

Zeitschrift: Annual report / International Committee of the Red Cross
Herausgeber: International Committee of the Red Cross
Band: - (1968)

Rubrik: Asia

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 24.08.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

When Mr. Jequier was in Santo Domingo in June 1968, the Society was preparing to transfer its headquarters to another building which was being constructed. It is planned to include a blood bank.

Haiti

In 1966 the ICRC assisted the Haitian Red Cross when it was reorganizing. In 1968, wishing to know the result, the ICRC delegated Mr. Jequier to Haiti.

Whilst in Port au Prince, in June, he observed the effective work carried out by the National Society's Steering Committee presided over by Dr. Victor Laroche, particularly the activities for the benefit of the capital's needy families.

In November, in order to assist the Haitian Red Cross, the ICRC sent it a consignment of medical supplies, including vaccines.

For the inauguration in December of the Haitian Red Cross Society's new headquarters, donated by Dr. Duvalier, President of the Republic, the ICRC was represented by Mr. Gaillard, Assistant-Director.

3. ASIA

Cambodia

In 1968, Mr. André Durand, ICRC Delegate-General for Asia, spent several months in Switzerland for the sake of his health. He returned to Phnom-Penh on November 5 to resume, with the approval of the Cambodian government, his work of co-ordinating the various ICRC missions in South-East Asia.

Mr. Testuz, former ICRC delegate to Japan, deputized for Mr. Durand during his absence from the Cambodian capital.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

At the beginning of the year, the American authorities asked the ICRC to intervene in favour of the crew of the USS "Pueblo"

which was captured on 23 January by the naval forces of the People's Democratic Republic of Korea.

The ICRC thereupon asked the National Red Cross Society in Pyongyang for news of these men, particularly of those who were wounded. That Society replied that the request was inadmissible, the matter being outside the purview of the ICRC.

Hong Kong

During the year, Mr. Hans Hefti, Honorary ICRC Delegate, went to several Hong Kong prisons to visit persons detained following the 1967 riots. He interviewed detainees of his own choice without witnesses. His reports were then delivered to the detaining power.

Indonesia

Assistance to Displaced Persons in Kalimantan.—In October 1967, due to the violent demonstrations against them, some 50,000 people of Chinese descent fled from their villages to seek refuge in Kalimantan on the western coast of Borneo. The Indonesian government then requested the National Red Cross to contribute to the relief of these families who were concentrated at Pontianak and Singkawang.

In March 1968, at the request of the Indonesian Red Cross, the ICRC sent a delegate to Djakarta. After thoroughly examining the situation, in co-operation with the Indonesian Red Cross and authorities, he confirmed the need of the seriously undernourished refugees at Kalimantan for material emergency assistance. Vitamin products to combat illness due to deficiencies were totally lacking. Consequently the Indonesian Red Cross appealed for food and medical assistance for a period of six months.

On 19 April, after receipt of its delegate's report and in response to the Indonesian Red Cross request, the ICRC issued an appeal to several National Societies to help the refugees in Borneo. A number responded favourably and donations amounted to about 150,000 francs. The Singapore Red Cross, which co-operated in this human-

itarian action, purchased the relief supplies and dispatched them to Pontianak.

In July an ICRC doctor-delegate went to Djakarta in order to assist the Indonesian Red Cross in its distribution programmes.

Japan

On 13 August 1959, the Japanese Red Cross and the Red Cross Society of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea signed an agreement in Calcutta on the repatriation of the Koreans residing in Japan who wished to return to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As Japan decided not to extend this agreement beyond the time-limit laid down, the end of 1967, the final repatriation operation took place on 22 December of that year. However, at that date, there were still some 17,000 Koreans in Japan wishing to go to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and who had filed their applications before the expiry date of the agreement.

On 2 April 1968, the ICRC appealed to the two National Red Cross Societies concerned to take the necessary steps for the repatriation of these 17,000 Koreans. This appeal met with a positive reply from Japan and was renewed on 10 September. The Japanese Red Cross confirmed its previous decision. On the other hand, the ICRC has received no reply from the Red Cross of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Laos

The Lao Red Cross, in co-operation with the ICRC, in 1966, started distributing relief to some 100,000 displaced persons who had fled the combat zones.

In January 1968, following the fighting which had broken out near Luang-Prabang and in the extreme south of the country, a further 25,000 refugees fled to the Mekong basin. Five hundred of them were wounded.

Additional assistance having become necessary, the ICRC, at the request of the Lao government and Red Cross, launched an appeal on January 26 to National Societies on behalf of the victims of the conflict in Laos.

