COLLECTION

COMMUNIQUES DE PRESSE
DU COMITE INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

1992
N° 1699 - 1732

anglais
PRESS RELEASE

Press Release No. 1699
20 February 1992

RESIGNATION OF MR. GUY DELUZ, ICRC DIRECTOR GENERAL

Geneva (ICRC) - Mr. Guy Deluz, Director General of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and member of its Executive Board, has announced his desire to step down from his post and devote himself to other activities. At its meeting on 20 February, the ICRC Assembly accepted his resignation and expressed its thanks for the commitment and skill that Mr. Deluz brought to his work within the institution. The ICRC will continue to benefit from Mr. Deluz' experience as he will serve as a consultant on a number of studies in which he has been closely involved.

++++
PRESS RELEASE
PRESS RELEASE NO. 1700
12 March 1992

NAGORNO-KARABAKH: ICRC calls for respect of humanitarian law

Geneva (ICRC) - In view of the increasing intensity of the fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) calls on all the parties involved in the hostilities to ensure the protection of civilian and military victims, in compliance with the basic rules of international humanitarian law.

The ICRC urges them in particular:
- to take every possible precaution to spare civilians;
- to ensure that the wounded and sick are cared for in all circumstances, regardless of the side to which they belong;
- to make certain that medical staff and establishments are respected and protected;
- to ensure that combatants who surrender or who are no longer able to take part in the fighting are treated humanely.

The ICRC also appeals to all combatants to respect the red cross and red crescent emblem, which provides protection for the victims and those caring for them. It is the responsibility of the region's political leaders and military commanders to ensure such respect and prevent misuse of the emblem.

The ICRC has 13 delegates in Azerbaijan - six in the capital, Baku, and seven in Agdam, 30 km from Stepanakert (main town of Nagorno-Karabakh), where the ICRC plans to set up an operational base. Three other delegates are in Yerevan, the Armenian capital. As a neutral and impartial institution, the ICRC urgently calls on the parties to facilitate the work of its delegates in behalf of all the victims of the conflict.

+++

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), together with the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the recognized National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, is one of the three components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. An independent humanitarian institution, the ICRC is the founding body of the Red Cross. As a neutral intermediary in case of armed conflicts or disturbances, it endeavours on its own initiative or on the basis of the Geneva Conventions to protect and assist the victims of international and civil wars and of internal troubles and tensions, thereby contributing to peace in the world.
ICRC APPOINTS NEW DIRECTOR GENERAL

Geneva (ICRC) - In its meeting of 19 March 1992, the Assembly of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) elected Mr. Jacques Forster and Dr. Peter Fuchs to the ICRC's seven-member Executive Board. Dr. Fuchs was appointed Director General and will take up his duties on 1 May 1992.

Mr. Jacques Forster, a professor at the University of Geneva Graduate Institute for Development Studies, has been a member of the International Committee since 1989. He replaces a 13-year member of the Executive Board, Mr. Rudolf Jäckli, who will remain a member of the Committee.

Dr. Peter Fuchs was born in 1946. He is from Wettingen in the Canton of Argau, and is domiciled in Bondo, Canton of Graubunden. He studied medicine at Zurich University, where he was later a lecturer, and held a number of positions at the Zurich Cantonal Hospital before becoming head of the medical department of the Zurich Prisons Service. Dr. Fuchs joined the ICRC in 1982. He carried out numerous medical missions in Latin America, Asia and the Middle East, and was appointed Deputy Director of Operations in 1988, a post he occupied until February 1990. Afterwards he conducted occasional missions and headed the task force set up in early 1991 to coordinate ICRC activities in the Gulf crisis.

When the ICRC adopted a new executive structure in May 1991, general management became the task of three Executive Board members, in charge respectively of Principles, Law and Relations with the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, Operations and General Affairs. As Director General, Dr. Fuchs will be responsible for general coordination and matters concerning communication, personnel, finance, administration, data processing and telecommunications.

++++
STATEMENT OF THE STANDING COMMISSION OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT

The XXVIth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, postponed at the last minute in November 1991 because of political difficulties, should be convened "as soon as possible", says the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

The Commission, at a meeting in Geneva last week, announced its decision to "actively pursue" the possibility of holding the Conference in conjunction with the next statutory meetings of the Movement, which are scheduled to be held in October 1993, in Great Britain.

In the meantime, the Standing Commission said, it would redouble its efforts, in consultation with all concerned, to settle issues likely to threaten the successful holding of the International Conference.

The International Conference brings together the States Parties to the Geneva Conventions, all the recognized National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. It is the forum where the major issues regarding international humanitarian law and the main fields of activity of the Movement are discussed.

The Standing Commission is composed of nine persons, namely two representatives from the ICRC, two from the Federation and five from the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Its primary role is to prepare the International Conference and to promote harmony in the work of the Red Cross and Red Crescent bodies.

