RED CROSS ACTION IN POLAND
APPEAL FOR 41.7 MILLION SWISS FRANCS

Geneva (ICRC/LEAGUE) - Evaluation missions carried out since December 28, 1981 in Poland by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) delegation in the company of representatives from the Polish Red Cross, have led to an extension of the assistance programmes. The provision of vehicles to the Polish Red Cross, the establishment of a radio communications network, a new medical programme, and relief for 80,000 people affected by the floods in the Plock region (west of Warsaw) since January 10, have resulted in the need to increase the budget announced on December 21, taking it to 41.7 million SwFr. for the first four months of 1982. Consequently, a new appeal to national Red Cross Societies was launched yesterday evening by the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies (League).

In order to carry the existing assistance programmes of the Polish Red Cross into February, March and April which had been budgeted at 24.5 million, a significant amount of relief, including 411,000 food parcels, 218,000 sets for newly-born babies and 50 tonnes of soap and detergent still remains to be found, in addition to the 20,000 pairs of boots and 20,000 overcoats for the flood victims.

As to the new programmes, budgeted at a total of 17.2 million SwFr. they include, amongst other things, the provision of 60 vehicles to the provincial sections of the Polish Red Cross, the installation of 10 radio stations connecting the ICRC delegation and the headquarters of the Polish Red Cross with the nine principal warehouses in the provinces; and finally, the sending of three supplementary delegates to be based in the provinces of Poland and an ICRC radio technician to maintain the radio network, thus bringing the number in the Warsaw delegation to 10.

Up until now, contributions have been received or promised by 32 national Red Cross Societies, but while relief in kind is valued at a total of 13.7 million SwFr., only 1.7 million SwFr. in cash contributions have been announced. Consequently, the Red Cross assistance action for Poland still needs 26.3 million SwFr.
Press release no 1430
Geneva, January 26, 1982

POLAND : ICRC AUTHORISED TO VISIT INTERNEES

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) delegation in Poland was informed on 21 January 1982 that the offer of its services to visit internees which it had made in Warsaw on 21 December 1981 had been accepted by the Polish authorities.

Two ICRC delegates together with the support of representatives of the Polish Red Cross, undertook a first visit at Goldap (some 200 km from Warsaw) on 22 January 1982 where they saw 242 internees. A second visit was made on 24 January 1982 at Bialoleka (in the outskirts of Warsaw) where delegates visited 245 internees. A total of 525 comfort kits (personal and toilet articles) were distributed during these visits.

The authorisation allows the ICRC representatives to visit all those persons interned since 13 December 1981. Visits are undertaken in accordance with the usual ICRC criteria: that ICRC delegates can interview internees without witness, that the visits are made at the place of detention and that they may be repeated.

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Press release No. 1431
31 March 1982

THE ICRC LEAVES UGANDA

Geneva (ICRC) - With the departure of the last 8 delegates, the delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Kampala closed on 31 March 1982. This withdrawal follows an official request presented to the ICRC by the Ugandan authorities earlier in March.

The ICRC is deeply concerned by the decision of the Ugandan Government and its practical consequences, particularly in the field of protection where its delegates have been active since May 1979 until December 14, 1981, when the authorization to visit detainees was rescinded.

The ICRC has informed the Ugandan Government of its wish to continue the dialogue with the view to resuming its action of protection in the near future as it feels that there is a definite humanitarian need for the continuation of this specific ICRC task.

ICRC visits to prisons in Uganda had started three weeks after the opening of the delegation in May, 1979. Between 1979 and 1981, about 4500 to 6000 detainees were seen each year by ICRC delegates, who also provided relief and medical assistance to the detainees. Following requests from the delegation, the Ugandan authorities agreed, in August 1980, to release certain categories of detainees on humanitarian grounds. Civilians in the West Nile and around the capital also benefitted from ICRC protection.

With regard to the assistance programmes, the action, after the subsidence of the initial emergency, focused mainly on the West Nile region, where displaced and returned persons benefitted from relief convoys; in 1981 relief distributions had to be extended to victims of sporadic incidents of violence in areas around the capital. From 1979 till 1982, a total of 780.3 tons of relief valued at 3,070,230 Swiss Francs, plus medical assistance amounting to 2,081,430 Swiss Francs, were distributed through the Kampala delegation and the Arua sub-delegation.
Geneva (ICRC - League) - The Joint Commission responsible for distributing the income from the Empress Shôken Fund met on 24 March 1982 under the chairmanship of Mr. Maurice Aubert, member of the International Committee of the Red Cross. H.E. Fumihiko Suzuki, Ambassador of Japan, Mr. Henrik Beer, Secretary General Emeritus of the League, and Mr. B. Petterson, League Deputy Secretary General were present.

