COLLECTION

COMMUNIQUES DE PRESSE

DU COMITE INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

1990

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anglais
Press release No 1629
18 January 1990

REPATRIATION OF PRISONERS OF WAR BETWEEN IRAN AND IRAQ

Geneva (ICRC) - On 17 and 18 January 1990, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) repatriated a number of sick and wounded Iraqi and Iranian prisoners of war, pursuant to unilateral decisions taken by the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Iraq.

On 17 January, 50 Iraqi prisoners of war left Tehran for Baghdad on board an aircraft chartered by the ICRC. The prisoners were accompanied by an ICRC team comprising two delegates, a doctor and two nurses, and were handed over to representatives of the Iraqi authorities.

The next day, 20 Iranian prisoners of war, accompanied by the same ICRC team, boarded the aircraft for the return flight to Tehran. They were handed over to representatives of the Iranian authorities.

All the repatriated prisoners of war had previously been interviewed, individually and without witnesses, by ICRC delegates and doctors. Although pleased that 70 prisoners of war have at last been reunited with their families, the ICRC wishes to remind the international community that over 100,000 Iranian and Iraqi prisoners of war are still being held in both countries. Under the Third Geneva Convention, they should have been repatriated 17 months ago.

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Press release No. 1630
19 January 1990

THREE ICRC STAFF AMBUSHED IN THE PHILIPPINES

Geneva (ICRC) - On January 1990, three staff members of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) were ambushed by unidentified armed men in civilian clothes north of Cotabato City, Magindanao province, on the island of Mindanao (Philippines).

Walter Berweger, an ICRC delegate, and Juanito Patong, a member of the Philippine National Red Cross, were fatally wounded. Roberto Mira, a local ICRC employee, was slightly injured.

The ICRC, deeply shocked and saddened by this outrageous act, extends its profound sympathy to the families of the three Red Cross workers.

This tragedy underlines the imperative need to respect the protective Red Cross and Red Crescent emblem. Only on that condition can ICRC delegates fulfil their entirely neutral and impartial mission.

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Press release No. 1631
5 February 1990

ICRC DELEGATES NOW FOUR MONTHS IN CAPTIVITY

Geneva (ICRC) - Four months after the abduction of Emanuel Christen and Elio Erriquez in Sidon, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) again proclaims its indignation.

It calls upon all parties in Lebanon, and all governments that have assured it of their support, to increase their efforts to obtain the release of the two hostages. The ICRC itself is continuing to press by every means possible for their release.

This abduction is especially intolerable at the present time, when the ICRC is striving to bring about a humanitarian truce and provide protection and assistance to the victims of the Lebanese conflict. During the recent clashes in Iklim El Touffah, it succeeded for instance in evacuating wounded civilians and the mortal remains of combatants, and at this very moment the ICRC delegation in Lebanon is doing its utmost to help the victims of the fighting raging in East Beirut.

The ICRC appeals yet again for the release of Elio Erriquez and Emanuel Christen, whose detention is a grave violation of the respect its delegates need to carry out their humanitarian mission.

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PRESS RELEASE

Press release No.1632
5 February 1990

FIGHTING IN EAST BEIRUT: ICRC CALLS FOR TRUCE

Geneva (ICRC) - Despite several public appeals to the parties involved and many contacts with the belligerents, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has not yet been able to obtain all the security guarantees necessary for it to carry out its humanitarian work in East Beirut, where for the past six days the plight of the civilian population has been desperate owing to the heavy fighting.

Although in recent days the ICRC has succeeded in supplying the hospitals in the Metn and Kesrouan with equipment, medicines and oxygen, it is deeply concerned about its inability to reach hospitals in the eastern part of the capital, where the situation is deteriorating daily.

The ICRC once again urgently appeals to the belligerents to call an immediate truce so that all humanitarian organizations can bring assistance to the victims.

