1980: SUCCESS AND FAILURE

The ICRC was extremely busy in the year that has just ended. The marked increase in its commitments throughout the world, already noted in previous years, continued in 1980.

The Committee intervened in over sixty countries to provide protection and assistance to the victims of international armed conflicts, civil wars, internal troubles and tensions. The largest operation carried out by the ICRC was undoubtedly its joint action with UNICEF in Kampuchea and along the Thai border. It required the engagement of considerable financial means since in 15 months the overall cost to the international community amounted to some 500 million dollars. Such efforts have not been in vain, however, for it may now be said that the Kampuchean population has been saved from starvation.

While the ICRC has every reason to rejoice at such an achievement in Kampuchea it cannot but recognize that despite innumerable attempts it was unable to take action in Afghanistan as the situation required. The second part of this Bulletin is devoted to a look-back at all the approaches made in vain by the ICRC to the Afghan and Soviet Governments, on the one hand, and the opposition movements, on the other. The interruption of all ICRC activities in Afghanistan since June 1980 is a serious setback for the humanitarian cause. The ICRC hopes it will only prove temporary, and that in 1981 discussions will resume with all the parties involved in the conflict so that the civilian victims and the Afghan and Soviet soldiers taking no further part in the fighting finally receive the protection and assistance to which they are entitled under international humanitarian law.

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IRAQ/IRAN CONFLICT: ICRC VISITS OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

ICRC delegates based in Iraq have made three preliminary visits to areas of Iran occupied by Iraqi forces. They went to the town of Qasr-E-Shrin on 9 December, Mehran and the surrounding area on 15 December, and the city of Khorraramshahr on 22 December. The ICRC is seeking authorization from the Iraqi authorities to return to Khorraramshahr and other districts most affected by the fighting in order to assess the needs of the civilian population.

In December ICRC delegates in Iran and Iraq continued their visits to the prisoners of war of each side and transmitted messages from the prisoners to their families.

CLASHES IN LEBANON: ICRC INTERVENTION

On December 22nd ICRC delegates took emergency aid to the town of Zahle, in central Lebanon, which had been cut off following clashes between local forces and Arab peacekeeping troops.

The ICRC brought in an ambulance and medical equipment to help the efforts of the Lebanese Red Cross which was taking care of about fifty wounded people.

The ICRC intervention came after its delegates were able to arrange a ceasefire between the opposing sides.

ICRC RETURNS TO CHAD

Five delegates (including a specialist of the Central Tracing Agency (CTA) and two nurses) arrived in N'Djamena on 21 December 1980 to provide emergency assistance to the civilian and military victims of the Chad conflict, following the taking of N'Djamena on 15 December by the armed forces of the Transitional Government of National Union (GUNT). The delegates joined Dr Charles Jeanmaire, who, in Kousseri (Cameroon), has been taking care of Chadian refugees as part of the action undertaken by the League of Red Cross Societies.

The first concern of the ICRC - which had retired from Chad last October for safety reasons - will be to provide immediate assistance to the wounded, both civilian and military, to visit combatants taken prisoner and to resume Tracing Agency activities, which had been interrupted for two months.

MISSION IN SOMALIA

The head of the ICRC Legal Division, Hans-Peter Gasser, and the assistant to the Director of the Operations Department, Francis Amar, were in the Somali Democratic Republic from 7 to 18 December 1980, at the invitation of the authorities. Mr Gasser and Mr Amar were welcomed by leading officials of the National Red Crescent Society and had various interviews with the Minister of the Interior ("Local Governments and Rural Development"), the Director General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Commander in Chief of the Custodial Corps. The problems inherent in the ICRC's mission of protection and assistance were discussed during these interviews.

On 14 December the two ICRC representatives visited for the second time a Cuban prisoner of war (already visited by the ICRC in May 1979); they also obtained permission to visit Ethiopian prisoners of war captured during the Ogaden conflict and for whom numerous steps had been undertaken by the ICRC since 1977. They saw 197 prisoners on 14 December and seven others on 15 December in the outskirts of the capital. The prisoners filled in capture cards and wrote family messages during these visits.

From 9 to 12 December Mr Gasser and Mr Amar toured the border area with Ethiopia (north-east of the country) in the company of members of the Red Crescent and a representative of the Ministry of Defence, with a view to possibly organizing an assistance operation for the civilian victims of the fighting.

THAILAND/KAMPUCHEA: CONFERENCE OF DONOR COUNTRIES

The financing of the relief operation for the Khmer population in Thailand and Kampuchea was the subject of a conference held in New York on 10 December 1980 under the auspices of the United Nations. The contributions announced by 13 countries and governmental organizations (EEC and UNDP) totalled 63.3 million dollars, whereas the budget submitted by the organizations involved in the operation amounted to about 200 million dollars for the coming 12 months. Eleven other countries announced contributions of which the amount will be made public later. The donor countries unanimously requested that in 1981 the respective activities of the ICRC, UNICEF and WFP should remain concentrated on urgent humanitarian problems.
In Kampuchea the ICRC will continue to provide medical assistance in 1981; it also wishes to develop its protection and tracing activities.

In Thailand, after ceasing to take part in food distributions in December 1980, the ICRC will focus its efforts in 1981 on medical assistance, in co-operation with voluntary agencies. Protection and Central Tracing Agency activities will continue.

The Bangkok delegation remains the logistic base for the entire operation.

ONE YEAR OF MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN KAMPUCHEA

One year ago, on 19 January 1980, the first ICRC medical team for Kampuchea landed in Phnom Penh. This team was made available by the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies for the USSR and numbered ten persons. Four other teams followed, from Hungary, Poland, the German Democratic Republic and Sweden.

Since then these physicians and technicians working in co-operation with other organizations enabled the ICRC to repair and re-equip five hospitals in four provinces of Kampuchea. All these establishments are now ready to meet medical needs, although the ICRC teams still have a major role to play, since there is still a lack of sufficiently qualified Khmer medical staff.

APPEAL FOR FUNDS FOR FOUR PROJECTS

On 9 December 1980 the ICRC launched an appeal to National Red Cross Societies and the international community for about 12 million Swiss francs to cover the cost of its operations in the Iraq/Iran conflict, El Salvador, Nicaragua and East Timor.

To help the victims of the Iraq/Iran conflict, the ICRC is carrying out protection (mainly visits to prisoners of war) and Central Tracing Agency activities in both countries. The amount budgeted - which also includes a reserve for an assistance programme, if necessary - is 2.5 million Sw. frs for the period from 1 November 1980 to 31 March 1981.

In El Salvador the ICRC is developing protection and CTA activities for victims of the events and has set up, in co-operation with the National Society, a food and medical relief operation for some 45,000 displaced persons; the ICRC is also providing financial support for the El Salvador Red Cross Society's general activities. The amount required for those various activities is 4.1 million Sw. francs for the six months January-June 1981.

For the whole of the year 1981, 2.5 million Sw. francs is necessary to enable the ICRC to continue protection and assisting prisoners in Nicaragua.

In East Timor, where the ICRC, in co-operation with the Indonesian Red Cross, is continuing to provide food and medical assistance to some 40,000 displaced persons, 3.3 million Sw. francs is earmarked for the period from 15 October 1980 to 15 April 1981.

RECENT ELECTIONS TO THE ICRC ASSEMBLY...

At its session of 17-18 December 1980, the Assembly of the ICRC re-elected Mr. Alexandre Hay to the Presidency of the ICRC for a period of four years.

Mr. Hay had succeeded Professor Eric Martin as ICRC President and had taken up his duties on 1 July 1976.

The ICRC Assembly also re-elected Mr. R. Pestalozzi, Mr. J. Burckhardt, Mr. A. Gallino and Mr. R. Jäckli to membership of the Executive Board and accepted the resignation of Mrs. D. Bindschedler-Robert, to who it expressed its warmest thanks for her distinguished services since the Executive Board was set up in 1973.

Mrs. Bindschedler-Robert remains a member of the Assembly.

The Assembly elected Mrs. Andrée Weitzel, who became a member of the ICRC in 1979, to take Mrs. Bindschedler-Robert's place on the Executive Board.

At an earlier session two members had been elected by the Assembly, bringing the total number in the Assembly to 22 members. The new members, Mr. Dietrich Schindler and Mr. Olivier Long, took office on 1 December 1980.

Mr. Dietrich Schindler is a doctor of laws and a professor of international, constitutional and administrative law at Zürich University. He was already a member of the ICRC from 1961 to 1973; he became an
honorary member in 1973 and continued collaborating in the work of the Legal Commission.

Mr. Olivier Long is a doctor of laws, a doctor of political science and a professor at the Graduate Institute of International Department and was Swiss ambassador to London before being appointed Director General of GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) in 1967, a post he held until recently.

... AND ICRC SENIOR STAFF APPOINTMENTS

In addition, four senior posts were filled, with effect from 1 January 1981:

* Mr. Jean-Marc Bornet is the new delegate-general for Africa. He had been entrusted with several important posts in the Middle East Zone in the last few years. (From 1972 to 1975, he was deputy head of delegation in Israel and the Occupied Territories; since last year, he had been regional delegate for North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula). Mr. Bornet succeeds:

* Mr. Frank Schmidt, who becomes delegate-general for Europe and North Africa, a post held by Mr. M. Bossinger until his retirement at the end of July 1980.

* Mr. Yves Sandoz, Doctor of Laws, has been appointed Deputy Director of the Department of Principles and Law. After carrying out several missions for the ICRC since 1968, Yves Sandoz became Assistant Head of the Legal Division in 1975 and took part as an expert in the Diplomatic Conference on Humanitarian Law.

* Mr. Michel Martin has succeeded Mr. René-Jean Wilhem as Head of the National Societies and Principles Division. A staff member of the ICRC since 1956, Mr Martin has filled several important posts in Geneva and in the field, took part in the "Tansley" study, and has been working since 1975 as Deputy Head of the Division he will henceforth be running. Mr. Wilhem, who was also Deputy Director of the Department of Principles and Law, will act as Advisor to the Director of, that Department until his retirement at the end of April 1981.

A NEW VIDEO FILM:
"CURE HIM AND I WILL THEN LOOK AFTER HIM"

The doctors sent by international assistance organizations to the Thai frontier to care for Kampuchean refugees found numerous patients suffering from psychoneurotic trauma after many years of war and hardship. As the physicians were faced with problems difficult to solve by western medical techniques they turned to the "Krou", who are the keepers of traditional Khmer medical knowledge and philosophical thought.

This original experiment is recounted in a video film lasting 27 minutes which depicts the problems and the results obtained, describes the techniques and accoutrements used by the "krou", the consultations given in special centres set up by the ICRC in three refugee camps and the relation between traditional medicine and western medical practices.

The film was produced by Jean-Philippe Naef, with the assistance of Dr Jean-Pierre Hiegel (who initiated the project in Thailand), and it will be available next February, in French and English, for 250 Swiss francs.

NEW: ADVANCED TRAINING COURSE FOR HEADS OF DELEGATIONS

An advanced ICRC training course is being held from 4 to 7 January in Geneva. Fifteen heads of delegations with several years of experience in the field are taking part in it to extend their knowledge, in particular with regard to humanitarian principles and law.

This course was made necessary by the diversification of ICRC operations in increasingly complex political situations.

It will be followed in the not-too-distant future by two others seminars devoted to delegation management, and assistance and protection techniques.

IN BRIEF

In 1980, the ICRC's Visitors' Service welcomed over 6,000 visitors - including 2,000 members of the Red Cross movement. The cinema and conference rooms have been renovated, and now enable the ICRC to multivisual programmes as well as normal films.

Christmas parcels for detainees in Nicaragua: For Christmas the ICRC gave 5,000 gift parcels to Nicaraguan detainees held in the four penitentiary centres in Managua and the rest of the country. The parcels contained T-shirts, underclothes, sandals and toilet articles.
This month's programmes by the Red Cross Broadcasting Service can be heard on Monday, January 26th, in English and French, and on Wednesday, January 28th, in German, Spanish and Arabic. On both days the broadcasts are from 0600 - 0700 GMT, 1130 - 1230, repeated at 1700 - 1800 GMT. The shortwave frequency is 7210 kHz in the 41.6 metre band.

This month there are also beamed frequencies to the following areas:

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<td>Thursday, January 29th, from 0945 - 1015 GMT, in English and French on 15.430 kHz, 17.830 kHz and 21.520 kHz; and in Arabic at the same time on 21.630 kHz.</td>
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IN BRIEF

Repatriation of Taiwanese fishermen: Fourteen Taiwanese fishermen, whose boat had entered Vietnamese territorial waters in May 1980, were released and repatriated under the auspices of the ICRC on 4 December 1980.

Visits to political detainees in Iran: On December 1st, ICRC delegates in Iran ended series of visit to the Evin prison in Teheran, during which they saw 1088 political detainees.

Jordan: A new series of visits to places of detention ended on December 20th. It was the second to be made in Jordan in 1980.

Airlift for Angola: an airlift was organized to bring supplies from Zimbabwe to Angola. Three flights took place in November, transporting 3 landmine proof landcruisers, 35 tons of food, 10 tons of soap and other materials, including medicaments.

The prothesis centre of Bomba Alta (Angola) has equipped 10 new patients in November. It produced 18 artificial limbs made from plaster, 22 plastic limbs and 24 moulds for plastic legs. It also carried out 21 repairs.

Seminar for university professors: A seminar for university professors on the teaching and dissemination of international humanitarian law, jointly organized by the universities of Florence and Rome and the Italian Red Cross, was held in Florence at the end of November 1980. The ICRC was represented by Mr J-J. Surbeck of the Documentation and Dissemination Division.

Red Cross Course in Madrid: The 5th annual introduction course to Red Cross activities, jointly organized by the Spanish National Society and the Henry Dunant Institute, was held in Madrid from 25 November to 3 December 1980. Some fifty participants came from 16 Latin American countries, Portugal and Morocco. The ICRC was represented by the head of its Financing Division, Mr S. Nessi, and by the head of its Documentation and Dissemination Division, Mr R. Gaillard-Moret, who both gave lectures.

Ethiopia: From the beginning of November until 8 December, the ICRC has transmitted to the Ethiopian Red Cross Society relief supplies valued at about 260'000 Sw. Fr. for distribution in the provinces of Gondar, Harrar, Asmara, Bale and Sidamo. These supplies consisted of 140 tons of enriched food, 12 tons of milk powder, 40 bales of blankets and 12 bales of material.

The Debre Zeit Rehabilitation Centre (Ethiopia) is continuing its work with 8 ICRC and 55 local employees. Since its opening in January 1979 the Centre has produced 513 pairs of crutches, 601 artificial limbs and 53 wheel chairs.

Conference in Khartoum: The 12th Conference of Arab National Societies was held in Khartoum, under the auspices of the Sudanese Red Crescent, from 8 to 12 December 1980. The ICRC was represented by the Director of its Department of Principles and Law, Mr J. Moreillon; by the Delegate General for Africa, Mr F. Schmidt; and by Mr Schmidt's successor from January 1981, Mr J-M. Bornet.

Teacher's Manual: An English version of the Teacher's Manual, jointly drawn up by the League, the ICRC and the Cameroun Red Cross, has just been published. One hundred copies will be made available to English-speaking African National Societies which would like to produce a similar publication in their own countries.
AFGHANISTAN: AFTER 12 MONTHS, RED CROSS EFFORTS REMAIN IN VAIN

The situation in Afghanistan following the upheaval there was a source of constant concern to the ICRC throughout 1980. Despite repeated approaches to all the parties militarily involved in the conflict, the ICRC found it impossible to fully carry out the protection and assistance activities provided for under the Geneva Conventions to help the victims, civilian and military alike, of such disturbances. As we relate below, the ICRC nevertheless spared no efforts to open a constructive dialogue with the various parties concerned.

On 31 December 1979 the ICRC offered its services to the new Afghan government led by Mr Babrak Karmal. The government's reply came in two stages: on 5 January the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan announced before the United Nations Security Council in New York that the ICRC was invited to send representatives to Afghanistan; on 10 January the ICRC received the Afghan Government's official agreement for a mission to be sent to Kabul.

Assurances received, an ICRC mission, led by the Director of the Department of Principles and Law, Mr Jacques Moreillon, arrived in Kabul on 22 January to negotiate with the authorities and the Afghan Red Crescent the basis of the ICRC's humanitarian action, i.e. its specific activities to protect captured combatants and civilians arrested as a result of the events, and possibly the provision of assistance for the wounded, the prisoners and the civilian population. On 23 January the ICRC representatives, accompanied by the Secretary General of the National Red Crescent Society, were received by President Babrak Karmal and by the Minister of the Interior. As a result of these discussions, the President gave the ICRC a formal assurance that his government would in all circumstances respect the principles of the Geneva Conventions, to which Afghanistan had been party since 1956, and in particular that all the armed forces on Afghan territory would abide by their obligations under those Conventions. In addition, the ICRC received authorization to visit regularly and without witnesses all political and security detainees and all people captured in the fighting. The ICRC delegation and the Afghan authorities agreed to set up, in cooperation with the Red Crescent National Society, a relief operation for the civilian population affected by the events and to have the ICRC and the Afghan Red Crescent organize a Tracing Agency office to transmit family messages from and to relatives outside the country, to search for missing persons and to facilitate the reuniting of families. A specialist from the Central Tracing Agency (CTA) accordingly went to Kabul at the end of January.

Prison visits and medical assistance

Following the authorization granted by the Afghan authorities, a delegate and a doctor of the ICRC visited the prison of Puli Charki on 6 and 7 February, where they saw 43 political detainees. On 12 and 13 April the delegates made a second visit to the prison and they were able to see 385 political and security detainees. The authorities also agreed on the principles of visits by the ICRC to places of detention in the provinces; these visits could not take place, however, because the necessary security conditions were not fulfilled. In response to the Afghan Red Crescent's request for assistance to replenish stocks in hospitals and dispensaries in Kabul, the ICRC sent about 2 tons of emergency medical equipment to Afghanistan. On 22 March a medical delegate arrived in Kabul to assess the situation in hospitals throughout the city. Medical relief was distributed twice (on 3-4 May, and on 7-8 June) in 6 hospitals. Medicines were also supplied to the National Society.

Obstacles to ICRC activities.

Despite the assurances they had received the ICRC delegates were increasingly hampered in their work from April 1980, after their second visit to the prison of Puli Charki. The authorities were opposed to the continuation of the ICRC protection activities and to the setting up of a Tracing Agency office; moreover, they refused to extend the delegate's visas, which expired in mid-June. The ICRC addressed three telegrams (on 15 April, 14 May and 10 June) to the Afghan Head State, in which it noted with satisfaction that two visits had already been made to the prison of Puli Charki, but also recalled the other unsolved humanitarian problems and the difficulties encountered by its delegates in carrying out their tasks. The ICRC did not succeed in obtaining an audience with President Babrak Karmal for its represen-
tative in Kabul to try to ease the situation, so it was compelled to recall him to Geneva for consultations on 15 June. In the note announcing this decision to the authorities the ICRC proposed sending to Afghanistan a high-level mission to negotiate the continuation of activities. On 26 July the Afghan Government made it clear that it was not prepared to receive the ICRC envoys or to discuss the problems raised. In a further message to President Karmal on 1 August the ICRC called on the Afghan authorities to reconsider their position; it stressed that its insistence on being allowed to work in Afghanistan was prompted solely by its concern to alleviate the suffering of the victims of the conflicts.

Public appeal

Its overtures meeting with no reply, the ICRC publicly appealed on 16 September to all the parties militarily engaged in the Afghan conflict to respect international humanitarian law and to allow the ICRC to carry out fully its traditional tasks of protection and assistance.

In particular the ICRC asked the Afghan Government for permission to resume and develop the activities it had undertaken from January to June 1980. It also invited all the States party to the Geneva Conventions, in accordance with their obligation to ensure that these Conventions are respected, to give the appeal their full support.

The ICRC and the Opposition movements

As part of its approaches to all parties to the Afghan conflict to try to get them to apply international humanitarian law, the ICRC also contacted, as early as January 1980, the Afghan opposition movements to obtain an assurance that they would abide by the rules of article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions, in particular with the regard to the people they might capture. Throughout the year 1980 the ICRC pursued its efforts to that end. In the course of numerous interviews with the representatives of those movements, the ICRC delegates insisted on combatants respecting those fundamental humanitarian rules and the obligations arising from them. They also proposed that protection activities be developed, either by visiting Afghan of Soviet prisoners detained by the opposition movements, or by organizing their internment in a neutral country. These discussions are continuing but at the end of the year they had not led to the adoption of any concrete measures.

Approaches to the USSR

The ICRC also approached the Government of the USSR since Soviet troops were engaged in Afghanistan. In a note to the Permanent Representation of the USSR in Geneva, on 7 March, the ICRC informed the Soviet authorities of its activities in Afghanistan and offered its services for all the humanitarian problems likely to arise as a result of the presence of the Soviet armed forces on Afghan territory. It also requested the Soviet Union's support in the discharge of its humanitarian mission for all the victims of the conflict. Having received no reply, the ICRC sent a telegram on 21 July to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Moscow, stating once again its great concern over the fate of the many victims of events in Afghanistan. The ICRC pointed out the initial and direct responsibility, in international humanitarian law, of States whose armed forces take part in an armed conflict, even if their participation follows a treaty of agreements with another State. This telegram also remained unanswered, as did a second dated 28 August, in which the ICRC requested the Soviet Ministry for Foreign Affairs to make known the position of the USSR concerning its obligations in Afghanistan under international humanitarian law. During a mission in Moscow from 27 to 31 October, an ICRC delegation, led by its Vice-President, Mr Richard Pestalozzi, in discussion with representatives of the Soviet armed forces and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, broached the humanitarian problems involved in the armed conflict in Afghanistan. The Soviet representatives answered that these problems should be discussed with the Afghan authorities and that they did not concern the USSR, since the Soviet armed forces had not taken part in any fighting in that country.

Setback for the humanitarian cause

By 31 December 1980 the ICRC was forced to admit that its approaches to all the parties militarily engaged in the Afghan conflict had been in vain; no progress had been achieved. The ICRC considers this to be a serious setback for the humanitarian cause. It is tragic that in such an obvious situation of armed conflict, innumerable innocent civilians and an unknown number of soldiers hors de combat, whether Afghan or Soviet, are deprived of the protection and assistance they are entitled to under international Conventions. The ICRC hopes that this failure will prove to be only temporary and that a humanitarian action will be able to proceed for all the victims of the Afghan conflict in the near future.
In proclaiming the International Year of Handicapped Persons, the United Nations is seeking in 1981 to arouse public awareness, throughout the world, about the problems encountered by people who are disabled. This concern is not foreign to the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross, for one of the tragedies of war is the situation of amputees and the permanently disabled.

The ICRC's traditional interest in this sphere was translated into concrete terms in 1970 with the opening of an artificial limb workshop at Sana'a, the capital of the Yemen Arab Republic. This workshop is still in operation today, but is now self-financing. Similar experiments have been carried out successfully elsewhere in the Middle East and in Africa.

The problems involved in importing prostheses and equipment from Europe - high cost, difficulty or impossibility of carrying out repairs, etc. - have gradually led the ICRC to develop a technology that corresponds better to the economic realities of the developing countries: use of low-cost, locally available materials, training of locally-recruited staff, most of whom are themselves disabled. This new approach has given very encouraging results: amputees have regained a certain degree of mobility or, like the 25 young Ethiopians who underwent two years' training at the Debre Zeit orthopedic centre, found a new trade that has facilitated their reintegration into society.

The ICRC is presently preparing a new programme in Mozambique. It hopes that this "International Year of Handicapped Persons" will be instrumental in raising the financial support needed for its continued action in this field, representing as it does, for thousands of war cripples, the only hope of recovering their dignity and enjoyment of life.

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ANGOLA: FOOD AID FOR "DESLOCADOS" AND AIRBORNE ASSISTANCE

In Angola the ICRC delegates are continuing their assistance activities for "deslocados" (displaced persons) in the Province of Huambo. As an example, over 17 tons of food (maize, beans, milk powder, oil, biscuits) were distributed in one week in the area of Bailundo for 2,900 persons in need, and 19 tons in the area of Katchiungo for 4,300. The population suffers from malnutrition to such an extent that, in addition to food distributions to families, pots of enriched food are prepared in the assisted villages for persons who particularly need it, such as pregnant women, children and elderly people. Two special feeding centres for children have been opened at Katchiungo and Bailundo. Children suffering from serious malnutrition receive treatment there, while the relative accompanying each of them is given information on basic hygiene and nutrition principles.

Since the beginning of the year the ICRC delegation has been using a "Nomad" aircraft to transport its delegates within the country. This plane should enable the ICRC to reach remote villages which have not yet received any assistance owing to their inaccessibility by road.

THAILAND/KAMPUCHEA: AFTER THE JOINT ACTION

The ICRC/UNICEF joint action ended on 31 December 1980 and each organization is now concentrating its efforts on its own programmes.

The ICRC is continuing its protection, tracing and medical activities in Thailand.

On 15 January the medical staff working on the border and at Khao I-Dang hospital numbered 74 physicians, nurses and technicians made available by twelve National Red Cross Societies. The Thai Red Cross, which employs 53 persons, including five doctors, on its programmes, is still active at Khao I-Dang and in the Thai villages affected by the situation.

In Kampuchea the medical teams made available to the ICRC by the National Societies of Hungary, the USSR, Poland and Sweden, are continuing their activities in the Provinces of Kandal, Kompong Cham and Svay Rieng. On 15 January these teams totalled thirty persons, including fifteen physicians.

EL SALVADOR: EVALUATION OF NEEDS AFTER RECENT FIGHTING

Following the fighting that broke out in mid-January in El Salvador, the ICRC has been called upon to carry out emergency activities. During the first days of fighting the delegates were unable to leave the towns but they subsequently managed to reach the regions of Sesuntepeque, Santa Ana and Chalatenango and the department of Morazan to assess the needs of the civilian population.

The first information received by ICRC headquarters indicates that there is a great need for medical assistance, and Red Cross medical teams have already been increased by locally recruited staff.

The ICRC delegates continued their protection activities by visiting places of detention in San Salvador and the provinces, where they saw about fifty persons recently arrested as a result of events.

SOMALIA: OPENING OF A DELEGATION AT MOGADISCO

Following a mission by two ICRC delegates in the Somali Democratic Republic in December 1980, the decision was taken to open a delegation at Mogadiscio. The assistant to the Director of the Operations Department, Mr. Francis Amar, accompanied by the future head of the delegation, Mr. Pierre Pont, and by Dr Georges Muheim, returned on 23 January to the Somali capital to introduce his colleagues to the authorities and members of the Red Crescent, before coming back to Geneva.

One of the priorities to be dealt with by the new delegation is the assessment of medical needs in the border area with Ethiopia, with a view to assisting the civilian victims of fighting. Protection activities in the course of the coming weeks will involve visits to prisoners of war in Somali hands.

VIETNAM-TAIWAN: REPATRIATION FLIGHTS

A repatriation flight between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and Taiwan took place on 22 January. Under the auspices of the ICRC, 150 Chinese were thus able to return to their country of origin.

Four other flights will be organized up to the end of February for the repatriation of some 600 Taiwanese by the ICRC.
NAMIBIA/SOUTH WEST AFRICA: VISIT TO DETAINNEES IN ARMY HANDS

Two ICRC delegates visited on 28 January, the army camp of Marienthal in Namibia/South West Africa, where they saw 118 persons detained for security reasons. A previous visit had taken place in September 1980.

The ICRC is authorised to visit in Namibia/South West Africa only persons detained under Proclamations AG 9 (for 30 days) or AG 26 (for an indefinite period), and convicted prisoners. It does not have access to persons detained without charge.

UGANDA: NEW SERIES OF VISITS TO PRISONS - SUB-DELEGATION OPENED IN ARUA

Four delegates and a nurse are currently carrying out a new series of visits to Ugandan places of detention. From 23 January to 18 February, the team will be visiting eight prisons all over the country. It already went to those prisons in August 1980 and supplied them in recent months with various forms of relief, including medicine and food.

A sub-delegation was opened at the beginning of the year in Arua, in the West Nile Province, where the ICRC has been carrying out since mid-November 1980 an assistance programme for the civilian population affected by events; the sub-delegation has a radio link with the ICRC delegation in Kampala.

With a budget of over half a million Swiss francs, the ICRC is providing medical assistance to hospitals and dispensaries in the West Nile province, mainly in the Moyo, Arua and Nebbi districts.

ASIA: MISSION BY DELEGATE GENERAL

The ICRC Delegate General for Asia and Oceania, Jean de Courten, left Geneva on 20 January on a mission which will take him successively to Thailand, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Indonesia.

In Bangkok, Mr. de Courten will have talks with government officials on the ICRC’s protection and assistance activities in the country. The Delegate General will also visit the National Society, and will end his stay with a visit to the ICRC sub-delegation at the Khmer-Thai border.

Mr. de Courten will then proceed to Tokyo for contacts with the authorities and the Red Cross. Japan, it will be remembered, is a major contributor to ICRC activities in South-east Asia.

In Seoul also the Delegate General will be contacting the authorities and the National Society.

