventh Inter-American Red Cross Conference, at present being held in Rio de Janeiro and attended by the leaders of twenty-two National Red Cross Societies of countries in North and South America and in the Caribbean, formally called upon the parties to the conflict in Nicaragua to respect all persons not, or no longer, taking part in the fighting, and to refrain from causing any injury, in particular, to children, women, aged persons, the wounded and prisoners. It reminded the parties of their undertakings to observe in all circumstances the humanitarian provisions of the Geneva Conventions, which are also applicable in internal armed conflicts.

Furthermore, the Inter-American Conference urgently requested the parties to the conflict to provide every facility to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Nicaragua Red Cross to carry out their neutral and impartial humanitarian activities, including the arrangement of truces, and to allow the delegates of both institutions to bring protection and assistance to all victims of the conflict, without distinction.

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Press release No. 1362
15 June 1979

REFUGEES IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA: THE ICRC APPEALS TO THE WORLD

Geneva (ICRC) - The tragic plight suffered by hundreds of thousands of refugees, victims of the events which have been taking place in South-East Asia for many years, has been worsening for several weeks, and in the last few days has become intolerable.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) solemnly urges the Community of States to become fully aware of the extent of the tragedy in this part of the world and asks them to take immediate and decisive steps towards seeking, at the political level, solutions to the very cause of the disaster.

Humanitarian Organisations such as the Red Cross and the High Commissioner for Refugees can do no more than treat the effects of the crisis and, even then, only to a limited extent.

Today, the efforts of these organisations appear absurdly inadequate in view of the extent of the tragedy; tomorrow, they may no longer even have access to the victims.

Only an overall emergency plan, conceived and supported by the Community of States, might stop the visibly alarming deterioration of the situation. This plan must aim:

- to provide food for the civilian populations who are under pressure from fighting or famine to leave their countries of origin or of residence,

- to initiate, in those regions of the countries of first asylum where refugees have already arrived, economic development programmes, which would benefit the local population as well as the refugees,
- to have the countries of final settlement provide a larger number of entry visas, so that they share more equally with the countries of first asylum the very heavy load of these hundreds of thousands of people.

An approach of this kind would enable each State involved in this tragic crisis, with the determined support of the Community of States, to act in full respect for the most elementary humanitarian obligations, with a view to preventing, by all possible means and at all costs, the repetition of tragedies which the world has vowed it would never let happen again.

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COLOMBIAN PRESIDENT VISITS ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - The President of Colombia, His Excellency Mr. Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala, who is making an official visit to Switzerland, today called at the Geneva headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). He was accompanied by his wife and son, the ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence, and by Colombia's permanent representative in Geneva, as well as their wives.

On arrival, they were welcomed by the President of the ICRC, Mr. Alexandre Hay, and by members of the Committee and Directors. The secretary-general of the League of Red Cross Societies, Mr. Henrik Beer, was also present.

After signing the Visitors' Book, the Colombian President, the President of the ICRC and their parties discussed humanitarian cooperation between the Colombian government and the ICRC.

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Press release No 1364
19 June 1979

ICRC FILM AWARDED AT Varna FESTIVAL

Geneva (ICRC) - The jury of the 8th International Festival of Red Cross and Health films, which was held in Varna (Bulgaria) from 9 to 18 June, awarded the first prize (Gold Medal) to the film "Challenge in Africa" produced by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) under the British director, Derek Hart. In all, some 290 films from 41 countries and 5 international institutions took part in the four categories in the competition.

"Challenge in Africa", which already received an award last May at the festival organized in Brighton by the British Industrial and Scientific Film Association (BISFA), gives a dramatic account of the humanitarian problems born of the conflict in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. It also shows the tremendous difficulties encountered by the Red Cross delegates in trying to carry out their mission of protection and assistance in favour of war victims.

The original English version of this short film has been translated into 11 different languages, and the film has been distributed worldwide by the ICRC, in particular to television channels, several of which, in Europe, Africa and Oceania, have given it a privileged position in their information and education programmes.

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Press release No. 1365
21 June 1979

THE KING AND QUEEN OF SPAIN VISIT THE ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - His Majesty King Juan Carlos and Her Majesty Queen Sofia, on a state visit to Switzerland, today went to the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

On their arrival, the King and Queen of Spain, Princess Cristina, the Countess Marone, and their suite were welcomed by the President of the ICRC, Mr. Alexandre Hay, and by the Secretary General of the League of Red Cross Societies, Mr. Henrik Beer. Members of the International Committee, of its Directorate and of the Secretariat of the League were also present.

