

Indo-China

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IV. — INDO-CHINA

The meeting which took place at the beginning of 1949 between representatives of the French Red Cross and of the Vietnam Red Cross organization¹ did not take place in the presence of the ICRC Delegate (who was at that time held up in Indonesia). No agreement was reached.

A new meeting was fixed for February 1949, but the Vietnam Red Cross organization stated by radio that it could not be held.

In spite of wireless appeals to it and to the Nambo (South Indo-China) Army Medical Service, it was not possible to resume negotiations.

In July, 1949, the ICRC made contact at Bangkok with the head of the Vietnam representation in South-East Asia, and made a fresh appeal, by radio, to the Nambo Army Medical Service, to accord facilities for the exchange of messages and correspondence. The Service replied that such arrangements were not within their competence, being a matter for the Government ; they added, however, that all French prisoners in Southern Indo-China, military and civilian, were well treated.

The Delegate came to Geneva from Indonesia, and on his advice, the Committee decided to try a direct approach to President Ho-Chi-Minh. A letter was sent to the President through the Vietnam representative at Bangkok, to whom it was delivered in December, 1949. The Committee, after recalling its past activity in Indo-China, and especially that for the benefit of Vietnam citizens, requested that one of its Delegates be received with a view to making arrangements for ICRC relief work for interned persons, and, if possible, for the civilian population. The démarche was unsuccessful.

We may recall that a gift entrusted to the ICRC by the Vietnamese in France had been divided into two parts.¹ The first was sent, in December 1948, to the Vietnam Delegation at Bangkok, to purchase medical supplies and surgical instruments ;

¹ See *Report 1947-1948*, p. 89.

the second was employed partially in March and in May, 1949, to furnish food, clothing and medical supplies to Vietnamese interned by the French authorities.

V. — INDONESIA

The conflict which flared up again in December, 1948, between the Indonesians and the Dutch, ended only in December, 1949, on the formation, by agreement between the two parties, of the United States of Indonesia.

During the year—until the Indonesian question was settled by the Hague Round Table Conference—the ICRC continued to operate in accordance with the *modus vivendi* established under its auspices at the end of 1948, between the Dutch Red Cross and the Indonesian Red Cross organization.¹

Delegates visited camps where thousands of Indonesian prisoners—disarmed military personnel, political prisoners, or persons charged with specific offences—were held. Many improvements were obtained—relaxation of discipline, better housing and food, better facilities for correspondence—from the Netherlands authorities.

It was possible to increase this line of activity in September, 1949, when a new Delegate from Geneva arrived in Djakarta; he at once visited the camps in Sumatra, some of which had never been inspected.

Prisoners of War — The ICRC Delegates for South-East Asia and for Djakarta had numerous discussions on the humanitarian aspects of their work with the members of the United Nations Commission on Indonesia, and with the Dutch and Indonesian Working Committees, appointed to settle numerous questions of interest to the ICRC, including the release and the exchange of prisoners and internees.

Delegates also made contact with the Republican leaders in connexion with Netherlands military personnel, posted missing or captured.

¹ See *Report 1947-1948*, p. 92.