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Legal protection of civilian populations against the dangers of war

In 1966 the ICRC consulted several authorities, in implementation of two important resolutions adopted by the XXth International Conference of the Red Cross.

Resolution XXIX, acknowledging the need to improve international law protection for civil defence organizations, requested the ICRC to pursue its efforts to that end and to convene a further meeting of experts. The ICRC turned to governments especially interested in this problem, for their views on the *modus operandi* of such a meeting; it delegated to several capital cities to confer with the relevant government departments Mr. Pilloud, Director, and Mr. Wilhelm, Assistant Director, who, in December, discussed the matter in Geneva with a representative of the Swedish Civil Defence, who informed the ICRC of the progress of talks held among the civil defence services of the Scandinavian countries.

The ICRC attributes particular importance to Resolution XXVIII. This postulates certain essential principles on civilian population protection which any authority responsible for the conduct of operations should observe. Not only did the ICRC disseminate this resolution—which may be termed “the Vienna Declaration”; it also sought ways and means—as required by the resolution—of having the principles thereof sanctioned and elaborated by international treaty law. For that purpose the ICRC from mid-1966 onwards took advantage of missions abroad by its delegates to consult a number of persons in various parts of the world.

2. RELATIONS WITH RED CROSS INSTITUTIONS

Recognition of new National Societies

The ICRC officially recognized two new National Red Cross Societies in 1966. They were the Societies of Kenya (November 3) and Zambia (December 8).

The number of officially recognized National Societies thus rose to 108.

National Societies

As usual, the ICRC had frequent and useful contacts with National Red Cross, Red Crescent, and Red Lion and Sun Societies during the year. In addition to the many missions mentioned elsewhere in this report, several ICRC representatives went abroad. The main visits, which strengthened the bonds already existing between the International Committee of the Red Cross and the National Societies were the following.

In February and March Mr. Samuel A. Gonard, ICRC President, visited Societies in Central America, accompanied by Mr. S. Nessi, delegate. Before doing so, he had discussions at the United Nations headquarters in New York with U Thant and in Washington with General Collins, President of the American National Society and Mr. Dean Rusk, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

In Mexico, where he was received by Mr. J. Barroso Chavez, President of the National Society and of the League, the ICRC President visited the Puebla and Merida branches.

Continuing his voyage, Mr. Gonard then spent a few days in Guatemala. After being received in audience by the head of the government and some of his ministers, as well as by the municipal authorities of the capital, Mr. Gonard was apprised of the activities of the National Society which is presided over by Mr. A. Amado Chacón.

In El Salvador, the ICRC President was received by the President of the Republic, Colonel J. Rivera Carballo. He was also shown by Dr. R. A. Jimenez, the National Society President, examples of Red Cross activities in that country.

Similarly in Honduras, Mr. Gonard was shown Red Cross activities by the National Society's President Mrs. Enriqueta G. de Lazarus, and he also met the Vice-President of the Republic in Tegucigalpa.

In Nicaragua the senior members of the National Society explained the Red Cross tasks and achievements to Mr. Gonard, who was also received by the President of the Republic, Mr. René Schick.

During his brief stay in Costa Rica he met senior members of the National Society, went to the local branches at Cartago and Guada-

lupe accompanied by Mr. F. Solórzano Salas, the National Society President, and met the President of the Republic, Mr. Joaquín Trejos Fernández.

On his arrival in Panama, Mr. Gonard was received by the President of the Republic, Mr. Marco A. Robles and his wife who is President of the Red Cross Society. He paid a visit to General Thomas R. Fleming, the Canal Zone Governor, and to Judge Crowe, President of the American Red Cross in the area.

In Venezuela, Mr. Gonard was received by the President of the Republic, Dr. Raoul Leoni, and he visited the National Society presided over by Mrs. María Eugenia de Alvarez.

Mr. Gonard's tour was concluded by a visit to the Jamaican Government and Red Cross. He had discussions with the Governor-General, Sir Clifford Campbell, and with Mrs. Leighton M. Clark, President of the National Society.

On the return trip to Europe, Mr. Gonard called at Lisbon. He was received by General Carlos Mario Sanches de Castro da Costa Macedo, President of the Portuguese Red Cross and also by the Head of State. Mr. Gonard was accompanied in Portugal by Mr. Georg Hoffmann, ICRC Delegate-General for Africa.

