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When, at the beginning of 1972, the ICRC delegate-general for Latin America went on his mission to South American countries, he also stopped in February in Venezuela, where he conferred several times with government officials and with National Society leaders.

Mr. Gaillard-Moret and Dr. Marti also stayed in Caracas at the end of their mission which led them to several South American countries in December.

The ICRC regional delegates kept close contact with the Venezuelan authorities, who granted them a general authorization to visit places of detention, and with the National Red Cross Society, regarding, in particular, aid for detainees and the dissemination of the Geneva Conventions.

*Visits to places of detention:* ICRC regional delegates went to twelve places of detention, some of which were visited several times: three at Caracas, two at San Juan de Los Morros and the others at Bolívar, Dorado, La Pica, Los Teques, Maracaibo, San Cristóbal and Tucuyto.

About 9,000 detainees in all were seen, of whom some 200 were being held for political reasons or offences.

## Asia

In Asia, the ICRC's two main fields of activity during 1972 were Indo-China and the Asian sub-continent.

Mr. Jean Ott, ICRC delegate-general for Asia and Oceania, went on a mission which, from 4 March to 12 April, took him to Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, and also to the countries of the Indo-China peninsula and Hong Kong. In the first four, the chief purpose was to contact government authorities and National Societies. In Indo-China, the delegate-general raised questions outstanding between the ICRC and the authorities such as prisoners of war, persons detained as a result of the events, medical relief, and so forth. In Hong Kong, he studied the feasibility of an agreement under which medical relief would be provided throughout Indo-China.

There were also ICRC missions to Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore.

## Indo-China

Through its delegations in Saigon, Vientiane and Phnom Penh, the ICRC fulfilled its traditional duties to prisoners of war and displaced persons in Indo-China.

On 8 May, following the recrudescence of hostilities, the ICRC sent a message to all the parties to the conflict—the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRVN), the Government of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN), the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam (PRG), the Government of the Kingdom of Laos, the Lao Patriotic Front, the Government of the Khmer Republic, the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia (GRUNC) and the Government of the United States of America—reminding them that the ICRC “is and always remains at the disposal of all parties to the conflict for the establishment and supervision of hospital zones, security zones, neutralized zones and approach routes to those zones, for the protection of civilian and military wounded and sick and of civilian populations not taking part in the hostilities ...”.

On 17 July, the ICRC sent a note verbale to the Permanent Mission of the United States of America making “an urgent appeal to the Government of the United States to suspend bombardments over Vietnam susceptible of harming the civilian population, of destroying buildings, facilities, equipment or property of all kinds essential to the population's survival”. The note was not accepted by the United States Government.

When the approaching conclusion of a cease-fire agreement was announced in October, the ICRC, the League of Red Cross Societies and some National Societies took steps to ensure the most effective possible fulfilment of the duties with which they might be confronted after the cease-fire entered into effect.

Following renewed bombing north of the twentieth parallel by American aircraft, on 18 December, the ICRC made the following appeal to the four parties to the Vietnam conflict—the DRVN, the RVN, the PRG and the USA—on 29 December:

" The International Committee of the Red Cross had placed great hopes in the negotiations for a cease-fire in Vietnam.

The ICRC is therefore dismayed to see that, instead of ceasing, the war has intensified to an extent never before equalled in the history of this conflict.

The International Committee of the Red Cross makes a most pressing appeal to all parties to the conflict to put an end to hostilities, in order that the civilian population and the goods and services necessary to their survival may be spared, and that military and civilian detainees held by all parties may be released.

The International Committee of the Red Cross reminds the parties engaged in the conflict that it is their duty to respect the humanitarian principles laid down in the Geneva Conventions and which are intended to relieve the suffering of war victims. Those principles demand that the wounded, the sick, the prisoners and the whole civilian population shall be afforded protection."

## **Republic of Vietnam**

In 1972, the ICRC maintained a delegation in Saigon composed of a head of delegation, two delegates and two doctor-delegates.

The delegate-general for Asia and Oceania carried out a mission to the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) from 18 to 25 March. In Saigon he was received by the South Vietnamese Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence and a number of United States representatives. He also conferred with officers of the National Red Cross Society.