++++
PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1703
27 March 1992

ICRC DELEGATION LEAVES IRAN

Geneva (ICRC) - The 15-member delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the Islamic Republic of Iran has left Tehran, arriving in Switzerland this morning. The ICRC was notified that its activities were to be stopped and its delegates obliged to leave Iranian territory in a note dated 21 March 1992 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

To justify their decision, the Iranian authorities made accusations against the ICRC about the way in which it was fulfilling the mandate conferred on it by the Third Geneva Convention in respect of Iraqi prisoners of war and conducting the activities it had undertaken, on the basis of a bilateral agreement, in the country's prisons. The ICRC categorically denies these accusations. All its activities in Iran were conducted in compliance with the principles guiding its operations everywhere in the world, and it has therefore always worked openly with the Iranian authorities.

The ICRC is extremely concerned by the consequences in humanitarian terms of the interruption of its activities. To its knowledge, there are still more than 20,000 Iraqi prisoners of war on Iranian territory. Several thousand remain in captivity, and many of them have been held for over ten years.

../..

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), together with the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the recognized National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, is one of the three components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. An independent humanitarian institution, the ICRC is the founding body of the Red Cross. As a neutral intermediary in case of armed conflicts or disturbances, it endeavours on its own initiative or on the basis of the Geneva Conventions to protect and assist the victims of international and civil wars and of internal troubles and tensions, thereby contributing to peace in the world.
These prisoners of war are entitled to protection under the Third Geneva Convention, which stipulates that the ICRC must be allowed to visit them and that they are to be repatriated immediately after active hostilities have ended, in this case in August 1988. The decision of the Iranian authorities to suspend all ICRC activities for the prisoners of war is a violation of that Convention, to which the Islamic Republic of Iran is a party. It also blocks the implementation of an agreement signed in Geneva on 14 February 1992 by Iranian and Iraqi representatives under ICRC auspices and specifying that the repatriation of the last remaining prisoners taken during the war between Iran and Iraq was to resume in March.

In addition, on 22 January 1992, the ICRC had started to visit prisons in Iran, at the request of the Iranian government and on the basis of an agreement setting forth the ICRC's standard procedures, in particular access to all detainees, interviews without witnesses, repetition of visits and confidentiality of its delegates' observations. Some difficulties had been encountered in fully implementing the agreement, and the ICRC was negotiating with the Iranian authorities when it was notified that all its activities were to stop.

The ICRC deplores the decision of the Iranian authorities and calls on the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to allow it to resume its humanitarian activities without delay.

++++
N° 1704 n'existe pas
Press release No. 1705
10 April 1992

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: ICRC CALLS FOR PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

Geneva (ICRC) - Deeply concerned by the escalation of the fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina and by its consequences in humanitarian terms, affecting the civilian population in particular, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) appeals to the parties involved to take all necessary steps to ensure compliance with the basic rules of international humanitarian law.

The ICRC enjoins them in particular:

- not to direct any attack against the civilian population;
- not to attack, destroy, remove or render useless objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population;
- to spare the lives of those who surrender and treat all captured combatants humanely;
- to respect and ensure respect for the Red Cross emblem so as to guarantee the safety of medical personnel and Red Cross workers carrying out their humanitarian mandate;
- to allow all Red Cross staff and medical personnel the freedom of movement they need to assist the civilian population and people hors de combat;
- to ensure that combat units are aware of the humanitarian rules governing the conduct of hostilities and to facilitate ICRC efforts in that respect.

.//.
The ICRC considers it essential that all political and military forces formally express their firm support for impartial humanitarian activities under the protection of the Red Cross emblem and in favour of all victims.

The ICRC again expresses its readiness to undertake, with the agreement of the authorities, any action required to protect the lives and physical safety of civilians and persons hors de combat.

++++
SEVENTY-FIRST DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME
FROM THE EMPRESS SHOKEN FUND

Fifteen Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies in developing countries will benefit from grants totalling CHF 420,000 under the 71st 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.

Eight National Societies and one Regional Project involving seven Societies were selected by the joint ICRC-IFRC Commission entrusted with the distribution of the income of the Fund at a recent meeting in Geneva. The Commission's meeting was chaired by Mr. Maurice Aubert, Member of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The delegation of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) was headed by its 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beneficiary</th>
<th>Amount in Swiss francs</th>
<th>Purpose of Allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>72,000</td>
<td>to partly finance the construction of a Dispensary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>to partly finance the purchase of Training and First Aid material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>to partly finance purchase of a Multipurpose Vehicle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>42,000</td>
<td>for purchase of an Ambulance-type TOYOTA Land Cruiser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>54,000</td>
<td>to partly finance the Society's Ambulance Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>25.000</td>
<td>to partly finance purchase of Training and First Aid material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Vincent &amp; Grenadines</td>
<td>40.000</td>
<td>to install Radio equipment to link HQ with the outlying districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>42.000</td>
<td>to purchase an Ambulance type TOYOTA Hiace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West &amp; Central Africa</td>
<td>100.000</td>
<td>to cover two-thirds of the Federation's 1992 budget for First Aid training in the Region</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL 420,000

The Empress Shōken 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 Shōken 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 CHF seven million.

