

# Africa

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## I. PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

When describing the activity of the International Committee of the Red Cross<sup>1</sup> in 1961, some of the upheavals which shook the world during the past year will be recalled. Indeed, whenever men face each other with weapons in their hands, it is the duty of the Red Cross, and especially of the ICRC, to intervene in order to mitigate distress caused by the conflict and to make the needs of humanity and fellowship respected. But wars leave scars which take long to heal and that is why the ICRC has carried out many other tasks on behalf of the victims of earlier events which still have painful consequences.

### AFRICA

#### Congo

In 1961, as in the previous year, the ICRC had to deploy considerable effort in the former Belgian Congo.

This activity certainly produced most useful results and enabled much suffering to be relieved, although it also had its tragic side, since it cost one of the ICRC delegates his life.

**Medical aid.**—During the first six months of the year, the ICRC continued the medical work started in 1960 in co-operation with the League of Red Cross Societies.<sup>2</sup> This action benefited from the support of 23 National Societies which sent a total of 57 medical teams to the Congolese hospitals deprived of their personnel.

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<sup>1</sup> For the sake of brevity the International Committee of the Red Cross will be designated by the initials ICRC.

<sup>2</sup> See *Annual Report* 1960, pp. 8-13.

The ICRC, which organised the distribution of the teams, had frequently to intervene with the authorities to safeguard their security.

Meanwhile, the World Health Organisation had been obliged, some time beforehand, to recruit doctors on long-term contracts for service in the Congo. By the end of 1960, however, it had to admit that its efforts had not obtained much success. For this reason, WHO requested the Red Cross to keep fifty doctors in the Congo for a further period of six months, undertaking to cover a part of their cost with the National Societies.

The Red Cross medical action was thus extended until June 30, the date on which WHO undertook to relieve the teams supplied by the National Societies. In spite of numerous difficulties, this action enabled the desired objectives to be reached : to maintain the activity of the hospitals and the health services by urgent measures until the Congolese medical authorities and WHO could take over these tasks for an extended period and to train Congolese capable of undertaking them in the future. This was a remarkable example of international co-operation ; in fact personnel belonging to the Red Cross of several continents comprising teams from Africa, Asia, Oceania and South America, worked for a prolonged period side by side with teams from Europe and North America, something which was entirely without precedent.

In order to express its esteem for the courage, devotion and professional qualities of which the members of the medical teams had shown proof, the ICRC decided to award to each one of them a medal commemorating the medical action in the Congo. The National Societies undertook to hand over the medals to recipients in the following countries : Australia, Austria, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, Germany (Democratic Republic), Germany (Federal Republic), Greece, India, Iran, Ireland, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Sweden, Turkey, United Arab Republic, Venezuela, Yugoslavia.

**Detained persons.**—Continuing the work carried out since the outbreak of the troubles in the Congo, the ICRC attempted to come to the aid of all victims of the events without discrimination. In particular, it intervened energetically on behalf of prisoners,

whether military or civilian, detained in one region or another of the country.

In Katanga, Mr. Tshombe gave permission for another ICRC mission to go to Elisabethville. Two delegates left Geneva on March 15 and, for a month, visited the chief establishments in which were held persons arrested and imprisoned by the Katanga authorities for political reasons. They were pleased to observe that suggestions made during the previous mission<sup>1</sup> had to a large extent been carried out.

Furthermore, in Orientale Province another ICRC delegate (Mr. G. Hoffmann) obtained authorisation, also in March, to visit eight Belgian military who had been taken prisoner in January on the Ruanda Urundi border, and held in Stanleyville. He spoke with them and handed over mail and relief supplies to them. At the beginning of July, the eight prisoners were finally released and the delegate of the ICRC, who had energetically intervened on their behalf, accompanied them from Stanleyville as far as Brussels.