The signing of the Visitors' Book was followed by speeches by the President of the ICRC and by his Majesty King Juan Carlos. The Director of the Central Tracing Agency gave a commentary on the activities of the Agency, illustrated by an exhibition.

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Press release No 1366
25 June 1979

JEAN PICTET RETIRES

Geneva (ICRC) - Mr. Jean Pictet, former Director-General and at present Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), will be retiring on 30 June after more than forty-two years of professional activity. The ICRC expressed to Mr. Pictet its deep gratitude for the remarkable services he has rendered to the institution, throughout a career entirely dedicated to the Red Cross. Mr. Pictet will continue to be associated with the International Committee as a member.

Mr. Richard Pestalozzi, Special Assistant to the President, has been appointed by the Assembly of the ICRC to be Vice-President, as from 1 July.

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Joint press release
International Committee of the Red Cross No 1367
League of Red Cross Societies No General 14
28 June 1979

SOUTH-EAST ASIA: RED CROSS CALLS FOR ACTION

Geneva (ICRC/League) - The International Red Cross is today prevented from providing any kind of humanitarian relief to:
- more than 15,000 "boat people" who are at sea and are refused permission to land,
- some 80,000 Cambodians who have sought refuge in Thailand and of whom over 40,000 have been forced back and are trapped without the basic means of survival,
- to the hundreds of thousands of victims of the conflict in Cambodia.

So that it can bring immediate relief to these people the International Red Cross demands the following urgent action:

1. That all governments whose ships are sailing in the region instruct their captains to respect the Brussels Convention of 1910, which concerns rescuing people in distress and putting them ashore at a port,

2. That Governments in the region stop turning these refugees away from their coasts,

3. That Governments in the countries of final settlement immediately pledge to take a large number of these new arrivals so as to ease the burden on countries of first asylum,

4. That the Authorities in Cambodia permit an immediate distribution of Red Cross relief supplies to the people forced back from Thailand, as a first step towards a massive relief programme for victims of the Cambodian conflict,

5. That the Thai authorities open their borders to refugees and, at the same time, allow the Red Cross to continue aiding those who are already there and to assist new arrivals.

The Red Cross has national and international teams and supplies ready to assist these victims throughout the region and in countries of final settlement. These measures must be taken immediately, without waiting for more wide-ranging plans to be adopted by the international community.

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Press release No 1368
3 July 1979

UN SECRETARY-GENERAL AT ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - Mr. Kurt Waldheim, United Nations Secretary general, was welcomed at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) by Mr. Alexandre Hay accompanied by members of the ICRC and its Directorate.

His discussions with the senior officials of the ICRC dealt mainly with the problem of Indochina refugees, who will be the subject of a UN conference on 20 and 21 July. Mr. Waldheim invited the ICRC to attend as an observer.

Mr. Hay emphasized the determination of the Red Cross movement as a whole to help the victims of the Indochina tragedy wherever they may be, provided the governments concerned give it the essential facilities.

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Press release No 1369
19 July 1979

NICARAGUA : ICRC AIR-LIFT

Geneva (ICRC) - Members of the Nicaraguan National Guard, on 18 July, took over an ICRC DC-8 by force on the Managua airport. The crew of the plane on charter to the ICRC for air-lifting relief supplies, was compelled at gunpoint to take 148 people - most of them families of National Guard soldiers - to Guatemala.

This incident and the danger to air-crews and aircraft has impelled the ICRC to suspend its flights to Managua, although it will resume them as soon as possible in order to provide for the needs of the civilian victims of the fighting. The ICRC logistics set-up is therefore remaining on stand-by, and its three aircraft are at the ready, a Hercules C 130 in Panama and two DC-8s, one in Costa Rica and one in Guatemala.

Since 16 June the ICRC has air-lifted 1,120 tons of food and medical supplies to Nicaragua. These supplies have been distributed in Managua and other towns in the country at great risk by the ICRC and the Nicaraguan Red Cross.

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Joint press release
League - 15
ICRC - 1370
Geneva 25 July 1979

REFUGEES IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA : RED CROSS RESOURCES MOBILIZED

Geneva (ICRC/League). Representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and of the League of Red Cross Societies were invited by the Secretary General of the United Nations to participate at the meeting on 20 and 21 July 1979 on refugees and displaced persons in South-East Asia, held in Geneva under United Nations auspices. The encouraging results obtained will enable the Red Cross to use its available resources without delay to make an active contribution to the assistance programmes of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This contribution will be to the following operations:

1. In temporary host countries Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies will, with support from the League of Red Cross Societies, expand their present work in the camps, which consists of distributing basic relief, building shelters, medical care, social welfare and cultural assistance, communications, transport etc. These tasks require considerable resources in funds, manpower and material.

