COLLECTION DES COMMUNIQUÉS DE PRESSE

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ANGLAIS
AN ICRC DELEGATE KILLED IN AN ACCIDENT IN THE SUDAN

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has learned, with deep sorrow, of the sudden death of Mr Michel Zufferey, delegate to the Sudan, in a road accident on 5 January 1985.

Michel Zufferey, 40 years old, unmarried, joined the ICRC in 1972. He undertook his first mission in Bangladesh, and then was posted successively to Angola, the Lebanon, Israel, Pakistan and the Chad. He started his mission in the Sudan on 22 January 1983.

Michel Zufferey, having spent over 12 years in the service of the ICRC, made many lasting friendships, and his death is profoundly regretted by the whole organisation.

The ICRC extends to his parents and friends its deepest sympathy and condolences.

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Press release No 1500b
12 February 1985

AWARD OF THE PAUL REUTER PRIZE

Geneva (ICRC) - The donation made in 1982 by Mr Paul Reuter, Honorary Professor of Paris University for law, economics and social sciences, member and former President of the U.N. Commission for International Law, enabled the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to establish the Paul Reuter Fund. The revenue from the fund is to be used for the promotion of knowledge and understanding of international humanitarian law and for the award of a prize of SFr. 2,000 every other year to reward a particularly deserving work in that field.

The Prize jury, presided by Mr Jean Pictet, Honorary Vice-President of the ICRC, and comprising on this occasion, in addition to members of the ICRC staff, Professor L. Condorelli and Prof. G. Malinverni, of Geneva University, has decided unanimously to award the first Paul Reuter Prize to Mr. Mohamed El Kouhène, Doctor of Laws, of Moroccan nationality, for his thesis entitled "Les garanties fondamentales de la personne dans les instruments de droit humanitaire et des droits de l'homme". The viva voce examination was held in July 1984 at the Law Faculty of Nice University.

The jury appreciated the outstanding quality of the first part of the laureate's thesis which greatly contributes to the knowledge of international humanitarian law in that it highlights its relationship with human rights. The Prize will be presented to the winner in Spring 1985.

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Press release No 1501  
Geneva, March 14, 1985

REGOINITION OF A NEW NATIONAL SOCIETY

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

This recognition, which took effect today March 14, 1985, brings to 136 the number of National Societies which are members of the International Red Cross.

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Press release No. 1503
Geneva, March 21 1985

ROUND TABLE ON THE SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS ON DANGEROUS MISSIONS

Geneva (ICRC) - "The safety of journalists on dangerous professional missions" will be the theme of a Round Table that the International Committee of the Red Cross will organize on 23 and 24 April 1985 at the Mirador Hotel, Mont-Pèlerin sur Vevey (Switzerland). Sixteen international and regional media organizations* have been invited to attend the Round Table. The United Nations Organization, the International Labour Office and UNESCO will be represented by observer delegations.

The purpose of the Round Table will be to examine the hazards facing journalists and to consider remedies, including the effectiveness of the legal protection afforded by existing international humanitarian law. It will assess the specific measures already taken or which should be taken in order to ensure and increase the safety of journalists on dangerous missions.

It is on the strength of its experience in areas affected by conflicts and disturbances that the ICRC has taken the initiative to organize this Round Table, hoping thereby to help find realistic means of ensuring the safety of journalists on dangerous missions.

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- Commonwealth Press Union (CPU)
- Confederation of Asean Journalists
- Federation of Arab Journalists (FAJ)
- Inter American Press Association (IAPA)
- International Association of Broadcasters (IAB)
- International Catholic Union of the Press (UCIP)
- International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)
- International Federation of Newspaper Publishers (FIEJ)
- International Federation of the Periodical Press (FIPP)
- International Organization of Journalists (IOJ)
- International Press Institute (IPI)
- Latin American Federation of Journalists (FELAP)
- Latin American Federation of Press Workers (FELATRAP)
- North American National Broadcasters Association (NANBA)
- Union of African Journalists (UAJ)
- World Press Freedom Committee (WPFC)
Geneva (ICRC) - On 2 April 1985, the Israeli Occupation authorities notified the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) of their intention to close Insar camp, in South Lebanon, which contained at the end of March more than 1,800 prisoners regularly visited by ICRC delegates.

A thousand detainees have been transferred to Israel, violating articles 49 and 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. The Israeli authorities have told the ICRC that these prisoners will be eventually taken back to Lebanese territory, to a new camp now being built.