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MR. MAURICE AUBERT STEPS DOWN AS FULL-TIME ICRC VICE-PRESIDENT

Geneva (ICRC) - Mr. Maurice Aubert, for six years full-time Vice President of the ICRC, today steps down from this position to become Vice-President on a non-permanent basis. Mr. Aubert will remain a member of the Committee.

Mr. Claudio Caratsch, who will be a member of the Committee from 1 March, will become full-time Vice-President on 1 June 1990.
LEAGUE OF RED CROSS
AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE
OF THE RED CROSS

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TELEPHONE 34 55 50
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JOINT PRESS RELEASE

11 April 1990

ICRC No. 1634
League No. 9/90

SIXTY-NINTH DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME
FROM THE EMPRESS SHÔKEN FUND

Eleven Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in developing countries will receive grants totalling CHF 333,000 under the sixty-ninth distribution of income from the Empress Shôken Fund. The money will finance activities in the fields of disaster preparedness, health, social welfare, first aid and youth programmes.

The National Societies were selected by the joint ICRC-League Commission entrusted with the distribution of the income of the Fund at a meeting in Geneva at the end of March. The Commission's meeting was chaired by Mr. Maurice Aubert, Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The delegation of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies was headed by League Secretary General Mr. Pär Stenbäck. The Ambassador of Japan in Geneva, H.E. Mr. Hidetoshi Ukawa, was present at the meeting.

The grants will finance the following projects:

1) Antigua & Barbuda
- 1 4WD TOYOTA Land Cruiser for Disaster Relief and First Aid activities

2) Benin
- 1 Minibus type "Toyota Hiace" for First Aid and Youth Red Cross activities

Swiss Francs

33,000

30,000

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies form the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement.

The ICRC, founder body of the Red Cross, is a neutral intermediary in times of armed conflict and strife. It tries to ensure, on its own initiative or on the basis of the Geneva Conventions, protection and assistance to victims of international and civil wars and of internal strife and tension.

The League's function is to contribute to the development of the humanitarian activities of National Societies to coordinate their relief operations for victims of natural disasters and to care for refugees outside areas of conflict.
3) Chile
- 1 Minibus type "Volkswagen" 1600 cc to facilitate Community services of the Regional Red Cross branch of Puerto Montt 20,000

4) Fiji
- Training and Library facilities, i.e. building material and equipment, and Wheelchair Workshop equipment 12,000

5) Ghana
- 1 Lorry for use in Disaster Preparedness, and other Red Cross activities 50,000

6) Indonesia
- Mannequins (dolls) and recording paper for First Aid training 25,000

7) Lesotho
- 1 4WD Minibus type "Volkswagen" for Health, Social Welfare and Youth Red Cross activities 35,000

8) Mongolia
- 1 Computer set INTEL 80386 and NEC Colour TV model CT 2003 MT for the dissemination of International Humanitarian Law 30,000

9) Peru
- To create a "Wheelchair Bank" of about 50 chairs at the Headquarters of the Peruvian Red Cross 18,000

10) Somalia
- To finance in part the establishment of a 24-hour Ambulance Service in Mogadishu and the surrounding area 50,000

11) Western Samoa
- 1 Minibus "Toyata Hiace" for Health and Social Welfare activities 30,000

In 1987 the Joint Commission issued a booklet, "75 Years of Service to Humanity", which is still available and which recalls that the 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. The Empress Shôken died on 11 April 1914. The Fund has received repeated gifts from the Imperial Family of Japan, the Japanese Government and the Japanese Red Cross Society. Its interest-bearing investments exceed six million Swiss francs.

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Today is World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day. On this occasion, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the 149 National Societies and their 250 million members launch this appeal:

"Protect human life and dignity!"

In many parts of the world, the life and dignity of millions of women, men and children are threatened every day by armed conflicts and natural disasters.

It is impossible not to feel similar horror today at the arbitrary and senseless violence committed against so many people in the world.

It is impossible not to do everything in our power to protect life and to ease the suffering of those who, accidentally or unjustly, become the victims of natural disasters or man-made catastrophes.

In the name of all the people trapped in solitude and anguish, in their jail cells, hospitals, and camps for prisoners and refugees...