2. In permanent host countries the National Societies are stepping up their activities to receive refugees, for whom they often take most of the responsibility.

3. In all countries concerned the ICRC has begun to trace missing persons, exchange messages and reunite dispersed families with the active help of the National Societies concerned and in liaison with the UNHCR.

4. In Cambodia, the ICRC is making every effort to bring large-scale help as soon as possible to civilian victims of the conflicts and is preparing to send medical assistance and food.

The Red Cross is also considering what can be done to bring substantial help to the other countries in the region which have been ruined by the war that has afflicted them for so many years, or which are trying to cope with the unprecedented problem of refugees arriving by land and sea.

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INDOCHINESE REFUGEES IN SOUTH EAST ASIA
A MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS
PREPARATION OF A PLAN FOR THE REGION

The Red Cross representatives of 17 National Societies met in Geneva on the 31 July and 1 August, in response to the invitation from the League of Red Cross Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Among the items discussed were the assistance provided by the Red Cross to the Indochinese refugees in South East Asia as well as the future action required in the light of the present critical situation in the region and following the commitments of the International Red Cross made at the recent Conference on Refugees and Displaced Persons in South East Asia. The representatives of the UNHCR and of ICEM also attended.

Leading officials of the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the five Asean countries, as well as the British Red Cross Society representing its Hong Kong Branch, presented their activities and problems.

The main conclusions reached at the meeting were to increase relief operations presently being undertaken and also to formulate a concerted Plan of Red Cross Action in the entire region to be implemented without delay. The Plan will cover:

a) the supplementary needs of the refugees
b) the needs of the local population, and
c) the implementation of the Red Cross Central Tracing Agency Programme.

Although any current figures on the number of refugees in the area for the next few months must be approached very cautiously, a preliminary estimate for a five-months' Red Cross Programme for the region may be in the neighbourhood of 17 million dollars US (approximately 27 million Swiss Francs) or 3.4 million dollars a month. The participants agreed that the implementation of this Red Cross Plan and the required funds were within the capacity of the International Red Cross movement.

The participants also stressed the importance for the League and the ICRC to further coordinate the implementation of the Relief Programme and channel the resources, both from within and outside Red Cross, including those available through UNHCR and other international agencies.
Joint press release UNICEF/ICRC No. 1372
9 August 1979

ICRC/UNICEF : FIRST RELIEF FLIGHT TO KAMPUCHEA

Geneva (ICRC/UNICEF) : An aircraft chartered by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) left Ho-Chi-Minh City today, 9th August, for Phnom Penh with 4.4 tons of emergency medical supplies provided by the two organisations.

A representative of UNICEF and an ICRC delegate accompanied this first relief flight to Kampuchea, result of a visit to Phnom Penh in mid-July to make contact with Kampuchean authorities.

During their second visit to the capital, the ICRC and UNICEF will take the opportunity to study with Kampuchean officials the arrangements for a relief programme in favour of the population seriously affected by several years of deprivation and fighting. Under the programme, and consistent with their respective functions, the ICRC will provide protection and assistance to the civilian population in general, while UNICEF will concentrate on assistance to mothers and children and the restoration of services benefiting this particularly vulnerable group.

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Press release No 1373
10 August 1979

CHAD - CIVILIAN INTERNEES TO BE
TRANSFERRED UNDER ICRC AUSPICES

Geneva (ICRC) - Starting on 11 August 1979, 850 civilian internees of Chad nationality, the majority of them the wives and children of prisoners of war, after being held for over a year in the region of Faya-Largeau (BET province) by the Chad National Liberation Front (FROLINAT), will be taken to their villages in the southern part of Chad, by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The ICRC's endeavours, made with purely humanitarian motives, to obtain the approval of both the FROLINAT and the Chad Government to allow these women and children to return to their homes, have at last borne fruit.

The French Government has lent the ICRC planes for this operation. Four flights will have to be made from Faya to the towns of Moundou, Sahr and N'Djamena.