The Empress Shôken Fund was set up in 1912 by a gift from Her Imperial Majesty of Japan, for the purpose of encouraging the development of humanitarian activities among National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Since then, the Fund has received several gifts from the Imperial Family of Japan, the Japanese Government and the Japanese Red Cross Society.

The income distributed during the current year will enable thirteen National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Latin America, Africa and Asia to improve their equipment, enable them to carry out blood transfusion and first aid activities and to take part in the first leadership training seminar organized by the Henry Dunant Institute.

The Joint Commission thanked the Japanese Red Cross and, through it, the Imperial Family of Japan and the Japanese Government for the help given towards the development of many National Societies all over the world. In the name of the ICRC and the League, the Joint Commission expressed to the Japanese Government and the Japanese Red Cross the sincere gratitude felt by all members of the Red Cross movement.
Press release No. 1433
April 22, 1982

RECOGNITION OF NEW NATIONAL SOCIETY

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

This recognition, which takes effect on April 22, 1982, brings to 129 the number of National Societies which are members of the International Red Cross.

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Press Release No 1434
May 3, 1982

FALKLANDS/MALVINAS CRISIS : ICRC ACTION

Geneva (ICRC) - Three delegates from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), including one doctor, left Buenos Aires on May 3 for the towns of Rio Gallegos, Puerto Deseado and Comodoro Rivadavia, from where they will proceed to the Falklands/Malvinas if the situation permits. The mission follows a series of discussions with the Argentine authorities during which the ICRC explained its concern for the situation of the civilian population living in the archipelago as well as in southern Argentine towns.

Since the start of the crisis between Argentina and the United Kingdom, the ICRC has maintained regular contact with the authorities of these two countries. On April 28, the ICRC reminded the two parties of their obligations in accordance with the Geneva Conventions of 1949. It also offered its services to intervene in favour of people protected under the Conventions as well as in the framework of other humanitarian mandates which the concerned governments may wish to entrust to the ICRC.

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Geneva (ICRC) - A glance at the state of international relations today gives little encouragement to even the most persistent optimist. There is a growing fear, shared by concerned people of all races, on all continents, that the development and spread of new weapons capable of mass destruction - and the reported reappearance of older but just as sinister arms - is leading mankind down the path to an all-out confrontation whose proportions we can hardly contemplate. And yet other, so-called "conventional", forms of warfare on land, sea or air both internal and international are continuing day after day. This week alone hundreds of lives have been lost in clashes between nations, or in conflicts between members of the same nation. These deaths are sometimes being caused by the most simple kinds of weapons. It is precisely the continuation and - dare we say it - the acceptance of this state of affairs which make the prospects for global peace so remote.

Man's inhumanity to man today is simply appalling. But to stand back, aghast, is a luxury that members of the Red Cross can not afford. Henry Dunant, whose birthday will be celebrated tomorrow during World Red Cross Day (8 May), was appalled at the carnage of Solferino: but he found it in himself to act for the fallen victims, to help and encourage others to help the wounded whether they were "friend" or "foe". This gesture of helping the fallen fighter, or the shipwrecked, is still the grim business of the Red Cross, today and every day. However Dunant's ideal does not stop with the Red Cross: the governments which have signed the Geneva Conventions have themselves pledged to apply the same standards of protection and assistance for the victims of war, no matter which side they are on.

For as long as those pledges are honoured by action, hope for humanity in today's cruel world will be kept alive.

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8TH MAY 1982 : WORLD RED CROSS DAY
A MESSAGE BY ICRC PRESIDENT, MR. ALEXANDRE HAY
Press release no 1436
Geneva, May 13, 1982

FALKLANDS / MALVINAS : REPATRIATION OF ARGENTINE PRISONERS

Geneva (ICRC) - 189 prisoners, both civilians and members of the Argentine armed forces, who were captured by British troops on South Georgia, arrived today (May 13) at Montevideo airport on an aircraft chartered by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The 150 servicemen and 39 civilians (among them, 2 Chileans, 2 Uruguayans and 1 Spaniard) are to be handed over by the ICRC to representatives of the Argentine government in the Uruguayan capital; the Argentine officials will take charge of the transfer to Argentina.