In May the ICRC also obtained authorisation from the central government at Leopoldville for a doctor-delegate, Dr. L. de Chastonay, to visit Mr. Moise Tshombe, President, and Mr. Evariste Kimba, Katanga Minister of Foreign Affairs, then interned at Coquilhatville. Accompanied by a doctor of the Swiss Red Cross, the ICRC representative carried out a thorough medical examination of these two detained persons of note, assured himself that the necessary care would continue to be given them and spoke freely with them. After their transfer to Leopoldville, the same doctor-delegate was again given permission to visit them. As is customary, the reports concerning these various visits were handed only to the detaining authorities.

On the other hand, the ICRC had to admit with regret that it had not been able to obtain the necessary authorisation to assist all political prisoners in the Congo, meeting with setbacks chiefly in Orientale Province, Kivu and Kasai.

**The conflict in Katanga.**—The events in Katanga were to impose additional tasks on the ICRC which had not only to intervene

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<sup>1</sup> See *Annual Report* 1960, p. 15.

on behalf of new batches of prisoners, but to aid numerous other victims of that conflict.

This activity was further extended in December when hostilities, after several weeks of armistice, flared up between the UNO contingents and the Katanga forces. In order to replace Mr. G. Hoffmann, who had returned to Geneva, the ICRC sent Mr. G. C. Senn, who had for many years been an honorary delegate in Africa, to Elisabethville to co-operate with Mr. G. Olivet, who was already on the spot. Mr. A. Melcher, a Swiss resident in Katanga, also gave active and whole-hearted co-operation.

In Leopoldville, the ICRC delegation visited Belgian civilians who had been transferred from Leopoldville by UNO, either as a protective measure against military operations, or because they were suspected of having taken part in the fighting. They were, moreover, very soon released. It also visited foreign volunteers captured by UNO forces, some of whom were in hospital, and transmitted at the request of Katanga Headquarters in Elisabethville all news concerning these to that staff. These visits, moreover, took place regularly from the beginning of the fighting in September, which saw the capture of a certain number of foreign volunteers, and are still continuing for those who have not yet been released. Finally, the delegation also visited members of the Katanga armed forces captured during those operations and transmitted all possible useful information about them to the Elisabethville authorities.

In Katanga the delegates gave aid to prisoners held on both sides. Their representations often had positive results. Thus during the last days of 1961, Mr. Senn visited Katangans held by UNO at the airport of Luano near Elisabethville, then military personnel captured by Katanga forces. He handed over various relief supplies to the prisoners, but above all he negotiated for their exchange and release. He obtained the first successful results on December 28 : 4 Swedes being exchanged for 30 Katangans. Thanks to his pressing representations on subsequent days, new releases took place on January 15, 1962 : 15 military personnel of the United Nations (11 Swedes, 2 Norwegians and 2 Irish) were exchanged for 33 Katanga policemen held by UNO.

Throughout the Katanga crisis the ICRC representatives encountered often considerable obstacles. They succeeded, however,

in organising various relief actions on behalf of the civilian population stricken by the hostilities and in one of which Mr. Georges Olivet met his death. Before relating the circumstances of this tragic event, it would be appropriate to show how the delegates carried out these tasks, which were at the same time effective and not without danger.

The delegates first of all attempted to have civilians evacuated from the battle areas. This they often succeeded in doing although the military situation sometimes prevented them. Such was the case in Uvira Square in the north western European quarter of Elisabethville.

Shortly before his disappearance Mr. Olivet had attempted to aid the inhabitants of this area. However, on December 15, UNO headquarters informed Mr. Senn that the expected evacuation could not take place, but that on the other hand it would be possible to organise, under Red Cross auspices, the supplying of some 200 Europeans and Africans trapped in the square.

Thanks to the efficient co-operation of the Red Cross of Katanga, the delegate of the ICRC was able to organise a relief action which had now become extremely urgent, electricity and water supplies having been cut off. Furthermore, the inhabitants were subjected to a 24-hour curfew.

On December 16, Mr. Senn informed them of the forthcoming arrival of relief. But as there was continuous firing in the area, UNO troops undertook cleaning-up operations to enable the Red Cross vehicles to advance without undue risk. Relief supplies were subsequently held up until December 17. When they finally arrived, there was still sporadic firing from snipers.