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TWO MORE RELIEF FLIGHTS TO LEAVE FOR KAMPUCHEA

Geneva (UNICEF/ICRC) - Following the visit to Phnom Penh from 9 to 16 August of a delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and a representative of the United Nations children's Fund (UNICEF), two more flights are leaving today and 10 September, carrying approximately sixty tons of emergency supplies including food, medicaments and medical equipment. A UNICEF representative as well as a delegate and a doctor of the ICRC left for Kampuchea on the same flight.

The team will continue the discussions begun earlier in August with the Phnom Penh authorities with a view to deciding methods for the practical application of the assistance programme put forward by the ICRC and UNICEF for relief of the civilian population of Kampuchea.

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Joint Press release
UNICEF/ICRC No 1375
17 September 1979

FOURTH EMERGENCY ICRC/UNICEF FLIGHT FOR KAMPUCHEA

Geneva (ICRC/UNICEF) - A consignment of 41.5 tons of food and medicines for Kampuchea left Luxembourg for Phnom Penh today in a cargo plane chartered by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The plane will arrive in Phnom Penh September 18. It is the fourth arranged jointly by the two organisations. The cargo includes 8 tons of dried fish flour donated by the Government of Norway and 9 tons of enriched infant food contributed by Sweden through the World Food Programme (W.F.P.).

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Cambodia: Acceptance of the ICRC-UNICEF Relief Programme

Geneva (ICRC-UNICEF) - The representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in contact with the Cambodian authorities at Phnom Penh ("People's Kampuchea") have just received an affirmative reply concerning the start of the large-scale relief operations made necessary by the urgency and extent of the needs of the civilian population in Cambodia for food and medical services.

Indeed, the representatives of the two institutions have just been informed by the Minister of the Economy of the authorities' agreement to the opening in Phnom Penh of an ICRC delegation and of a UNICEF office. This decision has been interpreted in Geneva and New York as acceptance by the "People's Kampuchea" authorities of the emergency action plan which was proposed in August by the ICRC and UNICEF. The plan provides for the presence of at least some representatives of both institutions to ensure that relief distribution is both quick and consistent with the principles of impartiality and non-discrimination which have always guided the action of the ICRC and of UNICEF.

Moreover, the authorities of "Democratic Kampuchea" have agreed to the immediate start of a relief action based on the same principles for the benefit of tens of thousands of civilians stranded in a region near the Thailand frontier. Here too, the representatives of both institutions will be permitted to see for themselves that the relief is distributed without discrimination to all victims.

In accordance with the principle of neutrality, the ICRC and UNICEF, through their representatives on the spot, will watch that this relief, so essential for the civilian populations, will in no way contribute to the war effort of either belligerent.
Joint UNICEF-ICRC Press release No 1377
19 October 1979

KAMPUCHEA: ICRC AND UNICEF APPEAL FOR FUNDS

Geneva (ICRC/UNICEF) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the United Nations Childrens Fund (UNICEF) are appealing to the international community to support their programme of assistance to 2 1/2 million Cambodians, including 700,000 children and sick people.

The two organizations are appealing for 111 million dollars to provide food (58 million), medical aid (16 million), education (3 million) and various equipment (4 million). Logistic expense for the operation - air and sea transport, vehicles, fuel and so forth - are estimated at over 21 million dollars. Other operational costs for six months are expected to be below 4 million.

Mindful of the absolute necessity of providing humanitarian assistance to all victims, the ICRC and UNICEF, in co-operation with the World Food Programme for the food supplies, are counting on the support of governments, National Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies, National Committees for UNICEF, and the public generally, to enable them to meet the tremendous need.

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International Red Cross assistance for Indochinese refugees in Asia is to be extended to those who have received asylum in China. Some 260,000 persons have already arrived in the country over the last 18 months and still others are expected. The Chinese Red Cross has appealed to the International Red Cross for support to continue its work for some 69,000 refugees including 30,000 children who have not yet been integrated into normal life.

The Chinese Red Cross, which has been working since April 1978 together with the authorities, is depleting its resources and may not be able to meet the needs. The Red Cross programme is complementary to that of the UNHCR. The appeal to the International Red Cross is to allow the Society to continue its medical and feeding programmes. A family reunion and correspondence service will be set up similar to that which other National Societies in the region operate today together with the ICRC.