The other Insar prisoners, more than 700 people, were handed over to the ICRC on 3 April. ICRC delegates are helping them to rejoin their families.

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EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND PFLP-GC

Geneva (ICRC) - On 20 May 1985, 1150 Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners detained by Israel were freed in exchange for 3 Israeli soldiers captured in the Lebanon by the PFLP-GC.

The terms for the exchange were negotiated through the intermediary of Austrian diplomats. The two parties then requested the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to meet all the prisoners named by Israel and the PFLP-GC in order to ascertain their wishes concerning the different destinations offered to them. Further, the parties charged the ICRC with organizing and supervising the exchange operation.

Thus, 605 Palestinian prisoners were able to return to their homes in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and in Arab locations of Israel; 151 Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners were freed at Kuneitra, so that they could return to the Lebanon via Syria; meanwhile, 394 other prisoners, together with the 3 Israeli prisoners, were freed at Geneva airport (Switzerland), from where they were flown to their respective destinations.

The Swiss and Genevan authorities gave their full support to the part of the exchange which took place in Geneva, according to the wishes of PFLP-GC and with the agreement of Israel.

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Press release no. 1506
28 May 1985

BOMBARDMENT OF CIVILIANS IN THE IRAN-IRAQ CONFLICT:
AN APPEAL BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - As a result of the dramatic events taking place in the Iran-Iraq conflict, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr Alexandre Hay, made the following statement on 28 May 1985:

"The bombardment of civilians is one of the very gravest violations of international humanitarian law. A de facto truce existed for several weeks between the two belligerents; Iraq has broken it, and reprisals for restarting the bombardments have followed.

"I solemnly call on the opposing forces to put an end to these practices which cause intolerable suffering to innocent civilians."

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TWO NEW MEMBERS OF THE ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - The Assembly of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has welcomed two new members, bringing the composition of the policy-making body of the institution to 21 people. The new members are Mr Odilo Guntern and Mr André Ghelfi.

Mr Odilo Guntern, a citizen of Brig, was born in 1937. After having studied law at the Universities of Fribourg, Bern and Milan, Mr Guntern obtained his law degree in 1961, and his doctorate in 1968. He has been head of his own law and notary office in Brig since 1964. Mr Guntern has also been involved in public life. In 1975, he was elected by his canton to the Council of States in Bern, where he sat until 1982. From 1979 to 1984, he was a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg; he was Vice-President of the Assembly in 1982. Mr Guntern has equally been involved with various relief agencies.

M. André Ghelfi was born in 1921 at Tavannes, a citizen of Renan (Canton of Bern). He worked in various Swiss metal-working and machinery businesses. In 1952, he was nominated to the Secretariat of the Swiss Federation of Metal Workers, and has been its Vice-President for 15 years. He represents the federation, and the Swiss Tradeunions Group, on various social, political and economic commissions. Mr Ghelfi is also a delegate to the International Labour Organisation, Geneva.

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PRESS RELEASE

Press release no 1508
Geneva, 17 June 1985

THE PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA AT THE ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - Mr Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, accompanied by Mrs Rajiv Gandhi, today visited the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). He was welcomed by the President of the ICRC, Mr Alexandre Hay.

Mr Gandhi and the personalities who accompanied him discussed various humanitarian questions in a private interview with Mr Hay and representatives of the ICRC.

The Indian Prime Minister was accompanied by Mr Romesh Bandhari, Foreign Secretary, Mr Arun Singh and Mr C.R. Gharekhan, Prime Minister's Office, and the Indian Ambassadors in Geneva and Bern.

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Press release No 1509
July 16, 1985

SOUTH LEBANON:
THE RED CROSS EMBLEM USED FOR A BOMBING ATTACK

Geneva (ICRC) - In South Lebanon on 15 July 1985, a car loaded with explosives was set off by its driver near a check-point, killing numerous civilians, including women and children. According to eye-witnesses, the vehicle carried the Red Cross emblem.

Over the last weeks, other bombing attacks have killed large numbers of defenceless civilians in West Beirut, East Beirut, Tripoli and South Lebanon.

The use of the protective emblem of the Red Cross for indiscriminate killing and wounding is a doubly detestable act which the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) condemns. Furthermore, the security and efficacy of ICRC operations are thus liable to be compromised, to the detriment of the victims themselves.