In the name of all those who are suffering from wounds, from the loss of a father or mother, of a husband, a wife, or a child, or who have seen in the ruins of their homes the loss of everything most dear to them...

In the name of all the forgotten victims of conflict and disaster, we call upon all citizens, peoples and governments of the world to:

"Protect human life and dignity!"

The life of every human being is unique and irreplaceable. The life of every human being must be respected and protected against the ravages of man and nature. Without such values and universal principles, there is no proper human life, society nor civilization.

This is the firm conviction of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement... to protect human life and dignity worldwide, without regard to nationality, race, circumstance or political opinions... and to do so regardless of influence or pressure, no matter where, no matter when.
This is the mission of our Movement. A mission founded on humanitarian principles and recognised by international law and customs.

Coming to the aid of people caught in the violence of armed conflict and other emergencies...
Visiting prisoners of war and other detainees, helping people to communicate with loved ones and reuniting families...
Helping people to face hurricanes, floods, fires, drought or other disasters that threaten individuals and their communities... saving in this way millions of lives through prevention, protection and assistance.

This is the daily work of the innumerable volunteers, delegates and leaders of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

At a time when the opportunities for peace are so great, at a time when peoples are expressing with real determination their aspiration to freedom and fraternity:

Let us refuse to accept the inevitability of suffering!
Let us refuse to remain indifferent to conflicts and disasters!

Let us build a common front for Humanity along with all those who believe that respect for human life and dignity should outweigh all other considerations,

Let us choose humanity, and reject inhumanity!

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has already made this choice.

Note:

This message has been recorded by:

Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (speaking in French, German and Italian);

Dr. Mario Villarroel Lander, President of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (speaking in Spanish);

Mr. Pår Stenbäck, Secretary General of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (speaking in English);

Dr. Ahmad Abu-Goura, Chairman of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (speaking in Arabic);

The recording (on 7 1/2 reel tape or cassette) can be obtained from the Press Division of the International Committee of the Red Cross.
ICRC DELEGATES REPORTED MISSING IN MOZAMBIQUE ARE SAFE AND SOUND

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has received news that Brigitte Kehrer and Thierry Tribolet, two of its delegates in Mozambique who had last been heard of on 1 June, are safe and sound.

Spokesmen for RENAMO (the Mozambican National Resistance movement) informed the ICRC on 4 June that the two delegates are continuing their work establishing contacts and assessing needs among isolated communities.

The ICRC has been providing medical assistance and food aid to the victims of the internal conflict in Mozambique since 1980. The institution also gives support to hospitals and dispensaries, evacuates sick and wounded civilians and conducts visits to eleven places of detention throughout the country.

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NELSON MANDELA MEETS THE PRESIDENT OF THE ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - Mr. Nelson Mandela met the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, in Geneva on Saturday, 9 June, and some of the delegates who have visited political detainees in South Africa.

Nelson Mandela, who was visited regularly by the ICRC during his detention, expressed his thanks on behalf of the detainees of his movement and all detainees in South Africa for the "professional and persistent" work of this institution. The principal role of the ICRC is to protect prisoners and improve their conditions of detention, and Mr. Mandela commented: "Nobody can realize what that represents unless they have experienced it personally".

Mr. Sommaruga said the ICRC intended to continue to work in favour of all political detainees in South Africa.

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PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1638
19 June 1990

ICRC DELEGATES THIERRY TRIBOLET AND BRIGITTE KEHRER
RETURN TO THEIR BASE

Geneva (ICRC) - Thierry Tribolet and Brigitte Kehrer, the two
delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
with whom contact was lost on 1 June 1990, are back safe and
sound at their base in Quelimane. The ICRC has been in regular
touch with RENAMO (the Mozambican National Resistance movement),
enabling arrangements to be made in the province of Zambezia for
their return.

The ICRC has been in Mozambique since 1980, where it provides the
victims of the internal conflict with medical assistance and food
aid, gives support to hospitals and dispensaries, evacuates sick
and wounded civilians and conducts visits to places of detention
throughout the country.