The first consignments of relief supplies reached Vientiane in February and the Lao Red Cross, assisted by Dr. Baer, ICRC delegate, immediately began distributions. These relief supplies included medicaments, foodstuffs, clothing, blankets and mosquito netting.

On April 25, Dr. Baer went to the province of Sayaboury where he issued 500 mosquito nets and 2,000 nivaquine tablets (against malaria) to some 2,000 Meo mountain dwellers who, never having been immunized against malaria, had contacted the disease when they withdrew to the Mekong basin.

In July, twenty National Societies responded to the ICRC appeal. Their contributions, which were sent either direct or through the ICRC to the Lao Red Cross were equivalent to 200,000 Sw. francs. This was sufficient not only to permit local purchase of relief supplies, but also the acquisition of four houses at Paksé which were converted into a reception centre for displaced persons.

Concomitantly with the action undertaken in favour of refugees in the Mekong basin, the ICRC maintained contact with the Vientiane representative of the Pathet-Lao, with a view to supplying relief in the regions controlled by the Pathet-Lao forces and to assisting the prisoners whom they were detaining.

Philippines

On 6 January and 22 July, Mr. P. Calderara, ICRC delegate, visited the political detainees held at Fort Bonifacio (formerly Fort McKinley). These prisoners had been condemned several years previously under regulations made by the Philippine government against the underground Huks movement.

The ICRC delegate's reports were later sent to the detaining authorities.

Thailand

Mr. André Durand, ICRC Delegate-General for Asia, was in Bangkok from 19 to 25 January for discussions with the Thai authorities and Red Cross concerning the plight of Vietnamese nationals in Thailand, particularly those of them who were in detention.

It will be recalled that repatriation of Vietnamese refugees to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, which began in 1960 under the terms of the Agreement signed in Rangoon in 1959 by the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Red Cross of Thailand, was brought to a halt in 1965.

Vietnam

GENERAL REMARKS

Appeal to Belligerents to respect the elementary Rules of Humanity.—Having been questioned about press reports of inhuman acts committed during the fighting in Vietnam at the time of the Têt (Vietnamese New Year) offensive, the ICRC on 9 February 1968 launched the following public appeal to the belligerents :

The ICRC reminds belligerents that in all circumstances they are bound to observe the elementary and universally recognized rules of humanity. These rules demand that the lives of combatants who have been captured shall be spared, that the wounded, the sick and those giving them medical care shall be respected, that the civilian population shall not be subject to attack from the air and lastly, that summary executions, bad treatment or reprisals shall be prohibited.

The ICRC has often made known to those taking part in the hostilities the obligations they must fulfil. It ardently hopes that they will shortly put an end to this bitter conflict and, meanwhile, calls upon them to observe the basic rules of humanity.

Mr. Jenny, Head of the ICRC delegation in Saigon, also conveyed to the South Vietnamese and American authorities the ICRC's concern about the air raids on certain districts of the town during the February fighting and the losses which occurred among the civilian population. At the end of February, in its reply to the ICRC, the US Government denied news reports according to which summary execution of prisoners had taken place. In addition, it restated its firm intention to respect the Geneva Conventions. On 15 March, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam replied in the same vein.

Joint appeal by the League and the ICRC.—The heavy fighting which took place during the Feast of Têt caused many victims: nearly 8,000 dead, 15,000 wounded and 400,000 refugees.

Following these events and the request of the Red Cross of the Republic of Vietnam, the League and the ICRC jointly appealed for assistance from National Societies.

This appeal, launched on 9 February, resulted in the collection of about 9 million Swiss francs (in cash and kind) about one third of which was allocated to South Vietnam. The balance, in keeping with donors' wishes, was divided between the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the National Liberation Front.

I. REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

Delegation.—The ICRC mission in Saigon in 1968 comprised the Head of the mission, one delegate and two doctors.

Mr. Jenny was Head of the Delegation until March when Mr. Ruff took over until July. He was then replaced by Mr. Stalder who remained in the South Vietnam capital until the beginning of November. Mr. Durand filled the breach until the arrival of the new Head of Mission, Mr. Jean Ott, towards the end of November.

Prisoners of War and Civilian Detainees.—ICRC delegates in 1968 continued visiting collecting points to which were first sent Vietnamese arrested by the armed forces of the Republic of Vietnam during military operations, and prisoner-of-war camps where the prisoners were then sent, as well as hospitals and interrogation centres.

These visits were interrupted during the Têt offensive as it was impossible for delegates to leave the capital. They were resumed in mid-February.

During these visits, the ICRC representatives were particularly concerned for prisoners' health and medical treatment of wounded and sick in the military hospitals. Their reports were sent by the ICRC to the detaining Powers.