++++
Press release No. 1707
Geneva, 16 April 1992

IRANIAN AN IRAQI DELEGATIONS REACH AGREEMENT IN GENEVA

Geneva (ICRC) - At a meeting held on 15 and 16 April 1992 at the Geneva headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and under its auspices, delegations from the Republic of Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran discussed ways and means of facilitating the repatriation of the remaining prisoners of war (POWs).

Both delegations reaffirmed the principles defined in the plan of action agreed upon on 14 February 1992. They again emphasized that they consider themselves bound by the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and assured each other that they will resume the repatriation process, under the auspices of the ICRC, not later than 1 May 1992.

In addition, the two Parties will be guided in the repatriation process by the documents presented by the ICRC to both sides during the meeting.

The ICRC declares its readiness to participate in the POW repatriation process, provided that its standard criteria are fully met.

+++
AFGHANISTAN: ICRC NURSE KILLED SOUTH OF KABUL

Geneva (ICRC) - Mr. Jan Karlsson, 39, an Icelandic Red Cross nurse working for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Afghanistan, was killed today in Maydan Shar, 30 km south of Kabul.

Jan Karlsson had accompanied an ICRC delegate and a doctor to the town to evacuate two wounded Afghans coming from the Sheikhabad first-aid post, 30 km further south.

Several dozen onlookers gathered around the ICRC vehicles after the wounded men had been taken aboard. A man in the crowd fired on Jan Karlsson, who was killed instantly. The other two ICRC staff members, both Swiss, were unharmed and immediately returned to Kabul.

On the previous day delegates had discussed the medical evacuation with local leaders and had received all the necessary safety guarantees.

In the present climate of political and military upheaval in Afghanistan, the ICRC is stepping up security measures and is doing everything possible to obtain satisfactory security guarantees from all parties concerned.

The ICRC is deeply saddened by this tragic incident and expresses its heartfelt sympathy to Mr. Karlsson's family.

++++

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), together with the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the recognized National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, is one of the three components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. An independent humanitarian institution, the ICRC is the founding body of the Red Cross. As a neutral intermediary in case of armed conflicts or disturbances, it endeavours on its own initiative or on the basis of the Geneva Conventions to protect and assist the victims of international and civil wars and of internal troubles and tensions, thereby contributing to peace in the world.
INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS AND SWISS RADIO INTERNATIONAL TO COOPERATE

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Swiss Radio International (SRI) today signed a cooperation agreement on international short-wave broadcasts, the exchange of programmes with radio stations worldwide and the television magazine programmes SRI has recently started producing. The aim is to strengthen Switzerland's humanitarian influence abroad and to improve knowledge of the ICRC's role.

The ICRC has been using SRI shortwave transmitting stations for many years to broadcast a monthly programme in several languages. The new SRI programme structure, which became effective on 29 March 1992, will include coproduced programmes about the ICRC. SRI broadcasts on short wave throughout the world in Switzerland's national languages (French, German, Italian) and in English, Spanish and Arabic. In the future, the ICRC will be able to contribute more frequently to documentaries and to the news programmes put out daily in those languages. SRI also provides several hundred radio stations all over the globe with programmes in which the ICRC and Switzerland's humanitarian character play an important role.

SRI's short-wave broadcasts are heard by millions of listeners throughout the world. Surveys have shown that they arouse great interest, in spite of the constantly growing range of programmes available. SRI is especially highly appreciated in conflict regions as the voice of a country with a tradition of humanitarian action and independence.

SRI and ICRC press services
PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1710
24 April 1992

YUGOSLAVIA: NEW ATTACK ON OSIJEK HOSPITAL

Geneva (ICRC) - On 23 April 1992, several shells hit the hospital in Osijek (Croatia), which is under the protection of the Red Cross emblem.

The hospital and its immediate surroundings were declared a protected zone on 3 January 1992 on the initiative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), following an agreement signed in Pécs, Hungary, by all parties to the conflict.

ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga today addressed a message to the Presidents of Croatia and Serbia and to the highest federal authorities, deploring this further grave incident which again endangered the lives of the wounded, the sick, medical staff, and the ICRC delegates who are present at the Osijek hospital at all times.

++++
ICRC AND OAU SIGN COOPERATION AGREEMENT

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) today signed a cooperation agreement at ICRC headquarters in Geneva.

The agreement authorizes the ICRC to participate in OAU meetings as an observer and formalizes the longstanding cooperation between the two bodies. The official document was signed by ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga and OAU Secretary General Salim Ahmed Salim in the presence of top officials from both organisations.

In his welcoming address, Mr Sommaruga said the agreement confirmed and would enhance cooperation between the ICRC and the OAU, particularly at a time when the OAU was increasingly involved in peace efforts in Africa. He said it should also enable the ICRC to step up efforts to ensure Africans are treated with dignity even in conflict situations. "The OAU is working for peace and the ICRC is convinced that its humanitarian action is also a contribution to peace", he stated.

Mr Salim said he appreciated and admired the ICRC's work not only in Africa but all over the world. He underlined that the agreement testified to the recognition by all African countries of the important role played by the International Committee.
The signing of the agreement was followed by a meeting between ICRC and OAU delegations led respectively by the ICRC President and the OAU Secretary General. An overview of ICRC operations on the African continent was given, with discussions focusing on the situations in Liberia, Mozambique, South Africa, the Sudan and Western Sahara.