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RED CROSS/RED CRESCENT: 26th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN BUDAPEST

Geneva (League/ICRC) - The Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, meeting on 30 July 1990 under the Chairmanship of Dr. A. Abu-Goura, accepted the offer of the Hungarian Red Cross to organize the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in Budapest in November 1991.

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CONFlict IN KUWAIT: ICRC STANDS READY

Geneva (ICRC) - Following the outbreak of an armed conflict in Kuwait, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) today contacted the governments of both Iraq and Kuwait, through their Permanent Missions in Geneva, to remind them of their obligations under the four 1949 Geneva Conventions, to which both States are party.

The ICRC requested in particular that the parties comply with the Conventions' provisions relating to the protection of the sick and wounded, medical units and establishments, prisoners and civilians.

The ICRC is ready to dispatch a delegation to Kuwait to undertake humanitarian activities for people needing assistance or protection, in accordance with the mandate entrusted to it by the international community.

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STATEMENT BY THE ICRC PRESIDENT ON THE RELEASE OF ELIO ERRIQUEZ

Geneva (ICRC) - Five days after Emanuel Christen was freed on 8 August, his colleague Elio Erriquez was released by his abductors on 13 August. The two ICRC orthopaedic technicians were kidnapped on 6 October 1989 in Sidon in southern Lebanon. The ICRC President, Cornelio Sommaruga, today made the following statement to the Press at ICRC headquarters in Geneva:

President Sommaruga first of all expressed the "intense joy" which everyone at the ICRC shared with the family of Elio Erriquez. He stated that: "This successful outcome has been made possible thanks to the active support and the good offices of governments from whom we sought assistance. I would like to express the ICRC's gratitude to the leader of Libya, Colonel Muhammar Khaddafí, who gave us constant backing through his humanitarian appeals for the release of our two colleagues. I would also like to convey our thanks to the President of Syria, Hafez el Assad, and the Algerian President, Chadli Benjedid, who, as we know, were active throughout this crisis in seeking a solution. Finally, I wish to thank the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Lebanese authorities and all the parties in Lebanon whose support bore witness to their solidarity.

The President paid tribute to the ICRC delegates and employees who continued to carry out their mission in Lebanon during the 10 months their colleagues were held hostage. He thanked the ICRC crisis unit which, working with the task force of the Swiss Department for Foreign Affairs, directed the efforts to free Emanuel Christen and Elio Erriquez.
Mr. Sommaruga emphasized that the ICRC did not know who the kidnappers were, nor their motives. "On the basis of the information we have we do not wish to speculate on who was behind this kidnapping. The ICRC therefore dissociates itself from any theories put forward." The ICRC President also announced that the institution would be assessing the situation in the next few days and would take whatever steps it considered necessary.

President Sommaruga said that, in view of the grave problems facing the world today, particularly in the Gulf, the ICRC's mission to protect and assist conflict victims could be fulfilled only if respect were shown to its delegates.

The President concluded by launching a "pressing appeal" for the release of all the other hostages still held in captivity.

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PRESS RELEASE

Press release No 1642
20 August 1990

ICRC ACTIVITIES IN LEBANON

Geneva (ICRC) - In view of the painful experience of its two delegates' detention in Lebanon and the conclusions that it has been compelled to draw since their release on 8 and 13 August respectively, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has analysed all the information currently available in order to come to a decision regarding the future of its humanitarian activities in Lebanon.

The ICRC has decided to carry on with its work in Lebanon, which has been ravaged by conflict for the past 15 years. The number of ICRC staff will initially be reduced and will be deployed as local conditions permit.

The context of ICRC work is generally fraught with danger. The decision to stay in Lebanon is based on the assessment of the victims' needs and the help that the ICRC can and must provide, since no other organization is in a position to do so.

This decision naturally takes into account the grave question of the security of everyone working for the ICRC in Lebanon and the safety limits that cannot be overstepped in reaching the victims.

