

Palestine, Near and Middle East

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official lists, were possibly resident in the said countries and desirous of returning to Greece.

PALESTINE — NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST

For the first half-year of 1951 the ICRC made no change in its representation in the Near and Middle East. The delegates in Cairo, Beirut, Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv continued giving their assistance in countries where in spite of the armistice the situation had not become normal. The dividing lines, although no longer the fighting lines, nevertheless formed impenetrable frontiers.

It was often difficult to intervene in behalf of civilian internees in Israel territory, especially in the case of Arabs whose entry had been clandestine.

In Jordan it was possible to visit regularly and deliver parcels to 30 civilians captured during this period, 23 of them were repatriated to Israel through the good offices of the ICRC.

The four delegations of the ICRC continued to act as neutral intermediaries for the repatriation and transfer of persons wishing to join their families. In the first half-year of 1951 a total number of 157 persons were thus repatriated and transferred. During the same period the delegates of the ICRC transmitted 16,894 family messages and 468 requests for enquiries, and received 302 replies.

With regard to relief, the delegations of the ICRC dealt with the forwarding of 442 parcels of used clothing intended for Arab refugees, prisoners of war or civilians. They continued to organise food supplies for charitable institutions in Jerusalem (New Town); for the first six months 25,000 kg of foodstuffs (fruit, vegetable, cereals, etc.) were sent by regular monthly convoys across the lines.

It may be recalled that the ICRC Delegation in Jerusalem handed to the Palestine Arab Invalids Union prostheses of which the value was about 1,000 francs.

As the position became more stable, the ICRC was able to consider closing its delegations in Israel and Jordan. The first was closed on August 31 and the second on October 15. The

work of these two delegations was taken over by the authorities and the competent Red Cross organizations (Magen David Adom, Jordan Red Crescent, Joint Armistice Commissions). Before leaving Jerusalem the ICRC secured the conclusion of an arrangement between the Jordan and Israeli authorities for the continuation of the monthly traffic indispensable for carrying food supplies to the convents situated in the New Town.

During the second half-year the Civilian Message Service was discontinued at the request of the Arab and Israeli authorities, and handed over to the Joint Armistice Commission. In 1951 this Service had distributed altogether 38,627 messages.

In the second half-year, M. Gaillard, ICRC delegate in Cairo, was entrusted with several missions in Arab countries and in Iran, in order to settle various questions outstanding and to discuss with the government authorities the matter of the ratification of the new Geneva Conventions.

INDOCHINA

As indicated in the last Annual Report, the ICRC decided towards the end of December 1950 to send relief intended for all categories of victims of the conflict in the territory of the People's Republic of Vietnam. Medicaments were sent to Tonking, which seemed to offer the best facilities for reforwarding.

The mission of the new head of the delegation to Indochina in May 1951, who was accompanied by a doctor-delegate, was therefore to start the proposed relief action and to extend it if possible.

After various exchanges of radio messages the military authorities on both sides decided to neutralize a suitable meeting point. The meeting was held on July 26, 1951 between the representatives of the Red Cross organisation of the People's Republic of Vietnam and the delegates of the International Committee. The discussions concerned, not only the question of relief, but also that of the International Committee's general activity in Indochina. Another meeting was held on October 15, 1951. On this occasion the delegates of the ICRC repeated that they disposed of a stock of