

Africa

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I. PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD

1. AFRICA

Angola

With permission from the Portuguese government, Mr. Hoffmann went to Angola on June 22. Accompanied by the President of the Luanda branch of the Portuguese Red Cross, he was received by the Governor-General of Angola who gave his full support for Mr. Hoffmann's mission.

After visiting the Luanda hospital for the Portuguese armed forces, including the hospital's penitentiary division where some captive rebels were being treated, Mr. Hoffmann went to the " Pavilhao Prisional de Policia internacional e de Defesa do Estado " in Luanda, where political prisoners are held.

In the course of his mission, Mr. Hoffmann inspected a prison camp in the Cuando-Cubango district some 15 miles from Serpa Pinto, the " Campo de Trabalho de Missombo ", a detention centre in the Moçamedes district, and the " Campo de Recuperação Social de San Nicolau ".

In all places visited, the delegate was given a free hand to enquire into detention conditions.

Burundi

Further trouble occurred in 1966; the gendarmerie attempted a mutiny. Executions and many arrests having been reported, Mr. Senn, ICRC delegate, went to Bujumbura in June. After renewing contact with the authorities, he visited the Central Mbimpa Prison in Bujumbura on June 17 where he discussed detention conditions in private with some of the detainees. On June 19 he inspected the Muramvya prison some 35 miles north of Bujumbura where 702 political detainees were being held and whom he supplied with soap. On July 8, Mr. Senn visited Gitega

prison where there were 661 detainees, 149 being "remand prisoners" (political). On all these visits, Mr. Senn was accompanied by the Crown Prosecutor. No complaints were made by detainees. Detention conditions as a whole left much to be desired and Mr. Senn brought the shortcomings to the notice of the authorities.

Congo

At the beginning of January Mr. Senn went to Kinshasa on a general liaison mission. During his stay, which was prolonged until the end of the month, he had many contacts with the Congolese authorities. In particular he discussed with them measures for the repatriation of Congolese refugees, a problem in connection with which he had mediated in order to bring about an agreement of principle between the governments of Uganda and the Congo. In September 1966, the ICRC learned that fighting had broken out between the Katanga gendarmerie and the National Congolese Army in the region of Kisangani (ex-Stanleyville) resulting in many victims. In addition, the attack on the Portuguese Embassy in Kinshasa on September 24 gave rise to fears for the lives of Portuguese residents in the Congo. In view of the gravity of the situation, Mr. Senn was directed to go to Kinshasa where he arrived on October 4, accompanied by Mr. Ph. Züger, assistant delegate. According to the information Mr. Senn was able to gather in the Congolese capital the situation had returned to normal and the Portuguese section of the population was no longer in danger. He immediately endeavoured to obtain permission to go to Kisangani but unfortunately, when on the point of boarding the plane, he was forbidden to make the trip, by order of the President. Consequently Mr. Senn and his assistant decided to return to Geneva without having been able to fulfil their mission. The ICRC, after receiving its delegates' report, deplored the refusal of the Congolese government which until then had granted delegates the necessary facilities to accomplish their missions. In a memorandum dated November 23, 1966, it conveyed to the Congolese government its concern at this change of attitude and expressed the hope that no future obstruction will be placed in the way of ICRC humanitarian missions.

Ghana

When, on October 29, at Accra airport, the Guinean delegation to the OAU Conference in Addis Ababa was arrested, the ICRC was asked to intervene for the welfare of the detainees. Previously, the ICRC had been asked to intercede for the release of some hundred Ghana nationals who, according to Accra, were being held against their will in Guinea.

Although neither of these questions came within the ICRC's traditional scope, it instructed Mr. Hoffmann, its delegate general, to go to Accra to find out whether the plight of the Guinean delegates gave rise to any humanitarian problems justifying action. The ICRC delegate soon learned that both problems were being dealt with through diplomatic channels and called for no intervention by the ICRC.

Malawi

Mr. Senn went to Malawi on May 18. His programme in East Africa included the renewal of contacts with the authorities and Red Cross of this country. In the course of a meeting with Dr. Banda the Prime Minister, Mr. Senn raised the matter of the National Society's development. Being concerned also for political detainees, he visited the Dzeleke camp and the Libongwe and Zomba prisons.

Mozambique

Thanks to the facilities granted by the Portuguese government, the ICRC continued its mission in favour of prisoners. On arrival in Lourenço Marques on May 30, Mr. G. Hoffmann made contact, as is customary, with the Governor-General, the Portuguese Red Cross Committee and the local authorities. He then went to the Lourenço Marques prison of Cadeida da Machava where there were a number of political prisoners, and to the Portuguese military hospital.

