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PREFACE

The XXth International Conference of the Red Cross in Vienna, in October 1965, was a landmark in our institution's history.

The Conference was of special importance to the ICRC as it advanced humanitarian law, of which the Committee is a promoter. It also adopted in no uncertain fashion the Red Cross principles, in the drafting of which the Committee took a major part.

Events in the course of the year under review laid a heavy responsibility on the ICRC and confronted it with large scale practical tasks. In spring there was the crisis in the Dominican Republic, to the abatement of which the Committee's delegates contributed. Later there broke out the Indo-Pakistan conflict in which the Geneva Conventions had to be applied and implemented. As the months went by, the war in Vietnam was intensified, increasing the suffering which the ICRC endeavoured to alleviate in spite of the obstacles placed in its path.

The following pages give a brief account of the activity carried out by the ICRC, backed by its neutrality and its experience over more than a century.