Both delegations were particularly concerned about the dramatic situation in Somalia. While expressing his appreciation for the ICRC's aid efforts in the country, Mr Salim agreed that they were not enough to avoid a catastrophe and that a major involvement of the international community was essential. The two organisations will continue to use all possible means to achieve this goal.

++++
PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1712
5 May 1992

AFGHANISTAN: ICRC APPEALS FOR COMPLIANCE WITH HUMANITARIAN RULES

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is deeply concerned about the plight of the civilian population in Kabul, in view of the indiscriminate shelling of the city during the last 48 hours. The ICRC's surgical hospital in the Afghan capital has been admitting about 50 casualties a day for over a week.

The ICRC appeals to all the parties to respect international humanitarian law and to ensure respect for its rules by everyone involved in the fighting. It enjoins them in particular:

- not to attack civilians or facilities used only by the civilian population;
- not to launch indiscriminate attacks;
- not to attack, destroy, remove or render useless objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population;
- to spare the lives of people who surrender and to treat all captured combatants humanely;
- to respect medical personnel and establishments;
- to allow all Red Cross and Red Crescent staff and medical personnel the freedom of movement they need to assist the civilian population and people hors de combat;
- to respect and ensure respect for the Red Cross or Red Crescent emblem so as to guarantee the safety of all those engaged in humanitarian activities under its protection.

++++

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), together with the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the recognized National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, is one of the three components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. An independent humanitarian institution, the ICRC is the founding body of the Red Cross. As a neutral intermediary in case of armed conflicts or disturbances, it endeavours on its own initiative or on the basis of the Geneva Conventions to protect and assist the victims of international and civil wars and of internal troubles and tensions, thereby contributing to peace in the world.
JOINT PRESS RELEASE

8 May 1992

WORLD RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT DAY - UNITED AGAINST DISASTERS

Seville - Leaders of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, speaking in the 1500-seat Palenque theatre in the centre of EXPO, today called on all governments and their citizens to 'unite against disasters'.

'With the support of governments and the media', said President Cornelio Sommaruga of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), 'yet retaining all our independence and neutrality, we must promote respect for the basic rules of Humanity that will give millions of victims a chance'.

EXPO pointed the way to the 21st century, said President Mario Villarroel of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). But the 21st century would be 'an empty place' without Humanity. 'All the progress will not secure peace unless men and women everywhere can live their lives in decency'.

And both Presidents stressed the need to respect human life and dignity in war and disaster if millions of lives were to be saved, and suffering avoided, in the years ahead.

The Palenque ceremony - marking World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, the birthday of the Movement's founder, Henry Dunant - was the centre of a chain of similar events around the world.

'Today, everywhere, we must reaffirm our commitment to Solidarity with those in need', said Spanish Red Cross President Carmen Mestre. The General Commissioner of EXPO Emilio Cassinello, and the Spanish Minister of Social Welfare Matilde Fernandez, paid tribute to the work of the Movement.

The official ceremony was followed by 'The World of Humanity', a public performance in the Palenque by 100 Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers from all around the world, and by the 150-strong Bayer choir.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent pavilion at EXPO - a striking modern building symbolising a world destabilised by conflict and disasters - is attracting visitors from 10 am to 10 pm. The international volunteers - from 43 countries - present regular programmes of music and drama illustrating the work of the Movement.

+++
PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1714
8 May 1992

FOR THE RECORD

SOMALIA: SECURITY SET-UP FOR FOOD AID IN MOGADISHU

Geneva (ICRC) - Following several US media reports on ICRC activities in Somalia which speak of "the hiring of Red Cross mercenaries" or "the hiring of gunmen" to protect food convoys and distribution centres in Mogadishu, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) categorically rejects these statements and wishes to eliminate certain serious misunderstandings.

One of the ICRC's first priorities in organizing food distributions in Mogadishu has been to set up a security network to ensure the safe unloading of ships and transport of food aid to the capital. In the current situation in Somalia, security is an essential factor if this large-scale relief operation is to succeed.

Through the local relief committees 2,000 men for the north of the city and 1,000 for the south have been called in by the clans or sub-clans there to act as a kind of "police force". These guards protect the beaches where the off-loading is taking place, the main roads to the capital, the relief convoys and distribution points, but are in no way involved in the actual distribution process. Access to the areas where the supplies are distributed is allowed only to the beneficiaries, so as to discourage bandits who have been trying to steal food over the last few days.

The ICRC is in no way involved in the selection process nor in the recruitment of this "police force". It has, however, agreed with the Somali Relief Committees that a small amount of the food brought in would be given to its members as "food for work".

The ICRC stresses that this is by no means a general rule, but is a result of the extremely chaotic situation in Somalia. After examining all possibilities the ICRC came to the conclusion that this was the only way to get food aid through to the victims.

