COLLECTION

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PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1733
15 January 1993

SOMALIA: ICRC DELEGATE KILLED

Geneva (ICRC) - Mr. Kurt Lustenberger, a delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), was killed last night in Somalia.

Yesterday, 14 January, three armed men burst into the ICRC delegation in Bardera at 9.15 p.m. local time, demanding money. Although Mr. Lustenberger, the delegation's administrator, was about to hand over whatever money there was on the premises, one of the gunmen shot him in the head.

The delegate was flown out on an American plane belonging to the multinational forces, but died before reaching Mogadishu.

Mr. Lustenberger, 32, was from Hasle, in the Swiss canton of Lucerne. He was on his first mission for the ICRC.

The ICRC is shocked and saddened by the tragedy and expresses its deepest sympathy to Mr. Lustenberger's family.

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PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1734
25 January 1993

ICRC APPOINTS TWO NEW MEMBERS

Geneva (ICRC) - At its latest meeting on 20 and 21 January 1993, the Assembly of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) appointed two new members, Mr. Jean-François Aubert and Mr. Josef Feldmann. Their appointment brings the membership of the Committee, which is composed exclusively of Swiss citizens, to 21.

Jean-François Aubert, LL.D., is a professor of constitutional law at the Universities of Neuchâtel and Geneva. He was born in 1931 and is originally from Savagnier in the canton of Neuchâtel. He studied in Neuchâtel, Tübingen, Paris and Ann Arbor. He was a member of the Swiss National Council from 1971 to 1979, and of the Council of States from 1979 to 1987.

Josef Feldmann, Ph.D., was born in 1927 and is originally from Amriswil in the canton of Thurgau. He studied at the Universities of Zurich, Geneva and Louvain, and from 1958 to 1963 headed the Swiss school in Florence. He was active in the Swiss army, commanding a field division and a field army corps before becoming a full corps commander. He is a tenured professor at the University of St. Gallen, where he has taught a number of subjects, including security policy.

At the same meeting the Committee conferred honorary membership on Mr. Rudolf Jäckli, member of the ICRC's Executive Board since 1979.

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26 January 1993

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

SENEGAL: MINE BLAST KILLS SEVEN RED CROSS WORKERS, WOUNDS FOUR OTHERS

Seven first-aid workers from the Senegalese Red Cross Society were killed and four others wounded yesterday, 25 January, when their vehicle hit a mine. The incident occurred on a dirt road near Boulouba, 30 km south-east of Ziguinchor (Casamance province) at around 6 p.m. local time. The wounded were immediately taken to the regional hospital in Ziguinchor, where one of them remains in critical condition.

The Senegalese Red Cross team was taking part in a joint survey with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The aim of the survey was to assess humanitarian needs in Casamance, where the Senegalese National Society is carrying out an assistance operation following unrest in the province.

The entire International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is deeply distressed by this tragic incident. The Federation and the ICRC extend their profound sympathy to the families of the victims and to the Senegalese National Society.
PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1736
29 January 1993

OFFICIAL VISIT BY THE PORTUGUESE PRIME MINISTER

Geneva (ICRC) - Mr. Anibal Antonio Cavaco Silva, Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic, paid an official visit to the ICRC on Friday, 29 January 1993, and had an exchange of views with President Cornelio Sommaruga and senior ICRC officials on the ICRC's operational activities and the need for greater compliance with international humanitarian law.

The Portuguese Prime Minister congratulated the ICRC on its work to help victims of conflicts in Asia (East Timor) and Africa (Mozambique and Angola), and promised his own support and that of the European Community for its humanitarian commitments there.

The discussions were also concerned with the revision of the Portuguese Red Cross Society's statutes and the provision by the Society of personnel for the ICRC's operational activities.

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ANGOLA: SOLEMN ICRC APPEAL

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) solemnly calls on the government of the Republic of Angola and on UNITA to comply with international humanitarian law and to ensure that all those involved in the conflict do so. It also requests them to authorize and facilitate the resumption of emergency humanitarian activities in Angola.

For more than one month the mainly civilian victims of the Angolan conflict have been deprived of all protection and assistance. None of the humanitarian organizations present in the country has obtained the authorizations or security guarantees necessary for the implementation of emergency aid programmes.

Moreover, on 8 February 1993 an aircraft painted white and clearly marked with the Red Cross emblem was strafed at Uige airport while waiting to evacuate 21 foreigners held by UNITA. Both parties had been duly notified that this humanitarian operation was to take place. A member of UNITA was killed and a British subject wounded during the attack, which constitutes a serious breach of the principles of humanitarian law and shows complete disregard for the Red Cross emblem.