ICRC delegates also maintained their contact with the Government of the Republic of Vietnam with a view to obtaining authority

to resume the visits to prisons and re-education centres which were interrupted in 1966.

POW Releases.—In 1967, when the Republic of Vietnam requested ICRC assistance in the transfer to the Democratic Republic of seriously wounded prisoners of war, ICRC doctor-delegates examined in camps and hospitals the prisoners whose names had been put forward for this early release. Repatriation of the released prisoners took place in June.

At the beginning of 1968 a further convoy of 40 wounded prisoners whom the Saigon government had decided to release and who had expressed the wish to return north of the 17th parallel was being organized. The ICRC asked the authorities in Hanoi if they were prepared to accept these prisoners but, in spite of several reminders, they ignored the ICRC approaches.

Moreover, in March, the American command in Vietnam decided to repatriate three of the 17 North Vietnamese prisoners held at Da Nang since the naval skirmish in the Gulf of Tonkin in July 1966. On 27 March, the three released seamen were escorted by Dr. Strasser, ICRC delegate, from Da Nang to Vientiane in Laos where they were handed over to the Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

On 16 December, ICRC delegates participated in the transfer of seven North Vietnamese civilians released by the American Forces. They had merely to ensure that these civilians wished to return to the Democratic Republic.

POW Lists.—The Saigon delegation in 1968 continued sending the Central Tracing Agency lists of prisoners of war which had been received from the Ministry of National Defence. In September an additional 2,933 names brought the total on the lists received to 10,802.

Relief and Medical Assistance.—Consistent with the programme adopted by the League and the ICRC following their joint appeal of 9 February, representatives of the League, assisted by the South Vietnam Red Cross, undertook distribution of relief supplies (milk,

rice, fish, clothing) to displaced persons, whilst the ICRC delegates concentrated more particularly on giving medical assistance.

Thus, from February onwards, ICRC delegates went on many occasions to various refugee camps, distributing vitamins and medical supplies. They also visited several hospitals and orphanages to give treatment to sick children.

At the request of the South Vietnam Red Cross, in May the ICRC bought blood plasma and transfusion material. It also alerted the Red Cross Societies of Australia, the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany, which made available 100, 2,000 and 4,000 units of blood plasma respectively.

At that time also, the ICRC delegates delivered to the Hué Hospital—which had been seriously damaged during the Têt offensive—a full complement of surgical and medical equipment.

Professor Maurice E. Muller, head of the orthopaedic surgery department of the Hôpital de l'Ile in Berne was in Saigon from 23 September to 3 October. He had been appointed by the ICRC to deliver to the Government Hospital in Saigon a consignment of orthopaedic surgery instruments and he also took the opportunity whilst at the hospital to perform a number of operations and to give courses to the staff.

II. DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

General Remarks.—In 1968 the ICRC again offered its services to the Red Cross and authorities of the Democratic Republic as it had done in previous years. Once more the Hanoi authorities refused to allow an ICRC representative into North Vietnam.

Prisoners of War.—In February and November the ICRC again approached the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam concerning the identification of members of the US armed forces reported missing north of the 17th parallel and presumed to be prisoners of war. It received no reply.

For its part, the Central Tracing Agency continued sending Hanoi family messages intended for prisoners. It would appear that a few of these prisoners had been authorized to reply to their families.

The Democratic Republic of Vietnam released three American pilots in February and three others in August.

Relief Supplies.—Following the appeal of 9 February, the ICRC, in agreement with National Societies, decided to allocate 25% of the relief supplies received to the Democratic Republic.

As a result, and after contacting the Red Cross of North Vietnam in March, the ICRC delegates in Phnom-Penh sent to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam the share which had been allocated to it.

On 25 July, the ICRC sent a 76-ton consignment to the Democratic Republic by rail via Moscow to Vladivostok and from there by sea to Haiphong. This consignment included medical supplies, a 120-bed mobile hospital equipped with surgical instruments, a water-conditioning plant and a pre-fabricated "Telescopic-House" unit equipped as an X-ray theatre. The National Societies of Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Austria, Switzerland and the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as the Belgian and Austrian Governments, Oxfam, Christian Aid and the World Council of Churches, contributed to this operation.

III. NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

The National Liberation Front, in 1968, continued to avoid contact with the ICRC which unsuccessfully repeated its attempts to obtain news of civilians and enemy military personnel reported missing and presumed to be held prisoner by the NLF.

4. MIDDLE EAST

The Conflict between Israel and the Arab Countries

GENERAL REMARKS

Apart from the repatriation of prisoners of war between Israel and the Arab countries, the main problem which faced the ICRC in 1968 was the application of the Fourth Geneva Convention in the