Finally, in Djakarta, Mr. de Courten will be attending the 2nd Regional Conference of Asian Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies scheduled for 4 to 11 February.

ICRC ACTIVITIES IN IRAQ/IRAN CONFLICT

Visits continued to prisoners of war on both sides in January, and reports were given to the respective governments.

In Iran, ICRC delegates began registering and visiting the new prisoners of war captured during the fighting at the end of December and the beginning of January. In remitting the report on the POW visits to President Bani-Sadr, the delegates took the opportunity of discussing in general the ICRC’s activities in Iran, including the possibilities of aiding the civilian victims of the conflict with Iraq, and its visits to political detainees.

PAKISTAN: RELIEF APPRAISAL

The ICRC relief operation for Afghan refugees in Pakistan has just been re-assessed. Jean-Michel Monod, an ICRC delegate, went on mission for this purpose from 11 to 24 January 1981 to Islamabad, Peshawar and Parachinar.

He surveyed the medical activities carried out by the delegation, and in particular the work done in remote areas by three mobile teams recruited on the spot and covering ten camps. The project of equipping a hospital at Peshawar (to provide post-operative care and mother and child care) for Afghan refugees was given close consideration.

On the occasion of the Namibia Conference

SEVERAL AFRICAN VIPS VISITED THE ICRC

The ICRC followed closely the work of the Conference on the future of Namibia which took place from 7 to 14 January in Geneva, under the auspices of the United Nations. Senior ICRC officials met with several political personalities from Southern Africa, in order to discuss problems attending ICRC activities in the region.

On 16 January, the Director of the De-
partment of Operations, Jean-Pierre Hocké, together with his closest staff-members, had talks with Sam Nujoma, President of SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organisation); in particular he described the ICRC's programme to protect persons detained by the South African authorities.

On the previous day, ICRC President Alexandre Hay, accompanied by Mr. Hocké and staff concerned for the Africa region, had received Angola's Home Affairs Minister and member of the country's Political Bureau, himself accompanied by the Secretary of the Central Committee for Foreign Affairs. They exchanged views on ICRC action in Angola.

Meetings were held also with other personalities who were in Geneva for the Conference.

GENEVA: INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON EMERGENCY MEDICAL AID

The First International Red Cross Seminar on Emergency Medical Operations, organized by the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies, will be held in Geneva from 13 to 16 February. Some sixty doctors and members of medical teams (nurses, physiotherapists, nutrition specialists, etc.) from about twenty National Societies will be taking part. The feature common to all participants will be the several years' field experience they have gained in International Red Cross programmes.

The seminar agenda schedules working groups on fourteen practical subjects, the conclusions of which will be reported in plenary. The two major topics for discussion will be medical action in humanitarian operations and the preparation of National Societies for emergency medical action. Group discussions will deal with subjects such as vaccination, malnutrition, tuberculosis, malaria, public hygiene, surgery, dispensary medicine, problems related to handicapped persons, epidemiological assessments, etc.

The four-day seminar will combine lectures with films, and will be inaugurated in the presence of the ICRC President, Mr. Hay, and the Secretary General of the League, Mr. H. Beer.

This first seminar, which has a very full timetable, should enable participants to exchange ideas and experiences in a constructive manner, resulting in proposals that can be used in future operations (these conclusions will, moreover, be the subject of a special publication).

Further seminars are planned on more specialized topics including, for example, the participation of Societies that have received assistance from the International Red Cross, or those potentially interested in providing - or receiving - such assistance.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF THE RED CROSS

The January-February 1981 issue of International Review of the Red Cross contains a study by Yves Sandoz entitled "a new step forward in international law", in which the author describes and analyses the results of the United Nations conference on the prohibition or limitation of the use of certain weapons (which ended last October). The study is accompanied by the texts of the convention and protocols adopted by the conference.

In the same issue, International Review publishes the first part - which will be followed up in the other five issues this year - of a recent document called "The International Committee of the Red Cross", from the pen of André Durand, the ICRC historian.

NEW RATIFICATION OF THE PROTOCOLS

The Swiss Government has received two instruments signifying the ratification by the Lao People's Democratic Republic of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I) and of Non-international Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), adopted in Geneva on 8 June 1977.

The instruments were registered by the Swiss Government on 18 November 1980. The Protocols, in accordance with their provisions, will enter into force for the Lao People's Democratic Republic six months after the instruments of ratification have been deposited, namely on 18 May 1981.

The world total of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies now stands at 126.

The four 1949 Geneva Conventions have so far been signed by 146 Governments. Sixteen States are parties to the two 1977 Protocols, and one State has signed Protocol I alone.
DIPLOMAS FOR 28 ETHIOPIAN TRAINEES AT THE DEBRE ZEIT ORTHOPEDIC CENTRE

Twenty-eight Ethiopians, after a year of training at the ICRC’s orthopedic centre of Debre Zeit near Addis Ababa, have passed the theoretical and practical examinations for physiotherapists and orthopedists prepared by the ICRC team. The candidates were examined from 11 to 19 January by two professional examiners, who came specially from Switzerland, and by the ICRC chief medical officer.

The certificates issued by the ICRC, which still have to be validated by the Ethiopian Ministry of Health, will enable these young people to work as assistants, with a possibility of increasing their qualifications by further training courses.

A similar experiment was carried out by the ICRC ten years before at the prosthetic workshop at Sana'a in the Yemen Arab Republic. This workshop is now fully independent.

RATIFICATIONS AND DECLARATIONS OF SUCCESSION TO THE PROTOCOL FOR THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE OF ASPHYXIATING GASES

The Government of the French Republic, which is the depositary of the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed at Geneva on 17 June 1925, has received from the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and the Democratic Republic of the Sudan, their instruments of accession to the Protocol, and from the Government of Papua New Guinea the notification of succession to the same Protocol.

The Protocol states that the Government of the French Republic shall be notified of accessions and that the latter shall accordingly inform all signatory and acceding Powers. Accessions shall take effect on the date of notification by the Government of the French Republic.


IN BRIEF

Argentina: A series of visits in Argentinian places of detention, beginning with the Villa Devoto Prison in Buenos Aires, has been going on since 15 January.

Chile: The ICRC regional delegate for the Southern Cone, Mr. François Robadey, is in Chile to complete a series of visits, which began last November, to about fifteen places of detention throughout the country.

The Council of Europe meeting from 26 to 30 January in Strasbourg was attended by the delegate to the international organizations, Mr. M. Veuthey, and by the head of the Legal Division, Mr. H.-P. Gasser.

ICRC and human rights: Two delegates have been attending since 2 February the session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, which is being held in Geneva until 13 March. Several items on the agenda are of interest to the ICRC, since they are related to its activities throughout the world.

The Conference of Non-Aligned Countries being held in New Delhi from 2 to 14 February will discuss some items of operational and legal interest to the ICRC. Two ICRC delegates are attending the meetings as guests.

Three representatives from the Holy See visited ICRC headquarters on 15 January and met with the President, Alexandre Hay, together with directors of the organization. The discussions focused on the international situation and ICRC activities.

The Standing Commission of the International Red Cross, chaired by Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh, met at ICRC headquarters on 13 January. It examined several items connected with the draft agenda of the International Red Cross Conference scheduled for November 1981 in Manila.

RGBS IN FEBRUARY

This month’s programmes by the Red Cross Broadcasting Service can be heard on MONDAY, February 23rd, in ENGLISH and FRENCH, and on WEDNESDAY, February 25th, in GERMAN, SPANISH and ARABIC.

On both days the broadcasts are from 0600 - 0700 GMT, 1130 - 1230 GMT and 1700 - 1800 GMT. The shortwave frequency is 7210 kHz in the 41.6 metre band.

IN BRIEF

A Lebanese detainee, released by the Israeli authorities, was repatriated under the auspices of the ICRC on 22 January. The operation took place at Roshanikra (Ras Nakura).
The ICRC and the El Salvador Red Cross Assist the Victims of the Conflicts

The work of the Red Cross is founded on seven fundamental principles, as proclaimed by the Twentieth International Red Cross Conference (Vienna, 1965). They are:

HUMANITY
IMPARTIALITY
NEUTRALITY
INDEPENDENCE
VOLUNTARY SERVICE
UNITY
UNIVERSALITY
Food and medical care

But at last we are in the village square. The news of our arrival spreads like wildfire, and we are soon surrounded by a thick crowd. There is no time to lose: we have to distribute relief supplies to 2,000 people, treat as many patients as possible and set off again before nightfall.

The distribution system is set up: the trucks are lined up, and a relief worker calls out the names of the heads of families over the megaphone, using the list drawn up on the previous visit. After being checked, those eligible are given the food supplies that will enable their families to survive until the next Red Cross visit in about a fortnight's time.

The distribution operation has been perfected over the months and runs smoothly: within a few hours, everyone has received rations, whilst at the same time 170 desplazados have undergone a medical examination at the town hall. But night is already falling, and it's time to leave. In a blaze of headlights, with the Red Cross flag flying in the night, the convoy makes its way back to San Salvador.

A dispensary open 24 hours a day

Last year, the Red Cross dispensary in San Salvador dealt with more than 33,000 out-patients. The dispensary is located at the National Society's headquarters and is open 24 hours a day, providing free treatment for up to 150 patients a day. It is staffed by six doctors and 13 nurses, all paid, together with eight medical students who are unpaid volunteers.

The dispensary is small: one room serving as a reception area, and two treatment rooms, one of which is reserved for minor surgery. This latter activity has grown in importance since the troubles began, for in addition to the fractures and other accidental injuries that are found in polyclinics throughout the world, there are now many cases of bullet wounds. Numerous cases of shock are also dealt with here, as a direct result of the troubles and violence that the population of El Salvador is faced with every day.

The dispensary staff works in close collaboration with the National Society's ambulance men and relief workers who are also on duty night and day, ready to intervene as soon as an emregency is noti-
The First Seminar on International Red Cross Emergency Medical Actions, organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies and held from 13 to 16 February in Geneva, concluded its work with a number of recommendations adopted unanimously, which very rarely occurs in meetings of health specialists.

Some of those recommendations, which are contained in a report on the Seminar in this month's Bulletin, may seem plain common sense. However, the reason for clarifying a number of basic concepts was that medical staff on mission have too often lacked experience or taken unfortunate initiatives in the event of an emergency.

The Seminar was therefore useful in defining guidelines for National Societies taking part in League and ICRC programmes.

A subsequent step might be to study, with the countries that have already received help from the ICRC, means of improving the integration of international medical teams into those available on the spot. Further discussions might also include National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies which have never taken part in any large-scale operations, with a view to clarifying the roles of the ICRC and the League and their principles and means of action in emergency situations, in time of war or in the event of natural disaster.
IRAN/IRAQ CONFLICT: THOUSANDS OF DISPLACED PEOPLE

ICRC delegates stationed in Iran have made a first survey of the situation faced by thousands of people displaced to the east of the country from their homes in the west because of the conflict with Iraq.

During a visit to the eastern province of Khorasan, from February 14th to 20th, the delegates were told by local officials that some 15,000 people from western Iran had settled in the area, more than half of them in the provincial capital, Mashad. There, they were being looked after by the Ministry of Health, the national Red Crescent Society and some religious organisations.

The Red Crescent is in the process of setting up a camp 170 kilometres west of Mashad where it is planned to shelter up to 10,000 displaced people.

The ICRC delegates also visited a refugee camp sheltering about 600 refugees from Afghanistan. They reported serious health problems among some of these refugees. Iranian officials say there are about a quarter of a million Afghan refugees in Khorasan province. An ICRC doctor was due to return to the camp soon afterwards to assess specifically what medical help was most urgently needed. To help cope with an increased workload, the number of ICRC delegates in Iran is being increased from nine to 11.

In both Iran and Iraq, ICRC visits to prisoners of war continued in February. So far, the ICRC has visited and registered more than 2,000 POWs in Iraq and more than 1600 in Iran. More than 11,000 Red Cross messages have been exchanged between the prisoners and their families, through the intermediary of the ICRC.

The whole range of ICRC activities in Iraq on behalf of war victims was discussed during a visit to Baghdad from February 5th to 18th by the ICRC's delegate-general for the Middle East, Jean Hoefliger, who met representatives of the Iraqi authorities. Mr. Hoefliger is due to visit Iran shortly for talks on the situation with officials in Teheran.

IN BRIEF

Prison visits in Iran: On February 17th and 18th, ICRC delegates in Iran visited 269 detainees at the prison in Mashad, in the east of the country. The prisoners were being held on the orders of the Islamic courts.

EL SALVADOR: EXTENSION OF MEDICAL ACTIVITIES

Following the survey carried out by a medical delegate in El Salvador, the ICRC has recruited a local medical team composed of two physicians, one nurse and a driver to cover the northern part of the Department of Morazan near the border with Honduras. According to Dr. R. Arbex, "these villages usually have a health post or dispensary which is regularly visited by a doctor from the Ministry of Health. However, these visits have ceased for the time being. Therefore the ICRC is unable to assist the displaced persons without also assisting and not the local inhabitants, for they are all in bad - though not catastrophic - health. The most frequent ailments are diarrhoea, infections of the respiratory tracts, skin diseases and parasitoses. Two thirds of the patients are children, and the population is suffering from malnutrition, as farming is often impossible in many parts of this area, which is one of the poorest in the country", because of security risks.

The ICRC medical team will therefore make weekly visits to five villages inhabited by about 11,300 persons, most of whom are women and children.

The ICRC has also decided to set up a blood collection centre in co-operation with the Salvadorean Red Cross. In view of current events in the country, the fact that El Salvador has no blood bank might have extremely serious consequences. The ICRC centre is expected to start running in mid-March with a dozen locally recruited staff members and it will be able to provide blood free of charge and without discrimination in all cases of emergency.

UGANDA: NEW VISITS TO PRISONS EMERGENCY CONTINUES IN THE WEST NILE PROVINCE

Since the beginning of February a team of four delegates and a nurse have been making a new series of visits to places of detention in Uganda. They have already visited and provided medical relief to five prisons.

In the West Nile Province emergency assistance is still required. Ten tons of relief goods (e.g. blankets, soap and milk powder) and fifteen dispensary and pediatric kits were conveyed from Kampala in the course of the past few weeks and distributed throughout the area. A delegate flew to the Moyo District, which is cut off from the rest of the country since
the ferry stopped working and where 10,000 persons are in need of assistance. A consignment of emergency relief goods was being prepared at the end of February to meet the most urgent requirements.

THE ICRC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES IN AFRICA: 5.5 MILLION FRANCS A MONTH

In order to raise the necessary funds to continue and extend their operations for victims of war and natural disasters in Africa, the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies simultaneously launched two appeals to the international community in mid-February.

The League's appeal is for 41 million Swiss francs to finance its assistance programmes for victims of drought and refugees in East Africa, and its development programmes for several Africa National Societies. The ICRC, which has 70 delegates working in 13 countries, hopes to raise 52.5 million Swiss francs towards a total budget of 66.2 million francs for 1981.

About half of the funds, i.e. 30.7 million francs, is intended for activities in Angola, where the ICRC is carrying out an emergency assistance operation under difficult and perilous conditions for the displaced population of the conflict, in the Plano Alto region.

About 20 million francs are earmarked for the Horn of Africa to carry out protection, assistance and Tracing Agency activities for prisoners and the civilian population.

The remaining budget estimates are: over 3 million francs for visits to political detainees and assistance to the civilian population of the West Nile Province in Uganda; about 2.5 million francs for Southern Africa (regional delegations in Pretoria and Salisbury in particular); one million francs for the prosthesis project for war amputees in Mozambique; about one million for the continuation of visits to places of detention in Zaire; and as yet an undetermined amount for activities in Chad.

IN BRIEF

The ICRC Delegate General for Africa, Jean-Marc Bornet, went on mission from 9 to 26 February to Salisbury, Pretoria, Kinshasa, Luanda and Huambo in order to determine, with the delegates working there, the objectives of ICRC activities in this part of the world for the coming months.

CHAD: FOOD AND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE AT N'DJAMENA - SURVEY PLANNED FOR THE REST OF THE COUNTRY

Following on-the-spot assessment of the situation in N'Djamena by the head of the Relief Division, Philippe Dind, the ICRC will be continuing its food and medical assistance activities for a limited period of time until other organizations are able to take over, as the situation improves.

One hundred thousand francs worth of medical equipment and drugs were sent at the beginning of February to the various dispensaries and hospitals of N'Djamena and its surroundings. Since December 1980 the ICRC has also been providing food for hospital staff and patients. Emergency action, such as the disposal of bodies and cleaning the city, was also required to improve hygiene conditions and the ICRC gave street-cleaning staff disinfectant products and food to supplement what little they had.

The ICRC and the Ministry of Public Health and Social Affairs have undertaken a joint food assistance operation for needy families i.e. 20 to 30,000 persons in N'Djamena.

Rice, oil and other provisions have been regularly distributed since the beginning of February.

While the situation is slowly returning to normal in N'Djamena little is known about conditions prevailing in the rest of the country. The ICRC therefore intends to send its delegates to the southern and eastern parts of Chad, if safety permits, to assess the extent to which the population needs protection (including that of the Tracing Agency) and assistance.

ASSISTANCE TO THE KHMER POPULATION: NEW CONFERENCE OF DONOR COUNTRIES IN NEW YORK

A new conference of donor countries, United Nations specialized agencies, voluntary agencies and the ICRC will be meeting on 6 March in New York to discuss the results and financing of international relief operations for the Khmer population.

The ICRC intends to request 16.2 million dollars to cover its relief programme in 1981. The contributions announced at the previous conference last December only amounted to 10 million dollars at the end of January 1981, towards a budget of 26.1 million dollars.
ORPHANAGES IN KAMPUCHEA: ASSISTANCE BEGUN IN 1980 MUST CONTINUE

Orphans are a particularly vulnerable group of victims. Last year, at the request of the Kampuchean authorities, the ICRC launched an assistance operation in eight orphanages in Kampuchea.

Items such as blankets, mosquito nets, sanitary and kitchen installations, school equipment and games, were provided to the orphanages of Kompong Chnang, Kompong Som, Battambang, Pursat, Kandieng, Bakan, Kampot and Koh Kong. A Swiss commercial firm financed the entire operation, which cost 50,000 Swiss francs.

At the beginning of 1981 ICRC delegates made a round of the eight orphanages to see what use had been made of the equipment donated. They decided that the orphanages needed further support, as only the most elementary necessities have as yet been provided.

SECOND REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF ASIAN NATIONAL SOCIETIES IN JAKARTA

The Second Asia and Pacific Red Cross and Red Crescent Regional Conference, organized by the Indonesian Red Cross and the League, was held from 4 to 11 February in Jakarta. Seventy-six delegates from 27 countries took part in the conference, which was also attended by an ICRC delegation headed by the Vice-President Mr R. Pestalozzi. A score of observers from European and American National Societies and Jakarta-based representatives of specialized United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations had also been invited.

The Conference focused on several topics relating to the activities and development of National Societies in that part of the world. It was preceded by two seminars: the first dealt with protection, on which the ICRC delegation delivered lectures. Participants adopted a resolution on the dissemination of knowledge of international humanitarian law and another on the ratification of the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions. The second seminar, organized by the League and dealing with assistance, discussed a number of aspects of development aid to National Societies and the role played by the Red Cross in assisting refugees.

Besides providing an opportunity for an in-depth study of Red Cross principles and action, the Jakarta Regional Conference enabled participants to establish useful contacts and to get better acquainted with other National Societies which, although belonging to the same universal movement, have their own individual characters.

KHMER REFUGEE CAMP, KHAO I-DANG: ICRC HOSPITAL DESTROYED BY FIRE

On 10 February at 2.15 p.m., in the Khmer refugee camp of Khao I-Dang, the Buddhist monks began the inauguration ceremony of the new hospital ward of the German voluntary agency "Malteser Hilfe­dienst". Ten minutes later, when voices shouted "Fire ! Fire!", the 120 people attending the ceremony - patients, Khmer workers, medical teams and guests - rushed out and saw flames coming out of the kitchen of the "Catholic Relief Service" centre about 150 metres away.

Some Khmer refugees were already trying to put out the fire, but in a few minutes the flames had spread to the ICRC surgical hospital. It was immediately decided to call upon the medical teams from the Nong Chan and Samet border camps for help and to ask the Italian physicians at the Ta Praya hospital to stand by with an ambulance.

In fifteen minutes all 500 patients were evacuated. One of them, a young man from the Kampuchean province of Pre Veng whose legs had recently been amputated, reported: "When I saw the flames and heard people shouting I realized that I was tied to my bed and thought my time had come .... I managed to drag myself across the floor with my arms and was saved by a delegate and a Khmer worker who carried me outside the hospital".

The ICRC delegates were so busy evacuating the patients they did not have time to save any of their hospital equipment apart from the anaesthesia and X-ray equipment. Losses are evaluated at about 1.2 million Swiss francs. Many huts had to be bulldozed to stop the fire from spreading any further. A thousand refugees were thus deprived of the roof over their heads but the operation was necessary to avoid even worse disaster. A score of patients needing immediate care were evacuated to
Ta Praya Hospital, the others being taken to the former ICRC hospital, which had recently been converted into a cultural centre. The ICRC warehouse at Aranyaprathet provided emergency items (blankets, mosquito nets, beds, refrigerators, kerosene lamps and canned meat and fish) to meet immediate requirements.

In the course of the next few days the various humanitarian organizations working in the camp co-operated most successfully in re-organizing the various activities. An ICRC medical team and the Swiss Disaster Team were detached to Ta Praya Hospital for about ten days, to provide care for patients transferred there after the fire.

The causes of the fire are as yet unknown but an investigation is being carried out.

IN BRIEF

A Lebanese detainee was released by the Israeli authorities and repatriated under the auspices of the ICRC on 19 February. The operation took place at Rosh Hanikra (Ras Nakura). The detainee had been visited several times during his captivity.

Two Jordanian civilian internees were released by the Israeli authorities and repatriated by the ICRC on 17 February across the Allenby Bridge.

BACKGROUND

FIRST SEMINAR ON INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS EMERGENCY MEDICAL ACTIONS: A COMPLETE SUCCESS, WITH ENCOURAGING CONCLUSIONS

The first seminar on International Red Cross emergency medical actions, jointly organized by the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies, took place in Geneva from 13 to 16 February 1981.

Eighty-five doctors, nurses, nutritionists and health technicians, all of them with practical experience gained in several emergency field missions for the international Red Cross, took part in the seminar. They represented 23 National Societies. This issue of the ICRC Bulletin gives a summary of the conclusions arrived at by the participants. A detailed report will be published later this year in the form of a monograph which will serve as a guide to National Societies in training health personnel for emergency actions.

Many participants in the seminar were members of the permanent staffs of their National Societies, but there were also some who had been engaged only for temporary missions. Those taking part were divided into seven working groups, each group being assigned two of the 14 subjects proposed. Reports on all subjects of discussion were presented to a plenary session at the end of the seminar.

The seminar gave special emphasis to the difference between Red Cross medical action and that of other organizations. It was noted that the Red Cross acted on the basis of its own special principles, such as neutrality, impartiality, non-discrimination, etc. This special characteristic often stood in the way of integration of the Red Cross with actions by other organizations - governmental or
non-governmental - which operated under different rules. In the event of conflict, for example, the ICRC came to the aid of victims on both sides of the front without distinction, whereas other organizations acted only in one particular region or for victims chosen on the basis of their own criteria.

Although the Red Cross must therefore maintain its independence, it was nevertheless noted at the seminar that better co-ordination should be developed with various other voluntary agencies.

The importance of the criteria for action

The criteria for action were recognized by the participants as essential in medical programmes. As in all of its actions, the Red Cross must observe certain rules: it must act only in the interest of the victims; it must not create the need for a kind of medical service not adapted to local conditions; it must make sure that there was a certain balance between the aid given to victims and the conditions under which the general population lived, so as to avoid favouring the former in comparison to the latter. The Red Cross had also to take into consideration local resources in personnel and material in its planning, and use them first in its action.

Red Cross teams had also to make certain that the largest possible number of patients benefited from their care, without giving privileges to some as compared to others. It was also important to respect local traditions and the cultural heritage of the victims. Finally, it had to be borne in mind that Red Cross medical programmes were limited to periods of emergency and that it was therefore advisable to use simple and rational techniques.

There was also reference in the discussions to external pressures which must be resisted. These were often expressions of public opinion and could lead to precipitate and uncontrolled action which could be injurious to the interests of the victims. The Red Cross had therefore to make sure it was not carried away by emotional currents when engaged in an emergency situation.

Strengthening of co-ordination role urged

A medical action, even in a time of emergency, had to be carefully planned and strictly co-ordinated. In that connection, all concerned were in favour of the ICRC as a co-ordinator in conflicts and of the League in situations resulting from natural disasters. The Red Cross had to act in a controlled manner corresponding to the needs recognized and the priorities determined by its specialists. Any hasty shipment of medicaments, food, vaccines, field hospitals and medical teams must be absolutely ruled out in Red Cross activities, for these were often likely to serve political rather than humanitarian purposes, to the detriment of the victims and the institution.

The participants also considered that the ICRC and the League should supply better information than they did to donors about the needs for an action and the means required to carry it out.

Well trained personnel

Emergency medical action, it was pointed out, could not be improvised, so that the personnel provided by National Societies must be well trained. In addition to their technical training, they must be well informed about the Red Cross movement and its principles and about the dangers to be faced. Experience in the field had proved that the members of a Red Cross team had to be versatile and be well informed in fields which went beyond their own specialities. The frequently limited number of persons in a team made it impossible to call upon a great number of specialists, and it was therefore essential for a doctor to have some knowledge of epidemiology, hygiene, nutrition and sanitation, and for a surgeon to know the principles of wartime surgery and be able to operate under difficult conditions. In that connection, reference was made to the example of surgical teams on the Kampuchea-Thailand frontier which had to concern themselves with sanitation problems, such as the construction of latrines and the incineration of refuse in the camps. Such problems were unlikely to be encountered by a doctor in his native country.

In addition, it was said that in order to improve the quality of their participation in a medical action the National Societies should receive better information from the ICRC and the League about the needs in personnel and material.

Various specific questions

Some of these appear to deserve a mention here:

- The transfer of some of the sick and wounded to other countries: All participants agreed that this solution, which generally affected only a few persons, should be avoided whenever possible and a
local solution found, with outside assistance if necessary. Treatment in third countries could not be justified by the Red Cross except in extreme cases, for example, when it was absolutely impossible adequate treatment on the spot or when, for political reasons, the safety of the patient could not be ensured unless he was transferred. In such cases every effort should be made to choose a country with a culture very close to that of the patient's own country.

Dispensary medicine, in emergency actions consisted too often of handing out pills to hundreds of patients who would not be properly examined for lack of time. While curative medicine could not and should not be abandoned, the main emphasis should be given to preventive medicine, and to health education. With this approach, Red Cross personnel, whose time was limited, could be of greater service to the victims. Dispensaries should therefore give way to "health posts" which could provide preventive medicine and health education.

Tuberculosis treatment should not be undertaken during an emergency action unless observation of the patient could be ensured for at least six months. Nevertheless, as far as possible, efforts should be made to create such stable conditions that tuberculosis could be treated.

Vaccinations: The necessary conditions rarely existed in wartime to permit effective vaccination of the population. The Red Cross therefore engaged in vaccination campaigns only under the rare circumstances in which they were useful. In years gone by, too many vaccination campaigns had been incomplete or carried out under unsatisfactory conditions. In this connection it was pointed out that one of the very important practical problems was the storage of vaccines. A refrigerating system making it possible to conserve them up to the point of utilization was absolutely essential. In wartime, this was often impossible.

In nutrition, as in medicine, it was emphasized, aid should fit in with a soundly based programme. The assistance of specialists was indispensable in any large scale nutritional action. In the feeding of infants it has been clearly established that the use of bottles in Third World countries, in which hygienic conditions and the health education of the population were unsatisfactory, was dangerous for babies because of the proliferation of bacteria which may cause fatal infections. Mother's milk was of course the best for the infant, but if breast feeding was impossible there were other simple and safe means which nutritionists could teach to parents. Generally speaking, distribution of milk must be carefully controlled. The use of feeding bottles for infants had been forbidden in all Red Cross nutrition actions.

**Final recommendations**

In the final plenary session, the participants agreed unanimously on the following recommendations:

a) National Societies wishing to participate in emergency medical actions should develop the preparation of their personnel and material in accordance with the directives of the ICRC and the League.

b) The roles of the ICRC and the Leagues as coordinators of emergency medical actions should be strengthened and the National Societies should not act independently of the established programmes.

c) Emergency medical actions should be planned and directed by experienced professionals. They should be carried out only in relation to the needs of the victims, both in qualitative and quantitative terms.

d) Every National Society should establish a group of experienced professionals responsible for health problems and whose role should not be only consultative but also executive, in the planning and execution of emergency medical actions.

e) Another medical seminar of the same nature should be organized from three to five years hence.

These recommendations will be discussed at the forthcoming International Red Cross Conference in Manila in November 1981.