At the beginning of November an evaluation mission will go to China to study a programme and budget to enable the Chinese Red Cross to deal with the refugee influx in the same way in which other National Societies in the region have been doing for many months.
INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS TO RECRUIT MEDICAL TEAMS
FOR ASSISTANCE TO CAMBODIAN REFUGEES IN THAILAND

The International Red Cross is recruiting 120 doctors and nurses worldwide for urgent medical relief in Thailand for the tens of thousands of Cambodian refugees in the frontier zone. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and UNICEF having been mandated by the Thai government to coordinate all relief actions in this zone, it is the ICRC which will be responsible for this vast medical operation working closely with the Thai Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies.

In view of the large number required, the ICRC and the League have approached several National Societies to recruit this medical personnel. Some ten National Societies have already responded to the appeal. After briefing in Geneva, the teams will shortly leave for Thailand.
HELP TO THE KAMPUCHEA POPULATION TO BE INCREASED

Geneva (ICRC-UNICEF) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) need 250 million dollars for their programmes for the civilian population of Kampuchea during the next twelve months.

Apart from the 111 million dollars for which the two organizations appealed on 19 October to finance the first six months of their work in Kampuchea, it is expected that another 140 million dollars will be necessary to continue and extend assistance in the second half of 1980.

The international community is being called upon to give no less than 311 million dollars, counting the 60 million required by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for its assistance to refugees in Thailand.

These are the figures which will be submitted on 5 November to the "Pledging Conference for Humanitarian Relief to the People of Kampuchea" convened in New York by the U.N. Secretary-General.

This additional demand underlines the importance of the effort required. The ICRC and UNICEF earnestly hope that the community of States will contribute generously by giving them and the UNHCR the money and means to end the suffering which the civilian population of Kampuchea has endured for too long.

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Joint ICRC-UNICEF press release No 1381
Geneva, 23 November 1979

CAMBODIA - ICRC AND UNICEF SHORT OF FUNDS

Geneva (ICRC/UNICEF) - If the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations Childrens Fund are not very soon given more cash, the humanitarian action conducted by these two organizations in aid of starving Cambodian civilians may well be in trouble, with an expected year-end deficit of 45 million dollars.

In spite of the very encouraging outcome of the Pledging Conference convened by the UN Secretary-General and held in New York on 5 November, remittance of the promised contributions is far too slow, unlike the work in Thailand and Cambodia which is increasing in pace and cost. So far expenditure has exceeded incoming funds by eleven million dollars.

To avoid a decline in operations because of financial considerations, the ICRC and UNICEF appeal to the generosity of the public and look to the States of the international community to discharge as soon as possible the commitments they undertook.

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Press Release
No 1382
10 December 1979

VALERY GISCARD D'ESTAING AT ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - While in Geneva on 10 December, Mr. Valéry Giscard D'Estaing, President of France, went to the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Together with Mr. Olivier Stirn, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Daniel Hoeffel, Secretary of State for Health and Family Affairs, and Mr. Jean-Marie Soutou, President of the French Red Cross, Mr. Giscard d'Estaing was welcomed by ICRC President Alexandre Hay, members of the International Committee, the Institution's Directors and leading officials of the League of Red Cross Societies.

The President of the Swiss Confederation, Mr. Hans Hürlimann, who met Mr. Giscard d'Estaing on his arrival at Cointrin Airport, was also a guest of the ICRC during this visit.

After signing the Visitors Book and seeing an exhibition on the work of the Central Tracing Agency, President Giscard d'Estaing discussed topical problem with the ICRC before proceeding to the Palais des Nations to receive the Nansen Medal of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees.

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JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Friday, 21 December 1979
ICRC - 1383
League - general 31/1979

INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS APPEALS FOR AID TO HELP CHINESE RED CROSS

RESETTLE REFUGEES

Geneva, December 21, 1979—In an appeal launched to National Societies to aid the Red Cross Society of China's refugee relief and resettlement project, the League of Red Cross Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross jointly called for hospital supplies and equipment worth an estimated SwFr 1,251,600 as well as cash contributions for local purchase of badly needed supplies (clothing, blankets, fishing equipment, educational material, etc.) valued at approximately SwFr 2,291,100.

The appeal came as the People's Republic of China went forward with its announced commitment to accept 260,000 Southeast Asian refugees, an estimated 10,000 of them still in Indochina.

As one phase of its refugee relief and resettlement project, the Chinese government is building ten hospitals, six of them to be equipped through the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, four of them by the Chinese Red Cross financed by the International Red Cross.

Suggestions by the ICRC's Central Tracing Agency concerning the tracing of persons and the transmitting of the refugees’ family mail are under study by the Chinese Red Cross.