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Joint press release
CICR Nr. 1409
League Nr. 1
Geneva, February 9, 1981

First Medical Seminar of the International Red Cross

Geneva (ICRC-League) - The first seminar on International Red Cross emergency medical activities will be held in Geneva at the Penta Hotel from 13 to 16 February 1981. Some 70 physicians and nurses from 23 national Red Cross societies will take part in this meeting jointly organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the League of Red Cross Societies. The seminar will enable participants to exchange ideas and practical experience in the field, with a view to improving and adapting medical activities to the needs of the assisted population.

Topics to be discussed include emergency surgery, nutritional problems, hygiene and the prevention of epidemics, the choice of medications and assistance to war disabled.

Dr. Ulrich Middendrop, who is the head of the surgical clinic at the Winthertur Cantonal Hospital, a member of the ICRC and chairman of the ICRC medical committee, and Mr. Olof Stroh, special assistant to the Secretary General of the League, will be chairing the opening session.

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Press Release
ICRC No 1410
Geneva, February 17, 1981

ASSISTANCE IN AFRICA - ICRC's 1981 PROGRAMMES TO COST 5.5 MILLION SW FRANCS A MONTH

The problems of Africa demand, in 1981, a special effort by the international organisations to help the continent's growing population in need - people afflicted by both man-made and natural disasters.

For its part, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), is active in 13 African countries to provide medical care, relief and protection for the victims of conflicts. To be able to continue and extend these urgent programmes - for the most part in situations where it alone is able to act - the ICRC has appealed to governments and national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies for 52 and a half million Swiss francs. This sum is needed to make up the total budget for 1981 of 66.2 million francs.

As a neutral intermediary, the ICRC's tasks in Africa - as elsewhere in the world - include visiting prisoners of war and political detainees, transmitting family messages and providing material assistance in conflict regions where civilian victims such as displaced people are practically cut off from all other help.

The largest portion of the funds now being sought are for Angola, where the ICRC urgently needs to extend its assistance programme to reach as many as possible of the country's estimated 500'000 displaced people. Two-thirds of these are in the conflict zone of the Plano Alto. Security risks and logistical difficulties combine to present great problems in bringing aid, especially to the women and children. Their situation is described by ICRC delegates on the spot as being extremely grave.

The ICRC has also increased its aid budget for its activities in Namibia, the Horn of Africa and the West Nile province of Uganda.

The ICRC's appeal is being launched in coordination with the League or Red Cross Societies which is seeking 41 million Swiss francs to cover assistance to refugees and drought victims, and for its long-term technical projects for national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies.

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Geneva (ICRC) - Following recent press reports referring to an investigation to be carried out by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) concerning possible food assistance from the European Economic Community (EEC) for the displaced population in El Salvador, the ICRC wishes to make the following statement.

As a non-governmental and private organisation acting independently, the ICRC never undertakes an investigation at the request of a government or governmental body.

An ICRC mission led by the director of the operations department is in El Salvador at the moment to assess the needs and to determine the material and financial means required by the ICRC to continue its activities for all civilian victims. This mission, planned several weeks ago, is one of the regular visits made by the head of the operations department to various ICRC delegations throughout the world.

For several months the ICRC has been conducting an assistance operation for displaced persons, in co-operation with the Salvadorean Red Cross; moreover, ICRC delegates have been making regular visits since 1979 to persons detained as a result of events.

The ICRC stresses that it has made it a rule in all its operations to ensure, through its delegates in the field, that its assistance does in fact reach the victims.

The ICRC's activities must remain impartial without favouring one party to the detriment of another.
Press release no. 1412
5 April 1981

Lebanon: Death of relief workers prompts appeal by ICRC President

Geneva (ICRC) - Two relief workers from the Lebanese Red Cross and a nursing nun were killed on the evening of Saturday April 3 when the ambulance, in which they were travelling from Baalbeck to Zahle with blood and medicaments for the wounded, was caught in cross-fire and accidentally left the road.

Deeply hit by this tragedy and by the number of innocent victims already affected in South Lebanon, the Bekaa and Beirut during the past few days, M. Alexander Hay, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), made the following appeal on Sunday morning in Amman, Jordan, where he was presiding over the opening of an important seminar on the dissemination of international humanitarian law.

"...It is impossible not to speak of the tragedy which has once again hit Lebanon. The fundamental aim of international humanitarian law is precisely to avoid what is happening today in Lebanon: the shelling of civilian institutions, indiscriminate attacks against hospitals, schools and other places which should be respected at all times.

"Once more, innocent victims have paid for it with their lives. "...All of you who are fighting in Lebanon and to whichever party you belong, I implore you in the name of the ICRC and in the name of humanity, to stop this senseless killing and to protect civilians, particularly women, children and the elderly, I implore you to respect the hospitals and schools and to spare the wounded and all those not involved in the combat."