+++
BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: THREE ICRC STAFF INJURED IN SARAJEVO

ICRC (Geneva) - Three staff members of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) were injured at 2.30 p.m. today in the Vratnik quarter of Sarajevo by an explosion in circumstances that remain to be clarified. Yvan Lalic, interpreter, and Frédéric Maurice and Roland Sidler, delegates, were accompanying a convoy from Belgrade carrying emergency medical supplies for the civilian hospital in Sarajevo.

The staff members are being treated at the hospital, where the seven other ICRC delegates in Sarajevo have gathered.

++++

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), together with the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the recognized National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, is one of the three components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. An independent humanitarian institution, the ICRC is the founding body of the Red Cross. As a neutral intermediary in case of armed conflicts or disturbances, it endeavours on its own initiative or on the basis of the Geneva Conventions to protect and assist the victims of international and civil wars and of internal troubles and tensions, thereby contributing to peace in the world.
Press release No. 1716
19 May 1992

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: ICRC DELEGATE DIES IN SARAJEVO

Geneva (ICRC) - Early this morning a delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Mr. Frédéric Maurice, 39, died at the civilian hospital in Sarajevo of injuries received yesterday.

Mr. Maurice, who was married and had two children, joined the ICRC in 1980. During his twelve years with the institution he carried out humanitarian missions in Israel, Iran, Angola and Ethiopia, in the course of which he assumed responsibilities of great importance. Recently assigned to the ICRC Directorate of Operations, he had volunteered to replace the head of the ICRC delegation in Sarajevo.

Mr. Maurice had been injured together with two other ICRC staff in an attack on a Red Cross convoy carrying emergency medical supplies for the civilian hospital in Sarajevo. The exact circumstances of this tragic event are still unclear.

The ICRC, deeply saddened by Mr. Maurice's death, conveys its profound sympathy to his family.

++++
PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1717
21 May 1992

ISRAEL: ICRC POSITION ON TREATMENT OF PALESTINIAN DETAINERS UNDER INTERROGATION

Geneva (ICRC) - In a meeting with the Permanent Representative of the State of Israel, Ambassador Itzhak Lior, in Geneva yesterday, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Cornelio Sommaruga, called upon the Israeli government to put an immediate end to the ill-treatment inflicted during interrogation on detainees from the occupied territories, who are protected persons within the terms of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

By virtue of its mandate under the Fourth Geneva Convention, the ICRC has for many years conducted interviews in private with detainees under interrogation. It has reached the conclusion that to obtain information and confessions from the detainees, means of physical and psychological pressure are being used that constitute a violation of the Convention. Confessions obtained under duress moreover preclude any fair trial.

The ICRC deeply regrets that the numerous and detailed reports it has regularly submitted to the Israeli authorities and its repeated representations at high government level have been to no avail. It has in particular urged the authorities to prohibit all forms of ill-treatment, including insults and threats, to forbid interrogation by co-detainees and the exertion of pressure to induce detainees to collaborate, to improve the material conditions of detention and to limit to the strict minimum the time detainees have to spend in interrogation sections.

../.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), together with the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the recognized National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, is one of the three components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. An independent humanitarian institution, the ICRC is the founding body of the Red Cross. As a neutral intermediary in case of armed conflicts and disturbances, it endeavours on its own initiative or on the basis of the Geneva Conventions to protect and assist the victims of international and civil wars and of internal troubles and tensions, thereby contributing to peace in the world.
Articles 31 and 32 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibit any form of physical or moral coercion against protected persons and any measure of a nature to cause them physical suffering. The Israeli position, which is that security considerations may justify the use of "moderate measures of physical pressure", constitutes in the ICRC's opinion a violation of the relevant provisions of international humanitarian law.

Having observed no substantial or lasting improvement in the situation, the ICRC once again calls on the Government of the State of Israel, which is party to the Fourth Geneva Convention, to ensure that detainees from the occupied territories under interrogation are duly treated in accordance with the provisions of that Convention.

++++
PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1718
24 May 1992

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: HUMANITARIAN AGREEMENT SIGNED UNDER ICRC AUSPICES

Geneva (ICRC) - A framework agreement has been signed under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), at the institution's headquarters in Geneva, on the application of the basic principles of international humanitarian law by the parties involved in the conflict currently raging in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The agreement was reached following two days of discussion between the parties to the conflict and was signed by the representative of the President of Bosnia-Herzegovina and representatives of the Republic's Serbian, Croatian and Muslim communities. Representative of the Federal Yugoslav Government and of the Government of the Republic of Croatia were also present as observers. ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga opened the meeting with a solemn address, and the proceedings were conducted by Thierry Germond, ICRC Delegate General for Europe, and other senior ICRC officials.

Practical measures to ensure the application in the field of the provisions contained in the agreement were also worked out. A four-member Commission comprising one representative of each of the parties to the conflict should be set up shortly under ICRC auspices. The Commission's tasks will be as follows:

- To exchange lists of persons detained on account of the conflict by the various parties so as to organize ICRC visits to such persons and to arrange for their release.

- To allow access by the ICRC and other humanitarian organizations to groups of civilians who are cut off, in danger or particularly vulnerable.