This course of action confirms the ICRC's commitment in Lebanon and implies full recognition by all the parties involved in the conflict of the indispensable nature of humanitarian activities, and of the need to facilitate this work and to respect and ensure respect for those conducting it.

The ICRC counts on such recognition and respect wherever it discharges the mandate to act as a neutral intermediary that has been conferred on it by the international community.

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PRESS RELEASE

Press release No 1643
3 September 1990

ICRC VEHICLE COMES UNDER FIRE IN AFGHANISTAN

Geneva (ICRC) - An Afghan employee of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was shot when an ICRC vehicle came under fire in western Afghanistan on 1 September.

An ICRC delegate and the Afghan employee, Faqir Yar, were driving along a main road out of Herat carrying messages from prisoners to their families when several bursts of gunfire hit their car. It was not clear where the shots had come from.

The car immediately turned back and Faqir Yar was rushed to hospital, where he died of a head injury. The ICRC delegate escaped unhurt.

The ICRC deplores this incident, which occurred while its staff were on a neutral and impartial humanitarian mission. It again stresses the absolute necessity for respect of the Red Cross and Red Crescent emblem. This is an essential condition for its delegates to be able to conduct their activities in conflict situations, where security incidents are frequent.

The ICRC conveys its condolences to the family of Faqir Yar, who lost his life while carrying out his humanitarian mission.

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Press release No. 1644
14 September 1990

THE PRESIDENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE AT THE ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) – The President of the People's Republic of Mozambique, His Excellency Mr. Joaquim Alberto Chissano, yesterday visited the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), where he was received by the institution's President, Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, and several members of the Committee. Mr. Chissano was accompanied by Dr. P. Mocumbi, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and by Mozambique's Ambassador in Paris and Geneva.

In his welcoming address the ICRC President thanked Mr. Chissano for supporting the whole range of ICRC activities in Mozambique (visits to detainees and assistance to displaced persons), and for granting the institution all the facilities it needs to discharge its mandate.

In his reply President Chissano pointed out the importance of the ICRC's impartiality in its work on behalf of victims of conflicts. He also emphasized the excellent cooperation that existed between the ICRC and the Mozambique Red Cross Society.

After signing the Visitors' Book Mr. Chissano had a working dinner with Mr. Sommaruga, during which they discussed various matters of humanitarian concern.

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FOUR ICRC STAFF AMBUSHED IN SOMALIA

Geneva (ICRC) - Four staff members of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Somali Red Crescent Society were ambushed this morning, 6 October 1990, by unidentified armed men. They were returning from a mission to bring emergency assistance to the Daraweyne conflict zone, some 30 km from the town of Hargeisa in north-western Somalia, when the tragic incident occurred. The mission was being conducted with the full agreement of the parties concerned.

ICRC delegate Peter Altwegg was seriously injured in the attack; he was taken to Hargeisa where he died of his wounds. The ICRC has no news at this time of Miss Antonella Notari, its other delegate, Mrs. Sahra Ahmed Jama, President of the Hargeisa branch of the Somalia Red Crescent, or Mr. Hassan Arab, a Somali Red Crescent employee.

The ICRC immediately took steps to establish the whereabouts and ensure the return of its three associates. Additional security measures were taken to protect all staff involved in the ICRC operation in Somalia.

The ICRC is shocked by this unacceptable act and conveys its deepest sympathy to the family of Mr. Peter Altwegg.

The institution once again stresses the absolute necessity to respect the Red Cross and Red Crescent emblem. Only on this condition can it fulfil its humanitarian mission.

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ANGOLA: HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE ACROSS THE FRONT LINES

Geneva (ICRC) - For the first time in almost a decade of activity in Angola, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has obtained the simultaneous agreement of the Angolan Government and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) to take emergency assistance across the front lines and to bring supplies in from neighbouring countries.

So far all assistance to the central Angolan plateau and the south-east of the country, where hundreds of thousands of civilians are suffering particular hardship on account of the conflict, compounded this year by severe drought, has had to be flown in.