*Application of the Conventions:* The ICRC sent a note to the Australian and New Zealand Governments reminding them of their residual responsibilities regarding prisoners of war when they withdrew their armed forces from the Republic of Vietnam. The Government of New Zealand assured the ICRC that it was aware of its responsibilities under Article 12 of the Third Geneva Convention and had taken appropriate measures to ensure that they were fulfilled.



*Prisoners of war:* During the period covered by this report, ICRC delegates carried out forty-six visits to camps, military hospitals and other places of detention. They regularly visited six prisoner-of-war camps, and latterly three, twelve army hospitals and three correctional institutions (civilian prisons) where prisoners of war accused of offences or crimes under ordinary penal law were held. They also had access to the " Combined Military Intelligence Center " in Saigon. On the other hand, they no longer went to the screening centres or interrogation centres visited in previous years. As United States troops started to withdraw, most of the centres closed down. The ICRC delegation in Saigon made various fruitless attempts to obtain from the South Vietnamese Ministry of Defence an up-to-date list of places where prisoners of war were held.

With the recrudescence of hostilities, on 31 March, the ICRC approached the authorities in the Republic of Vietnam to ascertain whether arrangements had been made to ensure the protection of prisoners of war. The authorities informed the ICRC that the Pleiku, Da Nang and Qui Nhon camps had been evacuated and that the prisoners of war had been transferred to the three remaining camps of Phu Quoc, Can Tho and Bien Hoa. By the end of June, the prisoners of war totalled about 37,000, including 30,000 in the Phu Quoc camp.

During their visits to prisoner-of-war camps, the ICRC delegates noted a marked improvement in material conditions (toilet articles and clothing distributed by the authorities, increased daily rations, etc.) and in the treatment of prisoners. Moreover, following the ICRC's request that those opting for the " new life " <sup>1</sup> be separated from other prisoners of war, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam stated that the separation had been carried out.

ICRC delegates supplied the prisoners of war visited with toilet articles, mats, medicaments and even school material.

They were present at a number of trials, in the Can Tho military court, where prisoners of war were accused of committing offences or crimes under ordinary penal law during captivity. They asked the South Vietnamese authorities to be allowed to interview prisoners before they were tried, but were not granted permission to do so.

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<sup>1</sup> " *Candidats au ralliement* ".

*Civilian detainees:* The ICRC again asked that visits to national prisons and correctional institutions be subject to the same conditions as visits to prisoner-of-war camps, namely that only a few days' notice be required and that detainees be interviewed privately.

In January and February, the ICRC delegates visited the correctional institutions of Pleiku, Ban Me Thuot, Qui Nhon and Nha Trang, where the provincial authorities authorized the head of delegation to talk to detainees without any witness. The Saigon authorities, however, had not replied to the ICRC's request when the 31 March offensive was launched and visits to correctional institutions were provisionally suspended. Later the delegation submitted a new programme of visits to correctional institutions—including the Tan Hiep national prison—and again asked to be allowed to speak to detainees without witnesses. The request was turned down by the authorities, whereupon the ICRC decided to suspend visits to civilian detainees until the restrictions on its activities were removed.

*Medico-social assistance:* One of the principal consequences of the 31 March offensive was an increase in the number of displaced persons. The ICRC delegation in Saigon offered its services, and particularly those of its doctors, to the Red Cross of the Republic of Vietnam, and so it came about that ICRC doctor-delegates joined the National Society in some of the visits it made to displaced persons at Hué, Long Thanh and Da Nang. The ICRC made a donation of 50,000 Swiss francs to the RVN Red Cross for the benefit of such displaced persons.

The doctor-delegates visited a number of orphanages in Saigon and its surroundings every week. About ten institutions were supplied with medicaments, rice and items of furniture.

## **Democratic Republic of Vietnam**

In April 1972, the ICRC wrote to the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRVN) again offering its services for assistance to victims of the conflict and stating its desire to carry out the activities laid upon it by the Geneva Conventions.

Parallel to that offer, the Central Tracing Agency wrote to the DRVN Red Cross requesting a list of prisoners held in that country.

In the matter of prisoners, the DRVN confirmed its position as described on page 40 of the Annual Report for 1970.

In June, the ICRC offered the DRVN authorities and Red Cross relief supplies for the victims of hostilities. The offer was accepted, and during the second half of 1972 the ICRC carried out eight despatches to Hanoi, by air, representing more than 4 tons of medicaments and medical supplies for the DRVN Red Cross.

The various problems outlined above were also discussed with DRVN representatives in Paris and Vientiane.