When they arrived in Uvira Square, Mr. Senn and his colleagues from the Katanga Red Cross found the Europeans in a state of great anxiety. They were much comforted by seeing the Red Cross vehicles. Meanwhile, their need necessitated the organisation during the same afternoon of a second convoy which brought them the medicaments which they so urgently required.

**The death of Mr. Georges Olivet.**—The above example shows the conditions in which the representatives of the ICRC worked and the risks to which they were exposed. It was whilst carrying

out an action of that sort by going personally to the aid of the direct victims of the struggle, in an ambulance with Red Cross markings, that Georges Olivet met his death.

On previous days he had acted exactly in keeping with the rôle of the Red Cross, which is to mitigate suffering brought on by war. He himself picked up victims lying in the streets, ensured the hospitalisation of the wounded, organised the evacuation of civilians and negotiated truces to enable the Red Cross to fulfil its task of relief. Georges Olivet no doubt knew to what dangers he was exposing himself by thus intervening in the battle of Elisabethville. It was this which marked his end with real heroism.

On December 13 in the last message he sent to Geneva, Georges Olivet stated that he had on several occasions presented himself to UNO headquarters in Elisabethville where the sentries refused to let him pass. His intention was to negotiate a truce for the evacuation of civilians in the battle areas.

On December 14 rumours began circulating, according to which Mr. G. Olivet had disappeared. The ICRC immediately asked the United Nations to carry out searches. Still without news on the next day it instructed its delegate in Leopoldville (Mr. J. de Preux) to proceed at once to Katanga to take part in the investigations.

On the following days, it was confirmed that Mr. Olivet had been seen on the 13th for the last time. Accompanied by Mrs. Nicole Vroonen and Mr. Styts Smeding, both voluntary workers of the Katanga Red Cross, he had taken his place in an ambulance with the intention of going to the headquarters of the United Nations.

On December 23 a telegram arrived from Elisabethville which included the following information :

“ Bodies Olivet and Madame Vroonen of Belgian nationality and Smeding of Dutch nationality found this morning. Bodies were found buried about 20 yards from the ambulance. Ambulance had been hit by machine-gun and bazooka fire . . . ”

The International Committee learned this news with the deepest affliction.

On December 24, 1961, it issued a press release which read mainly as follows :

*The International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva has received from its delegation in the Congo confirmation of the death of its representative, Georges Olivet, mortally struck, with two members of the Katanga Red Cross, whilst carrying aid to the victims of the fighting at Elisabethville.*

*The ICRC wishes to pay public tribute to this faithful servant of the Red Cross, who did not cease, since the beginning of the hostilities in the Congo, from risking himself with exemplary courage in order to mitigate suffering and save many human lives ; for his devotion to the Red Cross ideal he paid with his life.*

Mr. Boissier, President of the ICRC, then made a declaration to the press and radio as follows:

*One recalls the famous statement ' I only believe in causes for which men get themselves killed '. For the Red Cross, or rather for those whom it aids, people are giving their lives, and the International Committee of the Red Cross now numbers one more martyr.*

*For eighteen months the delegates of the ICRC have travelled throughout the Congo by car, on dangerous roads at the mercy of ambushes, in planes which landed somehow or other on airstrips which were often blocked. Everywhere, they have tried to release prisoners, exchange hostages and protect populations threatened by massacre and famine. Only recently, Georges Olivet was sparing no effort, with a love, a faith and a courage which everybody, white and black, admired, because this man was destined to accomplish such a mission.*

*Speaking several native languages, which he had learned whilst in business, he knew how to approach the local inhabitants, to speak to them, to understand them and, above all, to make himself loved.*

*He was confided in and his help was sought. For him, only one thing mattered, to devote himself entirely to a cause to which he had dedicated his life.*

*Thus in Elisabethville, in the middle of the fighting, he made several attempts to cross the enemy lines to save the victims of heavy firing. He did not succeed. He tried once more and that was the end. The end of an earthly existence but the beginning of greater things, to be followed as an example.*

This sad event was keenly felt throughout the world and especially by the Red Cross Societies. Many countries sent messages



of condolence to the ICRC. The world press gave wide prominence to the Elisabethville tragedy and published tributes to those who had died for the Red Cross.