- To organize, without discrimination, the transport of humanitarian relief supplies for victims of the conflict, and to guarantee the convoys' safety.
Finally, the parties expressly requested the ICRC to study the setting-up of an airlift of humanitarian assistance to Sarajevo. Negotiations on this urgent matter are to continue in later sessions.

In view of the tragic events that have affected the ICRC and other international organizations in Sarajevo and elsewhere in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the institution reaffirmed clearly that it would not be in a position to pursue its humanitarian activities in the republic until it could ascertain that the terms of the agreement signed in Geneva today were being complied with by all forces present in the field.

++++
ICRC: HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA
INTOLERABLE

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is forced to recognize that, despite the commitments made under its auspices in Geneva on 22 May by the parties involved in the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina to respect and ensure respect for the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law, the terrible escalation of violence in this strife-torn republic shows no sign of abating. In these circumstances, when the most basic rights of the victims and of especially vulnerable groups are being constantly and deliberately violated, the ICRC is no longer in a position to carry out its humanitarian tasks and is therefore obliged temporarily to withdraw its delegates from Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The ICRC is more determined than ever to do all it can to bring assistance to the victims of this conflict, and is calling another meeting of representatives of the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina and of the Croatian, Muslim and Serbian communities. The purpose of this meeting, due to take place in Geneva on 30 May, is to work out the details of a plan of humanitarian action which will allow the ICRC to return to the republic as soon as possible. The plan of action will be implemented only after all the parties to the conflict have given their formal assurance that the terms of the 22 May agreement will be fully respected, in particular as concerns security conditions.

+++
ZAMBIAN PRESIDENT VISITS ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - The President of the Republic of Zambia, Mr. Frederick Chiluba, today visited the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). He was received by ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga, members of the Committee and other officials of the institution.

Mr. Chiluba was accompanied by his wife, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Finance and Labour, the future Zambian ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva and other diplomats.

In his opening address, Mr. Sommaruga stressed the need for a massive relief effort to counter the effects of drought in Zambia and southern Africa, an effort the ICRC is making in countries such as South Africa and Mozambique affected by both conflict and drought.

He said he counted on Mr. Chiluba's help to intensify efforts to make international humanitarian law better known in Zambia, in particular among the armed forces and the police, and hoped that Zambia would soon become Party to the two Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions.

Mr. Chiluba stated that the work of the ICRC was to be lauded and applauded and underlined the "rare resolve" of the institution in promoting and preserving the dignity of mankind. He promised that both he and his government would do all possible to "minimize conflicts in order to promote the dignity of man and the sanctity of life."
During discussions after the signing of the visitors' book, Mr. Chiluba assured that the process for the ratification of the Additional protocols was underway. He also said his government would do all necessary to help in the search for people reported missing during Namibia's struggle for independence. The ICRC is dealing with tracing requests and the Namibian government has asked its neighbours to cooperate in efforts to locate these people.

++++
RECOGNITION OF A NEW NATIONAL SOCIETY

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has recognized the Seychelles Red Cross.

This recognition, which took effect on 3 June 1992, brings to 151 the number of National Societies which are members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

+++

Press release No. 1721
10 June 1992
RUSSIAN FEDERATION SIGNS HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT WITH ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - The government of the Russian Federation and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) signed a headquarters agreement in Moscow today.

Following this agreement the ICRC will open a delegation in the Russian capital to carry out its traditional activities in the country, notably work to spread knowledge of international humanitarian law.

There are already several ICRC delegations in the Caucasus region of the former Soviet Union, in the towns of Baku (Azerbaijan), Yerevan (Armenia) and Tbilisi (Georgia). Following recent events, the ICRC is also present in Vladikavkaz (Ossetia) and Chisinau (Moldova). In addition, a team of delegates has just completed a series of missions to the Central Asian republics.

A headquarters agreement establishes the general framework of the ICRC's relations with the authorities of a country, so that it can work there in accordance with its mandate. The Russian Federation is the 43rd country to sign a headquarters agreement with the ICRC.

++++

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), together with the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the recognized National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, is one of the three components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. An independent humanitarian institution, the ICRC is the founding body of the Red Cross. As a neutral intermediary in case of armed conflicts or disturbances, it endeavours on its own initiative or on the basis of the Geneva Conventions to protect and assist the victims of international and civil wars and of internal troubles and tensions, thereby contributing to peace in the world.
PRESS RELEASE

Press Release No. 1723
2 July 1992

RECOGNITION OF RUSSIAN RED CROSS CONFIRMED

Geneva (ICRC) - At its meeting on 1 July 1992, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) confirmed the validity of the recognition of the Russian Red Cross, which was founded in 1867.

The Russian Red Cross was part of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR between 1924 and 1991. The Alliance was dissolved following the events of December 1991 and its member Societies came back into separate existence.

