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REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

AFRICA ¹

Early in 1955, the events in North Africa led the ICRC to offer its services to the French Government, to perform its humanitarian duties in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. In a letter dated February 2, the President of the Council of Ministers stated that the French Government was prepared to authorise representatives of the ICRC to proceed to Algeria and Morocco, to visit places of detention, and, if they wished, to converse without witnesses with persons under detention.

Two ICRC missions were sent to *North Africa*. A few days earlier, M. Michel, Head of the ICRC Delegation in France, had established preliminary contacts with the authorities, with the assistance of MM. Vautier and Vust, resident delegates of the ICRC in Casablanca and Algiers respectively.

The ICRC mission to Morocco was composed of two delegates sent from Geneva, MM. Gaillard and Maunoir ; owing to illness, the latter was replaced, from March 7, by Dr. Daulte. From February 23 to March 30, 1955, the International Committee's delegates visited 41 places of detention and were able, whenever necessary, to converse freely with the prisoners and camp representatives. Conversations were held in French and, in some cases, internees who spoke French served as interpreters for their comrades who did not speak the language. The duration of the mission did not exceed one month ; on account of the remote situation of places of detention, the delegates covered over 7,000 kilometers, even to some far distant regions in South Morocco.

The ICRC mission to *Algeria* was composed of MM. Bovey, Gaillard and Maunoir, from Geneva. From April 12 to 18, the

¹ ICRC Delegations : British Central Africa, Algeria, Morocco and Union of South Africa.

mission covered the three departments of Algiers, Constantine and Oran, and 43 places of detention were visited. In several cases, the International Committee's representatives were authorised to converse freely with the detained persons; after the interviews their suggestions were placed before the camp commanders.

As customary, a report on the visits and the conditions of detention was sent by the ICRC to the French authorities.

In the summer of 1955, the situation in North Africa having become more serious, the ICRC again requested authority to send missions. It also took the opportunity of reminding North African authorities of the fundamental principles of the Geneva Conventions.

In August, the ICRC approached the British authorities to inform them of its wish to be allowed to carry out its traditional humanitarian duties on behalf of victims of events in *Kenya*. The approach did not bring the result hoped for. The British Red Cross informed the ICRC, however, that, in some cases, it gave direct assistance to child victims of disturbances.

The International Committee's resident delegates in *British Central Africa* (M. Senn), the *South African Union* (M. Junod), *Algeria* (M. Vust) and *Morocco* (M. Vautier) continued, as in previous years, to remain in contact with authorities and Red Cross Societies.

AMERICA ¹

For a second time within a few months the ICRC was able to lend its services to a National Society of *Central America*, and to assume the duties specially assigned to it by the Geneva Conventions of 1949, in its capacity of a specifically neutral and impartial institution and intermediary.

On being informed, in January 1955, of the disturbance which had broken out in *Costa Rica*, and although the Government of that country had not so far acceded to the Geneva Conventions

¹ ICRC Delegations: Argentine Republic, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela.