N° 1794 n'existe pas
ICRC PRESIDENT MEETS RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

Geneva (ICRC) - The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Cornelio Sommaruga, accompanied by the Delegate General for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Jean-Marc Bornet, and the Deputy Director of the Department of Principles and Law, François Bugnion, met the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Andrei Kozyrev, today (17 January) at the headquarters of the Russian Permanent Mission.

The ICRC has been working in the northern Caucasus since early December 1994, with complete independence and in accordance with its customary criteria. During the meeting the ICRC President expressed his concern about the distressing situation in Chechnya. In particular, he called attention to the plight of the thousands of severe casualties and of the hundreds of thousands of displaced people. Mr Sommaruga also deplored the terrible consequences of the attacks and bombardments of the civilian population. The ICRC President and Mr Kozyrev considered arrangements, such as a truce, for the particular purpose of evacuating civilians and casualties in general from Grozny. Mr Sommaruga furthermore asked Mr Kozyrev to give ICRC delegates access to all Chechen prisoners detained by the authorities of the Russian Federation.

During the meeting, a comprehensive exchange of views also took place on humanitarian situations of mutual interest and on the follow-up to be given to the International Conference on the Protection of War Victims held in Geneva in September 1993.

+++
PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1796
3 March 1995

PRESIDENT OF GUATEMALA VISITS ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - The President of the Republic of Guatemala, Mr Ramiro De León Carpio, today visited the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). He was received by ICRC President Comelio Sommaruga, two members of the Committee and several senior staff.

The ICRC President said that he was pleased to welcome Mr De León Carpio, Head of State of one of the 185 Parties to the Geneva Conventions. He went on to express his appreciation of Guatemala's support for the ICRC regional delegation in Guatemala City. This delegation works not only in the Republic but also in neighbouring countries to prevent or relieve human suffering and to spread knowledge of international humanitarian law and the principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in particular respect for the dignity of the individual in all circumstances.

President Sommaruga mentioned that during the sombre period in Guatemala's recent past the ICRC had not been able fully to discharge its mandate in behalf of the many victims needing its assistance. He said it was time to find a way for the ICRC to fulfil its role effectively so as to ease tension between the different parties, in anticipation of a more peaceable future for Guatemala. "The support you give the ICRC in this respect, Mr President, will be vital", declared Mr Sommaruga.

He concluded by paying tribute to Red Cross volunteers in Guatemala and by affirming the ICRC's resolve to provide support, together with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, for the efforts of the Guatemalan Red Cross to assume its place within the Movement.
In his reply, President De León Carpio said that he was pleased to have the opportunity to visit the ICRC and expressed his admiration for the institution's humanitarian work. He added that despite the difficulties the ICRC had experienced in connection with his country's internal problems, he had always had high regard for its efforts to assist victims around the world. He also expressed keen interest in the development and strengthening of the Guatemalan Red Cross.

Several prominent Guatemalan officials accompanied their President on his visit, including Marithza Ruiz de Vielman, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Federico Urruela Prado, Guatemala's Permanent Representative in Geneva, Carlos Enrique Reynoso Gil, Minister of the Interior, and Vicente Arranz, Chairman of the Presidential Commission for Human Rights.

+++++
PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1797
Geneva, 22 March 1995

ICRC CALLS FOR COMPLIANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW IN TURKEY AND NORTHERN IRAQ

Geneva (ICRC) - Following the recent operations of the Turkish armed forces in northern Iraq, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is deeply concerned about the plight of the civilian population, particularly vulnerable in combat areas.

The ICRC appeals to the Turkish military authorities and to all the parties involved to respect international humanitarian law. It calls upon them to refrain from launching any indiscriminate attack that may endanger the civilian population and to accord humane treatment to captured combatants and arrested civilians. It also requests them to care for the wounded and sick and to respect the Red Cross and Red Crescent emblems.

On 22 March the ICRC sent the Turkish Government a note reminding it of its obligation to comply with international humanitarian law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention, in occupied Iraqi territory, and Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions, which applies to non-international armed conflicts. The ICRC further requested immediate access to Kurdish combatants and civilians detained by the Turkish armed forces. The ICRC had already made several approaches to the Turkish Government with a view to carrying out its humanitarian mandate in Turkey.

+++++
ITALIAN PRESIDENT VISITS ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - The President of the Italian Republic, Mr Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, visited the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) today, 19 April 1995. He was received by ICRC President Comelio Sommaruga.

After introducing the members of the Committee, senior ICRC staff and the Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, President Sommaruga gave a speech in which he expressed appreciation for the interest shown by the Italian Republic in problems of humanitarian concern. He went on to speak of its financial support for the ICRC and the importance of its participation in the forthcoming International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, and referred to its essential role as a member of the Security Council. The need to find a quick solution for the problematic status of the Italian Red Cross was also mentioned.

President Scalfaro responded by voicing his admiration for the work and professionalism of the ICRC, and encouraged it to continue its efforts to promote respect for international humanitarian law in armed conflicts.

After signing the visitors' book, President Scalfaro, accompanied by President Sommaruga, went to see the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum.

+++++
PRESS DIVISION
19, avenue de la Paix
CH-1202 Geneva
Phone (022) 734 60 01
Telex 414 226
Telefax (022) 734 82 80

PRESS RELEASE

Press release No. 1799
Geneva, 8 June 1995

PRESIDENT OF KAZAKHSTAN VISITS ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - President Nursultan Nazarbayev of the Republic of Kazakhstan, accompanied by Kazakh Foreign Minister N. Tokayev, were received today 8 June by the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Comelio Sommaruga.

President Nazarbayev emphasized the importance he attached to respect for international humanitarian law and to the promotion of its rules among the armed forces. He thanked the ICRC for having organized seminars to that end in Kazakhstan.