Over the past nine months the ICRC has already provided some 400,000 people on the central plateau with more than 6,000 tonnes of food. At peak periods, seven ICRC-chartered light aircraft and two Hercules transport planes have been involved.

Today, 8 October 1990, a large-scale operation is being launched.

A convoy of ICRC vehicles is heading from the port of Lobito (Benguela province) to Huambo. This is the first time for many years that an unescorted convoy has travelled the route.

An ICRC Twin Otter will fly between Huambo and the bush airstrip of Likwa in the south-east of the country (Cuando-Cubango), thus crossing a front line.

Two separate ICRC convoys are also leaving Windhoek in Namibia; one bound for Lubango (Huila province) and the other for the border village of Cacuchi (Cuando-Cubango province).
Twelve ICRC delegates and almost 30 local employees are taking part in the operation. They are backed up by the ICRC delegations in Luanda, Windhoek and Jamba, and by ICRC headquarters. A total of 260 tonnes of food and other relief supplies will be taken in.

The ICRC has obtained all necessary assurances regarding the safety of its staff. Complex arrangements have been negotiated with the Angolan Government, the Namibian Government and UNITA, covering the checking and dispatch of emergency supplies for people in both Government-controlled and UNITA-controlled conflict areas.

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PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1647
9 October 1990

ICRC APPEAL FOLLOWING THE EVENTS IN THE ISRAELI-OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Geneva (ICRC) - During a series of clashes between the Israeli armed forces and Palestinian civilians in the Israeli-occupied territories on 8 October 1990, at least 24 civilians were killed and over 100 wounded.

ICRC delegates on the spot in Jerusalem saw live ammunition being used by the Israeli forces against civilians.

The ICRC delegates helped transport the wounded to hospital, and approached the Israeli authorities in an effort to avoid any deterioration in the situation, and in particular to ensure that the armed forces did not enter mosques or hospitals.

The ICRC is extremely concerned about the situation and hereby urgently appeals to the Israeli authorities to put an end to the use of live ammunition against civilians.

Moreover, in view of the extreme tension now prevailing, the ICRC calls on all concerned to show moderation and thus favour peaceable solutions in full respect for international humanitarian law.

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ICRC DELEGATE AND SOMALI RED CRESCENT STAFF MEMBER RETURN SAFELY

(Geneva, ICRC) - Antonella Notari, delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and Sahra Ahmed Jama, a staff member of the Somali Red Crescent, who had been detained by the Somali National Movement (SNM) since 6 October following the ambush in which ICRC delegate Peter Altwegg lost his life, were released today, 11 October 1990.

Antonella Notari joined the ICRC team in Ethiopia, while Sahra Ahmed Jama will return to her family in Somalia. Both women are in good health.

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THE ICRC BEGINS VISITS TO DETAINEES IN RWANDA

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has begun visiting people detained in Rwanda following the outbreak of fighting earlier this month. The visits began in the capital, Kigali, on Saturday 13 October and are taking place according to standard ICRC criteria, which include interviews without witnesses and the registration of all detainees.

The four delegates already on the spot, one of whom is a doctor, are to be joined by two others to reinforce the visiting team and establish a tracing service between the detainees and their families.

The ICRC first sent three delegates to Kigali on 3 October, the day after the violence broke out. The team has since made two surveys in the north of the country, where the fighting began. On both occasions, emergency medical supplies were given to hospitals treating the wounded.

Delegates have also distributed food to patients in hospitals in the capital, as the curfew prevented families from taking food to sick relatives.

Ten tonnes of food supplies have been driven in and supplemented with local purchases, while medical supplies have been flown in from Europe.

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Press Release No. 1650
18 October 1990

THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF LIECHTENSTEIN VISIT THE ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - Prince Hans Adam II and Princess Marie of Liechtenstein, accompanied by the Head of the Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein and government officials, were received today by the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Cornelio Sommaruga, at ICRC headquarters.