**IN BRIEF**

The ICRC's telecommunications service noted a reduction in 1980 of 9 per cent of its radio traffic between Geneva and the field, with 7,454 messages exchanged; 20,544 messages, however, were exchanged between the various delegations, which represents an increase of over 50 per cent as compared to 1979. Over 41,000 messages were exchanged by telex between ICRC headquarters and its delegations throughout the world, i.e. 38 per cent more than in 1979.
REFUGEES IN THEIR OWN COUNTRIES

The attention of the international community has quite rightly turned towards Africa, which is at present the scene of many natural disasters and conflicts. Not only are several countries suffering from famine caused by severe drought, but war is driving countless people away from their villages and creating an unprecedented stream of refugees - 5 million according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. In other words half of the total number of refugees throughout the world. The public must be made aware of this very grave situation and considerable efforts must be undertaken to support the African countries affected by these disasters, which are preventing the implementation of indispensable development programmes.

It is impossible to speak of internal conflict and fighting without immediately thinking of people displaced within their own country, who thus become refugees in all but name, without actually having that status to ensure their protection and who, like other refugees, are uprooted and destitute.

For the International Committee of the Red Cross humanitarian assistance to such people is an unquestionable priority of the first order. Through its activities in situations of armed conflict, the ICRC witnesses daily the distress of countless civilians forced to give up all they have. It tries to provide them with material and moral assistance under extremely arduous conditions e.g. difficulties and risks involved in reaching the victims, and tense political situations.

Despite the obstacles the ICRC will increase its assistance to these displaced persons, who now number almost 750'000 on the African continent alone.

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ANGOLA: EXTENDING RELIEF ACTION - AIRLIFT

In view of the distress in Angola, the ICRC will gradually extend its assistance to more displaced persons in the Planalto. Its food and medical programmes, so far concentrated in Huambo province to about 20,000 people, will reach the neighbouring province of Bié for the benefit, as a start, of another 10,000 victims. More delegates will be sent out in the coming weeks.

The expansion of ICRC action will be the second stage of efforts to relieve the disastrous situation in the Planalto. Depending on developments ICRC action might, before the end of the year and in co-operation with the "Angolan Red Cross" and authorities, be extended still further.

An airlift was organized in March to bring in the supplies for distribution. In each of twelve flights from Francistown (Botswana) the aircraft brought about 20 tons of relief and vehicles to Huambo. In addition 400 tons of maize reached Huambo by rail at the beginning of March.

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW: SEMINAR ON DISSEMINATION IN AMMAN

The First Arab Seminar for middle eastern countries on Dissemination of Knowledge of International Humanitarian Law will be held from 5 to 15 April in Amman. It is jointly organized by the Jordan Red Crescent and the ICRC and will be attended by delegates from a dozen National Societies of the area, the League of Red Cross Societies and the Henry-Dunant Institute. Observers from several regional organizations have also been invited.

This seminar, which was to be held last year at the same time but had to be postponed for financial reasons, is the last of a series which have been organized in various parts of the world since 1977. The purpose of these meetings is to make circles concerned parties aware of the need to popularize the principles and ideals of the Red Cross and of international humanitarian law among the armed forces, ministries, universities, schools and the public at large.

IN BRIEF

Mozambique: On 30 March a team of three specialists left Geneva for Maputo to set up an artificial limb centre for war amputees.

AFGHAN REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN: OPENING OF AN ICRC HOSPITAL IN PESHAWAR

In mid-April the ICRC will open a hospital in Peshawar for Afghan refugees. This hospital will also be the rear base for the four ICRC medical teams working in the dispensaries of ten refugee camps in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Kurram and North Waziristan.

As a beginning, the hospital's maternity and child-care unit will take in patients from the camps, after which a surgical unit will be installed to tend the war injured coming from Afghanistan. The third and final stage will be the setting up of an artificial limb and rehabilitation centre.

With a laboratory, X-ray equipment, a special feeding section and a tuberculosis detection service, the hospital will be able to provide care for surgery, gynecology and obstetric cases, and for patients suffering from malnutrition. It will relieve the severe strain on Pakistan hospitals caused by the many sick and wounded Afghans.

The hospital will be manned by a dozen doctors, nurses and technicians made available by National Red Cross Societies. The hospital teams in the Tribal Areas working under the direction of an ICRC doctor are Pakistani and Afghan.

Estimates for the cost of the whole ICRC action in Pakistan for 1981 amounts to 4.8 million Swiss francs.

ETHIOPIA: SURVEY IN HARARGE

Dr. D. Allgöwer, deputy head of the Medical Division of the ICRC, has been in Ethiopia since 9 March on a survey mission. Accompanied by the ICRC relief delegate based in Addis Ababa and by Ethiopian Red Cross representatives, he first went to the Balé province where he saw several camps for displaced persons.

The team then proceeded to Hararge, where it visited the Dega Habur camp with some 20,000 displaced persons, and other places.

The joint ICRC-Ethiopian Red Cross programme includes assistance - in the form of food, blankets, clothing and medical supplies - for this and other camps in the other provinces affected by the fighting, i.e. Balé, Sidamo, Gonda, Eritrea and Tigre. So far this year the ICRC and the National Society have provided 223 tons of relief valued at about 300,000 Swiss francs.
IRAN-IRAQ CONFLICT: MISSIONS AND POW VISITS

The ICRC's delegate-general for the Middle East, Mr. Jean Hoefliger, visited Iran from 10 - 20 March for discussions with Iranian officials on the ICRC's activities stemming from the conflict.

Among the representatives of the authorities he met was the Procurator-General of the Republic, Ayatollah Qodussi.

Mr. Hoefliger also took part in the first ICRC visit to a new camp for Iraqi prisoners of war near Teheran.

In Iraq - where visits to prisoners of war also continued in March - the President of the ICRC, Mr. Alexandre Hay, arrived for talks with government leaders in Baghdad on March 29th. Mr. Hay is due in the Jordanian capital, Amman, on April 4th for the opening of the First Arabic Seminar on International Humanitarian Law.

ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME IN EAST-TIMOR: THE JOINT ACTION IS OVER

The joint assistance action of the Indonesian Red Cross and the ICRC in favour of the displaced persons in East-Timor, will be over on April 15. Claude Châtelain, press officer of the ICRC, has just come back from the island. Here is her report:

Tuesday 10 March: Timor, seen from the Fokker that flew our party over from Denpasar, resembles a huge emerald encased in a vast expanse of turquoise. The typical tropical jewel, any vacationer's dream. Thursday 12 March: it is 7.30 a.m. but the sun is already high in the sky when the Red Cross helicopter takes off from Dili military airport. Today, we shall see two villages out of the fourteen that are still being covered by the Indonesian Red Cross and ICRC assistance programme in favour of populations displaced by the 1975 events, and regrouped in mountain settlements by the authorities.

Whilst flying over jungle-covered hills and steep ravines, isolated from the other passengers by the steady deafening roar of the rotors, I see in my mind's eye glimpses of photographs of the beginning of the action: the suffering of thousands of people who, for months and months, had been hiding in the mountains, with roots, tree-bark and wild fruit as their only sustenance before being "resettled" in a number of villages that could not provide sufficient means of survival for them. That was the situation the Red Cross had been confronted with when it launched its emergency assistance programme in mid-October 1979.

The action is some eighteen months old: over that period it has involved several hundred national Red Cross staff (doctors, nurses, volunteer relief workers) and a 3-man ICRC delegation: one co-ordinator based in Jakarta, a doctor and a relief delegate based in Dili. Initially planned for six months, the assistance programme, for various - but mainly logistic - reasons has been prolonged twice. It has saved thousands of human lives, which is well worth its high cost (due to the lack of roads and the poor state of the existing ones - transportation of relief goods and personnel has been effected mainly by air).

There is no longer an emergency: during the second half of 1980 and the first months of 1981, 11 villages out of 14 have been "handed over" to the local authorities and Red Cross.
From yesterday till now.

Let's stop wandering in the past and near future: presently, we land in Laclubar, a community of about 8,000 people that spreads on the slopes of a hill. Apart from the hospital with only one patient, we visit the market, where vegetables and fruit are available in fair quantity, and the fish ponds at the foot of the hill. During the last half of 1980, 3 new and unusual programmes had been included in the Red Cross operation - namely the gift of live fish, ducks and chickens to the assisted villages, with the aim of giving the people additional sources of fresh protein and, in the case of ducks and fish that feed on - among other things - on mosquito larvae, of reducing the anopheles population and therefore, the risks of malaria.

"Red Cross" ducks and carps.

After Laclubar, we go to Natarbora, a village which was handed over in October 1980. The place has an atmosphere of serenity about it. There are cornfields, banana trees, a clear stream where "Red Cross" ducks swim and splash-passing through several ponds full of "Red Cross" carps. In Laclubar, as well as in Natarbora, it is hard to imagine that, a year ago, the population was in dire need of medical and food relief: in Dilor, where the helicopter brings us the day after it is even harder. In November 1979, the village - or, rather, set of villages totalling about 4,000 inhabitants, had the highest percentage of malnutrition of all those covered by the Red Cross programme. On March 13, 1981, a seemingly quite healthy population, informed in advance of our visit, were in their best clothes and welcomed us with traditional music and dancing, demonstrations of handicraft manufacturing and corn harvesting. We visited the hospital, the polyclinic, witnessed the distribution of vitamins and protein-rich biscuits to the holders of blue cards (the card system, initiated by Dr. Grellety 18 months ago, is still in use).

During the 3 hours our visit lasted, we were followed by almost the whole population, and the smiles on peoples's face were no doubt, a reward to the ICRC relief delegate, the representatives of the Indonesian Red Cross and the local volunteers.

A striking proof of success.

But the most striking proof of the success of the joint National Society and ICRC medical and food assistance programme in Timor was yet to come: it took shape in the face of Emmanuel, a child we met in Uatolare the following day. In a film shot by the Dutch television at the beginning of the Red Cross programme, the appearance of a young boy or, rather for the viewers, a living skeleton epitomised the whole misery of the situation in mountainous Timor, testifying for the need of an emergency relief operation. The same boy, Emmanuel, was introduced to us by the Red Cross doctor on 14 March: bright-eyes, with a shy but mischievous smile, average in size and weight, the child was very much alive, and a little confused to be the focus of so many persons' attention. Soon after, Emmanuel was back with his friends, playing like any child in the world...

The same evening, as the sun set on Uatolare, the population began to assemble in the school yard for the Tebe dance, a traditional Saturday night treat in Timor. Meanwhile, on the market place, the more modern-oriented villagers, joined by the Red-Cross volunteers, were dancing to a violin playing old Portuguese melodies. Thanks in great part to the Red Cross efforts, the ghosts of sickness and hunger seemed to belong to a nightmare long forgotten. But it was only yesterday, and there is still much work to be done by authorities, the local Red Cross and the villagers themselves to turn a better situation into a really good one. One day, maybe, Timor will become what it looks like from high above: any vacationer's dream.

THAILAND/KAMPUCHEA:
SOME STATISTICS

In the first quarter of the year ICRC activities in Thailand were concentrated on protecting Vietnamese refugees who had trekked across Kampuchea, and on providing surgical and medical services in the region of the Kampuchean border. This latter activity involved more than 12,000 consultations in hospitals and dispensaries between 1 January and 11 March. The value of medical supplies to the various teams amounted to almost 400'000 Swiss francs. During the same period 1,788 patients were admitted to hospital, there having been a noticeable increase in the number of persons injured by mines and bullets. Co-operation with voluntary agencies enabled the ICRC to reduce the medical staff at the frontier and at Khao-I-Dang to 27 (not counting the administrative personnel and technicians).

In the course of the three months the ICRC delegation in Phnom Penh received, thanks to the regular shuttle flights from Bangkok, 220 tons of relief (including that from UNICEF and the HCR) valued at 1.5
IN BRIEF

Repatriation: A Syrian national who had entered Israel on 4 February was repatriated under ICRC auspices on 5 March via Kuneitra.

BACKGROUND

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES IN AFRICA

RED CROSS CONTRIBUTION TO RELIEF FOR DISPLACED PERSONS

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has convened for 9 and 10 April, in Geneva, an international conference on assistance to refugees in Africa, drawing the attention of governments, humanitarian organizations and, through the mass media, world public opinion to the gravity of this problem. While the ICRC has no mandate to take care of refugees, it does have a duty to assist displaced people, who are among the most vulnerable victims of international and non-international armed conflicts.

Displaced people may be defined as refugees in their own country. Indeed, civilians compelled by natural disaster or armed conflict to leave their villages to seek refuge in safer areas in their own country are refugees without the status or legal protection due to refugees. Without the Red Cross, displaced people, in the event of conflict at least, would be often deprived of humanitarian aid.

Pursuant to the assignment entrusted to it by the 1949 Geneva Conventions, the ICRC must help the civilian and military victims of armed conflict and for that reason is expected to extend its protection and assistance to displaced people. Moreover, the ICRC is often the only internationally recognized organization able to take action in a country at war. Working in co-operation with the National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society and other humanitarian organizations in the country concerned, the ICRC provides displaced people with food and emergency medical services. Its Central Tracing Agency (CTA) works to relieve distress of a different kind by seeking missing persons, transmitting messages between, or reuniting, the members of dispersed families.

Difficulties and criteria for action. The conditions in which the ICRC undertakes its humanitarian action are often difficult. Governments reluctant to admit the existence of conflict within their borders may raise political objections or may fear that the presence of the ICRC may be interpreted as international recognition of a rebel movement, even though the ICRC has neither the power nor the means of granting such recognition; its delegates' very lives may be endangered by fighting; and financial problems may restrain action in spite of the urgency of needs.

These obstacles do not prevent the ICRC from maintaining its traditional course, namely to act in a strictly humanitarian fashion for the benefit of victims, to observe its rule of discretion and to limit its action to the emergency phase.

The emergency which has stricken Africa is causing extreme hardship in the Horn of Africa and in southern Africa. The extent of this humanitarian problem - nearly 5 million refugees, 2.4 million displaced people, and 750,000 of whom have been affected by conflict - makes it imperative that the international community increase its efforts to provide relief.

Not just aid, but survival. Most of the hundreds of thousands of people displaced by the fighting in the southern part of Angola are in the high plateau region, the Planalto. At present ICRC aid reaches close to 30,000 people concentrated in a score of villages in the Huambo province. These people are completely dependent on aid to survive, and ICRC assistance consists mainly of food, blankets, clothing, special food for immediate consumption by the most vulnerable victims (children, the elderly and the sick), special feeding centres for starving children, medical attention and revival of rural first aid posts.

Supply and logistic difficulties are considerable. Many "deslocados" are in vil-
lages which are almost inaccessible due to the security situation and it is with caution that the ICRC is trying gradually to extend its work on the Planalto. In the next few months it hopes to extend its operations to more villages in order to double or even treble the number of people in receipt of its aid.

Emergency in Uganda. Needs have also reached crisis proportions also in the West Nile Province of Uganda where serious unrest has caused the flight of 180,000 people to Zaire and the Sudan and 60,000 to other areas of Uganda. Some thousands of Ugandans have returned to their villages but having left them in haste, they are now completely destitute. The United Nations and several voluntary agencies are working on development programmes which are intended to bring about the resettlement of the population. The assistance provided by the ICRC will be for the critical months following their return.

With that in view - despite considerable logistic problems arising from the remoteness and security problems, ICRC delegates are distributing food and clothing in the villages and in the missions where displaced people are still taking refuge. They are also helping to restore rural dispensaries by providing medical supplies.

Desolation in Ethiopia. As a consequence of the ravages of drought and hostilities, 7.5 per cent or 2.4 million of Ethiopia's 32 million inhabitants, are displaced people.

In 1977, the ICRC and the Ethiopian Red Cross started a joint assistance programme in the regions of Balé, Sidamo, Harar, Gondar, Tigre and Eritrea where some hundred thousand people displaced by fighting are in need of emergency assistance.

The ICRC provides the National Society with the finance and supplies necessary for the operation, with the regional branches of Ethiopian Red Cross attending to the relief distributions.

From January 1980 to the end of February 1981 the ICRC provided more than 1,200 tonnes of relief, estimated at a value of 2.2 million Swiss francs, for the benefit of displaced Ethiopians. Yet more must be done, including the reinforcing of the National Society's logistic and administrative resources.

Tracing Agency and refugees. For the ICRC Central Tracing Agency there is no difference between a refugee and a displaced person. All the CTA needs to know is that the person is the victim of a conflict.

Where the HCR does not or cannot operate, the Agency can help refugees to trace their relatives.

Three years ago the work in the Africa section of the Central Tracing Agency could almost be handled by a single person. Today Africa is a full time job for eight staff members in Geneva as well as for the five delegates and local personnel in the field.

For the CTA the most important delegation is in Sudan, where half a million refugees have fled from Chad, Ethiopia, Uganda and Zaire.

Since March 1980 the Khartoum office of the Agency has had sub-offices in the provinces of Kassala and the Red Sea, where the refugees are concentrated. The work it carries out, in co-operation with the HCR, consists essentially in seeking people whose families have lost touch with them and in the forwarding of messages between the members of dispersed families having no other means of communication.

A major part of the work is to facilitate the reuniting of families. The CTA attends to the preliminary formalities (drawing up lists, checking family relationships, etc.) while the HCR undertakes the actual operation. Up to the end of 1980 the Tracing Agency office in Khartoum had reunited eighty families. This is a satisfactory result, bearing in mind that at least two months elapse between the opening of a CTA office and the solving of the first cases, in view of the complexity of the work in compiling and sorting out the necessary information.

The Agency's work in Africa is not limited to the Sudan. It has offices also in Chad, Uganda, Zaire and Zimbabwe. Other ICRC delegations in Africa also deal with tracing problems without having a special agency office for the purpose.

At present the ICRC is active in thirteen African countries offering refugees and displaced persons in each the possibility of tracing a missing relative. In fact, an enquiry made at the Agency office in Uganda might well be solved by the Agency delegate in Kenya or Zaire.

Another service offered by the agency is issuing of ICRC travel documents which
are internationally recognised and provide a person who is not officially recognised as a refugee to either emigrate to a third country or return to his own. Repatriations of refugees is another field in which the ICRC offers its services by arranging the necessary formalities.

It must be realized that the Red Cross set-up in Africa is considerable, yet small compared with the extent of the humanitarian problems. The international conference on assistance to refugees in Africa should enable humanitarian organizations to obtain the finance necessary for the continuation of their operations. The Red Cross is associated in that conference with a view to obtaining the resources to continue and develop its protection and assistance activities. The survival of hundreds of thousands of human beings is in the balance.

TRACING AGENCY IN UGANDA A GLEAM OF HOPE IN BOMBO

A delegate of the Central Tracing Agency has sent us from Uganda the following graphic description of the work that is being done there to help refugees and displaced persons:

"When I stopped over in Kenya early this year, on my way to Uganda, the ICRC delegate stationed in Nairobi took me to Kibera, a village of the Nuba community, just outside the capital. He thought I might be able to gather some information which might be useful for my tracing work in Uganda. It turned out that he was right, for in this typically African village, with its adobe houses, dusty streets and lively market-place, we met a man who gave me the names of two notables of the village of Bombo, near Kampala, and said they would be able to help me. One of them was the community's religious leader and the other was an eminent elder in the tribe.

On my return to Uganda, I went to Bombo, taking with me a local employee as interpreter. At the village, we were made welcome, a large mauve-coloured mat was spread out and two chairs placed on it. After having been greeted by all the children of the village, we asked to see the two notables who had been recommended to us. We were told they were away but would be back the following week to take part with all the Bombo inhabitants in a big religious festival, and would surely be pleased to meet us then.

The following Saturday, we again set off on the road to Bombo. A short distance before the village we saw, waiting for us by the wayside, the same old man who had been our guide the previous week. This time he took us to the market-place, where the colourfully clad women, with flocks of smiling children around them, sat in the shade of tall trees, while the sound of prayers came through the open windows of the mosque.

As the two notables came forward to greet us, we were most impressed by their grand appearance. One of them was wearing a magnificent dark red caftan and a turban, while his companion was dressed in a brilliant white burnous and cap.

We conversed in a small, cool room, into which not much light penetrated. One of the notables gave us some facts about the history of their tribe and told of the suffering their people had endured during the recent events and of the sorrows and worries caused by the disappearance of beloved relatives. We went together through the names of the persons we were trying to find, and we realized what a difficult task it was: some people had fled, their relatives and friends had lost all trace of them and not knowing their fate, were sure that they were dead. It was now our turn to explain the CTA's role and activities.

After partaking of a meal offered by our hosts, we took our leave and, exchanging the customary expressions of thanks, we promised that we would meet again. As we were going back to our car, we had a glimpse of the sheik's dark red mantle and the notable's white burnous as they re-entered the mosque, from where we could hear the continuing prayers and chants. For over an hour, they had stayed away from the ceremony, in order to be with us and show their hospitality.

On that particular day, we did not get any further with any of our enquiries. On the contrary, we were given even more cases to deal with. But a link had been forged; an esteem had arisen between us - at least I flatter myself that the consideration I felt for these people was reciprocated. From now on, when writing to our colleagues at Khartoum and Nairobi, our thoughts would turn to the people of Bombo; and meanwhile, in that Ugandan village, there were two men who now knew that we were not indifferent to their problems, that we shared their distress over the disappearance of their relatives."
This year's World Red Cross Day theme is illustrative of the twofold vocation – protection and assistance – of the movement founded 117 years ago by Henry Dunant.

For prisoners of war, political detainees and the population of occupied territories, Red Cross protection is vital: the work of ICRC delegates not only brings about improvements in detention conditions but is an assurance to such people that they are not forgotten and that their plight is not solely dependent on the whim of the detaining authorities or occupying Power.

Similarly, for those who have lost everything in a natural disaster or war, Red Cross assistance is not just a bowl of rice or a blanket: it often means their very survival. Such assistance is given without discrimination, impartially and selflessly.

For more than a century, the moral comfort of Red Cross protection and its material aid provided during emergencies has kept hope alive for millions of human beings, in spite of violence by man and nature. "Red Cross: with you and for you" is no mere slogan, but is the expression of a worldwide effort to relieve suffering.

The texts of this bulletin have no official character, and may be freely reproduced.
LEBANON: EMERGENCY AID PROGRAM-ME-APPEAL FOR 6 MILLION SW FRANCS

At the beginning of April violent fighting broke out once more in Lebanon causing the ICRC and the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) to take emergency aid action.

One of the first steps was to organize relief convoys to carry medical supplies to the hospitals and dispensaries in the besieged town of Zahle in the Bekaa plain and to evacuate the wounded.

On 3 April, three Lebanese Red Cross voluntary workers were killed when their vehicle was caught in cross-fire and crashed after leaving the road. The ICRC President, who was chairing in Amman a seminar on the dissemination of humanitarian law, was deeply affected by the news of this accident and just as much by reports of the numerous casualties caused by the fighting. He appealed to the parties involved to respect fundamental humanitarian principles and to refrain from action leading to loss of life.

From the beginning of April up to the 27th, eleven ICRC-LRC convoys carried relief to Zahle and, some two hundred persons altogether were evacuated from the town. This figure included over fifty wounded and about the same number of children whose parents were no longer with them. The relief goods consisted mainly of medical supplies for the local hospitals and dispensaries.

At Beirut, too, ICRC delegates took several wounded to hospital. In view of the fierce clashes, the ICRC Office in Jounieh was re-opened.

In southern Lebanon an ICRC nurse made a survey of the medical needs arising from the fighting in that area. Food, blankets and medicaments were distributed in Tyre, Saida, Nabatieh, Marjayoun and other places.

But in order to give effective aid throughout Lebanon to all parties to the conflict, the ICRC needs additional funds and more operational support. That is why on 13 April it launched an appeal for six million Swiss francs to enable it, over the next five months, to finance its operations (provision of medical supplies for hospitals and other medical establishments throughout the country, creation of an emergency surgical unit, resumption of Central Tracing Agency tasks) and to increase its personnel to 20 delegates and 35 local employees.

STOP PRESS

ICRC AIRPLANE FOR LEBANON: An aircraft, chartered by the ICRC, left Geneva for Beirut on May 2, loaded with nine tons of emergency relief, comprising mainly medical supplies. Also on board were six delegates, the delegate-general for the Middle East and the ICRC's chief medical officer.

After safely delivering its passengers and freight to the Lebanese capital, the plane returned to Geneva the same day bringing with it one wounded person for evacuation to Paris.

Prior to the relief flight, it had been necessary to negotiate a cease fire to permit the aircraft to land at Beirut airport, which has been closed because of the fighting.

ICRC PRESIDENT IN IRAQ

ICRC President Alexandre Hay, accompanied by the delegate-general for the Middle East, Mr. Jean Hoefliger, was from 29 March to 4 April in Iraq. In Baghdad, he had discussions with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Saadoun Hammadi, and with the Vice-Prime Minister, Mr. Tarek Aziz. In conclusion to these interviews, during which the practical application of the Geneva Conventions was discussed, both Ministers once again assured Mr. Hay of their Government's will to discharge its obligations under the Conventions.

ANGOLA: SUB-DELEGATION OPENED IN THE BIE PROVINCE

With the opening of a sub-delegation in Kuito, the chief town of the Bie Province, the first stage of the extension of ICRC activities to aid displaced persons in the Planalto region has begun.

Two delegates, a nurse, an administrator and a secretary are getting themselves organized in Kuito, from where they will develop a series of programmes for some 10,000 displaced persons - to start with - within a radius of 30 to 40 km around the city.

Food and medical relief supplied by the Red Cross in Angola will then reach some 40,000 persons in need. Forty ICRC delegates are currently working in Luanda, Huambo and Kuito and the budget for the ICRC operation has been fixed at 30.7 million Swiss francs for 1981.
FOLLOW-UP TO THE HCR CONFERENCE ON ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES IN AFRICA

The International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa convened by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Organization of African Unity was held on 9 and 10 April in Geneva. It was attended by representatives of 99 Governments and observers from several governmental and non-governmental organizations, including the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies.

The Conference ended with announcements of contributions for a total of 560 million dollars. Discussions have now begun between UNHCR and donors to determine the distribution of those funds, as a number of speakers at the Conference had emphasized the major role of the International Red Cross in assisting refugees and displaced persons in Africa and signified their Governments' intention to provide financial support to its activities in this field.

OBITUARY

The ICRC learned with greatest sorrow of the passing away on April 25th of Lady Angela, Countess of Limerick, vice-president of the British Red Cross and former Chairman of the Standing Commission of the International Red Cross from 1965 to 1973.

Thanks to her exceptional human qualities and her wisdom, Lady Angela played for years a leading role in the international Red Cross assemblies and exerted a prominent influence during the reappraisal of the role of the Red Cross.

In 1975, Lady Limerick was awarded the highest international Red Cross distinction, The Henry Dunant medal, for her lifetime work for the movement.

RED CROSS SEMINAR FOR AUSTRIAN TEACHERS: AN EXAMPLE WORTH FOLLOWING

In the first week of April, Jean-Louis Cayla, from the ICRC's Department of Principles and Law, attended a seminar organized in Vienna for secondary school teachers by the city's school council, in cooperation with the Austrian Junior Red Cross.

The seminar included topics such as the fundamental principles of the Red Cross, international humanitarian law, the role and activities of the international Red Cross (ICRC, League, National Societies), and some subjects for reflexion, e.g. the Red Cross as a factor for education and peace. A number of films were shown to illustrate these themes.

The example given by the Austrian Junior Red Cross, which thus ensures a wide dissemination of Red Cross ideals through educational programmes, is extremely praiseworthy and should be followed by National Societies throughout the world.

IN BRIEF

Family reuniting (Timor-Portugal): Six people (two adults and four children) left Timor on 14 April to join close relatives in Portugal. A delegate from the Central Tracing Agency accompanied them from Zurich to Lisbon.

Meeting in Bangkok: The Conference of National Societies of the countries of the ASEAN, organized by the Thai Red Cross, will be held in Bangkok from 6 to 8 May. The Director of the Operations Department, Mr J-P. Hocké, and the delegate-general for Asia, Mr. J. de Courten, will be representing the ICRC.

The President of the OAU at the ICRC: President Siaka Stevens of Sierra Leone, President in office of the OAU, was in Geneva for the Conference on Refugees in Africa and visited the ICRC on 8 April. Mr. Stevens, accompanied by his Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Commerce, was received by President Hay, and members of the Directorate. Their discussions centred on ICRC activities in Africa.

ICRC RECEIVES LIONS CLUB AWARD

On 15 April, Mr. William Chandler, International Lions Club President, in the presence of leading figures of the Swiss Lions Clubs, presented ICRC President Alexandre Hay with the Meritus Award, in recognition of the ICRC's humanitarian activities throughout the world.

This award is Lions International's highest distinction. The presentation, which took place at the ICRC's Geneva Headquarters, was organized by Mr. C. Fedele, Lions International's representative at the European Office of the United Nations in Geneva.
PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE IN THE FIELD...