Meanwhile, Mr. F. Siordet, Vice-President of the ICRC, went to Elisabethville to ensure that an official and thorough enquiry was made into those three deaths. A particularly serious blow had in fact been struck against the protective emblem of the Red Cross, recognised by the Geneva Conventions, since an ambulance which was displaying it had been attacked, its occupants being killed. As a result of the observations made by Mr. F. Siordet on the spot, the ICRC proposed to the United Nations that an independent commission be formed for the purpose of enquiring into the circumstances of the case.

**The respect for humanitarian rules.**—Since the beginning of the events in the Congo, the International Committee has neglected no opportunity to have Red Cross ideals and humanitarian rules better respected. Thus when hostilities again broke out on the Katanga border, the delegates of the ICRC made special representations with the Katanga authorities, as well as with the central government of Leopoldville, to ensure the application by troops of the essential provisions of the Geneva Conventions. Furthermore, when it was heard that fresh acts of particularly revolting barbarity had been perpetrated in the Congo, the ICRC considered it advisable to define the limits of its activity in similar circumstances and issued the following communiqué stating in particular :

“ The International Committee has constantly reminded the Congolese authorities *de jure* or *de facto* of the minimum requirements proceeding from the application of the Geneva Conventions and it has frequently intervened, and often with success, in saving numerous lives. However, in areas given over to disorder, it is not possible for it to accomplish its mission with complete effectiveness. The prevention of outrages against human dignity and life is the sole responsibility of the civil or military authorities, whose task it is to assure public order and to see that national and international laws are observed.”

The President of the ICRC also sent a telegram to Mr. Kasavubu, President of the Republic of the Congo, in which he expressed his

deep concern to him as a result of the atrocities which had been reported in various regions of the country, and reminded him that his government, having acceded to the Geneva Conventions, had undertaken to have their provisions respected. The President of the ICRC addressed a solemn appeal to the head of the Congolese State, requesting him to take all measures to avoid the repetition of such acts contrary to recognised humanitarian law.

Finally, in December, the President of the ICRC sent a telegram to the Acting Secretary-General of the United Nations insisting on the urgent necessity of evacuating the wounded, the sick and elements of the civilian population from military operational sectors in various areas of Elisabethville and Katanga, and requested UNO representatives to help the delegates of the ICRC to fulfil their strictly humanitarian mission.

In his reply to Mr. Boissier, U Thant declared: "I would like to take this opportunity of assuring you that UNOC troops will continue to do everything in their power to protect the lives and property of the civilian population and that UNO Command will co-operate with your representatives in Katanga in every possible way for the accomplishment of their humanitarian mission."

**Application of the Geneva Conventions.**—The ICRC took a number of steps to ensure that the forces opposing each other in the Congo respected the Geneva Conventions. Reports of these can be found on p. 47.

**Search for missing persons.**—The ICRC continued this important activity throughout 1961 in connection with the events in the Congo. A description of this is given in the Central Tracing Agency's report on pp. 36-37.

### **Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland**

The delegate of the ICRC in the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Mr. G. C. Senn, has continued his activity on behalf of persons arrested during the disturbances which had broken out in previous years.

In January he visited three penal establishments in Southern Rhodesia: the re-educational centres of Salisbury, Hwa-Hwa and

Enslinsdeel. In May and June he visited the prisons of Lusaka, Bwana Mkubwa, Livingstone, Broken Hill and Katombora in Northern Rhodesia and those of Domasi, Chilva and Zomba in Nyasaland, making a total of 11 visits which were followed up by frequent representations to the detaining Authorities.