On June 9, he was received in Nampula by the district Governor, the Head of the Army Staff, and by the local committee of the Portuguese Red Cross. He visited the town's military hospital and prison in which there were some political detainees awaiting transfer to the capital. From Nampula the ICRC delegate went to

Vila Cabral, the main town of the Nyassa district, where he visited the military headquarters, the civilian hospital and the reception centre for African civilians (men, women and children) having fled from the areas of disturbance. From Vila Cabral, Mr. Hoffmann returned to Lourenço Marques. From there he went to the Limpopo valley to visit the “ Campo de Trabalho prisional ” at Mabalane where captured members of the rebel forces are held in detention some 200 miles from the capital. The ICRC delegate interviewed several of them without witnesses.

Mr. Hoffmann was given the necessary facilities everywhere, both by the civilian and the military authorities as well as by the Portuguese Red Cross.

Nigeria

Serious trouble broke out in 1966 in various regions of Nigeria. Alarmed by the high number of victims and by the large refugee movements, the ICRC directed Mr. Hoffmann to go to Nigeria with the dual purpose of examining the situation and determining ways and means of assisting the victims. In the course of this mission, from November 10 to December 4, Mr. Hoffmann first had a number of contacts in Lagos before his tour of inspection in various regions of the country.

He had useful talks with the local authorities and Red Cross Provincial Presidents at Kano, Zaria and Kaduna in the North and at Enugu in the East. On return to Lagos, he examined in co-operation with the leaders of the National Society the problems facing the Red Cross as a result of the general situation. He also assisted the National Society to set up a tracing service to seek missing persons in various regions of Nigeria.

Portuguese Guinea

Following up his 1965 mission in this region, Mr. Hoffmann intervened in several countries in 1966, for the benefit of Portuguese military personnel captured by forces for the liberation of Portuguese Guinea. He was able to arrange for permission to be given the prisoners to correspond with their families but he was not, unfortunately, allowed to visit them.

Rhodesia

Mr. Senn arrived in Salisbury in February. After preliminary enquiries and contacts with the relevant government authorities he again visited political detainees in several prisons and detention centres. He made a number of trips within the country to obtain permission from local detention authorities to visit, in March, the Gonagudzingwa, Sikombela and Wha Wha detention centres. He also visited the central prison, the Gwelo prison for women, and the prisons of Queque, Khami and Salisbury.

Mr. Senn reported on these visits to the local police authorities and the relevant government ministries. He negotiated with the authorities for certain improvements in detention conditions. His suggestions were all well received.

In addition, in response to a request from the authorities and the Red Cross, Mr. Senn, accompanied by the Secretary of State for the Interior, inspected some parts of the South of the country which were suffering from drought and famine. Following this fact-finding mission and after examining the needs of the local population, Mr. Senn was able to make some useful recommendations to the authorities concerned.

Uganda

When conflict occurred at the end of May between the Kingdom of Buganda and the central government of Uganda, with military intervention in the insurrectionist territory, the National Society appealed to the ICRC. It was encountering difficulty in carrying out its mission and requested the presence of a delegate. In response to this appeal the ICRC directed Mr. Senn to go to Uganda. On arrival in Kampala on June 1, Mr. Senn examined the situation with the Uganda Red Cross and endeavoured to obtain audiences with the authorities in order to put to them the case in favour of the National Society's intervention. He also applied for permission to visit persons arrested as a result of the events. His efforts in this connection were in vain. Mr. Senn had to leave Kampala without visiting detention centres although he had been authorized to do so on previous missions. On June 14, the Minister for Internal Affairs confirmed in writing the rejection of our delegate's request.

Mr. Senn returned to Kampala at the end of August to enquire into the plight of a number of persons who were arrested during the May disturbances and still held in detention.

2. LATIN AMERICA

Cuba

Mr. P. Jequier, delegate general for Latin America, was in Havana from December 9 to 16, 1966, to discuss Cuban Red Cross development with the leaders of that National Society. Mr. Gilberto Cervantes Nuñez, President of the Cuban Red Cross, confirmed in his talks with Mr. Jequier the important work carried out by the Society. It has a large ambulance service of 200 vehicles throughout the island. Over 300 first-aid posts in all provinces are operated by the Cuban Red Cross.

In view of the ICRC's constant interest in the welfare of political detainees, Mr. Jequier endeavoured to obtain permission, through the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, to visit detention centres. However, the Cuban authorities refused.

In addition, even an offer to provide medical supplies to establishments where there were sick detainees was accepted neither by the Cuban Red Cross nor the authorities.

Dominican Republic

A year after the serious events which occurred in this country, Mr. Jequier returned there and stayed for a week in Santo Domingo.

He observed that the Dominican Red Cross has resumed its normal peace-time activities. After the ordeal of last year, Mr. Manuel E. Saladín Vélez, the President of the National Society, and all members of the Red Cross, are imbued with that spirit of service and selflessness which enables the National Society to carry out its essential and beneficent work.

Apart from its usual activities, the Dominican Red Cross is keenly interested in developing the workshop for the manufacture of artificial limbs, which was set up with U.N. assistance in Santo Domingo.