A "TWIN" FAMILY REUNIFICATION

One day in August 1980, the ICRC Tracing Agency in Bangkok received a letter from a Khmer living in France, Miss Som Sophon; some days later, a Mrs. Bopha Sophon, of Khmer nationality, residing in the U.S.A., sent another letter to the Tracing Agency. Both letters contained the same request, namely to trace, in the encampments on the Thai-Kampuchean border, two boys, respectively 13 and 7 years old, which both ladies claimed as being their young brothers; each of the girls also mentioned that refugees who had recently arrived in their two respective countries had told them that the boys had either been seen - or reported to be - in one of the border encampments. The names of the boys were Poeuv and Kim Sophon. Neither of them was to be found in the Agency's Bangkok file, and the enquiries were transmitted to the ICRC sub-delegation in Aranyaprathet. After thorough research and much questioning around the camps, the delegate responsible for Nong Chan succeeded in tracing the oldest brother, Poeuv, who had been living there with a Khmer family for some time. The boy did not know he still had two living sisters: they had separately left Battambang, home of the family, in the course of 1976 and since then, nothing had ever been heard of them. In 1977, Poeuv's father and mother, as well as one other sister had died. The two brothers had then left for Ta Keo, where the youngest one had stayed while the elder crossed the border into Thailand. But Kim would follow, as soon as he found some people to accompany him, and Poeuv was expecting him any day.

The information was passed onto the Agency in Bangkok, which conveyed it to the sisters, together with the news that each had a sibling living in another part of the world: just as Poeuv had not known he still had sisters, the girls weren't aware of each other's existence... This was in August 1980.

In January, 1981, Kim crossed the border into Nong Chan, together with the family he had been living with in Ta Keo. He went to the ICRC delegate in charge of the camp to seek information about his older brother. Soon after, the two boys were reunited. In February, they were transferred to the children's centre in Khao I Dang, where they are still awaiting resettlement. With relatives in France and the U.S.A., they won't have too long to wait.

RELIEF AND MORE: THE PRESENCE OF THE RED CROSS

Six months after the fighting, the 800,000 inhabitants of the West Nile province of Uganda are still in need of assistance, their houses having been looted or razed by fire, their crops destroyed and their medical services left in ruins. Yet gradually thousands of them are returning, destitute as they are, having lost all they own in their flight.

In this ravaged province the work of the ICRC began in November 1980, with the despatch of such emergency aid as blankets, medicaments and food for the civilian population. The second phase was the restoration and restocking of rural dispensaries. Next the ICRC Tracing Agency, in co-operation with the local authorities, began its work of seeking the missing and of visiting people arrested as a consequence of the events.

Although the population of the province is still in need, the emergency is past and the ICRC may contemplate withdrawal and handing over to other bodies able to continue providing assistance. Red Cross aid has been on a relatively modest scale but it has provided thousands of Ugandans with vital moral and material support upon their return.

In the words of an Indian businessman established in the West Nile for almost fifty years, "Your aid is greatly appreciated by the people, yet what really counts for them is not so much the relief they have received but the actual presence of the Red Cross in such a situation".

FEAR REPLACED BY NEW HOPE

At only 20 days old, the tiny baby was perhaps a little young to receive a new start in life. But that's what it amounted to, as she left the besieged Lebanese town of Zahlé on April 12, sleeping comfortably in the arms of an ICRC field officer.

The infant - none knew her name - was the youngest and most innocent victim of the fighting which began in and around the town on April 2. Somehow, she had been separated from her parents, who left Zahlé for the nearby town of Baalbek. It was a misfortune that could easily have turned into a tragedy instead, for her and the 22 adults who were evacuated the same day in the Red Cross convoy, fear was replaced by new hope.
A TRAGIC LOSS

On April 3rd, two volunteers from the Lebanese Red Cross and a nursing nun drove from Baalbek to Zahle with blood supplies for the injured. As they entered the stricken town in darkness, mistakenly believing a cease-fire agreement had been reached, shots were fired and the ambulance crashed, killing the three occupants.

The death of volunteers carrying out a humanitarian mission is always stunning. What gave a bitter twist was that the Red Cross members were not only doing their duty - they were repaying a debt of honour incurred a few weeks before, when fighting had taken place in their own town. On that occasion, it was Zahle Red Cross volunteers who brought assistance to their colleagues.

A PRIVILEGED ANGOLAN VILLAGE

August 1980, Kaialula: In this sprawling collection of improvised huts, some 1,200 displaced persons were stranded in dire distress, after wandering for months in the bush. The ICRC has warded off starvation among the inhabitants, some of whom were dangerously undernourished, particularly the children.

Danger forbad tilling the land and Kaialula was in urgent need of assistance. The Red Cross therefore started distributing food for all. It also set up a health post run by a locally trained nurse who gave elementary medical care and each day distributed to the fifty weakest children six protein-rich biscuits. Shortly after, a special feeding centre was opened to care for the most serious cases.

Since March 1981 there have been no admissions to the centre and the Red Cross food aid has been reduced. Corn is growing between the huts, the adults have recovered their strength and can again work to produce their staple food. The Red Cross still provides "papa" (corn-based gruel) for the children, but the smiling faces of the children as they wait their turn bear no resemblance to the distressing sight they presented a few months ago.

Yet Kaialula is a privileged village, being situated by the side of a main road which ICRC convoys travel along every week. Supplying it presents no danger or transport problem. But how many villages are inaccessible? How many people are still in need of Red Cross assistance?

PROTECTION, ASSISTANCE AND A LITTLE HUMOUR!

"It sometimes happens that Red Cross assistance is too well appreciated", says an ICRC delegate based in Latin America who remembers the request made to the Managua delegation by an amnestied detainee: the man had been released the day Christmas parcels were being distributed in the prisons and had come to collect the parcel he had not received!

WORLD RED CROSS DAY THEME: TWO-FOLD ASPECT OF ICRC INTERVENTION

The following article illustrates the theme chosen for this year's World Red Cross Day, i.e. "Protection and Assistance". It also shows that ICRC activities in aid of victims of armed conflicts and internal disturbances are the two-fold aspect of the role played by the ICRC since its creation over a century ago.

From the Horn of Africa to east of the Andes, over to the Middle East and down to the Straits of Malacca: the list continues and looks more like a travel guide to the four continents. But the people travelling are delegates from the International Committee of the Red Cross and their purpose - to visit political detainees. Since the first ever formal visit by an ICRC delegate to political detainees in a prison outside Budapest, Hungary, in April 1919, ICRC delegates have visited over 300,000 political detainees in more than 70 countries throughout the world.

Yet despite the interesting locations and impressive statistics, this is one ICRC activity which receives little publicity. And that's the way the ICRC wants to keep it.

Discretion is the key word and published information is confined to the places and dates of the visits, the number of people seen and the fact that the delegates were able to talk to the detainees without witnesses.

The main reason for this tightly drawn veil of silence is the same as the visit: to
provide protection for the political detainee.

"If you publish a negative report on a detention centre, it's possible that you won't be allowed back," said Roger Santschy, a veteran of numerous ICRC visits to political detainees.

"Secondly, the impact of such a report is only short-lived. The public may be shocked today, but tomorrow they've forgotten and what have you achieved for the detainee? In fact, he may be worse off because there's a chance that you can't go back to see him".

To the ICRC, a political detainee is someone locked up by his own country's authorities at the time of internal tension or disturbance because he is seen as a threat to the existing political system. Yet only the conditions of detention concern the ICRC, not why the detainee is locked up.

No legal basis

Visits to political detainees are not covered by the Geneva Conventions or the Protocols added in 1977. Despite this lack of specific authorisation in international law, the protection which the ICRC attempts to give political detainees is in accordance with the International Red Cross principles and statutes.

Supplementary assistance

In the field of providing relief assistance to the detainees, the ICRC takes the line that it should be complementary to what the authorities are providing. It does not want to become the authorities' substitute, taking almost complete charge of the prisoners' welfare.

Relief to families of detainees is often subject to the availability of funds and the situation within the country. As Roger Santschy explained:

"We cannot help everyone, because we just don't have the means. What has to be realised is that the political detainee is often not a rich man but at the same time, is usually the breadwinner for a large family. Even if the children are old enough to work, they may not be able to find jobs because their father is in gaol for being a threat to the existing system.

"Then there is the problem of raising funds for relief to both detainees and their families. Some countries with detainees attract more attention than others with the result that the former are often more 'fashionable' for the governments and organisations donating the money."

Yet, where it can, the ICRC will try to improve the conditions for the detainees by providing goods ranging from soap to blankets, and perhaps helping the prison authorities to improve conditions within the centres.

If the detainees have not been allowed to correspond with their families, permission is sought to provide them with Red Cross message forms which can be forwarded by the ICRC to the families.

Wherever possible, the ICRC also organises the transport or pays the fare for families to visit the detainees.

Visits by the ICRC delegates to the detention centres are followed by discussions at all levels with the detention authorities. Confidential reports are compiled and addressed to the detaining government.

While the state has no formal obligation to accept the ICRC's offer of services, there are two main reasons why governments often do accept.

One is to have a better knowledge of what's going on in their gaols. Abuses may be occurring which the national authorities know nothing about or approve of, but they may be both willing and able to ensure humane treatment for the detainees. On the other hand, some governments may find it convenient to claim that the ICRC is working in the detention centres, keeping a check on the conditions.

To provide effective protection, the ICRC asks to have access to all political detainees, to be able to speak to the detainees without a witness and finally to have the right of repeat visits to check on the long term welfare of the detainees.

Visit procedure

During a visit to a detention centre, particularly the first, the information being sought by the ICRC team is all-encompassing.

From the detention authorities, the team, which usually comprises one or two delegates in addition to an ICRC doctor, want simple facts ranging from names, numbers, and prison capacity to frequency of medical services, clothing provisions and cooking facilities down to even the maximum and minimum temperatures of the area.
An endeavour is made, in co-operation with the authorities, to compile a complete record of detainees in a centre because knowing the detainees whereabouts is in itself a form of protection.

From the prisoners, they want the details of any problems - serious or minor, personal or family - that they may be having as a result of the detention.

The role of the ICRC doctor during the visit is to check the available medical files to ensure that any medical treatment given to the detainees has been correct thus enabling him to reassure the detainees who may have been suspicious of the treatment's correctness. He also checks that medical facilities are available and adequate.

But there is no magic formula for the ICRC to bring about change in the conditions for political detainees. Unlike visits to prisoners of war in a conflict where at least two parties are involved in the negotiations, there is only one state involved with the political detainees and this power has complete control.

Said Santschy: "The strongest tool we have for bringing about change is patience and determination".

"THE TROUBLESHOOTERS OF THE ICRC"

For close to seven hundred thousand people in twelve countries throughout the world, emergency relief assistance by the ICRC is a current fact of their daily lives.

Some are displaced, others are still living in their homes, but all are civilian victims of past or continuing conflict situations in their own countries.

Providing essential supplies, ranging from the basic staple of the country concerned to blankets and tents, is the role of the ICRC's relief division.

This division, with its staff of 12 headed by Philippe Dind, is not confined to the rigors of routine, being constantly confronted by new situations and problems. As Dind explained: "No action is ever like the one before it".

Yet despite the ever-changing circumstances which the division must face, there is a basic plan of action which can be adapted to suit the moment.

For example, when a country is thrown into a conflict situation, the ICRC approaches the country's authorities for permission to send delegates.

At the same time, if local provisions are unavailable or inadequate, the relief division works quickly to send in the first load of relief supplies, drawing on its reserve stocks to avoid delays. This first load, usually comprising basics such as powdered milk, medical supplies and blankets, can be despatched and delivered while waiting for a detailed evaluation of needs from the delegates working in the country.

While documents on the country's socio-economic infrastructure can help the division in evaluating the country's specific needs, it is the national Red Cross Society which can be of the greatest assistance, giving advice, providing personnel and helping with the distributions. Monitoring these distributions is essential to ensure that the supplies reach those for whom they are intended. To this end, delegates often travel to remote areas to be "on the spot", despite often high security risks.

In each of the countries where the ICRC is providing assistance, the problems and demands vary as much as the geography, the culture and the conflict. But according to Philippe Dind, the major stumbling block confronted in most ICRC relief actions is logistical, both in the procuring and transportation of the goods.

"A country in a conflict is often a country whose economic infrastructure is affected, if not destroyed. So it's difficult to buy the needed goods in the country itself and even buying the supplies from nearby nations can be hindered because of the politics of the situation."

"When the problem of procurement is overcome, we have to find a way of getting the goods into and distributed throughout the country. The airport may be closed or the ports at a standstill because the dockworkers have fled. Inside the country itself, the usual means of transport may no longer be working or available. Fuel too can be difficult to attain because of its strategic value."

Solving these problems, so peculiar to the ICRC because of the nature of its work in conflicts, its essential. Whether it means hiring a plane or loading a camel, it's all part of the day's work for the relief sector, surely the "troubleshooters" of the ICRC.
DEALING WITH FEAR IN THE FIELD

Fear, one of the most basic human emotions, can be paralyzing. It can result in panic, destruction and even death. For ICRC delegates working in a country where war and internal strife are a fact of everyday life, it is an emotion which frequently accompanies them during the daily rounds of their tasks.

Because of the very nature of the tasks, the delegates are often in contact with the fear-inspiring aspects of conflict. To drive along mine-riddled roads, to cross the line dividing the parties in contention, to enter besieged towns—all this must be done if the ICRC is to fulfill its role of bringing aid to the victims of conflict; to do this, delegates must live with fear.

Yet, they cannot just live with it, they must become its master because the results of fear can be just as devastating when it engenders a false bravado. They must know when it is truly justified and when an action is more likely to lead to disaster rather than rescue and relief.

It can be an uneasy existence and one that demands discipline and careful thought. Yet, while the load is heavy, the fruits of success are amongst the sweetest.
LEBANON: ICRC DELEGATION REPORTS "WILD" ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE

The crowded beaches of Beirut have become the latest target for artillery gunners in Lebanon. On Sunday May 31, as city residents relaxed in the sun, beaches along the coast and on both sides of the city were shelled: unofficial reports say 18 people were killed and some 270 were injured in the bombardments which covered not only the beaches but also residential quarters in the eastern and western sectors.

The Delegation has contacted the parties to urge them to spare civilians.

During what the ICRC Delegation described as a "wild" escalation of violence in the city, armed men forced their way into the ICRC vehicle depot and into the delegation office itself, demanding transport. They made off with an ambulance, two minibuses and a car, all equipped with VHF radios and Red Cross flags.

Meanwhile, 13 new ambulances have arrived in Lebanon from West Germany. While some will be used by the ICRC, others are being distributed to the Lebanese Red Cross and the "Palestine Red Crescent Society".

As fighting continued in and around the eastern Lebanese town of Zahle, the ICRC and the Lebanese Red Cross organised convoys on May 2, 4, 16 and 21 to evacuate 88 people. Of these, 21 were sick or wounded.

Since the latest round of fighting began in Lebanon on April 2 up until May 22, relief and medical supplies valued at 590,000 Swiss francs have been distributed either directly by the ICRC, or through the intermediary of the Lebanese Red Cross or the "Palestine Red Crescent".

IMPROVEMENTS IN CHAD

Having resumed its activities in Chad in December last year, the ICRC foresees handing over its programmes in the near future, as the present requirements appear to require the expertise of those agencies specialising in rehabilitation and development.

During the past six months, the ICRC has been concerned with protection, medical and relief activities. In the field of protection, the ICRC is particularly involved with locating the ex-prisoners from the south of the country, who were victims of earlier conflicts and who have been unable to leave the northern regions.

It has also been preoccupied with the situation in the eastern part of the country, while the Central Tracing Agency has continued with its statutory tasks of tracing and mailing in respect of displaced families.

Medicaments, which have been in heavy demand, have been systematically channelled both to dispensaries and hospitals and through government departments. The ICRC also contributes towards the costs of transport to send medicines to the provinces and is also engaged in helping the lepers of N'Djamena, whose plight has worsened because of the conflict.

Basing its relief activities in N'Djamena, capital of Chad, the ICRC started a feeding programme for some 15,000 families in close co-operation with the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and the newly-formed Chad Red Cross, which is closely associated with most of the ICRC activities.

EL SALVADOR: RESUMPTION OF RELIEF CONVOYS IN THE MORAZAN PROVINCE

ICRC relief distributions in El Salvador are being continued. Distributions in the eastern province of Morazan, suspended for several weeks because of security reasons, were resumed at the beginning of May. Some 14,000 people living in several villages in the area have now received new supplies. The ICRC is providing mainly basic food stuffs such as beans, maize, rice, oil, sugar and powdered milk.

Prison visits are also continuing. Between May 18 and 24, ICRC delegates made 24 visits to detention centres in the capital, San Salvador, and provinces, seeing a total of 107 detainees.

In the field of medical assistance, the blood bank, established jointly by the ICRC and the Salvador Red Cross, was opened on May 8. The ICRC has furnished the laboratory equipment and has undertaken to cover one year's running costs of the centre, which is open to all without discrimination.

IN BRIEF

Relief in Nicaragua: Some relief supplies have been distributed by ICRC delegates to 356 needy families which have a parent in prison. The weekly rations, received by each family consists of 12.5 kg of basic food stuffs, namely rice, maize, beans, salt, sugar, milk and oat cereal.
ANGOLA SITUATION TO BE REGULARLY REVIEWED

Confronted by an ever-changing situation in Angola, the ICRC will reconsider its activities in the country every three months.

This follows a recent mission to the country by the ICRC's delegate general for Africa, Mr Jean-Marc Bornet, who returned to Geneva on May 25.

During his mission to Angola, Mr Bornet, with the head of the ICRC delegation, Mr Jean-Paul Fallet, spent from May 15 to May 19 at the sub-delegation in Huambo, where the bulk of the ICRC's work is concentrated.

Accompanying Mr Bornet on his mission was Mr Andreas Lendorff from the ICRC's relief division in Geneva.

SOUTH-EAST ASIA : MISSION IN THREE COUNTRIES

Jean de Courten, ICRC general delegate for Asia, returned to Geneva on May 18 after a two week mission taking him to Thailand, the People's Republic of Kampuchea and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. In each of the three countries, Mr de Courten had discussions with government officials during which the problems encountered by the ICRC in carrying out its activities in South-East Asia, and in particular those in favour of the Kampuchean people, were raised.

In Bangkok, Mr de Courten assisted in the conference of Red Cross and Crescent Societies of ASEAN countries, while in Phnom Penh and Hanoi, he also met leading figures of the respective national societies.

Finally, as a result of working sessions with ICRC delegates based in the three countries, the general delegate was able to examine present activities and those anticipated for the coming months.

IN BRIEF

The Secretary General of the Ethiopian Red Cross, Mr Teserra Kifetew, was welcomed to the ICRC on May 21. He discussed with those in charge of the ICRC's Africa zone and Department of Doctrine and Law, the dissemination programme pertaining to Red Cross principles and international humanitarian law, which the National Society is carrying out amongst the Ethiopian population.

IN BRIEF

VISITS TO DETENTION CENTRES IN INDONESIA

From February 22 to April 23, five ICRC delegates, including one doctor and an interpreter, visited 347 people, convicted for their part in the attempted coup d'état in 1965. The detainees are located in 26 civilian prisons on the islands of Sumatra, Java, Bali, Sulawesi (Celebes), Moluccas and Kalimantan (Borneo). The delegates, as usual, were able to meet all the prisoners without any witnesses.

Relief (including mosquito nets, blankets, soap, spectacles, and books) valued at 27,000 Swiss francs was distributed to the detainees visited.

The previous series of visits by the ICRC to detainees of this category took place in 1979.

IN BRIEF

Dissemination within the Israeli Army: An ICRC delegate, Pierre Toffel, will participate on June 19 in a seminar on the laws of war and international humanitarian law. Also participating in the seminar, organised by the Israeli Armed Forces, are some 50 jurists.

BULLETIN EDITOR VACATES POSITION

For Françoise Bory, editor of the ICRC Bulletin, this month's issue is particularly significant as it will be the last to be published under her direction. After 12 years of editing this publication and its predecessor, "ICRC IN ACTION", Ms Bory has decided to vacate the position to take up other responsibilities within the ICRC's press and information division.

The hardwork and thought that Ms Bory has devoted to the Bulletin throughout the years have certainly been recognised by her colleagues within the ICRC and appreciated by the readers themselves.

Taking over the editor's seat from next month is Annmaree O'Keefe, who hopes to be able to do justice by the example Ms Bory has set.
ICRC'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1980 ABOUT TO BE RELEASED

With the ICRC's annual report for 1980 in the process of being printed, the French and English editions will be ready this month, while the German, Spanish and Arabic versions will follow soon afterwards.

As a preview of the report, here are some statistics which give an idea of the activities carried out by the ICRC throughout the world last year.

PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE IN 1980

* ICRC delegates made 4,126 visits to some 42,000 persons deprived of freedom (prisoners of war and political detainees) in 400 detention centres in 27 countries.

* An average of 250 delegates were based in 31 countries throughout Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East, and were assisted by 500 locally recruited employees. Medical staff made available by 25 National Societies amounted to 1,100 (physicians, nurses, orthopedists, physiotherapists, nutritionists).

* The Central Tracing Agency received and processed 450,000 pieces of information concerning prisoners of war and refugees. It dealt with 25,000 enquiries about missing persons, distributed 20,000 messages between members of dispersed families and received 6,000 requests to reunite families.

* Thirty-seven countries benefited from the ICRC's material assistance, amounting to 24,993 tons and 53 million Swiss francs (16.2 million in medical equipment and drugs).

ICRC FILMS AT VARNA

Aspects of the ICRC's operations in Thailand and Kampuchea will be the subject of its two contributions to this year's 9th Varna International Festival of Red Cross and Health Films in Bulgaria, organised by the Bulgarian Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies.

During the festival, which will run from June 3 to June 12, an audio-visual workshop, organised jointly by the ICRC and the League, will be held on June 6 and 7.

WINGING INTO BEIRUT - ON A CEASE-FIRE AND A PRAYER

International journalist, Bob Kroon, looks behind the scenes of the ICRC's relief flight to the Lebanese capital of Beirut last month when a ceasefire was obtained to allow the aircraft to land at the then closed Beirut airport.

Beirutis stared in disbelief one sunny Saturday early in May, when a sleek white Caravelle with Swiss markings banked low over the western suburbs on its final approach to the capital's deserted International Airport.

Moments later, the plane, carrying 8 tons of relief supplies and half a dozen ICRC staffers, set down in lonely splendour on the long runway.

Unloading immediately began, under strict supervision of Syrian soldiers of the Arab Deterrent Force and an hour or so later, the Caravelle returned to Geneva.

It was the only "movement" registered by Beirut Airport during a three-week paralysis of all operations due to intermittent shelling.

The SwFr 41,000 charter, contracted by ICRC headquarters with the Swissair subsidiary CTA in Geneva, was a routine affair, on the Swiss end, but a nerve-shattering nightmare for Pierre Gubérán, the 38-year old delegate in charge of ICRC's field operations in Lebanon.

"It took three days of "haggling" with all interested parties, and in this place there are a lot of interested parties", a tired-looking Gubérán told us at his Coral Beach hotelroom in West Beirut. "First of all we had to talk the highest leaders into holding their fire for at least the duration of our operation, we had to get clearance from the appropriate Lebanese ministries, check with the parties involved, and alert airport officials.

After losing "several pounds and even more hours of sleep", Gubérán finally got green lights from all sides, or so he thought.

When the Caravelle was already winging its way across the Italian Alps enroute to the Lebanese capital, "Gub", as he's affectionately known among his colleagues, received an urgent early morning call at his apartment in Hamra. It was a high-
ranking Lebanese official, and the message was brief and unsettling: No landing clearance for Beirut after all. We're very sorry, but the Red Cross Caravelle must land at another airfield in Lebanon. "Impossible", Gubérán said, politely but firmly, "it's too late. They're on their way". But there was no tower control at Beirut Airport, said the official. "Then we'll provide it ourselves", said Gub. The official promised to see what could be done.

"It was one of those moments, when you feel like taking cyanide", Gubérán recalled. But he decided to take a hot bath instead and let the rest of the world go by.

Meanwhile ICRC's Beirut Communication Chief Eddy Von Wartburg had moved into the International Airport's empty control tower with a mobile radio transceiver to talk the Caravelle down after its take-off from Larnaca, in nearby Cyprus.

It had already started its descent toward the embattled Lebanese capital when word came from Government headquarters that the Beirut clearance had been reinstated after all. "I simply don't know what we would have done, if we hadn't got it, but there's no way we would have directed the plane to the other airfield, that's for sure", Gubérán said, "as it turned out it was a great ICRC flight operation, with our Red Cross radioman in the tower not only bringing in the Caravelle, but also requesting a couple of reconnaissance jets high overhead to keep their distance. That was the last in our long series of scares, but they said 'Roger' and disappeared".

FEAR AS A DAILY COMPANION TO DELEGATES WORKING IN THE FIELD

In reports of relief distributions to conflict victims, mention is hardly ever made of the fact that if drugs and food do reach their destination it is because, regardless of the danger, ICRC delegates have crossed lines of fire and driven along mine-strewn roads and tracks. Admittedly, the red cross sign is intended to safeguard its wearers, and technical measures like armour plating under Red Cross vehicles should provide some degree of protection. Moreover, the safety of its delegates remains one of the ICRC's fundamental concerns in its dealings with the leaders of parties to a conflict. And yet the sad record of recent years shows that all such efforts have proved inadequate to make life safe for delegates and their local collaborators.

In Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) three ICRC workers were ambushed and killed; in Lebanon a delegate and three volunteers were shot at and lost their lives; in the civil war in Nicaragua the National Society mourned the loss of no less than seventeen of its voluntary workers. In addition ICRC delegates disappeared for 3 days while working along the border between Thailand and Cambodia; in El Salvador shots were fired at a Red Cross delegate.

What does all this mean for a delegate on his way with relief goods in El Salvador, at the border between Thailand and Kampuchea, in Angola or Uganda? How will he manage to deal with such danger and overcome his fear?

Although fear is an elemental feeling like hunger and thirst, people hardly ever talk about it. The word is taboo and - if mentioned at all - it usually causes scornful reactions. Hardly any delegate ever speaks openly about it and yet practically all of them admit that 'fear is a familiar feeling to them.'

Sharing the daily life and experience of an ICRC delegation working under extremely precarious conditions in one of the above-mentioned countries gave the author a clearer insight into the phenomenon of fear.

On what appeared to be a Monday like any other the delegation was preparing to drive to the crisis area. As usual the ICRC vehicles were being checked and tons of milk, butter oil, maize, clothes and drugs loaded onto them, as the delegates again went through the check-list of precautions. Everything seemed to be a matter of routine except for the journey itself: for the first time in weeks, delegates would be driving the following day to a couple of outposts without the slightest assurance of being able to reach them.

Several weeks before, fighting in the area had compelled them to stop supplying these posts, which provided relief to 21 villages. Now that food supplies were running out it
had become absolutely necessary to reach those posts again and renew their stocks of food and drugs. Notwithstanding the 11 delegates and local collaborators concerned were all prepared to risk the journey.

None of them expressed any feelings on the subject. They all knew that they might strike a mine or fall into an ambush. On the evening before the journey the whole delegation was unusually quiet. Now and then a burst of machine-gun fire shattered the silence of the night, which did not help to raise the spirits of those counting the long hours before morning.

The absurdity of war

The next morning the sun shone brightly, dispelling the fears of the night. The armour-plated cars were driven out of the courtyard and the first-aid kits with drugs, bandaging material and plasma were loaded onto them along with the camp-beds and picnic. The ICRC team would have to spend two days in the outposts, including one night in a store-house.

They all gave each other a hand in fastening the safety belts in the drivers' cabins. The belts must be adjusted properly, for too much play, or a metal clasp compressing a cervical vertebra or an inguinal vein, might cause fatal injury in case of an explosion under the car.

The very natural instinct of self-preservation was only one of the reasons why the working atmosphere throughout the delegation that morning grew increasingly hectic. It was a sign of the unspoken tension.

The members of the delegation were, however, not the only ones bustling around getting their vehicles ready. A little further down the road, soldiers were pouring out of their quarters and loading machine-guns and crates of ammunition onto their trucks.

How absurd is war! The soldiers running the war drive off first and the ICRC teams, who try to alleviate suffering after the fighting, follow half-an-hour later.

The ICRC delegates drove through the city in two convoys of four vehicles each. The first and last lorries kept constantly in sight of each other. Each group would have to cover about 100 kilometres in the morning. On the outskirts of the city the two teams parted. Drivers had been instructed not to exceed 80 kilometres an hour, so that they would have time to see and avoid the holes in the road that might be used as booby-traps. Drivers and passengers alike pinned their faith on the armour plating under the vehicles, the thick safety harnesses pressing them to the backs of their seats and on the roll-bars intended to protect the driver's cabin in case a vehicle was overturned by an explosion.

Only a few kilometres away from the city the first car wreck by the wayside suggested that all precautions might in fact prove quite useless. A lorry, shattered and completely burnt out by the explosion of a mine, lay on an embankment. Along the way the delegates were constantly reminded by grisly monuments - a private car riddled with machine-gun shots, a tyre flung up into a tree by the explosion of a mine, and motley wreckage - that they were in a country at war.