Civilians in Angola are currently exposed to intense fighting and indiscriminate bombing and shelling. They are without protection, and there has been no truce allowing relief supplies to reach them. In view of the seriousness of the situation, the ICRC wishes to express its profound concern about the plight of the victims and the lack of compliance with international humanitarian law.

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Press Release No. 1738
26 February 1993

ICRC PRESIDENT CALLS FOR HUMANITARIAN MOBILIZATION IN AFRICA

Geneva (ICRC) - The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Cornelio Sommaruga, launched an appeal this morning for a humanitarian mobilization in Africa. "The situation in humanitarian terms is getting more tragic every day", he said at a meeting with ambassadors of African countries held at ICRC headquarters in Geneva. He went on to deplore the fact that the rules of humanitarian law and ethics are being constantly flouted, not only in Africa but all over the world.

Mr. Sommaruga expressed the conviction that this "exceptional humanitarian mobilization" should involve all the vital forces in Africa: governments, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the public. Special prominence must be given to spreading knowledge of and ensuring compliance with international humanitarian law. "Most of the African States have already made commitments in this regard", remarked Mr. Sommaruga. "Now the ICRC expects more: it expects action, everywhere."

The ICRC President also stressed the importance of the help brought to victims by the thousands of volunteers working for National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, especially in Somalia, Liberia, Togo, Mozambique and South Africa. He called on States to support this trend, which "does honour to Africa".

Africa is the scene of the ICRC's biggest operations: the 1992 budget for the continent amounted to 256 million Swiss francs, more than half of the institution's overall budget. Last year the ICRC dispatched 205,600 tonnes of aid to Africa, and its delegates visited 27,000 security detainees on the continent.

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Press release No. 1739
18 March 1993

PERU: ICRC RESUMES PRISON VISITS

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has resumed its visits to places of detention in Peru. The visits began on 8 March in the Santa Monica de Chorrillos women's prison in Lima, and since 15 March ICRC teams have been to Picsi prison in Trujillo and Yanamayo prison in Puno.

ICRC visits to places of detention run by the Ministry of Justice had been suspended for almost six months because of differences over visiting procedures. The matter has now been settled to the ICRC's satisfaction by an agreement signed on 4 March by the Peruvian Prime Minister and the head of the ICRC delegation in the country. The agreement takes up the ICRC's customary procedure for visits to places of detention and stipulates that delegates will be allowed to interview detainees without witnesses and in a place of their choice.

On 8 March ICRC delegates also resumed visits to police stations and army bases. The ICRC had temporarily interrupted its activities in these establishments following the recording and publication of a private interview between its delegates and Mr. Abimael Guzmán, leader of the Shining Path movement.

The ICRC, which has been working in Peru since 1980, welcomes these developments. It will now be able to carry on with all its activities in the country in a spirit of confidence.

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PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1740
19 March 1993

ICRC AND SWITZERLAND SIGN HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Swiss government today signed an agreement in Bern on the ICRC's legal status in Switzerland. The agreement takes effect immediately.

The ICRC is an entity recognized by international law, and on the international scene is usually regarded as an intergovernmental organization. These considerations prompted the Swiss Federal Council to view it as an international organization and resulted in the signing of the agreement.

Under the agreement, the ICRC benefits in Switzerland from the usual immunities granted to international organizations. The agreement does not affect the close ties between Switzerland and the ICRC, whose independence and freedom of action it also guarantees.

The ICRC was founded in Geneva in 1863. Its terms of reference stem from the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols of 1977, and from the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The ICRC carries out protection and assistance activities for the victims of armed conflicts and internal strife. It has some fifty delegations throughout the world, many of which already operate within the framework of similar agreements determining their legal status in the countries concerned.

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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.

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Press release No. 1741
14 April 1993

ICRC RECOGNIZES TWO RED CROSS SOCIETIES

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has confirmed its recognition of the Estonia Red Cross - originally accorded in 1922 - and announced its recognition of the Namibia Red Cross Society.

