

Indochina

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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.

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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

medicaments intended for the victims of conflicts in territories where they had not so far been able to carry on their work. They also confirmed that the ICRC expected to receive the list of prisoners of war and internees held in the territory of the People's Republic of Vietnam.

The French Red Cross Society in Hanoi (as before the previous meeting on July 26) had handed the delegates of the ICRC a number of letters sent by families in France; to these letters had been added several hundred messages made out by this Society on Red Cross forms, all destined for military personnel and civilians presumed to be captives. These letters and messages together with about a hundred requests for news of missing persons, which had just been received by the ICRC, were handed over on October 15 to the Representatives of the Red Cross organization of the People's Republic of Vietnam for transmission to the authorities concerned. The Representatives stated that the regular exchange of information concerning captives and missing, as also the organisation of a system of correspondence between prisoners and their families, were under study in accordance with the proposals put forward on July 26 by the delegates of the ICRC. Other questions were discussed on October 15, such as the effective application of the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949, the exchange of sick or wounded internees and prisoners, and the representation of the ICRC with the authorities and Red Cross organisation of the People's Republic of Vietnam.

On November 23, 1951, the head of the ICRC delegation addressed a message by radio to President Ho-Chi-Minh, requesting to be granted an interview. The latter replied conveying his thanks but regretting that he could not grant the request.

In conclusion it may be said that since the month of March 1951 some thirty camps for military or civilian Vietnam nationals held by the French forces were visited by the International Committee's delegates in Indochina.