The prisoners were handed over to the ICRC by the British authorities on Ascension Island. Earlier, three ICRC delegates, including a doctor, visited the prisoners and were able to speak to them in private. A confidential report on these discussions will be given to the governments of the countries concerned.

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AFGHANISTAN : THE ICRC TRANSFERS SOVIETS TO SWITZERLAND

Geneva (ICRC) - Three Soviet nationals, who had been part of the Soviet military contingent in Afghanistan when they were captured, arrived in Switzerland this morning, May 28. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has negotiated, organised and assured their transit through Pakistani territory and transfer to Switzerland.

It is on the request of the ICRC that the Swiss authorities have accepted to keep the Soviets temporarily under their responsibility, with all those concerned having given their agreement to this procedure.

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INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS APPEAL FOR DISARMAMENT

Geneva (League/ICRC): In an appeal published today, the highest authorities of the International Red Cross call on Governments to take rapid action "to stop the arms race, and to take all measures to achieve general and complete disarmament under effective international control".

The appeal is addressed to the Second special session on disarmament of the United Nations General Assembly. It is signed by the President of the Standing Commission of the International Red Cross, Dr. Ahmed Abu Soura, by the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. Alexandre Hay, and by the President of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Mr. Enrique de la Mata.

The signatories recall that resolutions concerning peace and disarmament have been adopted at numerous International Conferences of the Red Cross. They underline the importance attached to peace by the Red Cross movement, and urge the Community of States and the United Nations to adopt urgent measures to end armed conflicts and establish a lasting peace.

The three presidents consider it "their duty to express the growing concern of the world Red Cross movement over the unprecedented escalation of the nuclear and conventional arms race".

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FRANCOIS MITTERRAND VISITS THE ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - President of the Republic of France, Mr François Mitterrand, visited on June 2 the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) during his stay in Geneva. Mr Mitterrand was accompanied by Mrs Nicole Questiaux, Minister of National Solidarity, and Mr Jean Auroux, Minister of Labour. He was welcomed by the ICRC's President, Mr Alexandre Hay, and a former ICRC President, Mr Marcel Naville, together with members of the ICRC's Directorate. Also present were representatives from Genevese authorities, and from the League of Red Cross Societies.

After recalling the past century's links between France and the ICRC, Mr Hay gave Mr Mitterrand an outline of the ICRC's current activities. The French President then signed the visitor's book.

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Press release no. 1441
3 June 1982

SIX ICRC DELEGATES LEAVE FOR THE FALKLANDS/MALVINAS

Geneva (ICRC) - Six delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) left Montevideo in Uruguay yesterday (2 June) at 2330 GMT on board the British hospital ship HMS Hecla. They are bound for the Falklands/Malvinas where they are expected to arrive in four days.

The delegates, two of them doctors, are to visit prisoners of war being held on the islands or on board hospital ships. They will check that the conditions of detention conform to the rules of the Geneva Conventions. The ICRC delegates will also have discussions with the military authorities on the evacuation of the wounded and sick. The delegates will visit the hospital ships of both sides.

Yesterday the ICRC reminded both parties of its concern that the civilian population be safeguarded from the effects of the fighting.

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Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) confirms that one of its Swiss nurses, Miss Marie-José Burnier, was abducted by an armed group on 25 May 1982 following an attack on an ICRC convoy near Katchiungo in Angola.

Extremely concerned by this serious assault on its humanitarian mission and on those who carry it out, the ICRC is sparing no effort to obtain the release of its employee.

So as not to compromise the measures it is taking, the ICRC intends to treat this deplorable matter with the utmost discretion.

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PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1443
Geneva, June 8, 1982

ICRC ACTION IN LEBANON

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has reminded the combatants engaged in South Lebanon's hostilities of their obligations with regard to the International Humanitarian Law in force. It has asked them, in particular, to respect the wounded and sick, as well as those persons now out of the fighting; not to attack, in any case, the civilian population nor to use them for military ends; to take all the necessary measures to spare civilians and civilian property and to facilitate, in all circumstances, the accomplishment of the humanitarian mission of ICRC delegates and medical personnel.

On the field, the civilian population of Tyre (a town of about 10,000 people), fleeing from the threat of fighting, has sought the protection of the ICRC. The delegation in Tyre has taken immediate steps to meet the urgent needs of these people.