These decisions, which took effect on 31 March 1993, bring to 155 the number of national societies which are members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

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Seventy-Second Distribution of Income from the Empress Shôken Fund

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, together with the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, form the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The ICRC, which gave rise to the Movement, is an independent humanitarian institution. As a neutral intermediary in the event of armed conflict or unrest it endeavours, on its own initiative or on the basis of the Geneva Conventions, to bring protection and assistance to the victims of international and non-international armed conflict and internal disturbances and tension. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies promotes the humanitarian activities of National Societies among vulnerable people. By coordinating international disaster relief and encouraging development support, it seeks to prevent and alleviate human suffering.

Fourteen Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies in developing countries will benefit from grants totalling CHF 423,000 under the seventy-second 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-Federation 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, former Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The delegation of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Federation) was headed by its Acting Secretary General Mr. George Weber. 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>Cape Verde</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>To purchase a minibus for the transport of aged people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>37,000</td>
<td>For an ambulance CHEVROLET-ISUZU, type &quot;Transporter&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>To install communication links in the &quot;Region Tres&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>For an ambulance 4WD, type TOYOTA Hiace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>For first aid and rescue training programmes all over the country</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jordan 34.000 To purchase medical equipment for a laboratory in the district of Ma'an
Lao 45.000 For the strengthening of the Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service
Madagascar 7.000 To purchase audio-visual equipment for training programmes
Pakistan 43.000 To purchase medical equipment for the Blood Donor Centre in Islamabad
Rwanda 30.000 For an ambulance/minibus, type TOYOTA Hiace
Sao Tome & Principe 20.000 Wheelchairs/tricycles for disabled persons
Solomon Islands 20.000 To purchase equipment for training and development programmes
South Africa 50.000 To participate in the enlargement of the Kwanobuhle Community Centre in the Eastern Cape Region
Swaziland 25.000 To train first aid instructors for programmes to be carried out in the whole country

TOTAL 423.000 SF

The Fund was set up in 1912 through 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 most recent one being a five million yen donation in commemoration of Her Majesty the Dowager Empress' 90th birthday on 6 March 1993.

Both the Japanese Government and the Japanese Red Cross Society also contribute to the Fund, the former with generous annual allocations of twenty million yen, the latter with donations on special occasions, e.g. a five million yen contribution on 8 March 1993 to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the enactment of the Japanese Red Cross Law.

The interest-bearing investments of the Fund amount to 7 1/2 million Swiss francs.
JOINT PRESS RELEASE

LANDMINES: RED CROSS/RED CRESCENT APPEAL TO HALT THE CARNAGE

April 21st 1993

Geneva . - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (The Federation) are today launching an international appeal urging governments, manufacturers and belligerents to do everything in their power to call a halt to the carnage caused by the indiscriminate use of landmines.

The humanitarian organizations have for many years been drawing attention to the atrocious suffering and other disastrous effects resulting from the use of these lethal weapons, which are increasingly used in the most perverse way to spread terror among civilians and to keep them away from sources of food. The presence of large numbers of unrecorded and undetectable landmines makes vast tracts of land inaccessible, prevents refugees and displaced persons from returning home at the end of the hostilities and hinders humanitarian work.

The present situation is intolerable. The use of mines to inflict cruel and unnecessary suffering is a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. More than 100 million mines still scattered over the five continents and their countless victims bear witness to the need for drastic and immediate action to counter this scourge. Mines laid today will continue to maim and kill for generations to come.

A symposium held under ICRC auspices in Montreux, Switzerland, on 21-23 April will bring together over 60 international experts -- representatives of humanitarian agencies, arms manufacturers, government officials, mine clearance specialists, military officers, doctors and lawyers -- who will seek means of putting a stop to the dreadful damage that mines currently cause. A report will be drawn up on the magnitude of the problem and the practical measures to be taken, with emphasis on the coordination of efforts and the enforcement of effective law on the subject.

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PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1744
17 April 1993

EASTERN BOSNIA:
ICRC UNABLE TO ASSIST CONFLICT VICTIMS

Geneva (ICRC) - The serious worsening of the situation in eastern Bosnia has prompted the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to make numerous representations to the parties to the conflict to obtain access to the victims and provide them with the necessary emergency assistance, and to ensure compliance by the parties with international humanitarian law.

The ICRC Delegate General for Europe, Mr. Thierry Germond, met the highest military authorities of the two parties concerned, General Mladic and General Halilovic, respectively in Bijeljina on 13 April 1993 and in Sarajevo on 16 April 1993. He urged them to do their utmost to guarantee respect for civilians, the wounded and prisoners, and to facilitate ICRC access to all the victims, in particular in Gorazde, Zepa, Srebrenica and the other besieged towns.