### **Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam**

In April 1972, the ICRC wrote the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam (PRG) a letter similar to that sent to the Prime Minister of the DRVN (see above).

The ICRC also maintained contact with PRG representatives in Paris.

### **Kingdom of Laos**

During 1972, the ICRC had a delegate in Vientiane, seconded by a doctor-delegate, according to circumstances and particularly in the case of visits to places of detention.

*Prisoners of war:* On 25 May, ICRC delegates visited Samkhé prison, in Vientiane, and distributed toilet articles to the 130 prisoners of war held there. A further visit was made on 14 July.

*Political detainees:* On 9 March and 15 July, the delegates also had access to Chinaimo prison, in Vientiane, which held some fifty political detainees.

The ICRC delegates managed to interview prisoners of war and political detainees privately. As usual, the ICRC sent reports on the visits to the detaining authorities.

*Displaced persons:* At the Laotian Government's request, the ICRC contributed to defraying the cost of transport, from Bangkok to Vientiane, of a large consignment of clothing donated by Japan.

The distribution was planned by the ICRC delegation with the Laotian Ministry of Social Welfare and the Japanese Embassy in Vientiane. Early in the year, the delegate proceeded to Houei Sai, Luang Prabang, Van Vieng and Paksé, with representatives of the Ministry and the Embassy, to organize the distribution. Altogether 21,000 displaced persons received clothing.

In co-operation with the Lao Red Cross and the Ministry of Social Welfare, the delegate distributed 60 tons of rice to 3,000 displaced persons in the Vientiane plain during May.

In June, 4,200 flood victims in the Paksane area were supplied with clothing and 30 tons of seeds. In villages where recently displaced persons were to be found, the delegate distributed more than 5 tons of salted fish and 12 tons of rice.

During the second half of the year, 6 tons of rice, 8 tons of padek and 4 tons of pimento were distributed in the Vientiane plain and at Savannakhet, in addition to the medicaments delivered to various welfare organizations for distribution to displaced persons at Champassack, Borikhane, Paksane, Luang Prabang, and the Van Vieng and Paksé leprosaria.

### **Lao Patriotic Front**

The ICRC continued its contacts with the Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Haksat).

In addition to the supplies sent during the preceding year for the wounded, the sick and civilians in territory under Pathet Lao control, in April the ICRC shipped 1.3 tons of medicaments and surgical kits to Hanoi for the Pathet Lao medical services.

Two consignments of various pharmaceuticals, by air in June, totalled 669 kg. In November, the ICRC sent the Pathet Lao 2.7 tons of school equipment.

### **Khmer Republic**

In Phnom Penh, the ICRC maintained a delegation composed of the head of delegation and a doctor-delegate.

The ICRC delegate-general for Asia and Oceania visited Phnom Penh from 25 to 30 March. He had talks with the Khmer Red Cross and government authorities.

*Prisoners of war:* At the beginning of the year, the head of the delegation at Phnom Penh renewed the ICRC's approaches to the Khmer Government and the request that it apply the Third Geneva Convention and grant prisoner-of-war status to any combatants captured by the Khmer national forces. The head of delegation also asked the Khmer Government for a list of such prisoners of war and of Khmer civilians and servicemen reported missing and presumed to be held by enemy armed forces. Lastly, in February and March, he intervened on behalf of about a dozen prisoners who had been sentenced to death by military courts. The sentences were finally commuted to life imprisonment.

In a declaration dated 29 March, the Khmer Government announced that persons of foreign nationality who had been captured by the Khmer authorities would henceforth be regarded as prisoners of war. Those sentenced would be granted amnesty, interned in accommodation centres and treated in the manner laid down in the Third Convention.

Marshal Lon Nol personally confirmed the declaration in an audience granted to Mr. Ott during his visit to Phnom Penh. The delegate-general had access to prisoners of war in the central prison. He interviewed nine prisoners, including five of the men who had been sentenced to death and whose sentence had been commuted to that of life imprisonment.

In June, the Prime Minister again assured the ICRC of his Government's resolve to abide by the Geneva Conventions.

In September, the Khmer Government published a decree (*kret*) instituting an "accommodation centre for prisoners of war". Since the Ministry of the Interior was responsible for installing the camp at Koh Kong, the head of delegation maintained contact with representatives of that Ministry. However, the installation was not completed by the end of 1972, and the prisoners of war were still being held in the Phnom Penh central prison, which ICRC delegates were not allowed to revisit.