### **Angola**

Disturbances having broken out in Angola, the ICRC approached the authorities and the Portuguese Red Cross with a view, as is customary in similar situations, to bring its aid to the victims of the conflict, especially to persons deprived of their liberty.

Furthermore, an ICRC delegate, Mr. P. Gaillard, went to Lisbon on May 10 where he had several talks on the subject with the President of the Portuguese Red Cross, Professor Leonardo de Castro Freire. These talks were continued in Geneva from July 15 to 17 when the latter visited the ICRC, together with Colonel José Victor Mateus Cabral, Secretary-General of the Portuguese Red Cross.

At the end of August, the Portuguese Government informed the ICRC that the authorities and the Portuguese Red Cross had been able, by their own resources, to assist the Angolan refugees victims of the disturbances, and that it did not see the necessity of accepting the ICRC's offers of service on behalf of the prisoners.

### **South Africa**

Mr. H. P. Junod, permanent ICRC delegate in South Africa, returned to Switzerland at the beginning of May.

Owing to his thorough knowledge of the country and of its inhabitants and to his tireless devotion, Mr. Junod has rendered priceless service to the ICRC for the past 20 years.

### **Algeria**

The prolongation of the Algerian conflict in 1961 and the ever-increasing number of victims resulted in an appreciable addition to the ICRC's tasks in Algeria, as well as in France.

As regards aid to detained persons, the ICRC extended its interventions to prisoners and internees of other tendencies, that



† MARCEL JUNOD  
1904-1961

*Member of the ICRC, former delegate in many countries  
since 1935.*



† WILLIAM MICHEL  
1908-1961

*Delegate of the ICRC in  
Paris, in the service of  
the ICRC since 1943.*



† GEORGES OLIVET  
1927-1961

*Delegate of the ICRC.*

is to say, chiefly to activists of European origin. On the other hand, in view of the considerable magnitude of their needs it had to develop its relief action to the regrouped population.

## 1. Aid to detainees in French hands

a) *in Algeria*.—After having been postponed for several months at the request of the French authorities, the 8th mission of the ICRC, consisting of Mr. P. Gaillard, Mr. R. Vust and Dr. J. de Chastonay, went to Algeria from January 25 to February 23. It covered the whole country and made 61 visits to Algerian nationalist internees and prisoners, distributed in the following: 36 transit and screening centres, 5 military internment centres (reserved for fighting men captured with their arms), 6 assembly centres (reserved for administrative internees), 8 prisons and 5 hospitals.

The report relative to this mission was handed to the French Government on March 7. Furthermore, Mr. Gaillard made his chief observations and suggestions verbally to Mr. Jean Morin, delegate-general of the Government, to General Gambiez, then Commander-in-Chief of the French Forces in Algeria, as well as to Mr. Louis Joxe, Minister of State in charge of Algerian Affairs, who received him in Paris on March 6.

In addition to taking numerous steps concerning individual cases, Mr. Vust, the permanent delegate in Algeria, also visited 12 places of detention in July, of which 5 contained "activist" prisoners and internees of European origin.

Finally, from November 24 to December 16, the ninth ICRC mission consisting of the same delegates as on the previous one, visited 51 places of detention, including hospitals. In 16 of these camps and prisons the detainees were activists of European stock.

On December 15, the head of the delegation submitted a first report of the mission to Mr. Jean Morin, Delegate-General, as well as to General Ailleret, Commander-in-Chief of the French Forces. The official report was handed to the French Government at the beginning of January, 1962.

During these two missions various relief, to a value of Sw.Frs. 23,000 was distributed among the detainees.

b) *in France*.—The ICRC continued actively to intervene in 1961 on behalf of prisoners and internees.

After the death, much lamented by the ICRC, of Mr. William Michel, delegate in Paris, Mr. Pierre Boissier became head of the delegation at the end of January and in particular made numerous representations relative to the fate of the detainees.

Together with other delegates who had come from Geneva, he made two series of visits to places of detention in France.