The confirmation of the recognition of the Russian Red Cross brings to 151 the number of National Societies which are members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

++++
KABUL: ICRC URGES RESPECT FOR CIVILIANS AS MEDICAL FACILITIES STRUGGLE TO COPE

Geneva (ICRC) - All the hospitals and medical facilities in Kabul have been overwhelmed as a result of the worsening situation and the escalation of fighting in the Afghan capital. The hospital run by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) admitted at the weekend 147 wounded, bringing the total number of patients to over 400. This record figure largely exceeds the hospital's capacity. The other medical facilities in Kabul are also struggling with great difficulty to cope, despite the rapid distribution of emergency medical supplies by the ICRC.

The ICRC appeals to the parties concerned to spare the civilian population caught in the fighting and to comply with the rules of international humanitarian law. It urges them in particular:

- not to direct any attacks against hospitals;
- to allow medical personnel necessary freedom of movement;
- to avoid indiscriminate attacks, especially against civilians;
- to spare the lives of combatants who surrender;
- to respect and ensure respect for the Red Cross and Red Crescent emblems.

+++
PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1725
13 August 1992

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: ICRC ISSUES SOLEMN APPEAL TO ALL PARTIES TO CONFLICT

Geneva (ICRC) - Following the visits its delegates have conducted during the last few days to places of detention in Bosnia-Herzegovina, it is evident to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) that innocent civilians are being arrested and subjected to inhumane treatment. Moreover, the detention of such persons is part of a policy of forced population transfers carried out on a massive scale and marked by the systematic use of brutality. Among the long list of methods used are harassment, murder, confiscation of property, deportation and the taking of hostages - which reduce individuals to the level of bargaining counters - all in violation of international humanitarian law.

With regard to living conditions in these places of detention, it is imperative that urgent measures be taken to guarantee the physical and moral integrity of the detainees in accordance with the provisions of the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions, which must be observed in their entirety.

ICRC delegates have had only limited access to the republic's various regions and, despite repeated approaches made in this respect, they have still not received comprehensive lists of places of detention controlled by the various parties to the conflict or been notified of persons captured, and are thus unable to bring help to all the victims. The ICRC has had access to only a very limited number of prisoners or war, while the places of detention are crowded with innocent and terrified civilians.

The ICRC wishes to draw attention once again to the fact that the parties to the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina bear full responsibility for all acts committed by their respective combatants.

../..
After several weeks of intense activity in the field and in places of detention in an attempt to protect and come to the aid of the victims of this conflict, the ICRC notes that the parties to the conflict are not complying with the provisions of the Geneva Conventions, despite their commitment in this respect.

In these circumstances, and especially in view of the pressing need to clarify the situation in all places of detention in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the ICRC hereby solemnly appeals to all parties concerned to:

(a) put into effect their commitment to comply with international humanitarian law, in particular the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions;
(b) instruct all combatants in the field to respect captured persons, civilians, medical establishments, private and public places, and the Red Cross emblem;
(c) refrain from carrying out forced transfers and taking other illegal measures against the civilian population;
(d) take immediate steps to improve living conditions in all places of detention in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in accordance with the recommendations made in respect of places already visited by the ICRC;
(e) notify the ICRC immediately of all places of detention in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and supply accurate lists of all persons held in such places;
(f) take the action necessary to ensure that ICRC delegates can work effectively and rapidly in adequate conditions of security.

The ICRC earnestly hopes that implementation of the above measures by all parties to the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina will at last enable it to bring protection and assistance to all victims of the conflict, in line with its humanitarian mandate.

The entire community of States party to the Geneva Conventions bears a collective responsibility in this regard, having undertaken not only to respect but also to ensure respect for those Conventions in all circumstances.

++++
PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1726
14 August 1992

AFGHANISTAN: NEW ICRC APPEAL FOR COMPLIANCE WITH HUMANITARIAN RULES

Geneva (ICRC) - Despite the appeals launched by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on 5 May and 20 July 1992 for compliance with the rules of international humanitarian law, the situation in Kabul has deteriorated even further. Many civilians have been killed or wounded in this week's heavy shelling of the Afghan capital, and the ICRC hospital, orthopaedic centre and delegation have all been hit by rockets.

The ICRC appeals once again to all parties concerned to respect international humanitarian law and to ensure that it is respected by everyone involved in the present fighting. It asks them in particular:

- not to target civilians and facilities used only by the civilian population;
- not to launch indiscriminate attacks;
- not to attack, destroy or remove objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, or render such objects unusable;
- to spare the lives of those who surrender, and to treat all captured combatants humanely;
- to respect medical personnel and establishments;
- to allow all Red Cross and Red Crescent staff and other medical personnel the freedom of movement they need to help the civilian population and persons hors de combat;
- to respect and ensure respect for the Red Cross or Red Crescent emblem so that those working under its protection can carry out their humanitarian tasks in safety.

+++++

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), together with the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the recognized National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, is one of the three components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. An independent humanitarian institution, the ICRC is the founding body of the Red Cross. As a neutral intermediary in case of armed conflicts or disturbances, it endeavours on its own initiative or on the basis of the Geneva Conventions to protect and assist the victims of international and civil wars and of internal troubles and tensions, thereby contributing to peace in the world.
Press release No. 1727
28 August 1992

RECOGNITION OF A NEW NATIONAL SOCIETY

Geneva (ICRC) - At its meeting on 27 August 1992, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) announced the recognition of the Saint Kitts and Nevis Red Cross Society (West Indies).