Despite these efforts and the commitments made by the parties to the conflict, the ICRC has unfortunately still been unable to fulfil its humanitarian mandate in eastern Bosnia. It is therefore launching an urgent appeal to all the parties to heed its call and allow its delegates to assist the victims of the tragic events unfolding daily.

The ICRC staff on the spot are now in a state of readiness: close to 200 expatriates and 500 local employees in 19 offices, including 10 in Bosnia-Herzegovina, are standing by with 100 land cruisers and 80 trucks to bring relief and medical assistance to the victims of the fighting in and around the besieged towns in eastern Bosnia. The ICRC will step in as soon as it receives the necessary authorizations from the parties concerned.

The ICRC has taken note of United Nations Security Council resolution 819 and welcomes all efforts to protect the civilian population and guarantee safe and unrestricted access to the countless victims of the fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in particular in the towns under siege.

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Press release No. 1745
19 April 1993

ICRC PROTESTS ATTACK ON KABUL HOSPITAL

Geneva (ICRC) - Four rockets were fired at the Karte Seh surgical hospital in Kabul on 16 April. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) strongly condemns this and any other attack on the civilian population or medical facilities.

Last Friday's attack, which was launched during visiting hours, killed three people and injured 44. The injured, most of whom were relatives of patients, were treated on the spot.

Following the attack, the ICRC immediately contacted the parties concerned and reminded them of their obligation under international humanitarian law to spare civilians and civilian property, in particular all medical facilities.

The ICRC, which has been working in Kabul since 1988, continues to supply two of the city's five hospitals with all the equipment and materials they require. Together the two hospitals have 600 beds and treat most of the people wounded in the capital.

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PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1746
6 May 1993

ICRC APPOINTS TWO NEW MEMBERS

Geneva (ICRC) - At its meeting on 29 April 1993, the Assembly of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) appointed two new members, Ms. Lilian Uchtenhagen and Mr. Georges-André Cuendet. These appointments bring the membership of the Committee, which is composed exclusively of Swiss citizens, to 23. The other members are: President Cornelio Sommaruga, Vice-Presidents Pierre Keller and Claudio Caratsch, and Ms. Susy Bruscheide, Ms. Renée Guisan, Ms. Liselotte Kraus-Gurny, Ms. Anne Petitpierre, Ms. Francesca Pomietta, Mr. Jean-François Aubert, Mr. Maurice Aubert, Mr. Paolo Bernasconi, Mr. Max Daetwyler, Mr. Josef Feldmann, Mr. Jacques Forster, Mr. Rodolphe de Haller, Mr. Pierre Languein, Mr. Ulrich G. Middendorp, Mr. Jacques Moreillon, Mr. Marco Mumenthaler, Mr. Dietrich Schindler and Mr. Daniel Thürer.

Lilian Uchtenhagen was born in 1928 and comes from Sissach in the Canton of Basel-Land. She attended schools in Olten and Neuchâtel and studied at Basel University and the University of London. Ms. Uchtenhagen holds a doctorate in economics and was a member of the Swiss National Council from 1971 to 1991.

Georges-André Cuendet was born in 1933 and comes from Ste. Croix in the Canton of Vaud. He holds a law degree from the University of Geneva, a diploma from the Institute of Political Studies at the University of Paris and a master of arts degree from Stanford University in the United States. Mr. Cuendet is a member of the Board of Directors of a private Geneva bank. He was formerly a member and President of the Municipal Council and mayor of Cologny, in the Canton of Geneva, and is currently a member of Cologny's Administrative Council. He is also a member of the Management Control Commission of the State of Geneva and the Academic Council of the University of Geneva.

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JOINT PRESS RELEASE

RESPECT HUMAN DIGNITY, MOVEMENT URGES ON WORLD RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT DAY

Geneva - Examples of disrespect for human dignity fill the pages of daily newspapers and appear on TV screens with increasing regularity.

Tomorrow, 8 May, which is World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies all over the world will call on people to respect human dignity. Under the banner "Dignity for All", an appeal will be launched on behalf of the hundreds of millions of people suffering from the consequences of war, violence, disasters, disease and malnutrition.

In Geneva, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Federation) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in a joint 8 May message, stressed: "it takes more than food and other relief supplies to address the problems of human suffering.

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the two Geneva-based institutions will draw public attention to the act that human rights are guaranteed by States to all individuals, and that international humanitarian law gives fundamental protections to persons in armed conflicts.