During the last 3 months in Beirut, 10 ICRC vehicles have been stolen at gunpoint.
PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1540
19 September 1985

VISIT BY THE HEAD OF THE LIECHTENSTEIN GOVERNMENT TO THE ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - Mr Hans Brunhart, Head of Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein, today visited the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) headquarters in Geneva. He was welcomed by the President of the ICRC, Mr Alexandre Hay, and members of the Executive Council and the Directorate.

Mr Brunhart discussed various humanitarian questions in a private interview with Mr Hay.

During his visit, Mr Brunhart was accompanied by Mr Roland Marxer, Head of the International Relations Service of the Principality of Liechtenstein.

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Press release No 1511
October 3, 1985

RECOGNITION OF A NEW NATIONAL SOCIETY

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has recognised the Red Cross Society of Sao-Tome and Principe.

This recognition, which took effect today October 3, 1985, brings to 137 the number of National Societies which are members of the International Red Cross.

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Press release No 1512
21 October 1985

The ICRC sets up a 'hot line' for journalists on dangerous professional mission

Geneva (ICRC) - Concerned by the increasing hazards facing the journalists on professional missions, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) will endeavor, within the framework of the mandate it received from the international community, to intensify and to activate its humanitarian efforts on behalf of journalists as persons protected by international humanitarian law applicable in armed conflicts. Therefore, a 'hot line' has been established by the ICRC for the use of editors and professional associations, national and international, to provide the media with a way to contact the ICRC immediately and to request its help when necessary.

The forms of action the ICRC may take are various: in the event of disappearance, tracing of the missing journalist; as soon as notification of capture or arrest is received from the detaining power, registry of the information provided and transmission thereof to the families and professional organizations concerned; in the event of detention, request for an ICRC delegate to be allowed to visit the prisoner. The ICRC will also facilitate an exchange of messages between the detained journalist and his family.

The establishment of the 'hot line' follows up an express request made to the ICRC at a round table on "the safety of journalists on dangerous professional missions" which was held under its auspices in April 1985 at the Mont-Pèlerin (Vevey, Switzerland) and was attended by sixteen international media organizations.

In order to make known the existence and the practice of the 'hot line', the ICRC has produced a pamphlet to be widely distributed to the editors and to the national and international media associations. This pamphlet presents the practical measures the ICRC considers taking for the protection and assistance to journalists who are victims of conflictual situations. It explains not only the possible of action, but also the limitations and obstacles which impede it or even prevent it altogether.

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Press release

Joint Press Release
Geneva, October 25, 1985

ICRC No 1513
League No 25/85

NINTH AWARD OF THE HENRY DUNANT MEDAL

Geneva (ICRC-League) - The Henry Dunant Medal recognises and rewards outstanding services to the Red Cross by a member. 75 years ago, Henry Dunant passed away: this anniversary year, the Medal was awarded to Dr Olga Milosevic of the Red Cross of Yugoslavia and to Mr. Tom Willmott Sloper of the Brazilian Red Cross.

The Medal was presented today to the two recipients by Dr. Abu-Goura, President of the Standing Commission of the International Red Cross, during the meeting in Geneva of the Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross.

Dr Olga Milosevic is a member of the Commission of the presidency of the assembly of the Yugoslavian Red Cross for health activities and environment, and a member of the teaching board of the training centre for personnel from developing countries of the Yugoslav Red Cross. She served as Secretary General of the Yugoslavian Red Cross from 1947 to 1963.

Mr. Tom Willmott Sloper is a member of the national board and a member of the finance commission of the general assembly of the Brazilian Red Cross. He served for many years as a member of the Standing Commission of the International Red Cross and played an active role in the development of the International Red Cross.

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AN ICRC DELEGATE IS KILLED IN ANGOLA

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) must announce, with great sorrow, the death on the 16th of December, 1985, of Marc Blaser, radio operator in Angola.

Single and only 21 years old, Marc Blaser went to Angola in October, 1985, on his first mission for the ICRC. In the early evening of December 16, while in a neighborhood of Lobito, he was killed in an attack involving gunfire. An enquiry has yet to determine the exact circumstances of this tragic incident.

Although he only recently joined the institution, Marc Blaser had already touched many of his colleagues with his warmth and kindness, and impressed them with his professional competence. The ICRC deeply regrets having lost this young delegate, and wishes to express to his parents and friends its most profound feelings of shared grief and sympathy.

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