Deceptive beauty of the landscape

The ICRC delegates on their way that Monday morning left absolutely nothing to chance. They carefully scanned the road and countryside around them. The area was exceedingly beautiful: gentle hills in the distance and luxuriant vegetation in the plains. And yet this wealth of nature was misleading. The vegetation on both maize and fruit-trees had been neglected and no longer produced any crops. The landscape was also treacherous for the two ICRC teams. Every little mound of earth, every grove was potential cover for snipers. Luckily not until the following day did the delegates learn that the units fighting in the area were far better armed than had been assumed so far. They were now equipped to shoot at a range of 500 metres.

Scenes of distress at the outpost

It was midday when the first of the ICRC teams reached the outpost. It was a large village, where the ICRC ran a special feeding centre for children suffering from severe malnutrition. It was also a base from which the ICRC visited a dozen other villages, where field kitchens had been set up and food rations were cooked for several hundred people every day. The number of displaced persons needing care in the area had increased considerably in the past few weeks. Seven hundred people had recently flocked to one of the centres, which was a sure sign that the front had moved. All the people gathered at the outpost were in a pitiful state. There were children so weak that they could not even stand up. They were all under-fed, covered in lice and suffered from bad chills. The temperature was only ten degrees that day. Some of them, clothed in rags or just a piece of rough sacking,
stood there shivering around the cooking pot, waiting for someone to fill their rusty tins with steaming mash, or to give them some clothing.

Only the worst cases of malnutrition were taken in for treatment at the feeding centre, which was already overcrowded. The withered little infants did not even react when strangers took them up in their arms and carried them away. The most depressing thing, however, was to know that there were thousands of other children and adults suffering the same plight throughout the area, without the ICRC being able to help them in any way, because to drive along the untarred, heavily mined secondary roads would be tantamount to suicide.

Seeing such misery everyone was prepared, despite an unpleasant experience, to take even greater risks to extend the ICRC's area of activity. But then the next day, as the team was driving back to its base, apprehension grew as everyone became aware of the immediacy of danger.

Up to the very last moment the whole team had worked hard looking after the children, cooking meals, building huts, visiting district officials, trying to find possibilities for shelter near a source of water for the homeless and helping them as far as possible to fend for themselves.

Apprehension waxed as light waned

Time had flown by as the team was working and they had unexpectedly exceeded the time scheduled for turning back to their base. When the white ICRC vehicles displaying the red cross reached the main road the shadows were beginning to stretch across the way, which prevented the drivers from distinguishing the holes, and they could no longer be sure whether the rustle in the bushes was merely a breath of wind or snipers lying in ambush.

The atmosphere inside the drivers' cabins became quite stifling and yet the windows had to be kept shut for safety. As the cars jolted along the bumpy road the safety harnesses began to cut into their wearers' shoulders. There was hardly any one on the road any more and there was something ominous about the stillness of the countryside around them. Burnt-down houses along the way were eloquent reminders of the heavy fighting that had taken place in the area in recent weeks.

It was cold comfort to know that the leaders of the parties to the conflict had accepted the principles of humanitarian assistance and were therefore well disposed towards the ICRC. All a delegate driving through a combat area was concerned about was whether the soldier in the field had been informed of those principles by his superiors and what a gunman's reaction would be if he saw a white vehicle with a red cross on it driving towards him.

That delegate's only consolation was the colleague sitting beside him, and those driving before and behind him. If all the members of the team kept quite calm, as they did that day in spite of being keyed-up, and if they acted sensibly, making a reasonable assessment of distances to be covered, adapting the speed of their vehicles to circumstances and properly scanning the countryside around them, then they could, despite sporadic gunshots in the distance, ensure some degree of safety for themselves.

Bad news - What would tomorrow hold in store?

The sky was turning red as the belated team arrived back in town at the ICRC delegation. They all exuberantly greeted their colleagues from the other team, which had also returned safe and sound. The tension of the past few hours vanished in a second and was followed by an elemental feeling of happiness: they had all come back alive and unscathed. The slightest touch, every sound and smell were more intense than usual. Everyone was keenly aware of the uniqueness of human life. Their elation lasted until they all sat down to sum up and discuss the information gathered in the field: in the course of the past few weeks even more villages had been attacked, the number of bombing raids and mine explosions, and the number of casualties admitted to local hospitals had risen considerably. All this had occurred within the ICRC's immediate area of activity and was the unofficial information which each delegate had painstakingly gathered as he worked at the outposts, in order to be able to assess the general situation.

Were the teams going to set out again and risk their lives in order to save others? To overcome natural feelings of apprehension and doubt they all tried to make an extremely objective assessment of the situation, the consequences of which seemed quite obvious: to give up supplying the distribution centres to which the displaced rural population flocked would mean hunger for hundreds of people and almost certain death for many children. They therefore unanimously decided to continue their work the following day: fear must be overcome.
The design is similar, the Red Cross still figures prominently on the front cover and each of its 114 pages bears witness, yet again, to the thousands of hours of work and millions of Swiss francs the ICRC invests annually to inject humanitarianism into the numerous situations throughout the world requiring its presence.

In short, the ICRC annual report is a graphical mirror, reflecting the previous 12 months' hard work. Yet, the annual report for 1980, released last month, does not just reflect the institution's own efforts. It is, as described by ICRC president, Mr Alexandre Hay, in the foreword, "a gauge of the shifting balance of war and peace in the world".

It demonstrates the ever-increasing demands placed on the ICRC as the "clashes in Africa, Asia, and Latin America have compelled the ICRC to intervene on many more occasions, calling for a substantial increase both in personnel and in financial and logistic resources".

For ICRC delegates in the field and their back-up forces at the Geneva headquarters, meeting humanitarian demands has not been easy. "International humanitarian law, which has been accepted as binding by virtually all States, has all too often been disregarded by its most fervent conference table champions," says Mr Hay.

Yet for the President and the hundreds who work for the ICRC, breaking through the barriers, whatever they be, to achieve the ultimate Red Cross goals, is part of the job. There are the victims to aid, the prisoners and detainees to visit, the sick and wounded to tend and the rest of the world can expect unfortunately another ICRC annual report this time next year.

The texts of this bulletin have no official character and, may be freely reproduced.
VIOLENCE IN THE WEST NILE PROVINCE

An ICRC delegate was on the spot when uncontrollable elements of the Uganda army attacked the Ombachi mission in the country's West Nile province late last month.

As a result of the attack in which 55 civilians, sheltering at the mission, were killed and another 100 were wounded, the ICRC immediately approached the Uganda authorities to discuss the prevailing situation within the province as well as appealing to the beligerent parties to respect the wounded, civilians and Red Cross personnel and installations.

At the time of the attack on June 24, some 10,000 Ugandan civilians were sheltering at the mission run by the Fathers of Verona. As the Bulletin went to press, 6,000 were still at the mission, the others having fled in the direction of Zaire while the wounded had been evacuated to the south of the province. The situation was reported to be under control.

("Background", this month, focuses on the work being carried out by the ICRC in Uganda, with special emphasis on the activities in the West Nile Province. See page 6.)

GREEN LIGHT GIVEN FOR ANGOLAN PLAN

Angolan authorities have given the ICRC the green light to go ahead with its plan to adopt an air transport system to take medical staff and relief goods to areas in urgent need.

The decision by the ICRC to use two aircraft landing at several airstrips in those areas most affected by the events in Angola, was made following the visit to the region in May by Mr Jean-Marc Bornet, ICRC's general delegate for Africa.

At that stage, the assistance operation had been suspended since May 2 because of security reasons. However, it is believed that the new system of transport will overcome this problem, allowing the ICRC to resume its activities in the provinces of Bié and Huambo on the Angolan central highlands.

As of June 1, the number of ICRC delegates, including medical staff, who were working in Angola, was 39 with the main delegation in Luanda, the country's capital, a sub-delegation in Huambo and an office in Bié.

APPEAL FOR FUNDS AS SALVADORAN CONFLICT CONTINUES

As armed clashes continue in several rural areas of El Salvador, the ICRC has launched an appeal for 4.9 million SFrs to cover the cost of its activities during the next six months from July in this troubled country.

Out of an estimated 110,000 displaced people, some 40,000 are still stranded in conflict areas. As a result, the ICRC has concentrated its assistance activities in these areas where other organisations cannot enter because of security reasons. From January 1 to May 31 this year, the ICRC distributed more than 600 tons of foodstuffs, children's clothes, mats and about 3,000 blankets. Medical care too is provided by the ICRC in the form of two medical teams, each composed of a doctor and two nurses.

Protecting those detained in connection with the events is also another ICRC activity in El Salvador with the result that during the same period as above, a total of 4290 detainees were visited by ICRC delegates in 159 detention centres.

Work for the ICRC's tracing agency has increased greatly with an average of 40 people visiting the agency daily with their reports of missing people or questions about relatives who have been arrested. Since June 1980, the tracing agency bureau has opened about 1,900 files on people reported missing. The result - 438 people were found alive while another 76 were discovered dead.

Reflecting the increased demands on the ICRC in El Salvador is the expansion of its delegation in January - from 8 to 13 delegates.

CONVOYS TO ZAHLE CONTINUE

ICRC convoys on June 3, 10, 19 and 23 transported blankets, clothes and medical supplies to the Lebanese town of Zahle, the scene of some of the worst clashes during the three-month old conflict.

Since the start of the action to the beginning of June, supplies valued at 728,150 SFrs have been provided by the ICRC. Of this, 126,000 SFrs have been spent on providing medical assistance, 165,000 SFrs for relief and 437,000 SFrs on ambulances.
A QUICK ROUND-UP FROM THAILAND

After having supported the growth of traditional Khmer medicine "clinics" in the holding centres of Kamput, Sakeo and Khao-I-Dang in Thailand for almost 18 months, the ICRC has recently been examining the possibility of handing over the sponsorship to another organization equipped to handle long-term projects, as a firm basis for the clinics has now been established. Enquiries into this possibility were expected to be concluded by the end of June.

However, 36 ICRC medical and paramedical personnel are still working in the border camps, north and south of Aranyaprathet. Wounded from the border are also treated by a Red Cross surgical team based in Khao-I-Dang.

Medical care, food and housing continue to be provided by the ICRC for refugees in the special Vietnamese camp, "NW9". Since May, when the camp was closed to new arrivals the ICRC and Thai authorities have been negotiating on future arrangements. The camp by mid-June had a total of 538 Vietnamese "landpeople".

Since the camp's closure, ICRC delegates have devoted an important part of their time to the registration of Vietnamese refugees in the Khmer border camps while also continuing their tracing activities for unaccompanied minors, missing Khmers and family reunions in addition to supervising the mailing service operating in the camps and holding centres.

DEATH IN EL SALVADOR

ICRC delegates working in El Salvador were faced with a harsh reminder to abide by the ICRC's already stringent security measures following the discovery on June 4 of the body of one of the ICRC's Salvadoran employees, Mr Carlos Mandredi Hernandez.

The murder of Mr Hernandez, the storekeeper of an ICRC relief depot at San Miguel, increases the tragic list of victims in El Salvador, where the ICRC has been trying for some months to introduce some humanity within the prevailing situation of constant violence.

The ICRC is profoundly distressed by the event and has again appealed to the parties involved in the Salvadoran conflict to respect the civilian population and Red Cross personnel as they carry out their humanitarian work.

SURVEY AND DISTRIBUTION IN CHAD

Three delegates from the ICRC accompanied by two from the Chad Red Cross left N'Djamena, Chad on June 10 to carry out a combined survey and distribution of relief goods in the northern and eastern areas of the country.

Travelling with a convoy of four trucks loaded with relief and medical supplies, the group was expected to return to the Chad capital by the end of June after visiting Bol, Mao, Moussoro, Salal, Koro-Toro and Faya.

VISITS TO DETENTION CENTRES IN ARGENTINA AND COLOMBIA

During the first five months of this year, ICRC delegates visited 16 detention centres throughout Argentina, including the four principal prisons, Caseros, Villa Devoto, Rawson and La Plata where the number of detainees with whom the ICRC was concerned is 1,369.

In Colombia was distributed to the 36 detainees interviewed by ICRC delegates during their visit to detention centres from June 8 to 12 in Bucaramanga in the northeast of the country.

POLISH TEAM LAST TO LEAVE

Last month saw the departure from Phnom Penh of the only remaining medical team, supplied by a national Red Cross Society, to work under the auspices of the ICRC in Kampuchea. Following the departure of the Polish Red Cross team, on June 19, ICRC medical presence is being maintained in the country by an ICRC doctor and pharmacist. The ICRC delegation in Phnom Penh now numbers 10.

The regular shuttle flights between Bangkok and Phnom Penh - still the only rapid link for carrying passengers (ICRC and UN staff only), relief and messages between the two capitals - continues three times a week and delivered, during May, 71 tonnes of relief, including 62.7 tonnes of medical and paramedical material.

IN BRIEF

An ICRC surgical hospital was opened in Peshawar, Pakistan on June 15. The hospital with laboratory and X-Ray facilities has 45 beds, but its capacity can be increased to 65.
HAPPY ENDING FOLLOWS YEARS OF SEPARATION

After almost eight years of separation, 13-year old Christian Tannin, a naturalised French boy from Kampuchea, was re-united with his parents in Paris early last month.

The tale of Christian's separation from his parents is one in which the ICRC and its Central Tracing Agency has been involved with since 1975 having then received notice of the boy's suspected disappearance.

News of the boy reached his father in 1979 when he received a letter from the grandmother with whom Christian was living in Kampuchea. Acting on the information, the father informed the ICRC and wrote to the Phnom Penh authorities for approval of the boy's repatriation.

With the essential approvals received in April and May this year from both the Phnom Penh authorities and the Thai Government, it was as a passenger on the ICRC's regular flight from Phnom Penh to Bangkok that Christian finally left Kampuchea, bound for Paris on June 2.

HIGH RANKING GUESTS ATTEND ICRC FOUNDATION STONE CEREMONY

Heading a list of guests which resembled a "who's who" of Federal and Genevoise cantonal departments, M. Francois Pictet, Ambassador and Chief of the Permanent Swiss Mission to International Organisations in Geneva and Ambassadress F. Pometta, attached to International Organisations in Bern were amongst those who attended the foundation laying ceremony on June 18 for the ICRC's new Central Tracing Agency building. The ceremony was conducted by the ICRC's President, Mr Alexandre Hay and the director of the Agency, Mr. Ulrich Wasser.

To be completed in 1984, the five-storey building (two of which will be underground) is expected to cost 15 million Swiss francs which are being provided by the Swiss Federal Government.

The building, to be located in the grounds of the ICRC headquarters in Geneva, will be used predominantly by the Central Tracing Agency as its work has increased to the point where it has greatly outgrown its present offices.

IN BRIEF

Fourteen East Timor villages, which received assistance during the joint ICRC/Indonesian Red Cross action which lasted from October 1979 to April this year, were visited by an ICRC delegate last month.

The purpose of the visit from June 13 was to review with the Indonesian Red Cross the administration established to handle the relief and medical assistance as well as to study the exchange of family messages of tracing the island.

During an official visit to Switzerland, the President of Venezuela, His Excellency, Herrera Campins and his wife visited the ICRC headquarters in Geneva on June 12.

The ICRC headquarters was the scene of a royal visit on June 10, when Crown Prince Harald and Princess Sonja of Norway were welcomed to the institution by President Alexandre Hay. During their stay in Geneva, the royal couple also visited the League of Red Cross Societies.

RCBS IN JULY

This month's programmes by the Red Cross Broadcasting Service can be heard on Monday, July 27, in English and French, and on Wednesday, July 29, in German, Spanish and Arabic. On both days the broadcasts are from 0600 - 0700 GMT, 1130 - 1230 GMT and 1700 - 1800 GMT. The shortwave frequency is 7.210 kHz in the 41.6 metre band.

This month there are also beamed frequencies to the following areas:

ASIA AND PACIFIC


MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA

Thursday, July 30, from 0945 - 1015 GMT in English and French on 15.430, 17.830 and 21.520 kHz; and in Arabic at the same time on 21.630 kHz.
special report

Two successful repatriations

ICRC information delegates were on the spot during two repatriations organised by the ICRC in the same week last month. One was in the Middle East where Iran and Iraq returned wounded prisoners of war and the other was the handover in Zurich to South Korean officials of 48 Korean fishermen held by the Polisario in northern Africa. Below are the reports filed by the two delegates.

GOING HOME

"Here!" called the Korean fisherman. The roll call had started and slowly mounted into a staccato crescendo as the South Korean official shouted out the names of each of the 48 fishermen lined up in the deserted Zurich airport terminal at 3 am on June 18.

The handing over ceremony between the ICRC delegate, Peter Küng, and the South Korean ambassador, Mr Sang Yong Park, drew to its conclusion. Only minutes before, the 48 men, accompanied by Küng and two other ICRC delegates, one a doctor, had disembarked from an ICRC chartered aircraft which had flown that night from Algiers in North Africa with its special passengers.

For the fishermen, being handed over to the South Korean representatives officially marked the end of almost a year's detention by the Polisario. For Küng and his colleagues, it marked the welcome end of a 24-hour day, mostly spent in the scorching heat of the Sahara, finalising the details necessary for the repatriation.

THE PRISONERS' VOYAGE

After five and a half hours in the air, an Iraqi airplane landed at Larnaca airport in Cyprus, with 25 wounded Iranian prisoners of war, escorted by an ICRC doctor and two delegates. Five minutes later, at 9.20 GMT, a civilian aircraft, chartered by the ICRC, flew in from Tehran with 17 wounded Iraqis, also on their way home.

The repatriation of the wounded prisoners from both sides was the first of its type since the Iran/Iraq conflict started last October and each plane would soon return to the place where it had come from that early morning of June 16. But this time, with the passengers of the other.

First to debark were the Iranians: four stretcher cases - amputees and a paraplegic - followed by 21 walking patients - all in light blue uniform. All 25 gathered in the shade of the aircraft wing on the landing strip. Then seven amputees were carried from the ICRC plane and taken aboard the Iraqi aircraft, followed by ten other wounded Iraqis, all in dark green uniform.

Comfortably installed in their own country's plane, the Iraqis flew off to Baghdad, accompanied by the ICRC doctor and delegate. Next the ICRC aircraft took off for Tehran with the 25 Iranians, an ICRC doctor and a nurse to provide any necessary medical care and an ICRC delegate.

"Who will fit me with an artificial leg?" some of the wounded asked. "The military hospital or the Red Crescent," replied the delegate. "Can we write to our mates who are still prisoners in Iraq?" "Of course, through the ICRC, just as your families wrote to you."

Less than 12 hours after the 17 wounded Iraqis, entrusted to the ICRC for repatriation, had left the VIP lounge of the Tehran airport to board the Cyprus-bound aircraft, it was filled again with wounded soldiers - this time, Iranians, receiving a heroes' welcome home.

Yet amidst the fanfare, the memory of the changeover at Cyprus still lingered. As the enemies of yesterday had met on the tarmac at Larnaca each of the 42 had resembled each other. After all, they represented the other side of the bulletins of victory.

IN BRIEF

President of the ICRC, Mr Alexandre Hay, accompanied by the general delegate for the Middle East, Mr Jean Hoefliger, returned to Geneva on June 26 following a week of discussions with high ranking officials in Iran.
Working in a garden of chaos

Uganda, a country once described as the "Garden of Africa" with its agricultural riches is today in a state of chaos thanks to the effects of 10 years of internal strife. In April 1979, following the downfall of President Idi Amin, the ICRC was able to open its delegation in Kampala from where its delegates could carry out the pressing protection and assistance activities needed in the country.

In response to the troubles which, last October, flared up in the West Nile Province, birthplace of Idi Amin, two ICRC delegates have also been based in the provincial capital of Arua. This month's Background focuses on the work being carried out by the ICRC in Uganda, particularly the West Nile Province, and is compiled from reports filed by information delegate, Henriette Maire after her recent tour of the area.

Last autumn, all the pupils at secondary schools in Uganda were seconded to compile electoral lists. The schools were closed for the purpose. Since then, in most of the regions, the schools have not reopened, one of the effects of the prevailing situation. The population has been scattered and such are the various and urgent needs in Uganda that humanitarian action is needed on several fronts.

For the ICRC, there are some jobs that are best left to other organisations - the specialists in feeding programmes, relief, rehabilitation. But when it comes to visiting political prisoners and detainees and carrying out tracing activities, it is the ICRC which is the specialist.

Since the beginning of the year, two ICRC delegates have been based in Arua, capital of the West Nile Province, where the ICRC has installed an office for its tracing agency. Four local employees work in the office under the direction of the two delegates.

The four are teachers from a local school but reduced to idleness by the situation, they have offered their services to the ICRC. Thanks to them with their knowledge of the people, language and area, news of the tracing agency has quickly spread throughout the province, a district as large as the island of Corsica, with a population estimated at 800,000. Among these people, there is hardly a family without at least one missing member. And the concern is the same everywhere. Are they dead, in prison, seeking refuge somewhere?

It is estimated that 110,000 have taken refuge in Sudan while another 130,000 are thought to be in Zaire. For the families, the agency is a source of hope.

All the requests are centralised in the Kampala tracing office, where the enquiry files now number 30,000. The existence of the agency is well known and people come constantly to try and find a missing family member. Thanks to the already established tracing agency offices in neighbouring countries, it is not rare to find the missing person. Thus contact is reestablished, family messages delivered and the most rewarding of all, family reunions achieved in collaboration with the UNHCR.

Some ICRC facts about Uganda:

* Between January and June this year, the ICRC has brought relief to about 20,000 people who have been either displaced or were victims of plunder and pillage.

* Relief valued at 420,200 SFrs has been provided in the West Nile Province and prisons throughout Uganda.

* Medical supplies, worth 168,000 SFrs have been sent to dispensaries in the West Nile and to prisons.

* During the past six months, more than 10,000 family messages have exchanged.
The tracing agency also plays an important role in the ICRC's prison visiting activities. With an estimated 6,000 political prisoners and detainees in Uganda, ICRC delegates visit the detention centres throughout the country.

Hoping to achieve improvements in the detention conditions, food is distributed by the delegates to supplement the prisoners' provisions in addition to other items such as soap, paper, books etc.

However, the essential aspect of the delegates' visits is to register the prisoners, centralising all the names in the Kampala tracing office. With the information collected by the delegates during their prison visits, it has been possible to reassure concerned families on the fate of missing relatives who have been detained.

While the ICRC does restrict the bulk of its activities to tracing and prison visits, as well as replenishing clinics and hospitals in collaboration with other humanitarian organisations, it does, in cases of extreme urgency, distribute food, blankets, soap, cooking utensils and clothes to the civilian population.

In the West Nile Province, a major concern is the fact that both the civilians who stayed and those now returning to Uganda after having sheltered in other countries, have nothing, their possessions having been stolen or destroyed.

Area has been reduced to nothing. All economic activity has stopped. In the running climate of total insecurity, the people vegetate. They only ask for one thing: to cultivate their plot of ground. Their houses have been pillaged and they do not even have the essential tools to turn their soil. However for the villagers of Ofude, a small village some 60 kilometres north of Arua, there was a gleam of hope recently when the local authorities informed them that the ICRC would deliver 1,200 hoes. The news spread like fire. And on the day of delivery, everyone was at the distribution spot, hours in advance.

When the ICRC truck loaded with the hoes finally arrived, the waiting faces lit up and spontaneously, the people separated to make way for the vehicle. In only a few moments, the hoes were unloaded.

These pieces of iron represented a hope for the future. Provided by World Vision, the hoes were also a symbol of the cooperation between the ICRC and other humanitarian organisations working in the West Nile.

NOTE TO READERS

As you will have noticed, the layout in this issue of the ICRC Bulletin has been changed to a certain extent, in the hope of increasing its attractiveness and readability. Further small changes are envisaged in the forthcoming issues but it is believed that these will only enhance the Bulletin’s quality.

The Editor.
The nature of emergencies

The title is the same, but such is the nature of emergencies that even this editorial didn't make it to press without a radical change. Originally, the text started with a quote from a message dated July 3, summarising an ICRC action in Lebanon. The information contained in the message was simple and straightforward. Thirty-one convoys organised by the ICRC had been sent to Zahlé during the 90 days of intense conflict before an agreement between the opposing parties was reached and the ICRC convoys could stop.

But that message arrived at the ICRC headquarters before the sudden resurgence in violence in Beirut and south Lebanon which required more convoys to be organised. Yet despite the necessary alterations to this text, the theme remains unaffected and is even reinforced by the changes.

For the ICRC, emergencies arising out of conflict are a way of life. So far this year, Lebanon has presented the greatest challenge, but it is by no means the only emergency which has had to be faced by ICRC delegates working in the field and at the headquarters. And messages relayed from the field often give no hint to the hard work and flexibility demanded by the situation from those delegates on the spot.

Only a couple of days before the July 3, "mission-accomplished" message was beamed from Beirut to Geneva, ICRC headquarters received another message, this time urgent and from Uganda, relaying news of the attack on the Ombachi mission. Again the delegate on the spot had to jump to action to help evacuate those wounded as a result of the attack.

Lebanon and Uganda are only two countries, two examples, out of a hostful, where ICRC delegates have to be prepared at all times to deal with short, intense emergencies with maximum humanitarian output.

Today may be quiet, but tomorrow can present a situation demanding action in top gear, yet again.
around the world...

ANGOLA: REALISATION OF HOSPITAL PLANS SUSPENDED

Plans by the ICRC to take over the running of the municipal hospital in Bailundo have been postponed due to the security situation in the area.

Despite this suspension, however, the plans have not been completely dropped and will involve the establishment of an ICRC zone in the centre of the town to include the hospital, the nutritional rehabilitation centre and the camps where companions of those receiving treatment can stay.

Although the ICRC's nutritional centre in Bailundo has been operational since September 1980, the ICRC only took charge of the hospital on July 9 and had started the first tasks of reorganisation, including the marking of Red Cross symbols on the building, when the security situation forced a stoppage in the activities.

If and when it becomes possible to resume the work, the ICRC could run the hospital, supplying its own doctors as well as employing local personnel.

A similar suspension has befallen the planned nutritional centre in Katchiungo which was to be the third operated by the ICRC in the Angolan highlands and the second in Katchuingo itself. The centres have been opened to care for malnourished people coming from the "deslocado" (displaced person) villages and other parts of the highlands.

Also affected by the security problems is the ICRC's air transport system to take medical staff and relief goods to areas in urgent need. The system, which involves the use of two aircraft landing at several airstrips in these areas, started on June 26 but was suspended in mid-July.

MEDICAL MISSION IN THE PHILIPPINES

A four day medical mission was recently carried out by two ICRC delegates on the Island of Pata in the south of the Philippines. A total of 243 people were seen by the ICRC doctor and medical supplies were also distributed.

This mission followed an evaluation survey carried out in March when it was decided that it would not be necessary to increase the assistance being given to the 700 people displaced on the island as a result of guerilla operations in February this year.

ICRC CONVOYS ON THE ROAD AGAIN IN LEBANON

Three convoys from Beirut to the south Lebanese town of Tyre were organised by the ICRC delegation following the sudden escalation in violence which hit Lebanon in mid-July.

The convoys, with their cargo of medical and relief supplies, were held on July 19, 22 and 27. While the first two were used to transport medical personnel and relief destined for hospitals and clinics in the south, the third also carried non-medical relief, namely 85 mattresses and 1.000 kg of milk in addition to the medical supplies.

Peace has returned to Zahle, the Lebanese town caught in conflict for close to 90 days. By June 30, the day on which a settlement was reached, the ICRC had organised a total of 31 convoys, since the first on April 3.

The convoys had been the means of transporting 636 kilograms of medical supplies, in addition to assorted medicaments, relief supplies and 160 blankets.

On the return trips back to the capital, Beirut, the convoys evacuated 361 people who were either wounded, sick, foreigners, or to be reunited with their families.

In brief

A total of 40 distributions were organised by the ICRC during June to benefit displaced people in 14 villages in the Morazan. The distributions represented 185.7 tonnes of relief and 20 tents for 26,368 people.

As of the end of June, ICRC delegates had completed the fifth series of visits to all known Jordanian detention centres. Out of a total of 2,500 prisoners seen by delegates, less than 180 were of interest to the ICRC. It is envisaged that one series of visits will be carried out on an annual basis in the future.

ICRC activities in Chad are reaching their conclusion: the last delegate will leave the country in mid-October as the programme of food assistance is to be handed over to WFP (World Food Programme) and AICF ("Aide internationale contre la Faim"). As for medical assistance, it will be carried out by "Médecins sans Frontières" and the EEC.
A SPOTLIGHT ON CENTRAL AFRICA

Renewing contact with the authorities in Rwanda and Burundi, as well as reaffirming the basis of ICRC work in Zaire was the purpose of a recent five-week tour of the three countries by ICRC delegates, Mme Jeanne Egger and M. Jean-François Labarthe.

The mission from June 4 to July 10 follows a decision by the ICRC to develop its activities in Central and Western Africa which were interrupted in recent years due to more urgent demands on its resources in other areas of the world such as Kampuchea and on the African continent itself.

Visits to detention centres in Burundi are expected to take place later this year, following the Burundi Government's acceptance of the offer during Egger and Labarthe's stay in the country.

Although the last visit took place in 1978, the delegates were able to ascertain that relief supplies, provided at that time to enable a number of centres to produce their own food, had been effectively employed.