Events scheduled on 8 May in the more than 150 countries with Red Cross or Red Crescent societies will draw attention in different ways to the concept of "Dignity for all". Exhibitions, cross-border marathons, publications and information events are scheduled to take place across the globe.
May 8 is the anniversary of the birth of Red Cross founder Henry Dunant. It has been commemorated worldwide for 45 years. As is traditional, Dr. Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the ICRC, and Dr. Mario Villarroel Lander, President of the Federation, will speak in a radio address to be broadcast worldwide on behalf of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

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ARGENTINE PRESIDENT VISITS ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - Mr. Carlos Saúl Menem, President of the Argentine Republic, 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 senior staff, and the Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

In his welcoming address, Mr. Sommaruga expressed the hope that Argentina, which is party to the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, would continue to support the ICRC’s appeal to all governments to comply with international humanitarian law. He added that he was counting on Argentina to play an active role at the International Conference for the Protection of War Victims due to take place shortly in Geneva.

President Sommaruga went on to mention the work done by the ICRC in Argentina in behalf of political detainees and people who disappeared during the dark period between 1977 and 1982. In 1977 Mr. Menem himself, then a political prisoner, was visited by ICRC delegates.

During the conflict in the South Atlantic from May to July 1982, the ICRC visited and registered some 12,000 prisoners of war both on the Falkland/Malvinas Islands and on board various ships at sea.

Mr. Sommaruga ended his remarks by paying tribute to all the volunteers of the Argentine Red Cross.

In his reply, President Menem expressed his appreciation of the ICRC’s work around the world, adding that Argentina was proud of its support for the institution. "We have a duty to help the ICRC", he said. "May my visit here serve to strengthen the unanimous appeal now being made in favour of prisoners and other victims of conflict, and may the international community actively respond to that appeal."
Mr. Menem went on to stress the vital importance of neutrality for the ICRC. He concluded by warmly thanking the institution for its activities in behalf of political prisoners, giving his assurance that Argentina would always uphold international humanitarian law and back the ICRC’s efforts to ensure its implementation.

President Menem was accompanied on his visit by a number of prominent Argentine officials including Mr. Guido di Tella, Minister of Foreign Relations, Ambassador Juan Archibaldo Lanus, Argentina’s Permanent Representative in Geneva, and Admiral Jorge Ferrer, Navy Chief of Staff.

From the ICRC, President Menem and his delegation went on to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum.

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Press release No. 1749  
Geneva, 18 June 1993

RWANDESE PRIME MINISTER VISITS ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - Mr. Dismas Nsengiyaremye, Prime Minister of the Rwandese Republic, today visited the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). He was accompanied by Mr. Faustin Munyazesa, Minister of the Interior, and Mr. Félicien Gatabazi, Minister of Public Works. They were received by Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, the ICRC President, and Mr. Claudio Caratsch, the institution's Vice-President.

Talks between them were held in a constructive atmosphere and focused on the plight of displaced people in Rwanda, some of whom are now returning to their homes. The ICRC confirmed itself ready to help them make a fresh start. Visits by the institution's delegates to detainees in Rwanda were also discussed.

The Rwandese Prime Minister thanked the ICRC for its work and pledged Rwanda's support at the International Conference for the Protection of War Victims to be held in Geneva in late August. Mr. Nsengiyaremye also reaffirmed his country's determination to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law.

The ICRC's operation in Rwanda is currently its largest on the African continent. Some 13,000 tonnes of food a month are brought into the country, mainly by the World Food Programme, and distributed by the Red Cross. President Sommaruga praised the effective cooperation between the Rwandese Red Cross, the Belgian Red Cross and the ICRC.
PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1750
Geneva, 26 July 1993

ICRC APPEALS FOR PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN LEBANON AND ISRAEL

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) appeals to all the parties involved in military operations in Lebanon and Israel to respect international humanitarian law, and in particular to spare the civilian population and civilian property.

The recent operations have increased the toll of civilian casualties and led to the destruction of civilian property in Lebanon and in northern Israel.

The ICRC is deeply concerned about these latest developments and their consequences in humanitarian terms in both Lebanon and northern Israel.

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LEBANON/ISRAEL CONFLICT: ICRC APPEAL

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is closely following developments in the hostilities currently affecting Israel and Lebanon and is deeply concerned about the serious consequences for all civilians living in areas where military operations are taking place and those forced to leave such areas. Owing to the nature of the operations, hundreds of thousands of civilians have fled their villages in very precarious conditions.