*Displaced persons:* The ICRC delegation in the Khmer Republic also pursued its activities on behalf of persons displaced by reason of the hostilities. It carried out various fact-finding missions in the provinces—particularly in Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, Kompong

Cham, Preah Vihear and Battambang—where it visited refugee centres and hospitals. It inquired into the needs of displaced persons and, where necessary, supplied medicaments and food. Further, the doctor-delegate, assisted by the mobile medical team provided by the municipal authorities, regularly visited the sick in Phnom Penh's thirty-two accommodation centres. Yet efforts focused mainly on the three principal centres, Chruai Changwar, Pochentong and Cao Dai, sheltering 1,800, 600 and 570 persons, respectively.

The doctor-delegate also saw patients daily in the Khmer Red Cross dispensary, where medicaments were distributed. He regularly visited the Kau Tonsay nursery for orphans. The ICRC financed the hospitalization of a number of those children. The doctor-delegate was in close touch with WHO experts and doctors in the various Phnom Penh hospitals, who were supplied with medical equipment.

To bring the various tasks to a successful conclusion and comply with the requests of the authorities and the Khmer Red Cross, the ICRC made several despatches of medicines and medical supplies to Phnom Penh. In addition, the delegation made direct local purchases of medicaments, food and blankets.

*Vietnamese residents:* As it had done in previous years, the ICRC concerned itself with the lot of Vietnamese nationals living in camps. In addition to the Cao Dai camp in Phnom Penh, the delegates went to Battambang several times to ascertain the conditions under which some 4,000 Vietnamese nationals were being held in three different camps.

### **Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia**

The ICRC maintained its relations with the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia (GRUNC). It had various contacts with its representatives in Paris, whom it supplied with additional up-to-date lists of civilians reported missing since the outbreak of hostilities in Cambodia and American soldiers presumed to be held by the National United Front of Kampuchea (FUNK). The ICRC also handed over letters which the American Red Cross had received for those men.



## STEPS TAKEN BEFORE THE CEASE-FIRE

With the announcement, in October, of an early cease-fire in Indo-China, and particularly in Vietnam, the ICRC, the League of Red Cross Societies and some National Societies considered it necessary to co-ordinate the activities of the various Red Cross institutions with a view to aligning their aims and carrying out with the utmost efficiency any tasks that might arise after the cease-fire.

Mr. Olof Stroh, Secretary-General of the Swedish Red Cross, was initially entrusted with responsibility for establishing contact with the parties concerned—the DRVN, the RVN, the PRG, the Government of the Kingdom of Laos, the Lao Patriotic Front, the Government of the Khmer Republic, and GRUNC—and surveying with them possible requirements in case of a cease-fire. To ensure the mission's success, Mr. Stroh was supported by a group named Indo-China Liaison Group (ILG), composed of officials of the ICRC, the League and various National Societies. The ICRC offered the Liaison Group hospitality, particularly by providing premises and technical installations.

Parallel to this, an information meeting was being held at ICRC Geneva headquarters on 3 November. It was attended by some twenty experts from different National Societies.

ILG undertook to estimate the work which would have to be done—in the twofold field of protection and relief—as well as staff, equipment, transport and financial requirements. The ICRC delegations in Saigon, Vientiane and Phnom Penh were instructed to inquire of the authorities and the National Societies concerned regarding the needs which the Red Cross would have to meet after the cease-fire. Contact was also made with representatives of the DRVN, the PRG, the Lao Patriotic Front and GRUNC, in Vientiane and in Paris. Thus programmes relating essentially to the resettlement of displaced persons and the tracing of the missing were transmitted to ILG.

From 27 November to 23 December, an expert from the Geneva Central Tracing Agency went to Saigon, Vientiane and Phnom Penh to help the three National Societies set up tracing bureaux. At the close of that mission, three Agency officials were sent out to the Red Cross Societies of the Republic of Vietnam, the Kingdom of

Laos and the Khmer Republic, to provide assistance and advice.

On 8 December, the ICRC and the League concluded the following agreement regarding international Red Cross assistance to Indo-China:

" .... In the perspective of a cease-fire in Vietnam and the further steps which may follow towards peaceful developments in Indo-China, the ICRC and the League recognize the need to mobilize, in particular by a common appeal, and co-ordinate the employment of the full resources of the Red Cross, in order to assure the most effective protection and assistance to those in need.