While the possibilities for movement within the country are particularly limited for ICRC delegates, they have nevertheless succeeded in evacuating the wounded from Tyre. At Sidon, the delegates have endeavoured to establish the infrastructure necessary for the evacuation of wounded, but they have met considerable difficulties because of the almost unceasing shelling.

Given the breadth of the humanitarian engagement, the ICRC has decided to reinforce its delegation in Lebanon. As a first step, four delegates, a doctor and a nurse are about to leave for the country.

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LEBANON:

SOLEMN APPEAL BY THE ICRC ON BEHALF OF THE POPULATION

Geneva (ICRC) - Yesterday evening, the 10 June 1982, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) appealed firmly and solemnly to highest authorities of Israel, demanding that all measures possible be taken so that civilians, whatever their nationality, be spared in the conflict in Lebanon, specific mention was made of the fighting in Beirut.

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PRESS RELEASE

Press Release No. 1445
June 15, 1982

POPE JOHN PAUL II VISITS ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - Pope John Paul II today (June 15) joined with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in calling on the world to "sincerely and scrupulously" observe the humanitarian laws contained within the Geneva Conventions. The Pope made the appeal during his visit to the headquarters of the ICRC, the first ever by the head of the Roman Catholic Church.

The one-hour visit began with the welcome by the ICRC's President, Mr Alexandre Hay, accompanied by two directors, Mr Jean-Pierre Hocké and Mr Jacques Moreillon. Mr Hay then presented to His Holiness the President of the Swiss Red Cross Society, Mr Hans Haug. Following this introduction, His Holiness met members of the International Committee itself as well as other ICRC officials and representatives from the League of Red Cross and Societies and the Henry Dunant Institute.

It was during his address after the introductions that Pope John Paul II made his appeal, adding that the humanitarian laws could be complemented by international legal instruments to combat inhuman treatment, in particular, torture.

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BEIRUT : ICRC APPEAL TO SPARE THE CIVILIANS

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) renews its appeal from 9 June in view of renewed high tension prevailing in Beirut which could result at any time in repeated and intolerable suffering for many civilians, especially women and children. The ICRC cannot but express its gravest alarm at the situation in Lebanon, particularly in Beirut.

Therefore, the ICRC by virtue of its humanitarian duties and its mandates under international humanitarian law addresses the most solemn appeal to all parties involved in the conflict in Lebanon, as well as to all concerned authorities to ensure immediately that no additional harm be inflicted on the civilian population of Beirut and to take accordingly immediate action to guarantee the safety and protect the lives of all of them in particular women and children.

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LEBANON : AN ICRC SHIP IS STRUCK BY SHELLS

Geneva (ICRC) - The hospital ship "M/S FLORA", put at the disposal of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) by the German Red Cross (FRG) was struck by shells at 1430 GMT today in the port of Jounieh, where it arrived this morning.

One member of the crew was killed and several others wounded. The injured were immediately transferred to the Notre-Dame Hospital at Jounieh.

This serious incident occurred after the ICRC had unloaded 83 tons of medical supplies, vaccine and plasma, as well as a field hospital intended for the victims of the conflict.

Extremely shocked by this assault on the protective emblem of the Red Cross, the ICRC reminds all parties to the conflict of their obligation to respect medical installations and personnel that are duly marked and to spare the civilian population not taking part in the fighting.

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Press release No 1448
12 August 1982

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER VISITS ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - The British Prime Minister, Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, today visited the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Mrs. Thatcher, accompanied by Mr. Denis Thatcher, was welcomed by the ICRC Vice-president, Mr. Richard Pestalozzi, in the absence of President Hay.

Replying to a welcoming speech by Mr. Pestalozzi, the British prime minister expressed her thanks to the ICRC for the humanitarian work carried out in the South Atlantic conflict. She also announced a special contribution of her government to the ICRC's program for political prisoners.

After greeting members of the Committee and senior executives of the ICRC, Mrs. Thatcher had a private meeting with the vice-president and other officials, in which a number of humanitarian issues were discussed.

Mrs. Thatcher and her husband were then the guests of honour at a reception, at which senior members of Geneva-based international organisations were present, as well as the Secretary general of the League of Red Cross Societies and representatives of the Federal, Cantonal and Municipal authorities.

Mrs. Thatcher's visit came during a private stay she and Mr. Thatcher were making in Switzerland.
PRESS RELEASE

Press release No 1449
August 27, 1982

AFGHANISTAN :
AUTHORISED TO VISIT PRISONERS

Geneva (ICRC) - The delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Kabul has received the authorisation from the government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan to visit prisoners and to carry out humanitarian assistance activities.