The meeting took place during the course of a State visit to the Swiss Confederation. The President of the Swiss Confederation, Mr. Arnold Koller, was present, together with the Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and representatives of the Geneva authorities.

Mr. Sommaruga declared that in the short time since the Principality has been admitted to the United Nations "the ICRC has already had proof of the support and friendship of Liechtenstein, and we know we will be able to rely in the future on its humanitarian commitment in the world."

The ICRC President also praised the House of Liechenstein's humanitarian commitment, which continues with Princess Marie's Presidency of the Liechtenstein Red Cross.

In his reply, Prince Hans Adam paid tribute to Red Cross delegates who risk their lives to give assistance, and offered his condolences on the recent loss of ICRC delegate Peter Altwegg.
The Prince also underlined his family's traditionally close relationship with the Red Cross, and reiterated his Government's support for the ICRC.

On leaving the ICRC, the Prince and Princess of Liechtenstein paid a visit to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum.

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PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1651
19 October 1990

PRIME MINISTER OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND AT THE ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - The Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, General Chatichai Choonhavan, today visited the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), where he was received by the institution's President, Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, together with members of the Committee and senior ICRC staff.

General Choonhavan was accompanied by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Subin Pinkayan, the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Käsern S. Kasemri, Ambassador Tej Bunnag, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Thailand, and other Thai officials.

In his welcoming address Mr. Sommaruga emphasized the importance of this first visit to the ICRC, which marked more than ten years of intense and fruitful co-operation between the Thai Government and the ICRC. The common objective had always been and still was the provision of protection and assistance to the victims of the Cambodian conflict. The ICRC President also expressed his gratitude to the diplomats of the Kingdom of Thailand who, from the outset, had promoted the ICRC's initiative to obtain observer status at the United Nations.

In his reply, General Choonhavan stressed the difficulties Thailand was encountering in coping with the large numbers of Cambodian refugees on Thai soil and thanked the ICRC for its efforts to provide protection and assistance along the country's border.

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Press release No. 1652
23 October 1990

COMMUNIQUE BY THE STANDING COMMISSION OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT

The Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, trustee of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, at its meeting in Geneva on October 22nd, 1990, expressed its deep concern about the consequences, in humanitarian terms, of the recent events in Kuwait, the massive deployment of military forces in the Gulf area and the possibility of the Middle East being drawn into an armed conflict that would cause innumerable victims among combatants and the civilian population. The Commission deplored the current difficulties encountered by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in fulfilling its humanitarian mandate, difficulties which have left a countless number of people without protection, and the fact that disputes about the legal classifications of conflicts too often hinder the implementation of International Humanitarian Law.

Therefore, in conformity with Resolution I of the Twenty-fifth International Conference of the Red Cross (Geneva, 1986), the Commission solemnly appeals to the Parties involved to respect all their obligations under International Humanitarian Law so as to enable the ICRC to carry out its humanitarian activities.

The Standing Commission also appeals to all Parties concerned to do their utmost to find a peaceful solution to the present crisis in accordance with public international law.

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ICRC-PROTECTED ZONE IN JAFFNA BOMBED

Geneva (ICRC) - In Jaffna, on the northern peninsula of Sri Lanka, the zone protected by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in which the recently reopened Jaffna Teaching Hospital is located, was targeted today by a Sri Lankan air force aircraft. One bomb exploded close to the hospital grounds, injuring one person, while a second bomb landed inside the protected zone around the hospital, injuring four other people. The aircraft had been circling for some time above the protected zone which was clearly marked with the red cross emblem.

With the formal agreement of the two parties to the conflict, the ICRC has been working since June 1990 to assist people affected by the resumption of hostilities in north-eastern Sri Lanka.

Following this incident, the ICRC immediately and strongly protested to the Sri Lankan authorities. The ICRC stresses that it is imperative that the red cross emblem be respected in all circumstances.

The repetition of such an incident could seriously call into question the continuation of ICRC activities in the north-eastern provinces of Sri Lanka.