The topics discussed included the humanitarian issues raised during the recent negotiations held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, between the Tajik government and the Tajik opposition. Mr Nazarbayev welcomed the resulting agreement, which provides for the simultaneous release of prisoners under ICRC auspices, and added that he was very much in favour of the ICRC conducting regular visits to all persons detained in connection with the Tajik conflict.

Today's meeting also provided an opportunity for discussing other matters of common interest, such as the ICRC's humanitarian activities in Chechnya.

+++++

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS
Press release No 1800
Geneva, 4 August 1995

KNIN: THE ICRC INTERVENES AND CALLS FOR THE RESPECT OF CIVILIAN POPULATIONS AND OF PRISONERS.

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), faced with the recent resumption of military operations in former Yugoslavia and in particular in the region around Knin, is acutely concerned by the fate of those civilian populations who are dramatically exposed in all the combat zones.

The ICRC appeals to the Croatian military authorities and to all other parties involved to respect international humanitarian law. The ICRC calls upon them not to undertake attacks of an indiscriminate nature, and so liable to endanger civilian populations, and to treat captured combatants and detained civilians in a humane manner. The ICRC also calls upon the warring parties to provide the necessary care to both the wounded and the sick and to respect the Red Cross emblem.

The ICRC requests immediate access to all combatants and to all civilians captured by all the warring parties. Its delegates are already present in the towns of Knin, Bihac, Velika Kladusa, Vojnic, Banja Luka, Petrovac and Zagreb among others.

++++
Press release No. 1801
Geneva, 29 September 1995

TOP ICRC OFFICIALS RE-ELECTED

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), meeting in Assembly in Geneva on 28 September 1995, re-elected Mr Cornelio Sommaruga as its President for a third term, to begin when the present one expires at the end of 1995.

At the same time Mr Pierre Keller was confirmed in the post of Vice-President, while two of the ICRC's Directors, Mr Jean de Courten and Mr Yves Sandoz, were re-elected to the Institution's seven-member Executive Board.

The Board will thus continue to be constituted as follows:

Mr Cornelio Sommaruga, President
Mr Eric Roethlisberger, Permanent Vice-President
Mrs Anne Petitpierre, member of the ICRC
Mr Jacques Forster, member of the ICRC
Mr Peter Fuchs, Director General
Mr Jean de Courten, Director of Operations
Mr Yves Sandoz, Director for Principles, Law and Relations with the Movement

+++

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS
OAU SECRETARY-GENERAL VISITS ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - The Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Dr Salim Ahmed Salim, was received today 16 October by the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Comelio Sommaruga.

The ICRC President assured Dr Salim once again of the ICRC's firm commitment not to abandon African victims of war and violence to their fate.

During their meeting, the two men covered various issues of concern on the African continent, including the unstable situation in the Great Lakes region. In particular they discussed matters related to the repatriation of Rwandan refugees and the need to create acceptable conditions for their return. The ICRC President reiterated his particular concern about conditions of detention in Rwanda.

It was the OAU Secretary-General's second official visit to the ICRC. In 1992, the ICRC and the OAU concluded a cooperation agreement, which has resulted in several joint projects, mainly involving the teaching of international humanitarian law to armed forces in Africa.

In resolutions adopted in 1994 and 1995, the OAU Council of Ministers paid tribute to the important role of the ICRC in protecting and assisting victims of armed conflict, and endorsed the recommendations made by a joint OAU ICRC seminar, calling for a total ban on the production and use of landmines.

The ICRC has delegations in 15 African countries, with 444 expatriates and over 5,100 national staff. The cost of operations in Africa amounted to 271 million Swiss francs in 1994, that is, over 45% of the ICRC's field expenditure worldwide.

++++
Press release No. 1803
Geneva, 23 November 1995

THE DAYTON AGREEMENT: A MAJOR STEP ON THE ROAD TO PEACE

The agreement signed in Dayton, Ohio on 21 November by the Presidents of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia is without doubt the biggest step yet towards a peace settlement in the former Yugoslavia. There is now every reason to hope that the four years of bitter fighting are nearing an end.

The ICRC warmly welcomes the endeavours made in the pursuit of peace. However it remains concerned for the population whose physical and psychological resources have been exhausted by years of conflict. It is now time to find ways to heal the deep wounds left by hatred, violence, captivity, misery, uncertainty and the loss of so many loved ones.

Says Comelio Sommaruga, President of the ICRC: "We have been working in the former Yugoslavia since 1991 to protect and assist people affected by the conflict on all sides: those who have suffered detention and separation from their next-of-kin; those who have been displaced or have sought refuge elsewhere; and persecuted minorities. We are well aware that the road to peace and a future when the people can once again live in safety and dignity is long and fraught with difficulties. We hope that the political will expressed in Dayton will ease the distress of the people the ICRC has been supporting in their struggle for survival. The ICRC is determined to play its role in the common effort to help the region return to normality."

+++++
UKRAINE SIGNS HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT WITH ICRC

Geneva (ICRC) - The Government of Ukraine and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) today signed a "headquarters agreement" in Geneva. Mr Khandogy Volodymyr, Ukraine's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Mr Cornelio Sommaruga, ICRC President, signed the document at Geneva's International Conference Centre, where the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent is currently under way.

With the agreement secured, the ICRC will now open a regional delegation in Kiev, from which it will carry out its traditional activities, in particular programmes to spread knowledge of international humanitarian law.

A headquarters agreement sets out a framework for relations between the ICRC and the authorities of the country concerned, enabling it to carry out its mandate.

In addition to Ukraine, the delegation in Kiev will cover the Baltic States, the Republic of Moldova and Belarus. The ICRC is already present in the region, in particular the Russian Federation, where it has a delegation in Moscow and representatives in the northern Caucasus.

+++++