"Unfortunately in Rwanda, the authorities could not give us a definitive answer to our offer to visit detention centres as the proposition has to be discussed with the country's head of state who was absent at the time of our visit," said Labarthe. The last ICRC visits took place in 1976.

The two delegates were able, however, to meet the President's wife who is the honorary president of Rwanda's Red Cross Society.

Impressed by the expansion and projects of the Society, the delegates discussed with Society representatives the statutory obstacles to official recognition of the Society by the League of Red Cross Societies and the ICRC.

Unlike in Rwanda and Burundi, contact with the Zairean Government and other authorities has been constant since the ICRC first carried out protection and assistance activities in the country following the events at Kolwesi in 1978.

While the relationship between the Zairean authorities and the ICRC has been good, its activities in the detention centres suffered a setback between March and June this year. Egger and Labarthe were able to examine the causes of the problem with the highest authorities in the country. The Government also expressed its wish for ICRC activities to continue in the country and as a result, access to certain prisons, which had not been visited for some time, was possible while the two delegates were still in the country.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN ASSISTANCE TO AFGHAN REFUGEES

While the ICRC has not been permitted to continue its humanitarian activities inside Afghanistan since June 1980, its work for Afghan victims continues - on the other side of the border in Pakistan.

The opening in June of a 45-bed surgical hospital in Peshawar was the latest development in the work being carried out by the ICRC to aid Afghan refugees. In March 1980, mobile medical teams under the supervision of the ICRC and comprising mainly Afghan and Pakistani personnel, started visiting up to eight camps which stretch along the north-west frontier. Nine months later, fixed clinics were established and first aid training for the refugees was instigated.

In addition to working in these camps located in tribal areas known as "agencies", the ICRC has also been working in another camp, located in a settled area or "district". Considered as a starting point for new programmes and the training of personnel, the camp houses about 8,000 refugees. It was here that the ICRC could keep an eye on the success and progress of new programmes before introducing them to the camps in the tribal areas.

In mid-July however, the medical work in the tribal areas was handed over by the ICRC to local doctors and nurses. Now the ICRC, while concentrating on the development of the surgical hospital, is preparing the way for the next step in its plan of activities - the opening of an artificial limb centre where it will be able to produce and provide artificial limbs to the many Afghan amputees, while training local staff in prosthesis.

In brief

The ICRC officially opened an office in Windhoek, Namibia/South-West Africa on July 6. The opening marked the start of ICRC presence in the territory on a permanent basis.

Figures taken from the June report of the ICRC's Tel Aviv delegation in Israel bear witness to some of its protection activities during the month: 143 visits to detainees "under interrogation" in the Gaza strip and 91 visits of the same type in the Jerusalem sector.

Traditional visits were carried out at Hebron and Ramallah, while an intermediary visit took place at Beersheva in the Gaza strip, plus a special visit to Ashkelon as well as the completion of the 46th series of visits to Nafha. Two handovers were effected under the auspices of the ICRC at the Allenby Bridge.
Prison visits always follow the same line

On July 15, Great Britain's permanent representative in Geneva formally accepted, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, the ICRC offer to visit those imprisoned in Northern Ireland as a result of the events.

This acceptance followed the most recent ICRC offer made two months previously, and within 24 hours of the announcement, three ICRC delegates were heading for Belfast.

From the publicity point of view, it was one of the few times that this traditional protection activity of the ICRC - to visit detainees - received so much press coverage. But for the media of the world, Northern Ireland is news and has been for several decades.

For the ICRC however, the reasons and techniques for visiting the prisoners in Northern Ireland were no different to those in action when delegates visit prisoners and detainees in countries throughout the world. Considering that in 1980 alone, delegates visited 42,800 prisoners of war, civilian detainees and political detainees in 400 detention centres in 27 countries, the ICRC is no stranger to this activity.

While visiting prisoners of war and civilian internees in times of international armed conflicts is consistent with the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions, the ICRC also extends its action to those affected by internal tension and disturbances - a situation not covered by the Conventions and Protocols. And contrary to the "conventional" situation of international conflict, the State to which the ICRC offers its services is not bound to accept them.

Put simply, such offers are based on the ICRC's right to take humanitarian initiatives. In accordance with its internationally-recognised neutral status, the ICRC is not concerned why the detainees are locked up, but only how.

But it is not just a case of offer and acceptance. To ensure at least a minimum of protection for prisoners and detainees, the ICRC insists that its delegates be permitted to: a) see and talk freely with any detainee without a witness; b) to have access to all places of detention and to be able to repeat the visits; c) to have the list of persons to be visited or to be able to draw up that list during the visit; and d) to provide, if necessary, material assistance to needy detainees and their families.

In addition, the report compiled as a result of the visits, is strictly confidential and sent only to the government concerned. Only the names of the places visited, the dates of the visits, the number of persons seen are released for publication.

At times, this confidentiality is seen as unnecessary secrecy, even complicity by outsiders. It's not. It's just another means of ensuring protection for the prisoners and detainees.

So it makes no difference if the prison visits attract a blaze of publicity or are conducted in the usual low-key fashion, the procedure, as far as the ICRC is concerned, remains the same.

In keeping with this policy of confidentiality, the ICRC is able to confirm that 2,184 prisoners were visited in four Northern Ireland prisons from July 16 to July 23, 1981 of visits. Prisons visited were the Maze in Belfast, where the three ICRC delegates saw 970 prisoners in the H Block and another 317 in other Maze compounds; Crumlin Road, Belfast (652 prisoners); Armagh Prison in Country Armagh (53 women prisoners) and Magilligan Prison between Belfast and Londonderry (192 prisoners).

Following the end of this series of visits, the delegates had a final discussion with Northern Ireland Office officials before returning to Geneva the same day, July 23.

Previous visits in Northern Ireland were conducted between 1971 and 1975 but the ICRC was restricted to seeing only those people detained without trial under the Special Powers Act. This category was repealed in 1975.

In brief

A total of 559 prisoners, who were either serving sentence or awaiting trial under Spain's anti-terrorist law were visited by ICRC delegates during two series of visits from May 7 to July 10.

Following the visits, the delegates, including one doctor, had a final meeting with the Minister of Justice. A further series of visits is planned for later this year.
For the boat people, it's pirates and the sea. For the land people, it's the danger-fraught journey across Kampuchea and the risks attached to living in often-hostile Khmer camps on the Thai-Kampuchean border. In other words, it's dangerous business no matter which way Vietnamese refugees decide to quit their country. Yet despite the risks, the exodus continues.

In this month's "Background", the ICRC Bulletin takes a look at what the ICRC is doing to assist these people with reports on tracing activities in Hong Kong and Geneva, and a "flashback" to the 13 months of NW9, the special camp for Vietnamese refugees on the Thai-Kampuchean border.

**Tracing: a special kind of relief**

The flood has not yet been dammed. After starting in 1976, it reached a climax in 1979, when in June alone 54,871 arrivals in countries throughout South East Asia were recorded. The exodus of Vietnamese "boat people" has continued since then at a worrying rate. More than 74,000 were recorded by the UNHCR in 1980 and already, some 40,500 were recorded during the first five months of this year.

To cope with the tracing enquiries stemming from this staggering number of "fugitives of the sea" the ICRC's Central Tracing Agency established in 1979 a special tracing system.

The results of this system show its effectiveness: from August 1980 to May 1981, 8,000 new tracing enquiries were recorded and of these 5,000 have been successfully completed. This rate of success is expected to increase even more with the introduction of a computer at the agency's headquarters in Geneva. The computer allows the introduction of other criteria in addition to those used to solve the tracing puzzles when dealing with the cases manually.

In light of this positive step, it is essential to look at the tracing system for South East Asian refugees. Involved are the tracing and mailing services (TMS) of seven national Red Cross Societies in those countries where the "boat people" seek temporary asylum with the aim of obtaining the status of refugee. And the countries are Malaysia and Indonesia in particular, as well as Hong Kong, Macao, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

Hundreds of thousands of "boat people" have passed through the temporary camps in these countries, and in May alone, the population of the camps stood at 60,000 Vietnamese hoping to settle in third countries. It is in these camps that the essential tracing work is carried out. It principally involves the reunion of families, but particular care is given to non-accompanied children.

The "TMS" department of these national societies are also providing a mail service. Some 80,000 letters and aerogrammes pass through these services each month.

The role of the ICRC's tracing agency in this system is to act as the "last resource" when, in the field, the enquiries prove fruitless.

**Piracy: a burning issue**

Active, and efficient in their own right, the tracing and mailing services of the national societies also work in collaboration with the Inter-Governmental Committee for Migration and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Between these two organisations and the ICRC, co-operation is close because of the grave menace constantly threatening the Vietnamese boat people: piracy.

It is true that piracy on the South China Sea is not a new phenomenon. It has been in evidence there since the 17th century. However, since the "boat people" started leaving Vietnam, the piracy has taken on the proportions of an industry with unparalleled violence. And everything indicates that the measures taken to prevent it have not been sufficient.

Statistics furnished by the HCR demonstrate the horrors of the situation: 80 percent of the boats carrying the Vietnamese fall prey to piracy.

True, piracy is not a concern of the ICRC. Legally, it is incumbent on the states of the international community to
co-operate in suppressing it on international waters. And in territorial seas, those states concerned have the same duty.

Nevertheless, faced by the circumstances, the ICRC considers itself to be morally involved in accordance with its humanitarian mission. Accordingly, an ICRC working group co-operates with other humanitarian organisations - the International Committee Against Piracy, the HCR, UNICEF and the League of Red Cross Societies - in a bid to resolve the problem. And the problem is one which demands urgent attention: for every four to five people who arrive at a safe port, there are probably another five who don't make it.

Thailand: In the area north of Aranyaprathet, the end of each day witnesses the departure from the border zone of relief agency volunteers and ICRC delegates who will not return until the next day: the curfew and their own security makes this obligatory. However, during the thirteen months from April 1980, an ICRC vehicle driving in the opposite direction from the town to the border could be seen each afternoon. At the wheel, a delegate who was on his way to take his turn as "night guard" at NW9.

NW9 was like an island of bamboo, earth and canvas, anchored along the ill-defined border where Thailand and Kampuchea meet. When it was created on April 18, 1980, NW9 camp was cut out of the forest by three delegates. A strange site to shelter the survivors: to the west, a deep and endless trench; to the north, the Khmer Rouge; to the south, the anti-Communist Khmers; and to the east, this forest which had the worst in store - shell fire and mine fields side by side with no one appearing to know who had put the mines there.

In the camp, the survivors. These were the Vietnamese civilians who had crossed the border by foot after a danger-fraught journey through Kampuchea.

Even during the last few remaining kilometres, they gambled with their lives, by crossing the mined paths between enemy military patrols. For them, the paths were highways of summary executions, rapes and extortion. Many of the Vietnamese civilians - men, women and children - did not survive these last few kilometres.

For the survivors, the ICRC flag marking the start of NW9 with its protective guard from the Thai armed forces stationed in the surrounding forest and around-the-clock ICRC presence announced the entrance to a safe port.

After sunset, one delegate, the only European along the frontier, sits in a bamboo cabin at the camp entrance listening to the stream of Vietnamese who take their places around a table to talk, in either French or English, of their anxieties concerning their future, their security. The walkie-talkie, always within easy reach, crackles. In the darkness of the forest, the usual burst of automatic gun fire; isolated shots; often there are the mortar or cannon shells coming from the depths of the night and exploding less than a kilometre from the camp. It was only a miracle that there were no violent deaths at NW9 despite the surrounding war.

In total, 5,549 Vietnamese passed through NW9 before re-setting in third countries. On July 13, 1981, following the decision by the Thai authorities, the camp was closed after the transfer of its last occupant to a transit camp.

So now, as 13 months ago, the Vietnamese survivors, are blocked in the Khmer camps along the border. And each night, just as 13 months ago, the women are afraid of rape, of murder. Since July 13, discussions have continued between the ICRC and Thai authorities to find a satisfactory solution for the security of the Vietnamese refugees. Meanwhile, the forest is reclaiming NW9, now no longer the once welcome end to so many horrific odysseys.
Agency provides last hope

The ICRC's Central Tracing Agency in Geneva has become the last hope for many of the 17,000 Vietnamese "boat people" refugees in Hong Kong as they search for missing relatives.

The Hong Kong Branch of the British Red Cross has established a major tracing bureau with eleven full time staff to trace the missing "boat people".

Its 215,000 index cards accumulated since the mass exodus of boat people began in earnest in 1979 give details on the missing and those who seek news. They form the first point of reference in any search, which has a Hong Kong connection.

But, as the Bureau's Director, Amy Lee says: "When we do not know where to start a search or all other leads have drawn a blank we turn to the ICRC's computerised records for help. The records, which contain information on Vietnamese refugees throughout the world, are a last hope for many who search."

In one recent case, a Vietnamese mother in the USA, separated from her son nearly thirty years ago was so delighted to receive news of her long lost son that she asked Amy in a trans-Pacific telephone call: "Can we adopt you and bring you to America."

In another case a husband who had recently arrived on a boat from Vietnam was offered a chance of a new life in the USA - the dream of most of the refugees. When he was told that his wife was in a detention centre in Hong Kong as a suspected illegal immigrant he turned down the opportunity preferring to wait for his wife's release.

The Hong Kong Red Cross methods to find the missing refugees are based on long and detailed research. The card index contains every shred of relevant information held on the refugees - sometimes people are found simply because they made their own enquiries earlier and their personal details are still on the cards.

In Hong Kong the most difficult task is to make searches around the area of the "last known address". Often the flat or ship has been destroyed and painstaking questioning of boat people has to be carried out to get a new clue. In the early days of the operation one search was mounted with the clue: "My uncle lives on the seventh floor of a block of flats in Hong Kong". A general area of Hong Kong was found and a group of volunteers climbed to the seventh floor of many blocks until the uncle was found.

Advertisements are put in local papers. Notice boards display tracing information in the refugee camps as the people who have the most vital clues about the missing are often other refugees. Refugees who arrived on a boat which allegedly brought a sought-after person to Hong Kong are questioned. All too often, the original information given to the tracing bureau is based on a rumour and turns out to be false.

It is, perhaps, an indication of how many refugees died at sea that less than half the searches mounted by the Hong Kong Red Cross are successful.

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Summer time and the suffering continues

In some circles, it's known as the silly season - offices struggle on with only half their staff, newspapers fill their columns with older and longer than usual feature stories and there's standing-room only at the beach.

It's that time of the year when much of the northern hemisphere goes on holidays making for many, the words of the old blue's tune so appropriate: "Summer time and the livin' is easy!"

However, while the western world takes a holiday, the conflicts, the suffering and the urgent needs of the victims continue. For many of them, it's not summer and living is seldom easy.

At the ICRC headquarters, despite its location in the centre of a "world at rest", the continuous reports, telexes and telephone calls coming in daily from its delegations in troubled areas throughout the world destroy any holiday atmosphere which might attempt to steal its way inside the Geneva office.

Parliaments may break for summer recess, the factories can arrange an annual two-week shut-down and the shop-keeper might always insist on his August vacation.

But unfortunately for the victims of conflict, the displaced and the refugees, the prisoners of war and the detainees, there is no time off and the ICRC's work must continue uninterrupted.

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# around the world...

## IRAN-IRAQ CONFLICT : SECOND REPATRIATION

The repatriation of wounded prisoners of war and interned civilians took place between Iran and Iraq on August 25. It was the second of its kind to be organised by the ICRC since the start of the conflict, the first having taken place on June 16, 1981.

A total of 45 Iraqis and 40 Iranians were handed over to representatives of the two countries at the Larnaca airport in Cyprus by ICRC delegates.

A plane, specially chartered for the operation by the ICRC left Geneva the evening before (August 24) with four tonnes of relief destined for the victims of the most recent earthquake in Iran, on board. The relief had been supplied by the Swiss Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies. Also on board was a large quantity of pyjamas and towels bound for Teheran and to be given to Iraqi prisoners of war.

## PAKISTAN : CAMP FLOODED

For the Afghan refugee camp of Adesâlî in Pakistan, an event, which could have been tragic, has turned out well. At the end of July, this camp, where the ICRC has put into operation, pilot programmes for its medical activities, was flooded. It is here that the ICRC has assembled many a mobile medical team as well as carrying out important nutritional rehabilitation work in the camp dispensary. Treatment for numerous tuberculosis cases has also been provided in the camp.

The immediate result of the flood was the fleeing of the camp's inhabitants, the scattering of thousands of tents which had characterised the camp, and the inundation of the dispensary.

Today however, the tents are back and the dispensary has been repaired and is again functioning, much to the relief of ICRC staff, particularly as interruption to the treatment given to tuberculosis sufferers can have tragic consequences, not counting the risk non-sufferers run from contacting the disease.

## IN BRIEF

About 20 young diplomats from Ghana and English-speaking countries in East Africa visited ICRC headquarters on August 20. The visit was part of a European tour designed to supplement their studies at the University of Nairobi in Kenya.

## ICRC ACTIVITIES CONTINUE IN UGANDA

Material assistance to more than a thousand recently released detainees; a resurgence in dispensary activities; medical aid in the prisons; a project to disseminate knowledge of international humanitarian law: in other words, the ICRC has been busy in Uganda since the grave events in the West Nile at the end of June.

On July 25, 1,425 Ugandan prisoners were freed, in keeping with a promise made by President Obote in May. To ease their way back into freedom, the ICRC offered transport and material assistance. A second group of prisoners is expected to be released shortly.

To help detainees suffering from vitamin deficiencies -an acute problem in Ugandan prisons - the ICRC has distributed fruit, milk, and vitamin capsules.

At present, the ICRC is the only humanitarian organisation working in the West Nile Province, scene of the Ombachi attack and where the Arua district has been deserted by much of its population. An estimated 50,000 people are said to have fled to Zaire, joining some 60,000 who sought refuge there at the end of 1980, beginning of 1981.

The needs for protection and medical and material assistance are well and truly in evidence in the West Nile - a fact confirmed during two evaluation missions carried out at the end of July and in mid-August, so the work of the ICRC must continue.

Welcomed by the Ugandan authorities is the campaign to encourage respect for international humanitarian law. Aimed at reaching soldiers in particular, the programme is under the charge of officers in the armed forces while the information material has been supplied by the ICRC.

## IN BRIEF

Fifteen ambulances are expected to be delivered to Lebanon in mid-September. While 13 of the ambulances have been supplied to the ICRC by the Federal Republic of Germany and the remaining two from the stock available at the ICRC's headquarters, the eventual recipients of the vehicles are the Lebanese Red Cross, the "Palestine Red Crescent", and the Lebanese Government. One will remain at the disposal of the ICRC's delegation in Lebanon.
GAMBIA: INSTANT RESPONSE

Banjul, capital of one of the smallest countries in Africa, was the scene of an attempted coup d'état which was initiated on the night of July 29/30. As a result of the attempt, several hundred were killed and hundreds more were wounded. By August 2, however, hospitals were no longer registering newly-wounded although medical and relief needs were urgent enough for Gambia to ask the ICRC for assistance to be provided as quickly as possible.

In Geneva, from the time of the announcement of the attempted coup, the ICRC had been ready to reply to such an appeal: a team comprising two delegates, a doctor, and relief specialist, had been put on "stand-by" and a consignment of medicaments prepared. So when the ICRC received the request, it was able to react immediately. By August 5, the team and the urgently needed supplies were already on their way.

First stop for the ICRC team was Dakar, capital of Senegal, where they boarded a Senegalese Army plane to take them to Gambia. Because of the events, the flights to Gambia had been interrupted and the international airport of Yundum was closed to civilian traffic.

On arriving in Banjul, they got to work immediately, collecting information on the scope of the damage, establishing what was needed and what was already available.

The capacity of hospitals in the Banjul region was determined and the number of wounded in the four hospitals counted. The medicaments were distributed and a list of essential but unavailable medical items drawn up. The next step was a trip to Dakar to obtain the missing medical essentials.

On the relief side, a list of urgently needed goods was also made but the relief delegate found that the nutritional situation was not at a crisis level, although a drought in the country was presenting grave problems. Aggravating the situation was the disorganisation within the country, the pillaging and destruction which had resulted from the attempted coup. However, a food aid programme has been undertaken by other organisations specialised in long term development.

A traditional task of the ICRC, protection for prisoners, was also the subject of discussions held with the Gambian authorities.

Contacts established by the ICRC in the country have enabled the authorities to have a better knowledge of ICRC activities in the field of protection.

BLOOD BANK IN PHNOM PENH OPENS

For some months, the ICRC has been gradually reducing its medical activities in Kampuchea as the situation has become less urgent. However, it still provides medical supplies and until now, was arranging for the supply of 200 bottles of blood a week from Japan. However, the ICRC hopes to cut down on this outside supply and even stop it completely, if possible, thanks to the opening on August 2 of a blood bank in Phnom Penh.

Although fully operational, the new blood bank still faces some difficulties with regard to the donation of blood. Because of the population's reticence to give freely a little of their blood if it is not destined for members of their own families, the national Red Cross Society is to start an information campaign. In an endeavour to induce people to give blood, "symbolic compensation" such as a meal, may be one of the ways employed to achieve success. To initiate the donors' programme, the Swiss Red Cross is at present looking for a specialist in recruiting blood donors.

In brief

In an update of ICRC activities in El Salvador, 231 detainees were seen for the first time during July and up until mid-August. While the ICRC's tracing agency dealt with an average of 40 tracing cases a day during the same period, relief distributions in the country's Morazan department continued, as well as medical assistance to displaced people.

As the ICRC completes the last stages of its withdrawal from Chad, the local authorities have shown their appreciation for the work carried out by the ICRC by staging on August 13 a surprise official ceremony of thanks. During the ceremony, the ICRC was awarded the Decoration of the Order of the Commander of the Chad Republic, as recognition of its humanitarian services carried out during the country's difficult years.

As of August 1, ICRC staff working in delegations and offices throughout the world totalled 238. In addition, national Red Cross Society personnel working for the ICRC in Thailand and Kampuchea as well as other countries was 103.
**AUDIO-VISUAL CENTRE OPENS**

More space, more light, more equipment; greater scope for projects; increased dynamism within a team whose spirit, however, remains the same: such is a brief outline of the advantages of the new audio-visual centre of the International Red Cross to be officially opened on September 30.

The event is an important "first" in the realisation of even closer collaboration between the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies which, under the umbrella of the International Red Cross, have created the audio-visual centre, sharing both the work and the cost.

To be precise, September 30 does not mark the official birth of the joint venture as that already took place in 1979 at the ICRC's headquarters. Instead, it is the opening of the centre's permanent home - on the brand-new fourth floor of the League's headquarters.

As for the centre's functions, they include not only information and training within the Red Cross, but also informing the public at large of Red Cross actions throughout the world. The work carried out at the centre involves the production, distribution and maintenance of audio-visual equipment, from video to film.

There is also a photographic section whose archives already contain 40,000 prints and 20,000 slides. Multi-visual equipment and material for exhibitions also remain within the realm of the centre.

Leading the centre's team of audio-visual professionals is Jean-David Urfer, who previously worked on Swiss television. The team itself includes three photographers and an audio-visual technician.

At present, the centre's work accents on the production of video cassettes, ideally 16 a year. Recently released productions distributed to the four corners of the globe, include a 12-minute film on the repatriation of Iraq and Iranian prisoners of war in June. Soon to be released for public use is a video cassette entitled "Presenting the ICRC". Another film focuses on "traditional medicine". This project was carried out on the request of the ICRC's chief medical officer to demonstrate how this type of medicine can complement modern Western medicine.

Promoting the video productions will be an important part of the centre's future work as the use of video itself plays an ever-growing role in today's media. Also important will be the increased use of audio-visual techniques in the training of Red Cross staff as national Red Cross Societies, the League and the ICRC are more and more concerned to have the best training for their personnel.

**LOOKING TO THE INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE RED CROSS**

Can one speak of a "foundation stone" when the promoters of a new project are seated at their desks, still working on the realisation of their plan? Perhaps not, but the fact remains, that the ICRC headquarters now has in its grounds, a small hut, for the "Foundation for the International Museum of the Red Cross." And what's more, work on this important project, the first of its kind in the world, will start next Spring.

In the meantime, generous donors are invited to come forward. Private or public, individuals or societies, Swiss or foreigners, are all welcome to contribute to the birth of this remarkable project designed to tell in the best possible way the history of the Red Cross.

Described as an "architectural event", the future museum's building will be three-quarters underground, nestling into the hill on which the headquarters now stand. Open to the public, the museum will not be limited to historical documents assembled since Solferino until today, but will also serve as a centre for temporary exhibitions and conferences. Audio-visual units will be installed in the museum with commentaries in a dozen or so languages.

**RCBS IN SEPTEMBER**

This month's programmes by the Red Cross Broadcasting Service can be heard on Monday, September 21, in English and French, and on Wednesday, September 23, in German, Spanish and Arabic. On both days the broadcasts are from 0600 - 0700 GMT, 1130 - 1230 GMT and 1700 - 1800 GMT. The shortwave frequency is 7,210 kHz in the 41.6 metre band.

This month there are also beamed frequencies to the following areas:

**ASIA AND PACIFIC**

Tuesday, September 22; from 0945 - 1015 GMT in English on 9.560, 15.305, 21.520 and 21.695 kHz.

**MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA**

Thursday September 24, from 0945 - 1015 GMT in English and French on 15.430, 17.830 and 21.520 kHz; and in Arabic at the same time on 21.630 kHz.
**XXIVth International Conference of the Red Cross**

**Return to tradition**

It can never be said enough: the Red Cross is unique in the world and its position, privileged among all. In fact, what other humanitarian organisation of universal renown is able to maintain an auxiliary role to Governments and yet remain totally independent. It is the International Conference of the Red Cross which clearly demonstrates this every four years.

On the eve of the 24th conference, to take place in Manila in the Philippines from November 7 to 14, it is an opportune moment to look at the significance of such an event and the elements which make up the International Conference.

The forum is impressive. In addition to representatives of the Red Cross family, namely 126 national Red Cross Societies, the League of Red Cross Societies and the ICRC, there will also be the "voices" of 149 States, which have signed the Geneva Conventions. Moreover, 63 organisations have been invited to send observers, making the International Conference of the Red Cross at Manila a meeting place for representatives from possibly almost every organisation concerned with humanitarian work.

Traditionally, the exchange of views is unlimited except when it comes to political questions which are explicitly banned from the conference. Assessment of accomplished work or that still being carried out, as well as the formulation of future strategies are also included in the conference agenda. Its resolutions, decisions, recommendations and other expressed wishes will have as the common denominator, the desire to reinforce co-operation with the authorities in the aim of assuring the united effort of national societies, the League and the ICRC.

A glance at the provisional agenda of the Manila conference sheds light on the actual state of affairs in the field of humanitarian assistance.

The first important remark is that the conference will return to its traditional form and will not have a central theme. At the previous conference in Bucharest, four years ago, the re-evaluation of the role of the Red Cross was the basic subject of the debates.

The matters to be discussed at this year's conference, namely protection and assistance, organisation, services to the community and development will be divided among three commissions. It is a question for future conferences to consider the reduction in the number of commissions to two making it easier for small delegations of less than three members to participate in all the work as well as facilitating the general organisation of the conference.

To establish here and now the scale of importance of the subjects to be discussed would be jumping the gun. However, it is possible to mention briefly a few of the subjects likely to be broached.

Taking account of the acuteness of the problem, it can be confidently forecast that a debate on the refugee situation and the general policy of the Red Cross in this regard will be held. In addition, the Manila conference will provide the opportunity to underline the ICRC's Central Tracing Agency's role of co-ordinator and
technical advisor to national societies and governments.

Within the sphere of International Humanitarian Law, the effort undertaken by the ICRC for the ratification of the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols will be looked at. In this matter, mention should be made of the discussions with 19 States which have succeeded the former colonial powers. Although the latter had ratified the Geneva Conventions, the Governments now in power are obliged to make a declaration of continuity, of adhesion to the Conventions in order to be full members of the International Conference.

A further step and complementary to the ratification: dissemination of humanitarian law - its principles and ideals - is a topic written into the conference programme because of its basic contribution to the development of the spirit of peace in the world.

Concerning the emblem of the Red Cross, it is important to remember that an eventual modification of the status quo depends exclusively on the States, party to the Geneva Conventions. In this regard, the national societies are only able to express their wishes. A change in the status quo occurred recently when Iran dropped the usage of the "Lion and Red Sun" emblem which the Conventions had permitted. An explanatory guide to the usage and protection of the emblem is planned by the ICRC to replace a similar outline established in 1951.

In addition to the number of activities carried out under the title of "Red Cross" since the Bucharest conference, Manilla will salute the creation of a joint ICRC-League audio-visual centre.

Moreover, other matters to be looked out with include some intermediate reports on the advancement of work concerning the elaboration of an international law of relief in case of emergency; the study of volunteer work, conferred upon the Henri Dunant Institute; and the preparation of the next and 12th edition of the Manual of the International Red Cross.

The Manilla Conference will also certainly look at services to the community. Primary health will be the object of diverse reports and there will be an accent on efforts undertaken to promote blood donations as well as a look at training within the Red Cross Youth organisations.