The ICRC's delegates started visiting the detention centre, Puli Charki in Kabul, on August 24. In accordance with the ICRC's criteria for visits, the delegates, one of whom is a doctor, interview the prisoners they meet, freely and without witness.

The delegates went to three Kabul hospitals on August 16 and 17 and plan to visit other medical establishments in the city.

The delegation of four arrived in Kabul on August 14.

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PRESS RELEASE

Press release No 1450
September 18, 1982

MASSACRE IN BEIRUT : ICRC REACTS STRONGLY

Geneva (ICRC) - ICRC delegates in Beirut reported that hundreds of children, adolescents, women and old people have been killed in the Chatila quarter of Beirut, their corpses lying scattered in the streets.

The ICRC has also ascertained that wounded patients have been murdered in their hospital beds, while other patients and doctors have been abducted.

On Friday, September 17 and Saturday, September 18, ICRC delegates in Beirut had to evacuate two hospitals which, because of these conditions, could no longer function. This has come at a time when other hospitals in Beirut are overcrowded with wounded and dead.

Meanwhile, some three hundred people have taken refuge at the ICRC delegation in Beirut, and the number is increasing hourly.

The ICRC solemnly appeals to the international community to intervene to put an immediate stop to the intolerable massacre perpetrated in Beirut on whole groups of people and to ensure that the wounded and those who treat them be respected and protected and that the basic right to live be observed.

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PRESS RELEASE

Press release no 1451
October 7, 1982

RECOGNITION OF NEW NATIONAL SOCIETY

Geneva (ICRC) : The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has recognised the Red Cross Society of Rwanda.

This recognition, which took effect on October 6, 1982, brings to 130 the number of National Societies which are members of the International Red Cross.

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Press release No 1452
9th October 1982

ICRC DELEGATES IN AFGHANISTAN RETURN TO GENEVA

Geneva (ICRC) - Delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), who arrived in Kabul on the 14th August 1982 at the invitation of the Afghan authorities, and who had carried out their first visit to Puli Charki prison, have been asked by the authorities to interrupt their mission and to leave the country for the time being.

The ICRC had previously been assured that it could visit all prisoners captured while bearing arms or detained in connection with the events in Afghanistan. These assurances came during negotiations with the Afghan authorities.

In these circumstances the ICRC expects the Afghan government to make clear within the shortest possible time its intentions as to the application of this agreement.
Press release No 1453
October 22, 1982

SEVEN ICRC EMPLOYEES ABDUCTED IN ANGOLA

Geneva (ICRC) - Seven Angolans, employed by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) within the framework of its humanitarian action in southern Angola, were abducted on October 18, in the province of Cunene.

The ICRC sees this serious incident as another assault against its protection and assistance action which it is trying to carry out in the region. At this stage, the ICRC is not in a position to provide further information about this deplorable affair as the delicate negotiations being undertaken to obtain the quick release of its employees require discretion.

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PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1454
4 November, 1982

ICRC CENTRAL TRACING AGENCY SEMINAR

Geneva (ICRC) - The Central Tracing Agency Technical Seminar, organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), opened in Geneva on Thursday, 4 November 1982.

The President of the ICRC, Mr. Alexandre Hay, welcomed the 61 participants from 53 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

This event - the first of its kind to be organized on such a scale - is intended to enable representatives of the National Societies, the League of Red Cross Societies and the ICRC to exchange their views and discuss their methods of tracing persons missing as a result of conflicts, transmitting family news and reuniting families.

The seminar will last until 10 November.

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ICRC OVERSEES PRISONER EXCHANGE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Geneva (ICRC) - A multilateral exchange of prisoners in southern Africa took place today in Lusaka, Zambia, under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The operation was the result of negotiations which the ICRC conducted for more than a year with the seven parties concerned: South Africa, Angola, the Soviet Union, Cuba, the United States of America, Zambia and UNITA (the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola).

The operation brought about the release by South Africa of 94 Angolans, one Soviet and a Cuban, as well as five corpses of Soviet and Cuban citizens. Two Soviet pilots were freed by UNITA while the Angolan government released three US citizens held in Luanda and the remains of two South African soldiers.

The American and Soviet citizens were handed over to their respective embassies in Lusaka. The Angolans and the Cuban citizen were flown on to Angola by the ICRC.

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