In view of this critical situation, the ICRC solemnly reminds the parties involved in the fighting of their duty to comply with the rules of international humanitarian law that provide protection for war victims.

The ICRC stresses that the parties to the conflict have an absolute obligation in the conduct of hostilities to take all the precautions necessary to spare the civilian population. In particular, the following acts are prohibited:

- attacks aimed at civilians or civilian property;
- indiscriminate attacks likely to affect civilians and civilian property as well as military objectives;
- acts and threats of violence whose main purpose is to spread terror among the civilian population.

The ICRC further points out that combatants are obliged to distinguish themselves from civilians and may not use the latter to protect themselves from attack or for any other military purpose.

The ICRC calls on the parties to the conflict:

- to facilitate all work to protect and assist civilians, wounded and sick combatants and prisoners, and in particular to allow access to casualties who need to be evacuated as a matter of urgency;
- to respect the personnel, vehicles and buildings used for medical and humanitarian activities.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, together with the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, form the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The ICRC, which gave rise to the Movement, is an independent humanitarian institution. As a neutral intermediary in the event of armed conflict or unrest it endeavours, on its own initiative or on the basis of the Geneva Conventions, to bring protection and assistance to the victims of international and non-international armed conflict and internal disturbances and tension.
The ICRC for its part stands ready to perform the tasks entrusted to it by the Geneva Conventions. It remains at the disposal of the parties concerned, in its capacity as a neutral and independent intermediary, to take any humanitarian action that may be required in behalf of the civilian and military victims of the conflict.

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International Conference for the Protection of War Victims,
Geneva, 30 August - 1 September

The Geneva Conventions need more convincing advocates

Geneva (ICRC) - The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, has made a forceful appeal for greater compliance with international humanitarian law. Speaking at a press conference in Geneva earlier today, he said that the Geneva Conventions need much more convincing advocates.

At the International Conference for the Protection of War Victims, due to be held in Geneva in the next few days, representatives of over one hundred countries will be able to state their intention to work for greater compliance with the Geneva Conventions. "I hope that firm commitments will be forthcoming, and that these will be followed by practical measures on the ground", said Mr. Sommaruga.

The ICRC President feels that the Conference is taking place at a critical juncture. Civilians are more and more often the direct target of hostilities. Their cries no longer seem to be heard either by the belligerents or by the international community.

The 1949 Geneva Conventions, and above all their Additional Protocols of 1977, give special attention to the protection of the civilian population. But they are not sufficiently well known. The problem becomes especially acute in war situations when States have not issued the necessary information or instructed their troops in the fundamental rules contained in these treaties.

States are now being urged to respect more fully and, especially, to ensure greater respect for the Conventions. "If today a State does not honour its commitments in this regard, the international community must remind it of its responsibilities", said Mr. Sommaruga, adding: "Every State must uphold the Geneva Conventions and ensure that they are put into practice on its own territory and the world over."

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PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1753

28 August 1993

SIERRA LEONE: TWO ICRC NURSES KILLED IN AMBUSH

Geneva (ICRC) - On Friday 27 August 1993, at 10.30 a.m. local time (GMT), a convoy of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was ambushed near the town of Gorahun in Sierra Leone. During the attack two ICRC nurses, Susanne Buser from Switzerland and Sarah Leomy, a local Sierra Leonean employee, were killed. Another ICRC nurse, Bernadette Peterhans, was injured.

The ICRC convoy was composed of a Land Cruiser and a lorry, both duly marked with the red cross emblem. For the past 18 months the ICRC, in cooperation with the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society, has been providing assistance in that area to more than 10,000 displaced persons.

Susanne Buser was born in 1957 and came from Sissach in the Swiss canton of Basel-Land. She was on her sixth mission for the ICRC and had been working in Sierra Leone since July 1992. Sarah Leomy had been with the assistance operation from the start. Bernadette Peterhans, who was born in 1957 and came from Fislisbach in the Swiss canton of Aargau, received bullet wounds in one arm. Her life is not in danger.

The ICRC, extremely shocked by this tragedy, conveys its deepest sympathy to the bereaved families. It sharply condemns the attack and the failure to respect the red cross emblem. All ICRC operations in that part of Sierra Leone have immediately been suspended.

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Press release No. 1754

28 August 1993

TAJIKISTAN: ICRC DELEGATE KILLED IN PLANE ACCIDENT

Geneva (ICRC) - A delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Michel Kuhn, was killed this morning, 28 August 1993, in a plane crash in Khorog in south-east Tajikistan.