Motivated by the spirit of their Agreement of 1969, the ICRC and the League have therefore agreed to establish an integrated staff, to be called the Indo-China Operational Group (IOG), which will be responsible for the formulation of plans and their execution.

The ICRC and the League will jointly nominate the Director (DIOG) and his Deputy. The DIOG will select his own staff from personnel made available to him by the ICRC, the League and National Societies ....".

Mr. Stroh was appointed DIOG and Mr. Ott his Deputy. ILG became IOG. By the end of 1972, IOG's planning had reached as complete a stage as possible in the matter of protection and relief, staff, logistic infrastructure, etc. On 17 December, a further information meeting was held at ICRC headquarters for National Societies and Voluntary Agencies.

## Conflict in the Asian sub-continent

In the Asian sub-continent, the ICRC endeavoured to provide protection and assistance for prisoners of war, civilian internees and civilian minorities on both sides. For that purpose it set up permanent delegations in Islamabad, New Delhi and Dacca. By the end of 1972, the Islamabad delegation comprised seven persons (the head of delegation, three visiting delegates, one Agency delegate, one administrator and one radio operator); the New Delhi



delegation fourteen (the head of delegation, nine visiting delegates, one Agency delegate, two secretaries and one radio operator), and the Dacca delegation twenty-eight (the head of delegation, fourteen visiting delegates, one female nurse, one Agency delegate, three secretaries, one accountant, one administrator and six radio operators). These figures do not include local staff.

Mr. Enrico Bignami, ICRC Commissioner for activities in the Asian sub-continent, went twice to Islamabad, New Delhi and Dacca—from 8 to 20 January and again from 25 February to 14 March—for talks with Pakistan, Indian and Bangladesh government authorities about various human problems which remained unsolved.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Hocké, who took over from Mr. Bignami in April, carried out a mission to the three countries from 4 to 15 July.

From 1 December 1971 to 18 April 1972, the ICRC co-ordinated its joint relief action with the League of Red Cross Societies in Bangladesh.

## PRISONERS OF WAR AND CIVILIAN DETAINEES

Early in the conflict, from 3 to 16 December 1971, one of the primary duties of ICRC delegates in Islamabad, New Delhi and Dacca was to approach the authorities concerned with a view to obtaining lists of prisoners of war and securing permission to visit them and bring them family mail.

**Bangladesh:** On 28 December 1971, the ICRC delegates in New Delhi made a preliminary visit to a military hospital, where they saw four Pakistani prisoners of war.

At the time, however, most Pakistani prisoners of war (76,000) and civilian detainees (17,000)—altogether about 93,000 persons—were in Bangladesh. From their internment in Bangladesh, at the end of December 1971, until their transfer to India, on 15 January 1972, permission was granted for visits by ICRC delegates, who went to the Dacca, Chittagong and Sylhet transit camps.

A great many Pakistani civilians, especially destitute women and children, sought refuge in the Dacca camp. The ICRC delegates supplied them with such essentials as clothing, blankets, soap, pots, and powdered milk. A medical team was there to examine the sick.

At the request of Pakistani prisoners of war and civilian detainees, the ICRC delegates launched an operation to trace persons reported missing or who were dispersed in the country. With the assistance of Indian armed forces and local volunteers, several hundred persons were thus found and reunited with their families before being transferred to India.

The ICRC took part in the transfer by air of wounded prisoners of war and sick civilians whose state of health would not have stood up to the long journey by train and boat. In three flights, 269 persons were transported from Dacca to Lucknow.

In September, however, the Bangladesh Government informed the ICRC that several dozen Pakistani prisoners of war had been found in prisons in different parts of the country. As fifty-six of them had been taken to the Dacca central prison, the ICRC delegates visited them three times in 1972.

As is customary, the visits were covered by reports sent by the ICRC to the detaining power and the prisoners' own government. The ICRC delegates inquired into detention conditions. They brought family mail and parcels prepared for the prisoners by their own folk or the Red Cross Societies of the parties to the conflict. These remarks hold good for Pakistani prisoners of war and civilian detainees in India as well as for Indian prisoners of war and civilian detainees in Pakistan.