With more than 100 wounded being cared for at the Lebanese Red Cross dispensary in Zahle, the ICRC was able to organise a convoy on Sunday afternoon, during an extremely precarious cease-fire, to deliver medicaments, medical equipment and food to Zahle. On its return, an ambulance in the convoy, which had been able to evacuate one wounded person, was hit by a bullet - but fortunately without serious consequences.
JOINT PRESS RELEASE  
ICRC No 1413 - LIGUE No 5/81

To be published on April 11, 1981

60th DISTRIBUTION OF THE INCOME OF
THE EMPRESS SHOKEN FUND

Geneva (ICRC/League) - Seventy years ago, the Empress Shôken of Japan established a Fund for the purpose of supporting the relief activities of National Societies in peace time. Since then, the Government of Japan and the Japanese Red Cross Society have made regular contributions to increase this Fund.

Every year, the income of the Fund is distributed by a Joint Commission of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. This Commission met in Geneva on Thursday, 26 March, under the chairmanship of Mr. Maurice Aubert, member of the ICRC, with Ambassador Suzuki of the Japanese Mission in Geneva and Mr. Henrik Beer, Secretary General of the League being present.

Five National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, have benefited from the Fund's income this year. This will enable them to improve their equipment in order to carry out their national activities, especially in the medical and blood transfusion fields.

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Press release Nr. 1414  
Geneva, April 13, 1981

LEBANON: URGENT APPEAL BY ICRC FOR Sfrs 6 MILLION

With the sudden revival of fighting and resurgence of tension in eastern and southern Lebanon, the ICRC is urgently calling for Sfrs 6 million to fund its emergency action in the country.

Since April 3 up until last Sunday (April 12), the ICRC, in cooperation with the Lebanese Red Cross, had sent six convoys to Zahle carrying medicaments, blood, surgical equipment and food, while also evacuating 37 wounded.

During the same period, the ICRC was able to evaluate the needs of principal hospitals and clinics in southern Lebanon and has sent more than 2000 kgs of medical aid from Geneva to Beirut. In addition, its delegation in the Lebanese capital has been strengthened by a further seven delegates.

Confronted by a growing number of victims, the ICRC needs the Sfrs 6 million for the forthcoming five months to enable it to carry out its emergency action throughout the conflict-ridden areas.

This amount will allow the ICRC to supply numerous clinics and hospitals throughout the country, to open an emergency surgical unit, to deal with the growing tasks of the Central Tracing Agency, as the number of separated families and missing people increase, and finally to increase its delegation to 15 members and 35 Lebanese colleagues.

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Press release Nr. 1415  
Geneva, May 6, 1981

INDIAN PRIME MINISTER VISITS ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - Indian Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, today (May 6) visited the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Geneva following her address to the assembly of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Mrs Gandhi was welcomed to the ICRC by its president, Mr Alexandre Hay and members of the committee and directorate as well as leading figures from the League of Red Cross Societies.

After signing the visitor's book, Mrs Gandhi discussed with ICRC representatives current humanitarian problems.
EL SALVADOR: MURDER OF AN ICRC EMPLOYEE

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross has just learned with shock of the murder of one of its Salvadoran employees, Mr. Carlos Manfredi Hernandez.

Mr. Hernandez was the storekeeper of an ICRC relief depot at San Miguel in the east of the country where for the last seven months the ICRC and the El Salvador Red Cross have been conducting a large-scale assistance operation for displaced persons. The circumstances of the murder have not yet been determined.

Mr. Hernandez' death increases the tragic list of victims of the events in El Salvador. In the prevailing situation of constant violence, the ICRC has for months been trying to introduce some humanity and to induce combatants to respect women, children, the sick and all who take no part in the fighting.

The ICRC is profoundly distressed by the murder and again appeals earnestly for respect of the civilian population and of Red Cross personnel and their humanitarian work. The ICRC has conveyed its deep sympathy to Mr. Hernandez' family.
JOINT PRESS RELEASE
ICRC - 1417
LEAGUE 8/81
10 June 1981

Crown Prince Harald and Princess Sonja of Norway visit the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies

Geneva (ICRC/League) - While in Geneva, their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Harald and Princess Sonja of Norway visited the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the League of Red Cross Societies (League) on 10 June 1981.

After being welcomed by President Alexandre Hay, their Royal Highnesses and their suite, accompanied by members and directors of the ICRC, were informed about the institution's activities. They then signed the Visitors' Book and were shown the workings of the ICRC Central Tracing Agency.

At the League their Royal Highnesses were received by Secretary-General Henrik Beer and his colleagues, who explained the activities of the world Red Cross federation in the development of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, in assistance to the victims of natural disasters, and in aid of young people and the disabled.