Between April and September, Mr. Gonard visited successively the National Societies and authorities of the following countries: Poland, Bulgaria, Rumania, Yugoslavia, USSR, Democratic Republic of Germany, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. He was accompanied in turn by delegates Jean-Pierre Maunoir, Jacques de Rougemont, Pierre Basset, Herbert Beckh, Michel Martin and Serge Nessi.

In each country Mr. Gonard was given an insight into the activities of the National Society and its regional and local committees and branches, both in the large industrial sectors and in the countryside. He was received inter alia by Mr. Koslov, Vice-President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, and by Professor Gueorgui Miterev, President of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR and Vice-President of the League. During his stay in the USSR he was able to visit the Red Crescent Society of the Tadjikistan Soviet Republic, presided over by Mr. N. R. Tourssounov, and the Leningrad Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. T. K. Grakova.

In Poland Mr. Gonard was received by Mr. Cyrankiewicz and Mr. Rapacki, President of the Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs, and also by Mrs. Irena Domanska, President of the National Society.

In Rumania, the First Vice-President of the Council of Ministers, Mr. Birladeanu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Corneliu Manescu, and the President of the National Society, Mr. Moisescu, welcomed Mr. Gonard.

In Yugoslavia he met Mr. Stambulić, President of the Council, and Dr. Pavle Gregorić, President of the National Society.

He was also received by the Head of State in the Democratic Republic of Germany, Mr. Walter Ulbricht, and by Mr. Werner Ludwig, President of the National Society.

Mr. Gonard had a discussion in Hungary with Mr. Kallai, the Prime Minister, and with Professor Gegesi-Kiss, President of the National Society.

In Czechoslovakia he was received by Mr. Skoda, Vice-President of the National Assembly, and by Dr. Zdenek Stich, President of the National Society, in company with other senior members of the country's Red Cross.

In July, Mr. Gonard went to the Netherlands on the invitation of the National Society. He was accompanied by Mr. Pierre Basset. In the course of his visit he met Mr. J. Cals, the Prime Minister, Mr. J. Luns, Minister for Foreign Affairs, as well as Jonkheer Kraijenhoff and Mr. van Emden, respectively President and Director-General of the National Society.

After several contacts during the year with Dr. Giuseppe Potenza, President-General of the Italian Red Cross, Mr. Gonard was received in October by the Venice Committee of this National Society and by its President, Professor A. Coìn.

Other members of the ICRC have also carried out missions to various National Societies. In May, Professor Jacques Freymond, Vice-President of the ICRC, represented our institution at the Annual General Meeting of the American Red Cross in San Diego.

In the same month, Mr. Hans Bachmann, ICRC member, attended the centenary celebration of the Bavarian Red Cross in München.

Mr. Frédéric Siordet, another Committee member, went to Paris in June and October and to Helsinki in August. He attended several meetings of legal experts and visited the French and Finnish Red Cross Societies.

Also in June, the ICRC sent a delegation to the Swiss Red Cross Annual General Meeting, which coincided with that Society's celebration of the centenary of its foundation. This Society had participated actively in the commemoration in Switzerland of the ICRC's centenary in 1963. The delegation consisted of Mr. Hans Bachmann, Mr. Hans Meuli, Mr. Dietrich Schindler, Mr. Frédéric Siordet and Mr. Jean Pictet, Director-General, who addressed the meeting.

Towards the end of November, Professor Jacques Freymond, ICRC Vice-President, went on a mission to Vietnam, where he had important discussions with the President of the National Society, Dr. Pham-van-Hat.

Many National Society Presidents and leaders visited the ICRC, particularly in October, during the 86th session of the League's Executive Committee.

The Standing Commission of the International Red Cross met at ICRC headquarters on Monday, October 3. It was presided over by the Countess of Limerick, Vice-President of the British Red Cross, and was attended by Professor Gueorgui Miterev, President of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR; General James F. Collins, President of the American Red Cross; Dr. Geoffrey Newman-Morris, President of the Australian Red Cross; Mr. Hans von Lauda, President of the Austrian Red Cross; as well as the Presidents and Representatives of the ICRC and the League. On Tuesday, October 4, the ICRC received at its headquarters all the delegates and observers to the League's Executive Committee for a briefing.

Regional seminars

A seminar on disaster relief in South East Asia took place in Singapore from May 2-9, 1966. It was attended by delegates from National Societies in: Australia, Ceylon, India, Japan, Korea (Republic), Laos, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore,

Thailand and the Republic of Vietnam. The main objectives of this meeting were the encouragement, development and strengthening of National Societies in South East Asia by:

- a) exchanges of views on practical experience and programmes in the field of disaster relief;
- b) study of National Society needs in this field and the problems facing them;
- c) investigation into the possibilities of pre-disaster planning;
- d) development of relations between the League and the National Societies.