**India:** On 4 February, the Indian Government authorized the ICRC to visit Pakistani prisoners of war and civilian detainees. The first round of visits started on 8 February and ended on 22 April. Visits were made to fifty camps in fourteen different places along the basin of the Ganges, and to twenty hospitals. By the end of 1972, the ICRC delegates had totalled more than 270 visits to the places of detention and had on average visited most of them four times.

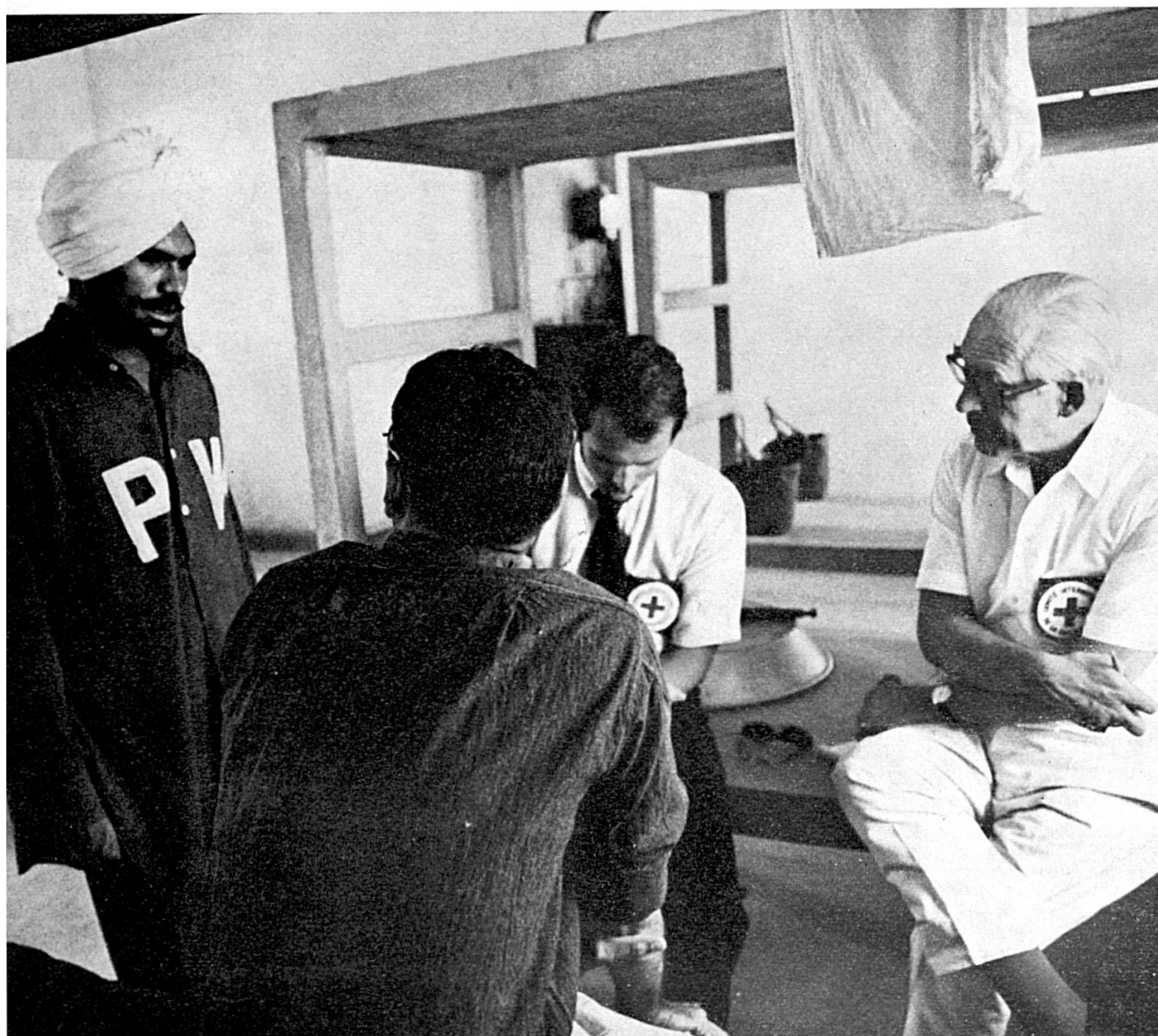
During the visits made, ICRC delegates inquired more particularly about the wounded, the sick and civilians. They organized a relief operation for civilians by distributing multivitamins and supplementary food to several thousand persons, mostly old people and children.

