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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 <sup>1</sup>

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

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<sup>1</sup> ICRC Delegations : Argentine Republic, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela.

of 1949, the ICRC made a successful offer of service to the Costa Rican Red Cross Society, to which it made a special point of delegating M. Jequier, member of the direction of the *Central Agency*, whose mission to Guatemala had led to such satisfactory results.<sup>1</sup>

The International Committee's representative arrived in San José on January 29. He at once perceived, and appreciated, the efforts made by the Costa Rican Red Cross Society to assist the victims of events, in spite of considerable difficulties due to the remote situation of the fighting area and the bad state of the highways. He was granted authority to visit prisoners captured in armed conflict by the regular forces, who were under detention in a prison and two barracks, in San José ; he was able to converse freely with prisoners and political detainees ; he followed up the visits by making various suggestions to the authorities, and the Costa Rican Red Cross, for the improvement of the internees' conditions.

At Penas Blancas, in the fighting area, on the border line between Costa Rica and Nicaragua, the representative of the ICRC encountered the Red Cross teams of both countries. It was the first time that, in such circumstances, a meeting of this description had taken place on the frontiers of two countries, in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva Conventions applied to the case of internal disturbances.

On February 9, the delegate proceeded to *Nicaragua*, where some Costarican nationals who took part in the fighting had been driven back, captured and interned. He visited two places of detention in Managua, assisted the internees, facilitated the exchange of news between them and their families, and succeeded, after discussions with the authorities, in improving the prisoners' conditions.

On his return journey, he met the Panaman and Venezuelan government authorities, and members of the Central Committees of Red Cross Societies, in Panama and Caracas.

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<sup>1</sup> See Annual Report for 1954, Pages 36-38.

During the summer, when events led to a change of regime in the Argentine Republic, the ICRC approached the Red Cross of that country. It received the assurance that the Geneva Conventions were being respected and applied. At the same time the ICRC broadcast an appeal relative to the respect due by the parties in conflict to the victims of the disturbance ; the message, also sent to the National Societies of the neighbouring countries, was repeated at regular intervals. Incidentally, the Uruguayan Red Cross was able, in the circumstance, to give useful service by helping Argentine Navy Cadets to disembark from a belligerent vessel near the Uruguayan territorial waters, and by facilitating the exchange of family news with the Argentine Red Cross.

The resident delegates in the *Argentine Republic* (MM. de Chambrier and Roulet), *Bolivia* (M. Gacon), *Brazil* (M. Haegler), *Colombia* (M. Roethlisberger), *Mexico* (M. Behn), *Peru* (M. Reiser), and *Venezuela* (M. Moll), continued to do useful work, particularly in assisting refugees and stateless persons, and in the dissemination and ratification of the Geneva Conventions.

In the North American countries *Canada* and the *United States*, where the ICRC has no representatives, working contacts have been maintained in connection with former prisoners of war in Japanese hands, the missing of the Korean conflict, detained persons in China, and refugees. With regard to the latter, correspondence with National Red Cross Societies has increased since the ICRC took over the archives of the ITS, particularly for the issue of certificates to the families of persons interned in concentration camps in Europe during the Second World War.

#### ASIA <sup>1</sup>

Since the outbreak of hostilities in *Viet Nam*, the ICRC has lent its traditional assistance to victims of events. After the cease-fire its delegates continued their activities on both sides of the demarcation line fixed by the Geneva Agreement of July 20, 1954.

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<sup>1</sup> ICRC Delegations : Hong Kong, Japan, Malaya, the Philippines, Republic of Viet Nam, Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and Thailand.