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Press release No. 1418 b
Geneva, 12 June 1981

PRESIDENT OF VENEZUELA VISITS ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - During his visit to Geneva, the President of the Republic of Venezuela, H.E. Mr. Luis Herrera Campins, came to the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross on 12 June 1981.

Upon arrival, H.E. and Mrs. Herrera Campins and their suite were welcomed by ICRC President Alexander Hay. The members and directors of the ICRC and Mr. Henrik Beer, Secretary-General of the League of Red Cross Societies, were presented to the presidential couple.

After signing the Visitors' Book, President Herrera conferred privately with Mr. Hay, while Mrs Herrera Campins and the presidential retinue were informed about ICRC activities and given an insight into the work of the Central Tracing Agency.

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Iran-Iraq: The ICRC Repatriates Wounded Prisoners

Geneva (ICRC) - An operation to repatriate prisoners of war who have been wounded during the conflict between Iraq and Iran was carried out today, June 16, 1981.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which organised the operation in close cooperation with the authorities of the two countries, was able to repatriate 25 Iranians and 17 Iraqis. This operation, initiated at the request of Iran, is the first of its type since the beginning of the conflict.

The ICRC handed over the prisoners of war to the two parties at the airport of Larnaca in Cyprus.

An aircraft, specially chartered by the ICRC for the operation, left Geneva on the evening of June 15. It was carrying 7.5 tons of emergency supplies for the victims of the Iranian earthquake. These supplies, including tents, blankets and other equipment, were supplied by the Swiss Red Cross, the League of Red Cross Societies and the ICRC.
Press release No 1420
Geneva, June 24, 1981

UGANDA : OMBACHI MISSION ATTACKED:
ICRC APPEALS TO COMBATANTS

Geneva (ICRC) - Ombachi mission situated in Uganda's West Nile Province, and where about 10,000 people have been sheltered from the grave troubles which have plagued the region since the beginning of the month, was this morning (June 24) attacked by uncontrollable elements of the Uganda army.

According to information sent by the ICRC delegate at the mission, the attack resulted in the death of 55 civilians while about another 100 were wounded. Evacuation of the wounded to Nebbi Hospital in the south of the province is currently being carried out.

Alarmed by the scale of violence in the region, the ICRC, whose major occupation is to propagate respect for the protection of those who are suffering, has launched a solemn appeal to the parties concerned, reminding them of their obligation to observe and carry out the fundamental humanitarian principles - in particular, not to attack wounded or sick, be they combatants or not, not to attack civilians and not to violate places and people displaying the Red Cross emblem.

In addition to the ICRC delegate, representatives from the League of Red Cross Societies, a team from "Médecins sans frontières", as well as some German doctors and Swedish logistics experts, have been at the mission, run by the Fathers of Verona, since June 19.

The immediate consequence of this morning's attack was the flight of the refugees towards Zaire. The remaining people at the mission will be evacuated to the south of the province tomorrow morning (June 25).
Press release Nr. 1421

IRAN/IRAQ CONFLICT : SECOND REPATRIATION ORGANISED BY THE ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) The repatriation of wounded prisoners of war and interned civilians took place between Iran and Iraq today (August 25).

A total of 45 Irakians and 40 Iranians were handed over to representatives of the two countries at the Larnaca airport in Cyprus by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

An aircraft, chartered by the ICRC for this operation, left Geneva on Monday evening (August 24). On board were four tonnes of relief destined for victims of the most recent earthquake in Iran. This relief has been made available by the Swiss Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies.

The repatriation is the second to be organised by the ICRC since the start of the conflict, the first having taken place on June 16, 1981.
Press release No 1422

AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT VISITS ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - During his tour of Switzerland, President of the Republic of Austria, His Excellency, Mr Rudolph Kirschläger, visited the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Geneva on September 9.

As guest of the Swiss Federal Council during his State Visit, His Excellency has been accompanied by Mr Kurt Furgler, President of the Confederation and Mr Georges-André Chevallaz, Federal Councillor, as well as the Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of External Commerce.

On their arrival at the headquarters, Mr Kirschläger and his entourage were welcomed by the ICRC President, Mr Alexandre Hay, who introduced them to the members of the Committee and Directorate of the ICRC as well as representatives from the League of Red Cross Societies, the Swiss Red Cross and its Geneva branch, and the Henry Dunant Institute.

After signing the visitors' book President Kirschläger and his group listened to an exposé on ICRC activities throughout the world. They were also shown an exhibition illustrating the work of the Central Tracing Agency.

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Inauguration of the International Red Cross Audio-Visual Centre

Geneva (ICRC/League) - The International Red Cross Audio-Visual Centre in Geneva was officially inaugurated on Wednesday 30 September.

A joint creation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the League of Red Cross Societies, the Centre produces and distributes a full range of audio-visual material on the history and activities of the Red Cross. Its services are available to all national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the media and the general public.

The opening of the Centre, located in the building of the League of Red Cross Societies, is an important step in the cooperation between the two international organisations which for the first time have undertaken the joint administration of a permanent service.
NEW NATIONAL RED CROSS SOCIETY

Geneva (ICRC) - On October 15, 1981, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) officially recognised the National Red Cross Society of Tonga.

This recognition brings the number of official National Societies, which are members of the International Red Cross, to 127.

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Press release No. 1425
Geneva, 22 October 1981

PRESIDENT OF GHANA VISITS ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - While in Switzerland, the President of the Republic of Ghana, His Excellency Dr Hilla Limann, visited the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on 22 October 1981.

In the absence of the President of the ICRC, Mr Alexandre Hay, at present on mission, H.E. Dr Hilla Limann and his entourage were welcomed by the Vice-President, Mr Richard Pestalozzi, who introduced them to the members of the Committee and Directorate, and to the Deputy Secretary General of the League of Red Cross Societies, Mr Bertil Petterson.

After signing the Visitors' Book, President Limann listened to an account of ICRC activities in Africa.

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Press release No. 1426
October 27, 1981

RECOGNITION OF NEW NATIONAL SOCIETY

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has recognised the Qatar Red Crescent Society.

This recognition, which took effect on October 26, 1981, brings to 128 the number of National Society members of the International Red Cross.
LEAGUE OF RED CROSS SOCIETIES / INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

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JOINT PRESS RELEASE
ICRC - 1427
LEAGUE 17/81
Manila, November 7, 1981

OPENING OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH
INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS CONFERENCE

(LEAGUE/ICRC) - This morning, at the Philippine International Convention Centre, in Manila, the Twenty-fourth International Red Cross Conference started, with a record number of delegations from 121 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, from almost seventy States parties to the Geneva Conventions, as well as from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the League of Red Cross Societies. Many observers, from emerging National Red Cross Societies and from governmental and non-governmental organizations, were also present.

The International Red Cross Conference, the supreme decision-making body of the International Red Cross, will continue until 14 November.

After the solemn reading of the principles of the Red Cross by Professor P.E. Marcos, vice-president of the Philippine National Red Cross, General Romeo C. Espino, president of the National Society, welcomed the delegates, stressing the importance of this conference in south-east Asia.

The retiring chairman of the International Red Cross Standing Commission, Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh, stated that the conference was an opportunity for the Red Cross movement to make a direct request to government representatives for their interest and support.

Mr. Alexandre Hay, president of the ICRC, conveyed the International Committee's concern at the rising tide of violence, particularly in ideological and racial conflicts in which the struggle had all the horror of total war. He warned against introducing politics into humanitarian action, as it would be not only contrary to humanitarian principles but ineffective. It would create an illusion, appearing to settle basic problems but would in fact confuse causes with effects. Mr. Hay appealed to governments and individuals to spare in their conflicts at least the small enclaves of humanity. In a reminder that the way to lasting peace was disarmament, he stated that the ICRC was open to any request which the powers might make if they agreed amongst themselves that the ICRC could, however modestly, contribute to genuine progress in disarmament.
Mr. Enrique de la Mata, the new president of the League of Red Cross Societies, said that the Red Cross, like other international bodies concerned to improve the human condition, offered a gleam of hope in today's world. It was, he said, a unique organization, because of its principles - particularly independence and neutrality - which constituted a sound basis for the struggle against injustice.

HE. Mr. Ferdinand E. Marcos, president of the Republic of the Philippines, concluded the ceremony saying that while philosophers had told us that what raised man above his primitive state was the sharpening of his awareness of his fellows suffering, the Philippine people considered the Red Cross to be the guardian of that ever-fragile moral sense.
(LEAGUE/ICRC) - The 24th International Conference of the Red Cross meeting in Manila ended its work on 14 November with a plenary session which gave approval by consensus to some 15 resolutions which had been put before it by the Commission on protection and assistance. Subject areas included the applicability of the 4th Geneva Convention to the occupied territories in the Middle East, forced or involuntary disappearance, anti-piracy efforts, torture and the humanitarian activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). In the latter resolution, the conference departed from previous practice and named three areas in which the ICRC is totally prevented from carrying out its humanitarian activities, namely, Western Sahara, Ogaden and Afghanistan.

The Commission on organizational and general matters presented its work to the plenary session. A statement of Red Cross policy with respect to refugees was given wide approval. Other resolutions referred to the role of the Red Cross volunteers and certain amendments to the rules and principles governing Red Cross relief work.

The work of the third Commission covering community services and development was also presented to the plenary session and proposed resolutions on primary health care, voluntary service, the giving of blood and the development of national Societies. In this respect, a strategy for Red Cross development in the eighties was adopted.

The next International Conference of the Red Cross will be held upon the invitation of the Swiss Government and the Swiss Red Cross in Geneva in 1986.

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