In short, it can be confirmed that the 24th Conference will demonstrate the concrete progress made towards peace through the humanitarian principles of the Red Cross. These principles urging the protection of life and health as well as respect of human-kind are universal, unchangeable, permanent, and yet are so often contravened in the violent world of today.

**WHO DOES WHAT?**

**General assembly of the League of Red Cross Societies**

With its authority invested by the League's members, the 126 national Red Cross societies, the assembly meets every two years to review the League's activities, projects and finances.

**Delegates' Council**

Composed of delegates from national societies, the League and the ICRC - to meet before the International Conference to discuss the posts of president, vice-presidents, general secretary and assistant general secretaries and above all, to establish the Conference agenda.

**The International Conference of the Red Cross**

As the highest Red Cross authority, it meets, in principle, every four years and comprises:

- delegates from all national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies recognised by the ICRC;
- delegates from the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies;
- representatives of States, party to the First Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the field;
- observers from national Red Cross Societies still in the process of being formed and from organisations whose work brings them into contact with the Red Cross.

**The Permanent Commission of the International Red Cross**

This commission has the task of establishing the provisional programme of International Conferences and supervising their preparation. It is composed of nine members - two representatives from the ICRC, two from the League, and five others elected by International Conference participants.
Yesterday's news still today's work

In mid-1979, the "big story" was Kampuchea. Banner headlines and indepth reports ran constantly throughout the world's press; photographs by the hundreds and stirring television documentaries made an impact where words failed. Kampuchea was a dying nation; its population had suffered atrociously and was still suffering. They needed help and immediately.

And as the public was swept to fever pitch concern by this wave of revelations, the ICRC and the UN agency, UNICEF, were already working together on a rescue operation that was to involve thousands of their own staff and millions of dollars.

On October 13, 1979, the Joint Operation was officially launched inside Kampuchea and within weeks, along the Thai-Kampuchean border. Now, two years later, other events have taken the place once allotted to Kampuchea in the world's media, and the Joint ICRC/UNICEF mission has not existed since the end of 1980.

Yet both organisations are still actively involved, still working closely together to build on the physical humanitarian success already achieved. More importantly perhaps, they are still able to provide that moral encouragement and climate so essential for a people struggling to rebuild their own small worlds in a country whose future is steeped in questions.

The texts of this bulletin have no official character and, may be freely reproduced.
DEVELOPMENTS IN ANGOLA FOR THE ICRC

Permission has again been sought by the ICRC for access to the area south of the Angolan town of Lubango to determine if there is a need for ICRC services following the conflict which flared in the area at the end of August.

An ICRC sub-delegation was opened in Lubango following the visit to this part of the country by ICRC delegates only a few days after the outbreak of fighting. At the same time, medical staff were kept on stand-by in Geneva in case of emergency. The survey itself was carried out by two delegates and the ICRC's chief medical officer, Dr Remi Russbach. Coincidentally, Dr Russbach and the ICRC deputy director of operations, Mr Michel Convers, were both on mission in Angola at the time of the conflict to study the ICRC's activities in favour of displaced people on the Planalto, further north. Here, work partially started again at the end of August following an improvement in the security situation - a problem which has plagued ICRC activities since they began in this area in May last year. Assistance in the Bailundo region re-started on August 25 and in Katchiungo on September 1. Because of the deterioration in the nutritional level of the displaced in parts of the Katchiungo area, it has been decided to increase the number of "marmites" (pots of porridge) distributed, before a more precise evaluation can determine more exactly the needs in the area.

DISTRIBUTIONS RESUMED IN THE WEST NILE

In the first relief distributions to be carried out since the return of ICRC delegates to Uganda's West Nile Province, 8,000 blankets, 29 tonnes of food and four tonnes of bean seed as well as a quantity of soap were given to displaced people living in the region.

Three field delegates, one doctor and a nurse are once again carrying out activities in the area which has been the scene of conflict for some time. Following incidents in the area in June, ICRC work was temporarily suspended because of the high risks involved for the delegates then active in the area. Tracing activities have also now been resumed and the sub-delegation reinstalled in Arua, the provincial capital.

PREVIOUSLY INACCESSIBLE REGION SURVEYED BY ICRC

Northern Morazan, a region of Salvador which had been inaccessible to the ICRC for some time because of the security situation was surveyed by an ICRC delegate at the end of August.

The evaluation mission took the delegate to the towns of Perquin and Corinto where relief was distributed to displaced people. Distributions of basic foodstuffs were also undertaken to aid the needy resident population of Perquin. Since August 25, relief distributions have been carried out regularly in the villages of northern Morazan. Some 65 tonnes of food have been distributed each week to more than 20,000 displaced people.

Concerning its protection activities in El Salvador, ICRC delegates carried out 202 visits to 94 detention centres, during June and July. While more than half these visits were made in centres outside the capital, San Salvador, 284 of the 286 detainees visited by the delegates for the first time, were located in San Salvador.

MEDICAL ACTIVITIES STEPPED UP FOR AFGHAN WOUNDED

To cope with the number of wounded arriving at the ICRC's surgical hospital in Peshawar, Pakistan, from Afghanistan, the surgical team is to be doubled in size and the bed capacity increased to about 100 beds.

With more surgical personnel, the team will be able to work around the clock, according to Dr Rodrigue Arbex who recently returned from a 10-day mission in Pakistan, where he evaluated the ICRC's medical activities.

In recent weeks, the number of wounded arriving at the border, often after a long and exhausting trip has increased. Three medical teams from the Pakistan Red Crescent, working jointly with the ICRC, are taking care of them, providing first aid and quick transport to the ICRC hospital in Peshawar.

A further development in the medical activities will be the opening of a prosthesis workshop to provide the several hundred known war amputees with artificial limbs. The workshop is expected to be opened in mid-October.
SOVIET PRISONER VISITED IN PRETORIA

Nicolai Pestretsov, the Soviet prisoner, captured by the South African forces during the conflict in southern Angola at the end of August, was visited twice in Pretoria by ICRC delegates during September. Both visits to the prisoner, on September 2 and September 23, were without witness, with an ICRC doctor present on the first occasion, and an ICRC translator on the second.

MEDICAL ACTIVITIES IN SUDAN RE-EVALUATED

A mission by ICRC delegates to Sudan to evaluate the medical work being carried out by the Swiss Red Cross under the auspices of the ICRC resulted in the decision to maintain the national society's team at the hospital in Kassala until the end of the year.

Plans to open a prosthesis centre at the hospital have been postponed because the number of patients who would benefit from such an enterprise is not considered sufficient at the moment to warrant its establishment. Instead, a specialist will be sent with the moulds needed to produce the artificial limbs for the existing number of wounded.

ICRC WORK CONTINUES IN ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

A Lebanese detainee who had finished his prison sentence and who was then transferred back from Israel to Lebanon under the auspices of the ICRC, was just one of the beneficiaries of ICRC activities carried out in Israel and the Occupied Territories during the period from July 31 to September 3.

Four Syrians were also transferred home from Israel at the end of their remitted sentence; 52 students returned to Syria to follow their studies and two people were transferred to Jordan at Allenby Bridge.

Visits to detainees during the same period comprised: 128 visits to detainees under interrogation (56 for the first time) in the Gaza Strip and 163 visits in the West Bank and Jerusalem also to detainees under interrogation, 82 for the first time. As part of the 47th series of visits, the prisons of Gaza and Beer Sheba were visited with 116 interviews without witness being carried out; three intermediate visits were effected at Beit Maatsar, Jenin and Nafha.

TIME TO COME HOME

The quality of the reception was bad and N'Djamena was only a faint voice fighting to be heard over the undulations of the radio waves. But even if some of the words were unclear, the message came home loud and clear. It was the last radio contact between Geneva and the ICRC delegation in Chad's capital, N'Djamena.

On October 10, the two remaining delegates manning the ICRC's bureau will leave the country, the need for the ICRC's presence now over. The closing of the delegation comes three and a half years after it first opened its doors, in February 1978.

During the first two years, there were two sets of doors—in N'Djamena and Faya-Largeau in the north and both delegations were confronted by the problem of logistics in a country of Chad's location and remoteness with enormous distances to be covered between the camps where prisoners of war were held, and to transport staff and supplies.

The going has not been easy for the ICRC working to bring protection and relief to prisoners of war and the victims of conflict in a country where there have been up to eleven conflicting parties.

For three months last year, there was no ICRC presence in the country at all because the security situation had rendered it impossible for delegates to carry out their work. However, when the delegates leave this year on exactly the same date incidentally, as last year, it will be because their work has been completed.

They will be leaving behind them however, a physiotherapist, who has been sent by the ICRC to assist in a project undertaken by the Catholic Mission to provide treatment and care for war amputees.
AMBULANCES REACH LEBANON

For eight days and nights, volunteer drivers from the Federal Republic of Germany's Red Cross Society, drove across Europe down to Turkey and into Syria before reaching the Lebanese border in a convoy to deliver 13 ambulances for use in Lebanon. Leaving Bonn on September 19, the ambulances and their 18 drivers arrived at the border on September 26 where the ambulances were then taken over by ICRC delegates and their Lebanese colleagues to be driven down to Beirut. While the ICRC provided the ambulances, the national society organised and paid for the transcontinental convoy.

HUMANITARIAN LAW PROBLEMS DISCUSSED AT SAN REMO

Some 150 participants last month (September) took part in the 7th Round Table meeting in San Remo, Italy, to discuss current problems in international humanitarian law, and to prepare for the forthcoming International Conference of the Red Cross in November. Representatives of the ICRC at the seminar, held from September 8 to 12, included its President, Mr. Alexandre Hay, several members of the Committee and senior officials from both the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies.

SEMESTRIAL REPORT READY

During the first six months of this year, medical and relief provisions, supplied by the ICRC in areas throughout the Middle East have been worth more than two million Swiss Francs. According to the ICRC's semestrial report, for the period from January 1 to June 30, 1981, the ICRC has seven permanent delegations and about a dozen sub-delegations or offices in this region, where its principal activities are related to the Iran-Iraq war, the Lebanese conflict and the Israeli-Arab problem. The semestrial report, detailing ICRC activities throughout the world, has been issued as part of the ICRC documentation to be presented at the International Red Cross Conference in Manila, during November. The report, in three languages, French, English and Spanish, is available on request.

ICRC PRESIDENT VISITS WASHINGTON

The President of the ICRC, Mr. Alexandre Hay, visited Washington from September 13 to 17 for talks with senior representatives of the United States administration. It was his first official visit to the American capital.

Mr. Hay met the American vice-president, Mr. George Bush, the Secretary of State, Mr. Alexander Haig, and the US ambassador to the United Nations, Mrs. Jeane Kirkpatrick, as well as government officials and members of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The ICRC President's discussions centred on three main points: the need for increased and sustained financial support for its activities in the world, the spread of violence which often engulfed those taking no part in the conflict, such as civilians, prisoners and the wounded, and the ICRC's desire for the United States to ratify the Protocols to the Geneva Conventions.

Mr. Hay described the visit as successful, saying that the United States appeared to appreciate the ICRC's work: this was demonstrated, he added, by the Reagan administration's decision, announced earlier this year, to endorse the increased US contribution to the ICRC's regular budget for 1982. The rise had already been agreed by the government of President Carter.

On the alarming spread of violence, and the lack of respect sometimes shown to prisoners taken in conflicts, Mr. Hay stressed the need for the major powers to recognise their responsibilities in trying to encourage respect for basic humanitarian principles. As to the Protocols, he was informed that they were under study by the U.S. Government.

While in Washington Mr. Hay also met senior members of the American Red Cross, including the Chairman, Dr. Holland, and the President, Mr. Elsey.

IN BRIEF

ICRC's general delegate for Africa, Mr. Jean-Marc Bornet, participated in the recent series of visits to security prisoners in South Africa. The visits, which are carried out on an annual basis, started on August 31 and finished on September 14. A total of 505 condemned prisoners were visited in these detention centres, including Robben Island.
general news...

PREPARATIONS FOR CONFERENCE GATHERING SPEED

With the 24th International Conference of the Red Cross only a month away, preparations for the quadrennial event to take place this year in Manila, the Philippines, are reaching fever pitch.

Close to one thousand people are expected to attend the conference which will run from November 7 to 14. Participants include representatives from the ICRC, the League of Red Cross Societies, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies from throughout the world and signatories of the Geneva Conventions. Observers from 63 organizations, interested in Red Cross activities, have also been invited.

The previous International Conference was held in Bucharest in 1977.

AUDIO-VISUAL CENTRE OPENS

Last month's official opening of the International Red Cross Audio-Visual Centre marked the start to a first-ever project of its type within the International Red Cross - namely the joint administration by the ICRC and League of Red Cross Societies of a permanent service.

Close to 150 people attended the opening on September 30 held at the League's headquarters in Geneva where the centre, with its video and photographic facilities, is located.

RCBS IN OCTOBER

This month's programmes by the Red Cross Broadcasting Service can be heard on Monday, October 26, in English and French, and on Wednesday, October 28, in German, Spanish and Arabic. On both days the broadcasts are from 0600 - 0700 GMT, 1130 - 1230 GMT and 1700 - 1800 GMT. The shortwave frequency is 7.210 kHz in the 41.6 metre band.

IN BRIEF

Her Royal Highness, the Grand-Duchess of Luxembourg, who is the President of her country's National Red Cross Society, visited the ICRC headquarters in Geneva on September 17, accompanied by Her Royal Highness, Princess Marie-Astrid, president of the Luxembourg Red Cross Youth and other officials of the country's national society.

A bibliography containing the titles of 5,000 papers and publications on international humanitarian law was recently published by the ICRC and the Henry Dunant Institute.

President of the Republic of Austria, Mr Rudolf Kirchschläger, visited the ICRC headquarters in Geneva on September 9 during his State Visit to Switzerland. Welcomed to the headquarters by the ICRC President, Mr Alexandre Hay, Mr Kirchschläger was accompanied by the Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of External Commerce as well as the President of the Swiss Confederation, Mr Kurt Furgler and Federal Councillor, Mr Georges-André Chevallaz.

Two years after

This month, October, marks the second anniversary of the official start to the largest operation to be undertaken by the ICRC since World War Two: the joint action with UNICEF in Thailand and Kampuchea to rescue the starving and sick Kampucheans from death. Described as a "race against tragedy", the joint action lasted 15 months and cost an estimated $200 million. Today, both organisations, while no longer "official partners" are still working closely together to ensure that the progress already made continues. "Background" in this issue takes a look at the situation both inside Kampuchea and along the border, focusing on the work of the ICRC, two years after the Kampuchean tragedy was world news.
The Frontier

While the Khmer encampments are still dotted along the Thai/Kampuchean border, with little hope of disappearing in the near future, their inhabitants scarcely resemble the rag-clad and starving men, women and children who flocked there in 1979 and 1980. Grouped in different camps, north and south of the Thai border town of Aranyaprathet, these estimated 120,000 Khmers apply themselves daily to leading a life, as normal as their situations will permit them.

They have learnt to smile once again, they are no longer starving and the two largest camps, Nong Chan and Samet, where much of the ICRC/UNICEF action has been focused, have taken on a sedentary, almost autonomous air.

However, any image of independence is only illusion. Basic foodstuffs, water, medical care and other social services are still provided by diverse international and voluntary organisations, with the ICRC's tasks in this regard, protection, medical assistance, and tracing activities.

With the general state of health of the Khmers in border encampments constantly improving, the ICRC is still working north and south of Aranyaprathet but on a reduced scale. In the north, sick and wounded are evacuated with the assistance of the ICRC to Ta Phraya hospital. In the south, a team of medical personnel continues to go at regular intervals to all dispensaries in the regions of Taprik and Nong Pru. All severe cases are transferred to the hospital at Khao I Dang where an ICRC surgical team of 12 continues its work. In Samet, the ICRC supports the medical care provided by the American Rescue Committee by supplying medicines and logistics. A team of one doctor and three nurses carries out the ICRC’s medical activities in Nong Chan.

It was thought that at the end of 1980 with a new harvest and economic progress being made within Kampuchea that perhaps many of the border Khmers would return.

A number did, but plenty of others stayed or left only to come back. Whatever their reasons for staying they have made their decision, which while temporary, may stretch into the future. In comparison to their past experiences, life in the camps is acceptable and can even offer certain advantages, the least not being the always-flourishing black market.

However, there is no security for the people massed in this area, known as "No Man's Land" with its political tension and armed confrontations between opposing forces. Even the threat of conflict between civilians is ever present. Evacuation of those injured by mines or bullets has become a daily routine.

Protection for the "Land people"

Since mid-May this year when the Thai authorities decided to empty as quickly as possible the Vietnamese refugee camp, NW9, enclaves of these "land people" formed in the Khmer camps. Most of these men, women and children have been installed around the camp hospital. In September, their number was around 500.

NW9 - the special Vietnamese camp opened by the ICRC in April 1980 as a means of providing protection for the Vietnamese refugees who had crossed Kampuchea in the hope of finding a new life in a third country. Closed on July 3, 1981, 5352 Vietnamese passed through the camp during its 14 months of existence.

The ICRC, through discussions with all the authorities concerned is working to obtain an acceptable and secure place for these people. So far, there has been no real breakthrough in the negotiations. The Vietnamese refugees stay at Nong Chan and Samet in a hostile environment, but the ICRC will continue its entreaties on their behalf to find a satisfying solution.

In the camps under Khmer control north and south along the border, the ICRC has had some difficulties to face in carrying out its protection activities. In the south, camp leaders only recently informed the ICRC that a few prisoners were detained. In the north, the ICRC was authorised to visit 17 Vietnamese in the region of Phnom Chat. A small success perhaps after so many months of discussions, but a success all the same.

Protection activities in Nong Chan, where the ICRC has for some time visited Vietnamese detained by the camp leaders, are also difficult to discharge on a regular basis. In Samet, the ICRC has just re-
ceived authorisation to visit, at last, the keeps.

Bringing medical assistance

With regard to its medical activities in favour of the Khmer border population, the ICRC is still in charge of the areas, north and south of Aranyaprathet, in addition to Nong Chan, but again, there are some difficulties.

With the onslaught of the rainy season, malaria is making its usual ravages and the hospital of Nong Chan is overflowing with patients. In the south, it is impossible to establish an anti-malaria campaign as the population does not want to give blood for the necessary tests. In the north, a certain number of patients continue to come for consultations at Phnom Chat, and the ICRC nurse sees one or two a week at Kok Tahan.

One activity which is pursued regularly with few hitches is the medical evacuations to the Khao I Dang holding centre, 12 kilometres from the border, where the ICRC continues to treat badly wounded, injured as a result of the armed confrontations in the border area or from the explosion of one of the numerous mines planted around "No Man's Land".

An interesting point is that for some months now, the population in the camps has again risen, partly perhaps because of the transfers by the Thai authorities of residents from the holding centres to the border. New arrivals, too are coming from inside Kampuchea. To wait for what, only they know.

Kampuchea

Flying into Phnom Penh today, it is hard to believe that just over two years ago, this capital was practically a ghost town, full of spectres of past horror and suffering. Tell-tale signs of war and deprivation in previous years are still there, but the Kampuchean capital has come back to life.

The markets are thriving and perhaps an interesting point is the fact that many of the consumer and luxury goods appear to come from the equally thriving black market along the Thai-Kampuchean border. The population of this town has changed too, both in appearance and number. Smiles have replaced the look of desolation, bustling energy has taken over from the starvation-caused lethargy and instead of a few hundred as in July 1979, the population of Phnom Penh is now estimated to be about half a million.

it is in this rejuvenated city that the ICRC has maintained its delegation since those first emergency filled days when with UNICEF, the aim was to get as much food as possible, mainly rice, into the then starving country. The ICRC further concentrated on rehabilitating the country's medical infrastructure, in co-operation with the Ministry of Health and the local Red Cross, to provide urgent aid for hospitals, dispensaries and orphanages.

ICRC medical assistance continues today, but the level and urgency has dropped remarkably - a good sign for the country's progress, medically. In place of the 35 or so medical personnel from National Red Cross Societies working under the ICRC umbrella in provincial hospitals throughout last year, there is now only one team from the Swiss Red Cross, while an ICRC medical supervisor, based in Phnom Penh, regularly visits provincial hospitals.

During July and August this year, 340.73 tonnes of medical supplies for hospitals and dispensaries were flown into Kampuchea by the ICRC by way of its tri-weekly shuttle flight from Bangkok to Phnom Penh.

Even the future supply of fresh blood, which until now has been sent on a weekly basis from other countries, namely Japan, has been assured by the opening in August of a blood bank in Phnom Penh. While there is a built-in resistance on the part of the Kampuchean residents to give blood, if not destined for members of their own family, optimism is high that this reticence will be overcome, allowing the ICRC to cut down and eventually stop the outside supply.

While the ICRC plans to continue providing urgently needed medical supplies throughout the rest of this year, it hopes, as it has been for the past 24 months, to develop its protection and tracing activities.

BOOKLET ON KAMPUCHEA READY THIS MONTH

A record of the 15-month joint ICRC/UNICEF action in Kampuchea and Thailand is to be published by the ICRC this month. Entitled "Kampuchea: Back from the Brink", the 40-page booklet complete with photographs and statistics, will be available in two languages, English (original version) and French, free of charge.
No room for politics

As this issue of the ICRC Bulletin goes to press, close to a thousand people will be flying into Manila in the Philippines for the most important event on the Red Cross calendar - the International Conference of the Red Cross, which only takes place every four years.

These people, representatives from national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the League of Red Cross Societies, the ICRC and the Governments party to the Geneva Conventions, come from widely varying cultures and societies to be united by the principles and aims of the Red Cross.

It is this unity which plays such an important role in ensuring the success of the Conference. As the Red Cross is entirely devoted to Man, it should, as such, go beyond the usual political bickering which one finds when humans start to organise themselves. It is imperative that this devotion to man is not forgotten by the conference participants; that politics do not play a part where they have no part to play.

It is a very simple message. The participants should think of the victims of conflict and not of those who make the conflict. When they speak of refugees who need something, they must not accuse the ones who make the refugees. When they talk of peace, it should not be thought of as a Trojan Horse for political ideas, but as something to be achieved.

In short, this International Conference of the Red Cross, just like its 23 predecessors, is not a political body to solve political questions. It is a humanitarian body, serving the innocent and pressing needs of humans suffering the more terrible consequences of politics.

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FIGHTING PIRACY IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

While the press has recently reported on the efforts being made to intensify the fight against piracy in the South China Sea, meetings on this subject have been taking place in Geneva for some months between representatives from the ICRC, the League of Red Cross Societies, the UNHCR, UNICEF and a number of Permanent Missions.

Recently, Thailand and Malaysia, which are responsible for surveillance in their own territorial waters, have participated in the discussions.

Several propositions have been made to the Thai representatives with regard to a global programme to fight piracy in international and territorial waters. One proposal, in particular, is that Thailand resume and intensify the operations of the Anti-Pirate Task Force, which although temporarily interrupted, started in February 1981, thanks to funds from the USA Government.

PESHAWAR HOSPITAL TO BE MOVED

The ICRC's surgical hospital in Peshawar, Pakistan, which has been opened since June to treat Afghan wounded, is to move to a bigger centre this month.

As the number of wounded in need of treatment has increased in recent weeks, it has been necessary to expand the bed capacity from 45 to about 100. However, the original premises only had room enough for 80.

The shift also means that there is a possibility of opening a second operating theatre in the new premises which allow for centralisation of the hospital's facilities such as the kitchen.

The previous quarters for the hospital comprised about five houses which meant a distance of up to 100 yards between some of the buildings. Now, the entire hospital will be housed under one roof.

GREENLIGHT GIVEN FOR MISSION IN ANGOLAN SOUTH

The ICRC has been given the go-ahead by the local Angolan authorities in Lubango to carry out a mission in the southern areas which were affected by the recent hostilities and previously "off-limits" to the ICRC. However, because of last minute developments, related to security and logistical problems, the mission, due to start on October 20, had to be postponed.

FREED PRISONERS RECEIVE ICRC SUPPLIES

Clothes, blankets and soap were distributed by the ICRC to the 1,086 detainees freed from Ugandan prisons on October 7. This liberation follows the first carried out on July 25 when 1,425, were freed.

Meanwhile similar distributions to needy families in and around Kampala are being continued, as in the West Nile area, where people returning to the country after having taken shelter in Zaire, have nothing. With some 30,000 people benefitting from the ICRC distributions in this province, seeds and hoes also form part of the supply programme.

In the medical sphere, a team comprising one doctor and a nurse, daily makes the rounds of dispensaries in the Arua district, capital of the hard-hit West Nile Province.

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VISITS IN MALAYSIA

Three ICRC delegates, including one doctor, visited 390 detainees in two Malaysian detention centres during the period from October 12 to 17.

As usual, the detainees, held under the Internal Security Act at detention centres in Batu Gajah and Kamunting, were seen without witness.

PRESIDENTIAL VISIT TO IRAQ

Two prisoners of war camps, Ramadi and Anbar, each received a visit from the President of the ICRC, Mr Alexandre Hay, during his mission to Iraq from October 18 to 23. During the mission, the President, accompanied by the ICRC's general delegate for the Middle East, Mr Jean Hoefliger, met high ranking members of the government as well as other leading officials within the country, to discuss matters related to the application of the Geneva Conventions.

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PROTECTION ACTIVITIES IN SALVADOR

Eight Salvadoran detention centres and hospital wards under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Justice were visited several times by ICRC delegates during the two months from August 1 to October 2. Only three of these places were holding political prisoners, who totalled 320.

On several occasions, they also visited 38 security posts and 26 military posts in addition to 15 municipal prisons and two posts under the responsibility of the customs' police. In total, the delegates saw 211 detainees for the first time.

WORK IN ISRAEL AND OCCUPIED TERRITORIES CONTINUES

ICRC delegates working out of the ICRC delegation of Israel and the Occupied Territories visited 244 detainees under interrogation during the period from September 4 to October 1. Of this number, 101 were seen for the first time.

During September, visits were also carried out in Beer Sheva, Ramallah (47th series) and Hebron gaols. ICRC delegates also met sentenced detainees during visits to Nafha and Chattah prisons.

MAPUTO CENTRE MOVES INTO FULL SWING

Since the arrival of the first group of war amputees to the Maputo Orthopedic Centre in Mozambique, on August 6, and up until the end of September, the centre's workshop had produced 30 provisional plaster limbs and worked on 30 permanent limbs. The centre, managed and financed by the ICRC, also aims at training local personnel in the skills of prosthesis to enable them to eventually take over the running of the centre, located in the country's capital.

DELEGATES VISIT ARGENTINE PRISONS

During the two and a half months from June to mid-August, ICRC delegates visited three of the four main Argentine prisons where they saw 699 detainees (244 in Rawson, 191 in Caseros and 264 in Villa Devoto).

The delegates also visited security detainees in other detention centres namely Mendoza (23 detainees), Ezeiza (two detainees), the military prison of Magdalena (three detainees) and detainees hospitalized in the Borda and Moyano hospitals (two in each).

WORKSHOP TO OPEN THIS MONTH

A prosthesis workshop, to be run and paid for by the ICRC, is expected to open this month in Peshawar, Pakistan to treat Afghan war amputees. With the opening aimed for mid-November, the workshop will be manned by ICRC-supplied prosthesis experts as well as local employees.

As in other artificial limb centres organised by the ICRC (Ethiopia, Angola and Mozambique), the limbs will be made on the spot out of locally-available materials such as wood and rubber. The aim behind the simplicity, a method which has been found efficient and effective in the other centres, is to ensure that the limbs can be easily repaired by the wearers, unlike sophisticated and costly European models.

In brief

Following a series of explosions in Lebanon during late September and early October which resulted in the death of 150 people and between 450 to 500 wounded, the ICRC decided to send 50 bags of blood a week in response to an appeal for blood by the Lebanese Red Cross. At a cost of 2,000 Sfr. for every 50 bags, the blood will continue to be sent for a period of two months.

Seventy-nine Angolan prisoners, including 10 wounded, held by the authorities in South West Africa/Namibia were visited on October 9 and 10 by two ICRC delegates.

Salvador blood bank: Since the opening on May 7 of the blood bank in El Salvador which is run by the Salvadoran Red Cross and financed during this, its first year of operation by the ICRC, 752 blood donations had been received up until mid-September.

Two delegates from the ICRC, acting in the role of observers attended the Conference of Arab Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies held in Bahrain from October 24 to 26. The conference, the 13th of its kind, comprised representatives from National Societies of 20 Arab countries.
ASSISTANCE DURING THE FIRST SEMESTER

Close to 28 million Swiss Francs was spent by the ICRC during the first six months of this year to supply relief and medical assistance in each of the four corners of the globe where it is working.

In Africa alone, where during this period it had more than 80 delegates divided among ten delegations and three sub-delegations, assistance valued at 16,637,985 Swiss Francs was supplied. In Asia, during the same period, 5,892,440 Swiss Francs worth of relief and medical aid was distributed, 2.036 millions worth in the Middle East and another 3.273 million in Latin America.

The recipients of the assistance included war victims, prisoners of war, detainees and their families in need, refugees, and the displaced.