During the course of the first of these, from March to July, the delegates went to 20 establishments, namely to the prisons, 1 penal centre, 1 “*centre d'identification judiciaire*” and 4 centres of assigned residence for administrative internees. Of these last-named establishments, 3 were occupied by interned Algerian nationalists and 1 by activists of European stock. This mission was made the subject of an official report submitted on June 21 to the French Government. On that occasion Mr. P. Gaillard and Mr. P. Boissier were received in Paris by several representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, of the Interior and of Justice, with whom they examined various questions concerning detention conditions.

The second series of visits took place between November 5 and 20, during the hunger strike observed by Algerian detainees in most of the prisons in France. The delegates visited 7 penal establishments, 5 prisons, the “*centre d'identification judiciaire*” at Vincennes and the hospital at Garches in which the three ministers of the GPRA, Mr. Ben Bella, Mr. Air Ahmed and Mr. Khider were then interned.

At the end of this mission, the ICRC submitted a certain number of suggestions to the French Government aimed at improving conditions imposed on persons accused or convicted of offences against the security of the State. It proposed extending these conditions uniformly to all penal establishments in France and Algeria. Taking these proposals into account the authorities drew up a new, more liberal, statute for this category of detainee.

The ICRC communicated these new provisions to the representatives of the Algerian detainees, who then decided to end their hunger-strike.

Thanks to gifts from various sources, the ICRC was able, on several occasions, to send relief supplies to the prisoners and internees. Thus in January it had distributed books of study (handbooks of grammar in French and Arabic, of geography, history and science) to a value of about Sw.Frs. 6,500, in several prisons in which the detainees had organised school courses. In March the ICRC sent underclothing of a value of approximately Sw.Frs. 30,000 to the centres of assigned residence.

It also distributed an amount exceeding Sw.Frs. 30,000 between a certain number of penal establishments to buttress welfare funds created by the detainees to help those amongst themselves who were in greater need.

*Aid to the regrouped population.*—In view of the increasing number of the necessitous and of the considerable extent of want among the population massed in some 2,000 regroupment centres in Algeria, the ICRC developed the action undertaken for more than five years on behalf of this category of civilian victims of the conflict. One of its delegates went to Algeria in June and July in order to examine with the representative of the general delegation of the French Red Cross, ways of increasing this aid, especially on behalf of women and children who form the greater part of these populations.

In 1961 the relief sent by the ICRC to Algeria reached a total amount of about Sw.Frs. 850,000.

It consisted chiefly of :

- 70 tons of powdered milk (from surplus dairy stocks placed at the ICRC's disposal by the Swiss Confederation)
- 30 tons of sugar
- 15 tons of soap
- 1 ton of cocoa powder
- 2,000 flasks of multi-vitamin
- 350,000 pills of cod-liver oil
- 10,000 flasks and tubes of ophthalmic drops and ointment
- 1,000 blankets
- 10,000 new sets of clothing for children
- one large lot of used clothing
- one lot of cloth for making up women's dresses.



These gifts from various sources were distributed by the mobile teams and the local Committees of the French Red Cross, in co-operation with the permanent ICRC delegate, Mr. R. Vust.

## **2. Aid to French prisoners in the hands of the National Army of Liberation (ALN)**

In spite of the lack of success of its previous interventions<sup>1</sup>, the ICRC in 1961 ceaselessly continued making representations to the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic, in order to obtain the names and news of French military and civilians captured by the ALN in Algeria. Thus at the beginning of March a delegate, Mr. P. Gaillard, went to Tunis in order to examine the position with the GPRA created by the latter's decision to accede to the Geneva Conventions. The ICRC furthermore made numerous contacts on this subject with the representative of the "Algerian Red Crescent" in Geneva.