Mr. Kuhn, who was 44 years old, had carried out many humanitarian missions for the ICRC since he joined its staff in 1982, in particular in Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Namibia, Sudan, Afghanistan and Nagorny-Karabakh. He was due to leave Tajikistan within the next few days to take up his new ICRC post in Azerbaijan.

The ICRC, greatly distressed by the death of one of its delegates, expresses its deepest sympathy to his family.

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PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1755
Geneva, 30 August 1993
International Conference for the Protection of War Victims
Geneva, 30 August - 1 September 1993

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY NO LONGER HEARS THE CRIES OF WAR VICTIMS

Geneva (ICRC) - "For how long must war victims cry out for help before they are heard?" This was the question asked this morning at the opening of the International Conference for the Protection of War Victims by Cornélia Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The ICRC was still in shock after the death of two of its nurses killed in an ambush in Sierra Leone last Friday.

The ICRC is Special Rapporteur to the Conference. The report it submitted focuses on the plight of war victims, and denounces the violence, horror and savagery that are unleashed when the basic principles of humanity are rejected.

Mr. Sommaruga described this state of affairs as intolerable. He went on to ask: "How can we not be profoundly disturbed when humanitarian law, the last bastion of human solidarity, is freely flouted by the very States which, by ratifying it, have undertaken to uphold it?" He called on the international community to put an end to unacceptable practices, "or else the horrors seen today will slide into absolute chaos".

The ICRC President stressed that humanitarian work must be conducted in total independence. "Humanitarian action should not be regarded as a means of pursuing political aims; on the contrary, it is politics that should be at the service of the humanitarian cause", he affirmed.

After expressing the hope that the declaration to be adopted at the end of the Conference would go beyond mere statements of intent, which only too often remained a dead letter, Mr. Sommaruga addressed an eloquent appeal to the international community: "I trust that the declaration will be an assertion of your active solidarity with the victims, without any discrimination, and of your resolve to respond with fresh determination to their cries of distress. I trust also that it will offer a response to the urgent pleas of the impartial humanitarian institutions for more effective guarantees of security for their delegates".

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During the Conference the ICRC press service can be reached at usual numbers at ICRC headquarters and at the Centre International de Conférences de Genève (CICG): Phone: 41 22 791 98 60, Fax: 41 22 791 98 01.
FOREIGN MINISTER OF RUSSIAN FEDERATION ON OFFICIAL VISIT TO ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Mr. Andrei Vladimirovich Kozyrev, accompanied by a number of close associates, today paid an official visit to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). He was received by ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga.

The main points raised at the official ceremony, which was attended by numerous journalists, were the ICRC's activities and the need for greater compliance with international humanitarian law.

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Press release No. 1757
Geneva, 1 September 1993

International Conference for the Protection of War Victims

THE ICRC TAKES STOCK: THE VICTIMS EXPECT TANGIBLE RESULTS

Geneva (ICRC) - The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, has called the International Conference for the Protection of War Victims the "starting point of a process of renewed commitment by the States to respect and ensure respect for humanitarian law under all circumstances".

Mr. Sommaruga summed up the Conference results in seven points.

1. Humanitarian law must be made completely universal by inviting the States which have not yet done so to become party to the Geneva Conventions and to their Additional Protocols. "Any imbalance in the obligations undertaken by the belligerents carries within it the seed of violations because the adversaries are not guided by the same provisions", he stated.

2. Humanitarian law must be widely known. "This is something that goes without saying, for how can humanitarian law be respected if it is not known to those who must apply it?"

3. The respective responsibilities of the States, the international organizations and the humanitarian agencies must be redefined so as to eliminate the "risks inherent in the blurring of mandates".

4. The essential nature of humanitarian assistance must not be forgotten. "Humanitarian assistance in no way constitutes interference or unlawful intervention in the internal affairs of States."

5. The universal values of the principles of humanitarian law are also to be borne in mind. "While the rules applicable in non-international armed conflicts may quite legitimately be narrower in scope than those applicable in conflicts between States, it is unacceptable for the States to use methods and means of warfare against their own people which they have undertaken not to use in the event of a war with another State."
6. Mr. Sommaruga spoke of the need for a universal and permanent penal jurisdiction, emphasizing that it was "unacceptable that war crimes should go unpunished". The means must be found of bringing the States responsible for grave breaches of humanitarian law to meet their commitments. "For we have the means, be they diplomatic, economic or even military, in extreme cases and when the violations of humanitarian law are so serious that they constitute of themselves a threat to peace."