The International Committee of the Red Cross was represented at this important seminar by Mr. A. Durand. He stressed the rôle which National Societies have to assume for the benefit of the victims of war, the necessity for the thorough instruction of legal, medical and military personnel in the Geneva Conventions, and the need to make the main articles of the Conventions known to the general public.

The seminar issued the following Recommendation which concerns particularly the ICRC:

RELIEF TO VICTIMS OF CONFLICT

“ It is recommended that:

1. The ICRC should establish more regular communications with National Societies on their responsibilities arising from the Geneva Conventions;
2. National Societies study Resolution XXI of the International Conference of the Red Cross held in Vienna in 1965 concerning the implementation and dissemination of the Geneva Conventions and take every possible step to carry out this Resolution.”

The first regional seminar for North African and Middle East National Societies was held in Rabat from May 23-28, 1966. This important event was organized jointly by the League and the Moroccan Red Crescent.

The seminar was attended by twelve National Societies from the Middle East and North Africa, namely: Algeria, Iran, Iraq,

Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey. Four European Red Cross Societies (France, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland), at the invitation of the Moroccan Red Crescent, sent observers. Observers were also present from seven inter-governmental and voluntary organizations, such as WHO and UNICEF.

Mr. Pierre Gaillard, delegate, represented the International Committee of the Red Cross at this important meeting. He briefly recalled the ICRC's functions throughout the world and delivered two papers, one on the ICRC and National Society activities during conflicts, and the other on relief to war victims.

After these communications, the meeting unanimously adopted two recommendations for the stricter application of the Geneva Conventions in war and inviting National Societies to give their backing to the ICRC. A third recommendation, elaborating on decisions taken at the Vienna Conference, urged the ICRC to pursue its efforts to extend Red Cross humanitarian assistance to the victims of non-international conflicts. It also recommended the governments of States parties to the Geneva Conventions, and also the National Societies, to give their support in their own countries to such efforts. The recommendation reminded National Societies of the " necessity to ensure by every available means the safeguard of the humanitarian principles of which they are the custodians and to see to their practical application not only in the event of international war but also in case of civil war or internal disorders, and everywhere where human suffering arises from international or national politics ".

Resolution IV concerned especially material relief to the victims of internal conflicts; it concluded with an invitation to National Societies to " undertake whatever action circumstances require and to give support to relief actions undertaken by the ICRC ".

* * *

The ICRC also participated in the first International Conference for Protection and Precautions Against Natural and Other Disasters, which was held at Skopje from October 25-30, 1966. The ICRC co-operated on the Organizing Committee for this Conference, together with the Yugoslav Red Cross and the League of

Red Cross Societies. Some sixty reports submitted to the Conference gave a clear picture of the precautions to be taken against disasters and the relief to be supplied in the event of their occurring.

This Conference, which was attended by delegates from twenty National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, ten governments, and several international organizations, came to many conclusions which will certainly provide useful guidance for all who may be called upon to combat the effects of disasters.

The ICRC, represented by its Director, Mr. C. Pilloud and by Mr. C. Ammann, Assistant Director, submitted several reports, in particular on the tracing of missing persons.

The League, for its part, submitted important papers to the Conference on planning and co-ordination of relief actions in the event of disaster.

This initiative of the Yugoslav Red Cross was most effective, the more so as participants were able to see for themselves the on-the-spot measures taken to repair the damage caused by the earthquake which hit the town of Skopje.

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Shôken Fund

The Joint Commission for the distribution of the Empress Shôken Fund income met in Geneva on March 23, 1966.

The Commission consisted of Ambassador Morio Aoki, representing the Japanese Red Cross, and representatives from the ICRC and the League.

The meeting examined the statement of accounts and the situation of the Fund as at December 31, 1965. It considered applications for grants from the 45th income distribution, and decided to allocate to the Red Cross of Trinidad and Tobago a sum equivalent to the maximum which had been allocated in previous distributions, i.e. Sw. fr. 12,000. This sum should enable the Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross to provide its children's convalescent home with necessary additional equipment.

The undistributed balance of income, i.e. Sw.fr. 7,070.30 will be added to the income available for the 46th distribution.