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Lastly, the ICRC delegates secured permission to visit three Sana'a prisons holding political detainees. They had access to the citadel and to the Rada prison, where they saw about 417 detainees, including some who were being held for offences or reasons of a political nature, and to whom they gave relief supplies and medical care.

People's Democratic Republic of Yemen

Towards the end of January, the ICRC shipped to Aden 20 tons of maize flour donated by the European Economic Community. The flour was distributed to needy families in Socotra Island, Kamaran Island and various provinces of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, as well as in places of detention.

When fighting broke out between the two Yemens at the end of September, the ICRC delegate in Aden approached the Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and offered the ICRC's assistance to the victims. He was authorized to visit about thirty North Yemen soldiers who had been captured and interned in the Aden military camp. The visit was made early in November, and the covering report was sent to the detaining Power and the prisoners' own government.

Lastly, relief supplies were sent to Socotra Island for the inhabitants of the flood-stricken area.

CENTRAL TRACING AGENCY

During 1972, the Central Tracing Agency received 82,587 requests and communications (47,198 in 1971) and sent out 79,296 letters (50,799 in 1971). This considerable increase in the volume of work was due mainly to the conflict in the Asian sub-continent.

The principal tasks of the Central Tracing Agency consist in obtaining from the competent authorities any information available about their captives and about enemy combatants found dead at the front; registering such data in its card index; informing the casualties' governments and families; opening enquiries where information is lacking; ensuring, or helping to ensure, the trans-

Distributing food to displaced Bedouins in the Sinai.
Photo Bory/ICRC



Presenting the " Soldier's Manual " to the Upper Volta armed forces.
Photo Jolliet/ICRC



mission of messages between prisoners and their families and between civilians separated by the events; issuing certificates of captivity, hospitalization or death, and reuniting families, in co-operation with National Societies.

In 1972, the Central Tracing Agency received 641 lists containing names of prisoners of war, civilian internees or other detainees consisting of a total of 7,788 pages and 196,824 names, 68,720 capture cards and 94 death certificates.

It opened 12,951 enquiries, addressed to National Red Cross Societies, delegations of the ICRC, the International Tracing Service at Arolsen and other competent bodies and closed 14,810 files, with a positive result in 7,686 of them. It transmitted 32,106 family messages, but this does not include messages exchanged direct between the ICRC delegations on the spot numbering 49,103 messages in the Middle East and about 1.1 million in the Asian sub-continent. The Central Tracing Agency issued 1,880 certificates of captivity.

In the field, the Central Tracing Agency bureaux in Islamabad, New Delhi and Dacca continued their work.¹ Towards the end of the year, the Agency also sent some of its qualified staff to the Red Cross of the Republic of Vietnam and to the Lao and Khmer Red Cross Societies in order to aid them to set up tracing bureaux in their own country.²

INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE (AROLSEN)

In 1972, the International Tracing Service (ITS), which the ICRC has operated since 1955, received 145,743 inquiries, 17,871 more than in 1971.

There was a marked increase in the number of requests for incarceration and residence certificates (59,403) relating to the Compensation Act which came into effect in the Federal Republic of Germany in 1953, and in requests for death certificates (4,948), for photocopies (2,231), for information with a view to obtaining an income or pension (4,305), for tracing persons (10,559) and,

¹ See page 58 of this Report.

² See page 45 of this Report.