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SERIES OF ICRC VISITS IN RWANDA COMPLETED

ICRC (Geneva) - On 16 November 1990 the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) completed a first series of visits to people held in Rwanda in connection with the events of 1 October 1990. During the visits, which began on 13 October in Kigali, 4,502 detainees in 25 places of detention were registered by delegates in accordance with the ICRC's customary criteria.

The ICRC has been making regular visits to security detainees in Rwanda since 1986. The latest such visit took place in July 1990.

The ICRC delegation, which has been in Rwanda since the outbreak of hostilities, is also helping to restore family ties between detainees and their relatives and supporting the Rwandese Red Cross in its work to assist the large numbers of displaced persons.

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Press release No. 1655
23 November 1990

PRESIDENT VACLAV HAVEL VISITS ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - Mr. Vaclav Havel, the President of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, today visited the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), where he was received by the institution's President, Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga. Mr. Havel was accompanied by Mrs. Olga Havlova, Mr. Jiri Dienstbier, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Ambassadors Joraj Kralik and Miloslav Kocarek.

During a working meeting, Mr. Havel and Mr. Sommaruga discussed ICRC activities in Europe, international humanitarian law and its dissemination in the Czech and Slovak Republic. At the end of the visit Mr. Havel signed the ICRC Visitors' Book.

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PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1656
30 November 1990

HUNDREDTH RATIFICATION OF THE PROTOCOLS ADDITIONAL TO THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS

Geneva (ICRC) - On 20 November, the Canadian government deposited with the Swiss Federal Council the instruments of its ratification of the two Protocols additional to the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

Canada is the hundredth State to become party to one or both of the Additional Protocols adopted in 1977 by a diplomatic conference in Geneva. Protocol I relates to the protection of the victims of international armed conflict and Protocol II the victims of non-international armed conflict. In particular, the Protocols enhance the protection of civilians against the effects of hostilities. Thus far, 86 States have ratified both Protocols, 12 have ratified only Protocol I and two have ratified only Protocol II.

Canada is also the twentieth State to declare that it accepts the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission provided for in Article 90 of Protocol I. This means that Switzerland, as the depositary State, can now take steps to set up the Commission.

The Commission will have the task of inquiring into any facts alleged to constitute grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions or Protocol I. It will also be able to use its good offices to help restore respect for the provisions of international humanitarian law.

Among the 20 States that have now accepted the Commission's competence are many European countries, including the Soviet Union, and Algeria, New Zealand and Uruguay.

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PRESS RELEASE

Press release № 1657
14 December 1990

GULF CRISIS: ICRC DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY INTENSIFIED

Geneva (ICRC) - Deeply disquieted by the continuing tension in the Gulf, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is currently approaching all States party to the Geneva Conventions to remind them of the respect that must be shown for the provisions of international humanitarian law applicable in armed conflicts.

As soon as Iraqi forces entered Kuwait on 2 August, the ICRC, gravely concerned about the situation of the civilian population, stressed that under the mandate entrusted to it by the international community, it must be allowed to act in Kuwait and Iraq on behalf of all persons requiring protection or assistance.

As part of its many and repeated contacts since the crisis began, the President of the ICRC and its Director of Operations went on mission to Baghdad in September and December respectively.

The ICRC regrets to note that it is still unable to discharge its mandate in Kuwait and Iraq. However, contact is being actively maintained with all the parties concerned, in particular with the Iraqi government.

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One of the leading organizations active in this field is the International Committee of the Red Cross. The ICRC is known for its work in providing assistance to victims of armed conflicts and natural disasters worldwide. The organization operates in over 80 countries and is based in Geneva, Switzerland.

Through a network of field staff, the ICRC provides medical aid, distributes food and water, and assists in the repatriation of prisoners of war. It also helps to locate and trace family members of missing persons and advocates for the protection of civilians in times of conflict.

The ICRC is funded primarily through voluntary contributions from governments, corporations, and private individuals. The organization is recognized for its neutrality and impartiality in its efforts to protect and assist those affected by war and conflict.