In November its requests having remained unanswered, it decided to send a further special mission to Tunis. Consisting of Miss M. van Berchem, a member of the Committee, and of Mr. P. Gaillard, this was received on November 22 by Mr. Ben Youssef Ben Khedda, President of the GPRA and Mr. Krim Belkacem, Vice-President, who promised to communicate the names of five French prisoners to the ICRC representatives. On December 30, the GPRA informed the ICRC that it was prepared to release two French military: Yves Lepreux and Guy Hurtaud. Mr. P. Gaillard then immediately proceeded to Tunis. He took charge of the two men and took them to the French Consulate, which promptly had them repatriated.

On that occasion, the delegate also requested Mr. Ben Bahmed, President of the "Algerian Red Crescent", to give them authorisation to write to their families, in accordance with the provisions of the Third Geneva Convention, unfortunately without any result.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Annual Report* 1959, pp. 10-12, and 1960, pp. 17-18.

## THE BIZERTA CONFLICT

During the armed conflict which broke out in July 1961 in Bizerta, the ICRC undertook the tasks of assistance which it has to perform in such situations. Immediately after the first fighting it sent, as a matter of urgency to the Tunisian Red Crescent, 200 flasks of blood plasma and 200 flasks of albumin for the wounded transported to the hospitals in the area. A delegate from Geneva (Mr. M. Rouge) escorted these relief supplies.

Two days later in reply to an appeal from the Tunisian Red Crescent, another delegate (Mr. J. Muralti, who was succeeded by Mr. M. Martin) went to Tunis, in order to carry out the mission of neutral intermediary assigned to the ICRC by the Geneva Conventions and to ensure the protection of essential humanitarian interests: cease-fire enabling the evacuation of the wounded and the burial of the dead, respect for the emblem of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent, free passage for ambulances, visits to prisoners, etc. These tasks, which naturally involved a great number of interventions with both sides and constant coming and going across the opposing lines, were carried out in close co-operation with the Tunisian Red Crescent.

From July 23 to September 10, the ICRC delegate made seventeen visits to Tunisian prisoners held in the five camps set up in Bizerta. At the end of August, the ICRC sent 20,000 packets of cigarettes to the Tunisian Red Crescent for the prisoners.

On the other hand, the Tunisian authorities having arrested a certain number of French nationals resident in Tunisia, the ICRC delegate also intervened on their behalf. He obtained authorisation to visit the military camp of Sousse, in which the majority had been interned with a group of French military captured at Bizerta. The delegate went there three times and, in addition, made two visits to some internees undergoing treatment at the regional hospital of Sousse.

Finally, Mr. M. Martin was authorised to visit, at the civilian prison of Tunis, one French military arrested before the events of Bizerta.

On September 10, following on an agreement between the governments concerned, the Tunisian prisoners and the French

interned of Sousse were exchanged at Bizerta under the auspices of the ICRC and handed over to their respective authorities. In this capacity as neutral intermediary, the ICRC delegate contributed, in co-operation with the Tunisian Red Crescent, to prepare this exchange. This took place at Menzel-Djemil in no-man's land between the two opposing military barriers, in the presence of the representatives of the Tunisian Red Crescent and the French Red Cross. The prisoners, 778 Tunisians and 217 French, passed in front of two control commissions charged with establishing their identity.

The released French internees were then taken care of by the welfare services of the French armed forces in Bizerta and, shortly afterwards, repatriated to France.

## **NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST**

### **United Arab Republic**

Continuing its assistance to stateless persons in Egypt wishing to emigrate, the ICRC delegation in Cairo, directed by Mr. Edmond Muller, again came to the aid of nearly 1,500 persons in 1961. On June 23 this action reaching its end, Mr. E. Jaquet, Deputy Head of the Central Tracing Agency, was sent from Geneva to Cairo for a period of four months to organise this final phase.

On December 31 the delegation closed down.

This action, which had been started just after the Suez conflict, was undertaken with the co-operation of several organisations specialising in assisting emigrants. It enabled nearly 14,000 stateless persons, Jews for the most part, to leave Egypt for various countries of asylum under satisfactory conditions.

### **Israel**

In January 1961, Dr. H. Bernath, honorary ICRC delegate, visited two Arab nationals detained in the prisons of Tel Mond and Ramleh.