This recognition, which took effect the same day, brings to 152 the number of National Societies which are members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

++++
SAVING LIVES IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Geneva (ICRC) - The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, today made an impassioned appeal to the international community to save lives in Bosnia-Herzegovina. With him was the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Mrs. Sadako Ogata, who also voiced deep concern about the plight of the victims of the conflict.

The text of President Sommaruga's statement was as follows:

"Since the beginning of the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the International Committee of the Red Cross has visited about 12,000 detainees and assisted nearly 300,000 displaced people. It has made numerous representations to all the parties to the conflict, demanding that the repeated violations of international humanitarian law cease at once.

The ICRC has also brought together plenipotentiary representatives of all the parties on several occasions, and has obtained their formal undertaking to comply with most of the provisions of international humanitarian law, in particular the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions.
PRESS RELEASE

Press Release No. 1729
19 October 1992

CROATIA AND YUGOSLAVIA REACH AGREEMENT UNDER ICRC AUSPICES

Geneva (ICRC) - A meeting between delegations from the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was held in Geneva on Sunday 18 October at the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Both parties agreed to exchange lists of names of the prisoners they are still holding in order to pave the way for their release. They also agreed to provide each other with all information in their possession concerning persons reported missing during the conflict and to facilitate the return home of displaced persons and refugees.

The ICRC called on the parties to proclaim an amnesty for all offences, other than war crimes, committed during the conflict, including desertion and the refusal to bear weapons. It hails the fact that an amnesty has been decreed by the Republic of Croatia, and expects the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to pass similar legislation, in accordance with the agreement concluded in Budapest on 7 August 1992.

The Republic of Croatia was represented at the meeting by Mr. Mate Granić, Vice Prime Minister, Mr. Ivan Crnić, Minister of Justice, and three officials of the Ministries of Justice and Foreign Affairs.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was represented by Mr. Tibor Varady, Minister of Justice, Mr. Momčilo Grubač, Minister for Human Rights and Minority Affairs, and three officials from the Ministry for Human Rights and Minority Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Defence.

+++++

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), together with the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the recognized National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, is one of the three components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. An independent humanitarian institution, the ICRC is the founding body of the Red Cross. As a neutral intermediary in case of armed conflicts or disturbances, it endeavours on its own initiative or on the basis of the Geneva Conventions to protect and assist the victims of international and civil wars and of internal troubles and tensions, thereby contributing to peace in the world.
RECOGNITION OF A NEW NATIONAL SOCIETY

Geneva (ICRC) - At its meeting on 4 November 1992, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) announced the recognition of the Antigua and Barbuda Red Cross Society (West Indies).

This recognition, which took effect the same day, brings to 153 the number of National Societies which are members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

++++

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), together with the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the recognized National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, is one of the three components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. An independent humanitarian institution, the ICRC is the founding body of the Red Cross. As a neutral intermediary in case of armed conflicts or disturbances, it endeavours on its own initiative or on the basis of the Geneva Conventions to protect and assist the victims of international and civil wars and of internal troubles and tensions, thereby contributing to peace in the world.
Press release No. 1731
4 December 1992

THE ICRC IN SOMALIA: A QUESTION OF SURVIVAL

Geneva (ICRC) - The situation in Somalia is getting worse every day, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is experiencing increasing difficulty in carrying out its work in behalf of over one million victims.

The extremely dangerous conditions have made it impossible to unload ICRC relief supplies in the ports of Mogadishu and Kismayo. As a result, 900 ICRC-run community kitchens are no longer working to full capacity and only limited amounts of food are still reaching the country by plane and barge.

The ICRC's sole concern is its humanitarian mission, which it intends to pursue. An improvement in security conditions is essential: the very survival of the Somali population is at stake.

The ICRC considers that a global solution must be found. This will depend on both the Somali authorities and the international community. The ICRC will continue making its own humanitarian contribution in accordance with its principles of neutrality and independence.

++++
MIDDLE EAST: ICRC URGES RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW

Geneva (ICRC) — The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was deeply distressed to learn of the murder of Israeli Sergeant-Major Nissim Toledano. Both hostage-taking and the killing of prisoners are prohibited by international humanitarian law. Persons enjoying the protection of this law are bound to abide by its provisions.

The Israeli authorities have responded to this killing by announcing their intention to deport more than 400 Palestinians from the occupied territories. The ICRC must protest once more against this practice to which the State of Israel has resorted several times in the past. It constitutes a grave breach of Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits individual or mass forcible transfers from occupied territory, regardless of their motive.

The ICRC appeals to the State of Israel not to enforce these expulsion orders.

The ICRC deplores the escalation of violence noted in recent weeks. It is firmly convinced that respect for international humanitarian law, however difficult the circumstances, is the best way of creating a climate conducive to peace. The ICRC therefore strongly urges all the parties concerned to find solutions within the framework of existing law.

+++