AFRICA BOOKLET NOW AVAILABLE

A second brochure focusing on the work of the ICRC in Africa was released by the ICRC last month. Covering the period from 1978 to mid-1981, the booklet, takes up from where the first, printed in October 1978, stops. It is available in three languages, English (original version), French and Spanish.

IN BRIEF 

The award, announced on Wednesday October 14, is the second to be won by the UNHCR and the 14th Peace Prize to go to an organisation, rather than an individual or individuals. The ICRC has won three times, in 1917, 1944 and 1963, the latter jointly with the League of Red Cross Societies. Founder of the Red Cross, Henry Dunant, was the first ever recipient of the prize awarded in 1901.

Summer Course Held in Warsaw

The first-ever course on International Humanitarian Law for advanced law students was held in Warsaw by the ICRC and the Polish Red Cross from September 29 to October 9.

With four representatives from the ICRC in the teaching corps which also included a number of Polish university lecturers and professors, the course itself attracted 31 students from Canada, Denmark, Spain, Finland, Great Britain, Hungary, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland and the Federal Republic of Germany.

During the day devoted to the dissemination of knowledge of International Humanitarian Law, several students expressed their desire to become involved in Red Cross activities, particularly with regard to dissemination programmes in their own National Societies.

IN BRIEF

President of the Republic of Ghana, His Excellency Dr Hilla Limann, visited on October 22, the headquarters of the ICRC where he was welcomed by the Vice-President, Mr Richard Pestalozzi. Dr Limann also met the Members of the Committee and Directorate as well as the Deputy Secretary General of the League of Red Cross Societies, Mr Bertil Petterson.

ICRC Congratulates UNHCR on Peace Prize

On the occasion of this year’s Nobel Peace Prize being awarded to the office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, the President of the ICRC, Mr Alexandre Hay, sent the following telex to Mr Poul Hartling to congratulate the High Commissioner:

"The high distinction of the Nobel Peace Prize conferred on the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees justly rewards the immense efforts deployed by your institution to assist hundreds of thousands of human beings in distress. The members of the ICRC join with me in expressing our heartiest congratulations to you and your colleagues."

With 38 delegations, sub-delegations and offices throughout Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America, the number of ICRC personnel working on the field as of October 1, 1981, totalled 231 in addition to 93 National Society personnel under the auspices of the ICRC.
TWO MORE NATIONAL SOCIETIES WELCOMED TO THE FAMILY

The official recognition by the ICRC of the National Red Cross Society of Tonga and the National Red Crescent Society of Qatar brings the number of National Societies which are members of the International Red Cross to 128. The recognition of the two societies came into force on October 15 and 26, respectively.

It is the task of the ICRC to make the pronouncement after examining a Society’s application in conjunction with the League to ensure that it fulfills the ten conditions for recognition. These conditions are:
1. That it be constituted on the territory of an independent State where the First Geneva Convention of 1949 is in force; 2. That it be the only National Society of the said State; 3. That it be recognised by its Government as a Voluntary Aid Society, auxiliary to the public authorities; 4. That it be an autonomous institution; 5. That it use the title and emblem of the Red Cross, or of the Red Crescent; 6. That it have an efficient organisation; 7. That it extend its activities to the entire country; 8. That it does not withhold membership from any of its nationals on grounds of race, sex, class, religion or political opinions; 9. That it adhere to the Statutes of the International Red Cross and share in the fellowship which unites its members; 10. That it honour the fundamental principles of the Red Cross and the Geneva Conventions.

In brief

The Commonwealth of Dominica has formulated a declaration of succession concerning the four Geneva Conventions. This succession, of which the ICRC was informed by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, has taken effect, retroactively, from the date of the country’s independence on November 3, 1978.

Honorary Vice-President of the Japanese Red Cross, Her Royal Highness, Princess Chichibu, visited the headquarters of the ICRC on October 26 during her stay in Geneva.

The Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs has informed the ICRC of the ratification of Protocol 1 by Viet Nam. While the instrument of ratification, was deposited with the Federal Government of Switzerland on October 19, the Protocol will come into force for Viet Nam on April 19, 1982.

THE OBSTACLE COURSE

What is the reality of International Humanitarian Law?... How does the ICRC deal with it in the conflicts of today?... This month, Background examines this law and its chief component, the Geneva Conventions and their Protocols to see exactly how effective they and the work of the ICRC can be in the world of 1981.

At the 24th International Conference of the Red Cross, the members of the Red Cross family come together to look at the progress they have made since the previous conference. The participants are confronted by thousands of words, and hundreds of reports concerning past, present and future aims and activities.

In other words, the practical is momentarily transformed into the theoretical for an organisation which prides itself on action in times of emergency. For the ICRC in particular, part of this theory involves an examination of International Humanitarian Law - how it is practised and its principles disseminated throughout today's conflict-ridden world.

It is no secret that greater and ubiquitous respect of this Law is always being sought after by the ICRC. The Conference itself is seen by the ICRC President, Mr Alexandre Hay, as an ideal opportunity to appeal to the world at large for this respect.

But what is International Humanitarian Law and why is the ICRC so concerned about ensuring that it is upheld. And how
does the ICRC deal with it in the conflictual realities of today.

According to Jean Pictet, a former ICRC Vice-President and member of the Committee, in his treatise, "The Principles of International Humanitarian Law", it is that law which owes its inspiration to a feeling for humanity and which is centred on the protection of the individual. "This expression of humanitarian law appears to combine two ideas of a different character - one legal, the other, moral," he explains. In today's world, this law is chiefly comprised of the Geneva Conventions and their Protocols, of which the ICRC finds itself guardian.

These Conventions and Protocols, which embody the very humanitarian ideal of the Red Cross, are intricately interwoven into its history as it was the ICRC which was the propelling force behind their evolution and realisation. They contain a provision of considerable importance for the ICRC, recognising its right "to take any humanitarian initiative which comes within its role as a specifically neutral and independent institution and intermediary and to consider any question requiring examination by such an institution."

THE FOUR CONVENTIONS OF AUGUST 12, 1949:

The First Convention protects wounded and sick medical personnel in war on land

The Second Convention protects the wounded, the sick and the shipwrecked and the medical personnel of armed forces at sea

The Third Convention protects prisoners of war

The Fourth Convention protects civilians in enemy and occupied territory.

THE TWO PROTOCOLS OF 1977 ADDITIONAL TO THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS:

Protocol I protects the victims of international armed conflicts

Protocol II protects the victims of non-international armed conflicts.

But these laws, sometimes known as the Geneva Law, have been drawn up by international legal experts who understand well the implications, nuances and demands. On paper, it looks good, but in reality, how does it work?

"There is that link between the ICRC and the Geneva Conventions which means we have a certain responsibility to see them implemented," says Yves Sandoz, deputy director of the ICRC's legal department.

"But how to deal with this responsibility is not so clear. Persuasion is our strongest force. We remind the conflicting parties of that Law and try to enter into discussion to convince them to implement the Conventions and Protocols on the field."

It is not an easy road for the ICRC, with obstacles littering the pathway to realisation even from the starting point namely applicability of the Geneva Law.

"Today, we even have difficulties with definition. States can claim that there is no conflict in their country or that they are not invading a country but rather have been invited. In cases like that, there is no possibility to impose the application of the law which should apply," Sandoz explained.

Even if the applicability of the Law is accepted, application is the next stumbling block. There are no means of enforcement, not because the ICRC and others responsible for the drawing up of the Law didn't consider it, but because such a concept is unrealistic.

"The system of the world today precludes an imposition of overall authority which such a concept requires. In any case, during times of war, States are even less likely to accept the ruling of a tribunal. If there was such a tribunal with such power, it would also have the power to prevent the war in the first place."

And without war, there is no need for International Humanitarian Law because it only comes into play when there is conflict.

The are however two provisions within the Geneva Law which allow for either an enquiry or negotiations on an international level. One of the provisions deals with the establishment of an enquiry commission. Until now, this has not been invoked because the provision states that the commission cannot exist until 20 States, which have ratified the Protocols, agree on its establishment. Today, only 19 States have so far ratified the Protocols.
The other provision deals with "Protective Powers". It allows for the conflicting parties in an international conflict to designate a neutral State to defend their interests. But the problem lies in finding States not only willing to act as a Protective Power, but also which are acceptable to the other side.

On the field itself, difficulties arise in interpreting some of the Conventional provisions and ensuring their control. While it is relatively easy to see if the standards required for prisoners of war, the treatment of wounded etc are lived up to, it is much more difficult to say if the damage and harm to a civilian population violates the Law.

As Sandoz explained, this stems from the fact that to have an effective Law, capable of being implemented during times of war, it was essential to have military reality built into it. Military forces are to limit themselves to military targets, and a maximum effort is to be made to ensure the minimum of damage to civilians. The Principle of Proportionality, however, makes assessment of unnecessary harm to civilians difficult. The basis of this principle is that there must be a balance between incidental civilian losses and military results. But determining what results justify so much civilian loss is often a matter of opinion. Consequently, deciding when and where the Law has been violated is difficult.

When it comes to violations, the ICRC's general policy is to try to convince rather than to condemn, as it believes condemnation leads only to a dead end.

With these difficulties to overcome coupled with the fact that the ICRC has a reputation for efficiency and neutrality whether working on the basis of the Geneva Law or not, the question arises if the ICRC would be just as effective without the Conventions and Protocols.

For Yves Sandoz, the answer is a definite no.

"While there are the violations, and remember it is always the violations which receive the publicity and not the countless times the Law is respected, the States have a term of reference. They may abuse it, but it is a legal obligation which sets a limit and we are in a much better negotiating position with the Conventions behind us.

"For example, although only 19 States have ratified the Protocols, there is still a term of reference for those who have not because it was only through common international consensus that they were formulated. That common spirit alone gives us more force."

In other words, without the Geneva Law, it is possible that conflicting states would stray even further from humanitarian right. As to further development of Geneva Conventions and their Protocols, Yves Sandoz believes they have reached their limit. More precise regulations concerning the type of weaponry used in conflict may be one direction to aim for, but as far as the Conventions and Protocols are concerned, almost everyone likely to be affected by conflict is covered. Except of course, the active combatants themselves.

"The next step takes us to an entirely different concept - the prevention of war itself.

"The ICRC is like a nurse treating to the best of its ability someone with an incurable disease. We are here to ease the suffering. To prevent the disease in the first place, a totally different procedure is needed."

RCBS IN NOVEMBER

This month's programmes by the Red Cross Broadcasting Service can be heard on Monday, November 23, in English and French, and on Wednesday, November 25, in German, Spanish and Arabic. On both days the broadcasts are from 0600 - 0700 GMT, 1130 - 1230 GMT and 1700 - 1800 GMT. The shortwave frequency is 7.210 kHz in the 41.6 metre band.

This month there are also beamed frequencies to the following areas:

ASIA AND PACIFIC
Tuesday, November 24 - from 0945 - 1015 GMT in English on 9.560, 15.305, 21.520 and 21.695 kHz.

MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA
Thursday, November 26 - from 0945 - 1015 GMT in English and French on 15.430, 17.830 and 21.520 kHz; and in Arabic at the same time on 21.630 kHz.
Adapting to change

"The world has changed, not the Red Cross. But the movement must adapt itself to this changing world," said Jacques Moreillon, the ICRC's director of Principles and Law, as he stood before the journalists assembled for the press conference on his return from the International Red Cross Conference.

With these words hot on the heels of the straightforward and strong reports presented by the ICRC during the Manila sessions, the question could be asked: "How is the ICRC adapting itself?"

At the same press conference, Moreillon determinedly stressed three points highlighted in Manila: the impossibility of the ICRC to work in certain areas because of the attitude of the relevant authorities, whether governmental or not; spreading violence aimed at both combatants and non-combatants; and over-armament in a world so besieged by starvation and poverty.

While the first two points deal with matters particularly related to the ICRC and affecting the victims of current conflicts, the third has wider ramifications. It is a statement of concern for the future generations, possibly the future victims which the ICRC will be caring for. And it is possibly a sign of the way in which the Red Cross and the ICRC is adapting itself.

In a world where conflict is often fought by "remote control" on a third ground; where political tempers can flare easily only to wreak havoc on the innocent; where the realisation of humane ideals often comes a bad second to the realisation of political ideology, the ICRC must be always conscious and always prepared for not only the situations which confront it today, but also those which may come. It must be ready for the possibilities of tomorrow without giving up the principles of yesterday.

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ANGOLA: MISSION IN THE SOUTH

Two ICRC delegates and a nurse travelled to the south of Angola last month to evaluate existing needs. Their mission was carried out in two stages: the first, in mid-November, took them to the Chiulo hospital where they distributed medicines, dressings, bowls, milk powder and blankets, and then onto Cahama and Chiange. During the second stage, one week later, they crossed the River Kunene, and travelled to N'jiva.

Meanwhile, the food distributions in the central region of the country, namely in the province of Huambo reached record figures during October. During this month, 190 tonnes of food were distributed to about 30,000 people. In this area, there are currently 58 locations for food distributions.

PRESIDENT VISITS AUSTRALASIA

Official visits to both the Australian and New Zealand Red Cross Societies followed the International Conference of the Red Cross for ICRC President, Mr Alexandre Hay.

Accompanied by Mr Alain Modoux, head of the ICRC's press and information division, and Mr Michel Martin, head of the ICRC's division of National Societies, Mr Hay arrived in Australia on November 15. After visiting Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra, he flew to New Zealand on November 20 where he stayed until November 24.

DISSEMINATION IN THE SOVIET UNION

Dissemination is the aim of the present mission by Mrs Denise Bindschedler, member of the Committee, and Mr Frank Schmidt, ICRC's general delegate for Europe, who are in the USSR for about two weeks until mid-December. While Mrs Bindschedler is giving lectures in a dozen university institutions and military academies on the development of international humanitarian law, Mr Schmidt is speaking on the ICRC's operational activities.

This mission had been planned in the framework of an exchange between two Soviet jurists who would spend a period of time in Geneva and two ICRC officials who would give lectures in the Soviet Union.

AFP REPORTS ON ICRC's TAIWANESE REPATRIATIONS

The repatriations of Taiwanese from Vietnam, organised under the auspices of the ICRC since 1976, are less well-known than UNHCR-arranged departures of Vietnamese citizens, according to an AFP (Agence France Presse) report last month.

So far this year, the ICRC has organised five such repatriations for a total of 903 people and the sixth is expected to take place on December 10.

In its article, AFP explained that this ICRC action had originally been concerned with nationals of third countries who, after the fall of Saigon in 1975, had wished to be repatriated, in particular, Yemenites, Pakistanis, Indians, Filipinos, South Koreans and Taiwanese, who were often without a passport from their country of origin. Today, with most of these cases now settled, the ICRC is concerned with Taiwanese on the basis of family reunions.

The ICRC intervenes mainly as an organiser, once the entry visas into Taiwan and the exit visas from Vietnam have been granted. ICRC delegates based in Hanoi told AFP that as of July 29, 942 remaining cases, with entry visas into Taiwan, were still outstanding.

Since the first flight in September 1976, the ICRC has organised the repatriation of 4,594 Taiwanese nationals.

IN BRIEF

Two hundred and twelve visits to security detainees under interrogation were carried out by ICRC delegates in Israel and the Occupied Territories during the period October 2 to 29. Ninety-four of the detainees were visited for the first time. Regular visits were also carried out in Ashkelon, Maasiahu and Nablus gaols.

The South African prisoner, Johannes Van Den Mescht, who is being held in Angola, was visited by ICRC delegates on November 9. The interview between the prisoner and the delegates was conducted without witness.

Three feeding centres for malnourished children in the Arua district were opened by the ICRC early last month. The centres are located in Offaka, Riki and Arua.
RELIEF DURING THE FINAL MONTHS IN CHAD

From January this year until September, one month before its closure, the ICRC delegation in Chad distributed 9,073.4 tonnes of relief goods. This comprised 8,998.40 tonnes of food stuffs and 75 tonnes of miscellaneous goods such as wood and beds etc.

The relief was distributed principally in N'Djamena, but at times in other parts of the country during ICRC convoys to the country's northern, western and central regions and also during a mission to the east of Chad.

The majority of distributions at N'Djamena were channelled through social centres and at the height of the action, more than 30,000 people namely old people, handicapped, orphans, and mal-nourished children, benefitted each month.

PROTECTION IN NICARAGUA

ICRC delegates in Nicaragua visited the Ruth Rodriguez Rehabilitation Centre in Granada on November 5. Of the 219 detainees, only 17 were incarcerated under categories relevant for the ICRC.

During the past two years since the end of the civil war in Nicaragua, the ICRC has maintained a delegation in the country's capital, Managua. The delegation concentrates its efforts on protection and assistance activities for the more than 3,000 prisoners still detained for reasons stemming from the war and visits all the places of detention under the authority of the National Penitentiary System.

From January this year to the end of June, 36 series of visits were carried out, while the relief distributed to detainees and their families during the same period was valued at SFr 800,000.

SOLVING SANITARY PUZZLES

Before the ICRC could move its surgical hospital in Peshawar, Pakistan to bigger, better and more compact quarters last month, one major problem had to be overcome to ensure the hospital's smooth running in the months to come.

While the new building is the optimum size for dealing with the recent increase in patients, the fact remained that the building's sanitary system was designed for domestic use and not for the demands of a hospital, catering for more than 150 people, patients and staff included.

To spearhead the problem, ICRC sanitary expert, Bob Smyth, was sent to Pakistan to help the ICRC delegation adapt the building's water and sewerage system before the patients were transferred. Despite some problems encountered in locating the essential second water mains as well as the septic tank which had to be cleaned out manually by bucket, the transfer was delayed by only two days.

In addition to dealing with the hospital's sanitary system, Mr Smyth also travelled to the Adesai refugee camp, about 15 kilometres outside Peshawar where in July, much of the camp's water supply had been polluted. The means of avoiding a similar occurrence in the future is at present being studied by the ICRC in cooperation with UNICEF and UNHCR.

IN BRIEF

The Argentine prison of Caseros was visited by ICRC delegates from November 9 to 13. Interviews without witness were carried out by the delegates with 106 of the 160 security detainees.

More than 100 officers from the Nicaraguan armed forces attended an expose on the law of war presented on November 11 in Nicaragua by an ICRC delegate who is a specialist in questions related to the spreading of knowledge of the Geneva Conventions amongst the armed forces.

In a series of visits which began on November 4, ICRC delegates visited 35 Angolan prisoners in Namibia, 10 of whom were wounded. During the course of this round of visits, six new prisoners were registered.
CHANGES IN THE LEAGUE’S KEY POSITION

One immediate result for the League of Red Cross Societies stemming from last month’s round of important Red Cross meetings in Manila, including the International Conference of the Red Cross, was a change in its leadership.

Taking over the role of League President is Mr Enrique de la Mata, President of the Spanish Red Cross, who succeeds Justice J. Adefarasin of the Nigerian Red Cross who was in the position for the past four years.

After 21 years in the Secretary General’s chair, Mr Henrik Beer of the Swedish Red Cross has stepped down and is succeeded by Mr Hans Hoegh, President of the Norwegian Red Cross.

Approval of the new appointments was given by the General Assembly of the League which met prior to the Conference early in November.

HENRY DUNANT MEDAL AWARDED TO RETIRED ICRC DELEGATE

A retired ICRC delegate, M. Melchior Borsinger was among the four recipients of the Henry Dunant Medal announced in Manila on November 6, the day prior to the opening of the International Conference of the Red Cross.

The highest honour to be bestowed within the Red Cross Movement in recognition of exceptional work carried out by its members, the medal was also awarded to Mme Alexandra Issa-el-Khoury of the Lebanese Red Cross, M. Ismael Reyes Icabalceta of the Nicaraguan Red Cross and posthumously to Mme Krista Djordjevic of the Yugoslavian Red Cross.

A delegate for 40 years before his retirement in 1980, M. Borsinger was praised in the award citation for assuming responsibilities, both on the field and at ICRC headquarters, which required not only technical knowledge, but also exceptional human qualities namely a sense of duty, discretion, endurance and courage.

"The list of missions carried out by M. Borsinger is like a list of all the conflicts, tragedies and violence which have thrown humanity into mourning during the course of the past 40 years," the citation read.

The Medal, bestowed by the Permanent Commission of the International Red Cross, was first awarded in 1969. Since then, 32 members of the Red Cross have received the honour, including 11 posthumously.

OBITUARY

News of the sudden death early last month of ICRC delegate, Kurt Stoll, left his colleagues both at ICRC headquarters and on the field shocked and saddened.

Only 32, Kurt had been with the ICRC since early 1980, working in the Thailand delegation until February this year. He was then posted to Teheran where he was working as administrator of the ICRC’s Iran delegation when the illness struck. Evacuated quickly to Geneva on November 4 to receive emergency treatment, Kurt died five days later. The staff of the ICRC Bulletin join with their colleagues in conveying their most sincere condolences to Kurt’s family.

Just published
A STUDY OF THE CTA

The "Scientific Collection" of the Henry Dunant Institute in Geneva has had a new title added to its series: "The Central Tracing Agency of the International Committee of the Red Cross". The doctoral thesis of a former ICRC delegate, Gradimir Djurovic, this study covers the work undertaken by the ICRC to ease the moral suffering of war victims during more than a century. Until now, there had been no systematic study of the different tracing agencies which have succeeded each other since the first in 1870. These agencies have been:

- The Bureau of Information of the International Agency of Relief to Wounded and Sick Military, Basel (1870-1871)
- The International Agency of Belgrade (1912-1913)
- The International Agency for Prisoners of War (1914-1918)
- The Central Prisoners of War Agency, which was followed by the present Central Tracing Agency in 1960.

SEASON’S GREETINGS

The editorial staff of the ICRC Bulletin wish their readers a joyous Christmas and a Happy New Year
Manila '81 in focus

The 24th International Conference of the Red Cross is over. Apart from representatives from the ICRC, League of Red Cross Societies and 73 States, Party to the Geneva Conventions, it attracted a record number of delegations from 121 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. It also attracted world-wide attention during its seven days of sessions and debates.

And the results of this forum, the supreme decision-making body of the International Red Cross, will touch most activities of the Red Cross movement during the next few years until the 25th Conference takes place in Geneva in 1986.

For the ICRC in particular, what are the more important results of the Manila Conference and how will they affect the day to day work carried out by the ICRC? "Background" this month interviews the ICRC's director of Principles and Law, Mr Jacques Moreillon, to put the conference and its results into focus. Also, Roland Hammer, an ICRC press officer, present at the conference, looks "behind the scenes" to see how the day to day running of the conference was carried out.

Sharing the concern

In the words of Jacques Moreillon, it was an unusual conference. Unusual in that as many as seven resolutions were taken on the basis of the ICRC report on its activities.

Such an unprecedented number bears mixed tidings. While the resolutions are tools by which the ICRC can further its humanitarian action, so many in support of the ICRC is perhaps a tragic reflection of the state of the world today.

However, as Mr Moreillon pointed out, the results show an increased sharing of concern. "The conference reflects not only the views of the Red Cross movement, but also those of the Governments party to the Geneva Conventions," he said.

One of the most significant and important resolutions adopted by the conference refers to the humanitarian activities of the ICRC for the benefit of victims of armed conflicts.

It is this resolution, arising out a statement in the activity report presented by the ICRC President, Mr Alexandre Hay, to the conference, that decries the fact that the ICRC is refused access to the captured combatants and detained civilians in the armed conflicts of Western Sahara, Ogaden and Afghanistan.

"The conference demonstrated, by adopting this resolution that the Red Cross does not limit its preoccupations to certain areas of the world. It showed that it is also able to express concern when and where the ICRC is paralysed and at the same time, to do so without becoming political or biased," Mr Moreillon said.

In urging the parties concerned to enable the ICRC to protect and assist those people captured, detained, wounded or sick, and civilians affected by these conflicts, the Red Cross limits its appeal in this resolution to concrete humanitarian possibilities. Its significance lies in the fact that it stems from a situation which has never before confronted the ICRC - total paralysis of action due to the attitude of the Parties concerned.

"To not say something in this situation would have been a politicization of the Red Cross," Mr Moreillon explained.

Another resolution which appears to be a direct response to the concern expressed by Mr Hay both during his inaugural Conference speech and in his activity report, concerns the increase in indiscriminate violence and repeated violations of basic humanitarian principles. A resolution of general support, it calls for respect for international humanitarian law and for humanitarian principles and support for the activities of the ICRC.
An important point of this resolution, according to Moreillon, is that it also covers ICRC activities concerning not only victims of "Conventional" conflict, but also those which lie outside the realm of the Geneva conventions.

Just as this resolution answers one of the ICRC's pre-occupations, so does a third, that concerning piracy and "the tragic fate of thousands of refugees who are victims of acts of Piracy in the China Sea and Gulf of Thailand", again referred to by the President in his activities report.

The ICRC, UNHCR, concerned governmental international organizations and all States are urged to co-operate to the fullest extent possible to eradicate piracy on the High Seas and in territorial waters, the Conference resolved.

The resolution on the application of the Fourth Geneva Convention of August 12, 1949 in the Occupied Territories of the Middle East had its grounding in ICRC reports as did the use of torture, which, like forced or involuntary disappearances, was condemned by the Conference.

"The first step towards peace is disarmament," Mr Hay told the Conference. "The Committee is standing by and is open to any requests that the Powers might make, if they can agree together, that we could contribute, no matter how modestly to genuine progress in disarmament," he announced. And the conference responded in the form of a resolution by consensus which amongst other things, fully endorsed an ICRC appeal to the Special Session of the U.N. General Assembly on Disarmament.

Other important resolutions dealt with the acceptance of the Protocols, additional to the Geneva Conventions and the wearing of identity discs by combatants.

Refugees, that specific group of victims for whom the Red Cross has devoted decades of work and effort, were given special mention in the form of a Statement of Policy concerning International Red Cross aid to refugees.

"This is the first time that official guidelines have been formed, not only for co-ordination within the Red Cross itself, but between the Red Cross and the UNHCR, a move welcomed by the UNHCR," Mr Moreillon said.

These recommendations, resolutions and decisions are by no means all which affect the ICRC, but they are the more important. Now that the conference is over, however, what will be the results of the results?

"They are fuel for ICRC activities until the next International Conference," said Jacques Moreillon.

At that time, the ICRC, along with the other delegates at the Conference will be able to see how effective and how far the ICRC was able to use this "fuel".

At this stage, however, with the resolutions only a few weeks old, it is impossible for anyone to forecast their effectiveness. As Mr Moreillon said, "The proof of the pudding is in its eating". But it can only be hoped that the ICRC's activity
Behind the scenes

The television camera slowly moves through the rows of chairs where some 800 delegates representing more than 150 nationalities are seated, in order to get near the speaker's platform jutting out into the immense plenary hall of the Congress Centre of Manila. In front of the stage, the camera focuses in on the protagonists of the International Conference, meeting to discuss the past and future of the Red Cross.

The success of such a conference obviously rests on the willingness of the delegates to advance the ideals and activities of the Red Cross, but it also equally depends on the invisible and often forgotten work of hundreds of people: the secretaries, welcoming hostesses, translators, interpreters, journalists.

At the end of a day's session and as the corridors become deserted, the neon lights still blaze for another two to three hours in the basement offices of the editorial team of the conference's Daily Bulletin. This Bulletin is as much a bond linking delegations as a guide to the multitude of subjects discussed. To summarise the discussions of the day, the team must sort out the pages and pages of notes taken on the spot, chose the essential points and be precise and complete without being lengthy. It is essential to examine the questions at hand as it can occur that a matter has not been resolved.

By 8pm, it is time for the translators to enter the scene. From French or English, everything is translated into French, Spanish, English and Arabic. A couple of hours later, the texts of these four languages are given to the typing service which makes the stencils. Only after that can the copying and stapling machines begin their work on the dozen or so pages of each Bulletin. The next morning, the delegates will be able to find in their pigeon holes at the reception desk, the Daily Bulletin in the particular language they want.

Encircling the meeting rooms are opaque bay windows behind which nothing can be distinguished. It is there that a fiery speech in Spanish is transformed into an equally fiery speech in Arabic or English. But not only is the delegate helped to find himself in the jungle of documents, debates and languages, he is also helped through that thick jungle of conference administration.

On arriving in the vast lobby of the Congress Centre, he is immediately drawn by the beaming smiles of the welcoming hostesses who ensure that there is a certain liveliness at reception, even during the meetings. There are of course the bustling delegates with eyes only for their dossiers. But they are not typical. "We were pleasantly surprised by the courtesy, understanding and kindness of most of the delegates," says Maria-Ana, whose blouse bears the insignias of a couple of dozen National Societies. "We work on many conferences, but for this one, there is the feeling that it's just not any conference. It is a meeting of the Red Cross and that influences the delegates."

REVIEW FOCUSES ON CONFERENCE

A resume of the work of the recent International Conference of the Red Cross will appear in the next issue of the International Review of the Red Cross, due to be published at the end of this month. Also included in the November-December issue are the official texts of the resolutions, decisions and recommendations of the Conference, the citations devoted to the four recipients of this year's Henry Dunant Medal and the opening speeches by the President of the ICRC and the Philippine Red Cross, as well as the newly-elected President of the League of Red Cross Societies.