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PREFACE

Political observers had given it as their opinion that 1960 would be "Africa's year". There was no doubt that this was indeed the case from many points of view. It also brought new and particularly heavy tasks for the Red Cross.

In fact the International Committee of the Red Cross had to undertake its most important action of 1960 in the Congo. It had to face there new and particularly complicated problems which demanded from it great efforts of imagination and determination. It was not spared any of the difficulties in accomplishing this vast humanitarian mission, but if, in spite of every type of obstacle, it was able to remain faithful to its ideal in the midst of all the turmoil in the Congo, it was not only due to the devotion and the courage of its delegates on the spot, but also to a large extent, to the valuable co-operation of several National Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun, Societies, as well as of their Federation, the League of Red Cross Societies. Our movement, represented by the most diverse nationalities, thus gave a magnificent demonstration of solidarity and was able to mitigate much of the suffering which had been brought on by the stirring events and which we can all recall.

In reading this report one will be made aware of the development of this action in the Congo, but one will also find many of the other multiple tasks described which were undertaken by our institution in the most varied regions throughout the world. For there were still many other situations which required the intervention of the ICRC. The report will show how it acquitted itself in carrying out these different humanitarian missions. It will, however, bring out less clearly how the ICRC had not in certain cases been authorized to accomplish its charitable work in favour of suffering human beings who had, moreover, the right to count on its assistance. In fact, the humanitarian ideal of the Red Cross is still far from receiving the understanding and support which it deserves. It is to be hoped that readers of this Annual Report will be made aware of the necessity of contributing towards the advancement of this ideal in the world, by giving their support to the action of the ICRC.

LÉOPOLD BOISSIER,
President

