

Regional Delegations

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Northern Ireland

In 1974, two ICRC delegates carried out a further series of visits—the sixth since the emergency regulations were introduced in Northern Ireland in 1971—to detainees held on the basis of an administrative order. They proceeded to Maze Prison on 7 and 9 May and to Armagh Prison on 9 May.

The delegates spoke freely with detainees of their own choice, without witnesses.

The full text of the report forwarded to the United Kingdom Government was made public by it.

Regional Delegations

The following regional delegations have been set up by the ICRC since 1970: at Yaoundé (for West Africa), Addis Ababa (for East Africa), Caracas (for Latin America), Kuala Lumpur (for South-East Asia) and Beirut (for the Middle East). In February 1974, the regional delegations in Africa were transferred from Yaoundé to Lomé and from Addis Ababa to Nairobi. By making such moves from one capital to another, the ICRC hopes to strengthen the particularly close links that are forged when a regional delegation is set up in a given country. In Cameroon, as in Ethiopia, the regional delegates enjoyed throughout the period of their mission the support of the authorities and the co-operation of the National Red Cross Societies.

A new regional delegation was set up at New Delhi, covering the following countries: Republic of Afghanistan, People's Republic of Bangladesh, Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma, Kingdom of Bhutan, Republic of India, Republic of the Maldives, Kingdom of Nepal, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Sri Lanka. The regional delegate took up his post in December 1974.

The regional delegates established in these bases paid visits to the countries in their respective sectors (see below), and several countries were also visited by delegates-general or other ICRC Senior staff.

The main purpose of such missions, whether carried out by regional delegates or by delegates-general, was to establish continuous and fruitful contacts with National Red Cross Societies and Governments. In this way the ICRC was able to foster interest in the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 (protection of victims of conflicts) and in the principles of the Red Cross, and to develop its assistance to detainees. These missions also allowed the ICRC to become better informed about areas where conflicts or disturbances might break out and to gather the logistic information that might become necessary in the event of any relief actions.

In the field of propagation of the Geneva Conventions and Red Cross principles, the delegates endeavoured to promote the dissemination of the documentation prepared to that end by the ICRC and to make the Red Cross movement better known. For that purpose, they made contact with Ministries of Defence with a view to the distribution of the "Soldier's Manual" ¹ and the "Summary of the Conventions" among members of the armed forces, and the organization of courses on international humanitarian law and lectures in military colleges; with Ministries of Education for the introduction of the School Textbook ² and the Teacher's Manual in schools; and with Ministries of Health, medical circles and universities with regard to the introduction of courses on international humanitarian law.

The contacts above were generally made through the National Society concerned, which in most instances co-operated actively with the ICRC. The ICRC, in its turn, took an interest in these Societies' activities and gave them material support within the limits of its possibilities. ³

In addition, ICRC delegates took part in the various Training Institutes which the League organized for National Societies, and in other Red Cross regional meetings. ⁴

With regard to assistance to detainees, the delegates requested authorization to visit those places of detention where "political" detainees were often to be found.

¹ See p. 79.

² See p. 79.

³ See table of relief supplies, pp. 57 to 63.

⁴ See p. 81.

In this Report, the term "political detainees" includes persons sentenced or detained not only on account of their political ideas, but also on account of offences committed mainly for political or ideological motives. In using this term for convenience of expression the ICRC does not seek to prejudge the status of those detainees. The purpose of all its visits is exclusively humanitarian, namely to ascertain the prisoners' conditions of detention and to put forward, if necessary, proposals for their improvement to the responsible authorities. The ICRC does not enter into any discussion with the authorities or with prisoners regarding the grounds on which the prisoners it visits are detained.

In the course of these visits, delegates converse as they please with detainees, without witnesses. They submit their conclusions, first to the person in charge of the place of detention and then to his military or civilian superiors. Their findings and recommendations are later incorporated in an official report sent by the ICRC in Geneva to the government concerned and to that government only. The ICRC considers these reports as confidential, and any public statements are confined to giving the names of the places of detention visited and the dates on which the visits took place.

In some countries, ICRC delegates are authorized to see only certain specific categories of detainees; for instance, persons who have been convicted or charged, or those interned on the basis of an administrative order; sometimes also visits may only be made at widely separated intervals. In all those cases, the ICRC endeavours to obtain authorization to visit a wider circle of persons or to carry out visits at shorter intervals.

In addition, the ICRC contributes to the improvement of the living conditions of the prisoners visited by supplying them with material aids.

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Africa

Within the framework of the ICRC's regular missions as described above, the delegate-general and regional delegates for Africa proceeded in 1974 to the following twenty-nine countries: Algeria, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad,

People's Republic of the Congo, Dahomey, Ethiopia, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Upper Volta and Zaire.

VISITS TO PLACES OF DETENTION

In eight of these countries the ICRC delegates were granted authorization to visit places of detention:

Cameroon: Six places of detention containing about 5,290 detainees were visited.

People's Republic of the Congo: One place of detention containing about 400 detainees was visited.

Ethiopia: Twenty-six places of detention containing about 16,580 detainees were visited.

The Gambia: Two places of detention containing about 200 detainees were visited.

Guinea-Bissau: One place of detention containing 33 detainees was visited. The visit took place before the country became independent on 10 September 1974, and the detainees were all members of the PAIGC, who had been granted prisoner-of-war status by the Portuguese Government.

Liberia: One place of detention containing about 310 detainees was visited.

Mauritania: One place of detention containing about 60 detainees was visited on two separate occasions.

Rwanda: Eleven places of detention containing about 5,300 detainees were visited.