7. "The peoples you represent," Mr. Sommaruga told the Conference delegates, "expect tangible results. There must be a follow-up to your deliberations".
JOINT PRESS RELEASE

10 September 1993

STATEMENT

The Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, meeting in Geneva on 8 September 1993, expresses its great satisfaction with the successful outcome of the International Conference for the Protection of War Victims, convened by the Swiss Government and assembling some 160 States in Geneva from 30 August to 1 September 1993.

Pursuant to the appeal to the Swiss Government, unanimously adopted by the Conference, to convene an open-ended intergovernmental group of experts to study practical means of promoting full respect for and compliance with International Humanitarian Law, and to prepare a report for submission to the next session of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the Standing Commission reaffirms its decision to re-convene the XXVIth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in 1995.

In particular, the Standing Commission congratulates the Swiss Government for convoking the International Conference for the Protection of War Victims. Pleased with the extensive involvement in the preparation of the Conference and of its promotion by all the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the Standing Commission affirms its readiness to offer its assistance in pursuing the objectives of the Conference and its follow-up.

Note: The standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent is the trustee of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent between two Conferences. It is composed of representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and five members from National Societies (of Germany, Zimbabwe, Benin, Brazil and Hungary). Its chairman is Botho Prinz zu Sayn-Wittgenstein (President of the German Red Cross).

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SOMALIA: ICRC APPEALS FOR COMPLIANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is deeply concerned by the casualties resulting from the fighting that broke out in Mogadishu on 3 and 4 October. In addition to the high number of fatalities among Somalis and UNOSOM soldiers, the ICRC counted more than 700 wounded in Mogadishu hospitals. One third of the wounded are women and children, and there was large-scale destruction of civilian property. Furthermore, the ICRC deplores incidents in which the mortal remains of victims were not treated with due respect. The ICRC urges all forces involved in the conflict to comply with international humanitarian law, and in particular to spare the civilian population.

On 6 October ICRC delegates visited 18 persons detained by UNOSOM forces, bringing the total number of Somali detainees visited since June to 172. One Nigerian UNOSOM soldier held by Somalis has also been visited to date. All the detainees seen were given the opportunity to write Red Cross messages, which were forwarded to their families. The ICRC is pursuing its efforts to gain access to any other detainees being held by Somalis or by UNOSOM.

At the request of the UN forces, the ICRC undertook to return the mortal remains of three Somalis in the hands of UNOSOM to their families. The ICRC is taking steps to ensure that the remains of UNOSOM soldiers are also returned.

The ICRC has increased its medical staff in Mogadishu in response to the very serious medical situation, and has distributed 2.2 tonnes of medical supplies in the capital since 3 October. In cooperation with the Somali Red Crescent Society, five first-aid posts have been set up to treat the wounded.

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JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Birmingham (UK), October 30, 1993

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT: CALL TO ACTION ON KEY HUMANITARIAN ISSUES

The biennial Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement closed its deliberations today after two days of intensive debate on key humanitarian issues.

Delegates from 161 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Federation and the ICRC, meeting in Birmingham UK, passed some 50 resolutions on a wide range of matters.

Issues discussed included protection and humanitarian assistance in times of conflict, aid to refugees and displaced people and the coordination of disaster relief.

The Council also considered an in-depth study on the future of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The keynote address to the Council was delivered by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, who called on those involved in armed conflict to recognise the neutrality, impartiality and independence of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and to respect their protective emblems.

Her Majesty also presented the Movement’s Prize for Peace and Humanity to the Somali Red Crescent.

The Henry Dunant Medal was awarded to 13 individuals, eight posthumously. The Medal is conferred in recognition of outstanding service and acts of great devotion to the cause of the Movement. Those honoured in 1993 included a volunteer with 60 years service and delegates who lost their lives in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Yugoslavia, Liberia, Somalia and Tajikistan.

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The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies promotes the humanitarian activities of National Societies among vulnerable people. By coordinating international disaster relief and encouraging development support, it seeks to prevent and alleviate human suffering.
Mr Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), stressed the independence of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies with regard to their respective governments as a moral imperative.

"The deliberations and decisions of these past days have set the agenda and priorities for our work on behalf of vulnerable people across the world to the end of this century", Dr Mario Villarroel Lander, President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the representative body of 161 National Societies world-wide, said today.

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