Persons detained on political grounds or for offences of a political nature had often been put together with other prisoners, and their status was not always clearly determined. The ICRC consequently offered its assistance to all prisoners and visited prisons as such, rather than specific categories of detainees.¹ The total

¹ This also applies to Latin America and the Middle East.

value of assistance supplied by the ICRC in the 49 places of detention in Africa visited in 1974 amounted to 339,250 Swiss francs.¹

MATERIAL AID TO NATIONAL RED CROSS SOCIETIES

Nineteen African National Societies received from the ICRC material aid worth 1,089,100 francs, including foodstuffs donated by the European Economic Community and the Swiss Government.¹

Latin America

As in 1973, the activities of the ICRC regional delegation in Latin American countries had to be somewhat curtailed by reason of the continuation of the special action in Chile,² on which regional delegates had to concentrate their efforts. Between February and December 1974, the delegate-general and regional delegates for Latin America nevertheless visited the following thirteen countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

VISITS TO PLACES OF DETENTION

In six of these countries, the ICRC delegates requested and were granted authorization to visit places of detention:

Bolivia: Eleven places of detention containing over 1,070 detainees were visited.

Colombia: Nineteen places of detention containing over 13,700 detainees were visited.

Ecuador: Three places of detention containing over 700 detainees were visited.

Honduras: One place of detention containing over 2,400 detainees was visited.

Paraguay: Seven places of detention containing over 1,600 detainees were visited.

Uruguay: Four places of detention containing nearly 2,500 detainees were visited.

¹ For details, see table of relief supplies on p. 57.

² See p. 42.

The total value of the aid provided by the ICRC to the 45 places of detention visited in Latin America in 1974 amounted to 100,200 Swiss francs.¹

MATERIAL AID TO NATIONAL RED CROSS SOCIETIES

The ICRC provided eight Latin American National Societies with material aid worth 7,659,450 Swiss francs (not including the special action in Chile). This sum includes gifts of foodstuffs from the European Economic Community and the Swiss Government.

South-East Asia

Delegates attached to the ICRC regional delegation for South-East Asia visited the following eight countries in 1974: Brunei, Burma, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

VISITS TO PLACES OF DETENTION

In six of these countries, delegates were granted authorization to visit the places of detention where political detainees were interned:

Indonesia: Sixty places of detention containing about 20,000 detainees were visited.

Malaysia: Six places of detention containing nearly 900 detainees were visited.

Philippines: Twenty places of detention containing about 2,700 detainees of various categories were visited a first time in March and again in December when the number of detainees had fallen to about 2,000.

Singapore: Two places of detention containing three detainees were visited.

Sri Lanka: Nine places of detention containing about 1,390 detainees were visited.

Thailand: Two places of detention containing 23 detainees were visited.

¹ For details, see table of relief supplies on p. 59.

The total value of the aid provided by ICRC delegates to the places of detention they visited in South-East Asia in 1974 amounted to 128,300 Swiss francs.¹

MATERIAL AID TO NATIONAL RED CROSS SOCIETIES

The ICRC provided two National Societies in South-East Asia with material aid to a value of 177,400 Swiss francs,¹ besides the aid furnished in Indo-China and the Asian sub-continent. This sum includes foodstuffs donated by the European Economic Community and the Swiss Government.

REUNITING OF FAMILIES

The ICRC maintained its contacts with the National Red Cross of the Republic of Korea and the Red Cross Society of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. These two Societies were engaged in talks aimed at establishing procedures acceptable to both parties for tracing missing persons and eventually reuniting members of families separated since the war in Korea.

The ICRC renewed its previous offers, remaining at the disposal of both parties should they find themselves in need of the services of the Central Tracing Agency.

Middle East

Concurrently with the action undertaken by the ICRC in the countries directly involved in the conflict between Israel and the Arab countries, regional delegates and the delegate-general for the Middle East visited the following four countries: Iran, Iraq, the Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.

In the context of the conflict in *Iraqi Kurdistan*, the ICRC offered its services to the parties and placed medical supplies at the disposal of the victims. At the end of 1974, it had not received any reply to its offers of service.

In the *Yemen Arab Republic*, ICRC delegates carried out two rounds of visits to places of detention. On the second occasion the delegates were granted authorization to visit eight prisons con-

¹ For details, see table of relief supplies on p. 60.

taining over 1,200 detainees. In the course of those visits, the delegates distributed relief items to a value of about 53,600 Swiss francs.

In the *People's Democratic Republic of Yemen*, the ICRC closed down the delegation it had set up at Aden in 1967. Its activities for the benefit of political detainees had almost completely ceased at the beginning of 1973.

In both these last countries, the value of material assistance forwarded by the ICRC to the local Red Crescent Societies for distribution to needy persons amounted to 260,000 Swiss francs, including foodstuffs donated by the European Economic Community and the Swiss Government. ¹

Relief Service

SUPPORT FOR THE ICRC'S TRADITIONAL ACTIVITIES

In carrying out its traditional activities during 1974, the ICRC continued to provide various types of relief, such as:

- medical supplies, clothing and foodstuffs to prisoners of war, civilian detainees and civilian populations victims of the conflict between Israel and the Arab countries;
 - medical assistance to detainees visited by ICRC delegates in the various zones of intervention;
 - assistance to National Red Cross Societies;
 - assistance to certain national liberation movements.
- (See tables below.)

These activities were usually planned and budgeted in 6-monthly periods. During 1974, a total of 2,257,163 Swiss francs was spent for the dispatch of supplies from Geneva by the Relief Service and for purchases made on the spot by delegations. ²

FOOD AID

Under agreements reached with the European Economic Community (EEC) and the Swiss Government, the ICRC was able to

¹ See table of relief supplies, p. 62.

² See Financial Table VII, p. 108 for the interim total of actual expenditure.