In March 1972, prolonged captivity began to create growing tension among the Pakistani prisoners of war. There were riots and

An ICRC doctor-delegate visiting a Saigon orphanage.  
Photo Barbey/ICRC



Pakistan : talking in private with an Indian prisoner of war.  
Photo Kurz/ICRC





some attempts to escape, particularly during March, October and November; tens of prisoners of war were killed, and others were wounded. The ICRC delegates immediately proceeded to the camps. The statements made by the prisoners and the camp authorities responsible for supervision were embodied in the reports sent to the detaining power and the prisoners' own government.

The Government of Pakistan protested and asked the ICRC to approach the Indian Government in order to prevent a renewal of such incidents and ensure repatriation of the wounded and of the bodies of those killed. The ICRC transmitted the requests to the Indian Government. It also approached the Indian authorities through the Indian Permanent Mission in Geneva and the head of the ICRC delegation in New Delhi, expressing its deep concern, asking that security measures which might have contributed to increased tension in the camps be cancelled, and urging that adequate instructions be issued so as to ensure that such events did not recur.

**Pakistan:** The Government of Pakistan authorized the ICRC delegates to visit Indian prisoners of war as from 4 January 1972. The prisoners, of whom there were 657, were held in two camps, at Rawalpindi and Lyallpur, while the wounded were in six army hospitals. On 2 August, the Lyallpur camp closed down and all able-bodied prisoners of war were transferred to the Rawalpindi camp. From 4 January to 1 December, when the general repatriation of Indian prisoners of war took place,<sup>1</sup> the ICRC delegates made thirty-four visits to the different places of detention mentioned, including eleven in the Lyallpur camp. The ICRC delegates also inquired about some 270 Indian civilians who had been captured by Pakistan armed forces on the western front and interned in Harrapa camp. They visited them twice, in July and again in August.<sup>2</sup>

*Negotiations regarding the repatriation of prisoners of war and civilian detainees:* Under Article 118 of the Third Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the treatment of prisoners of war, the ICRC made repeated approaches to the governments concerned with a view

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<sup>1</sup> and <sup>2</sup> See following page.

to securing the repatriation of prisoners. The Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 (Article 133) contains similar provisions regarding civilian internees.

The ICRC drew the Indian Government's attention to the matter on 23 March 1972. In a reply dated 25 April, the detaining power stated that the Pakistani soldiers had surrendered to the Joint Command of Bangladesh and India and that decision as to repatriation therefore rested with those two countries. On 25 May, the ICRC again communicated with the Indian Government. It pointed out that the existence of a joint command constituted an understanding between India and Bangladesh which concerned those two countries alone and could have no effect on India's obligation to repatriate the prisoners of war held.

The Government of Pakistan, to whom representations were also made under Article 118, on 1 December repatriated all Indian prisoners of war (617) save one who had just undergone surgery and who was subsequently transferred to India. Simultaneously, the Indian Government repatriated 542 Pakistani soldiers captured on the western front. The twofold operation was carried out at the Wagah frontier post, in the presence of ICRC delegates. This ended ICRC activities on behalf of Indian prisoners of war in Pakistan, while the ICRC pursued its activities on behalf of some 92,000 Pakistani prisoners of war and civilian detainees in India.

As in the case of prisoners of war, the ICRC approached the governments concerned regarding the release and repatriation of civilian detainees.

On 16 September, in the presence of ICRC delegates, the Government of Pakistan repatriated at Wagah 273 Indian civilians who had been interned in Harrapa camp. On 18 and 19 September, the Indian Government in turn repatriated some 700 Pakistani civilians detained by Indian armed forces on the western front.

Neither the Indian nor the Pakistan Government agreed to grant members of crews of the merchant marine, who had been captured on either side, the prisoner-of-war status to which they were entitled under Article 4 of the Third Convention. In India, the ICRC delegates were permitted only one visit to members of a Pakistan crew, in February 1972. In Pakistan, ICRC delegates were to begin visits to Indian seamen early in 1973.

*Seriously wounded prisoners of war:* Pending general repatriation at the end of hostilities, the ICRC laid special stress on seriously wounded prisoners of war and the seriously sick. From 26 February to the end of 1972, six repatriation operations took place. Some 600 Pakistani prisoners (550 soldiers and forty-one civilians) and about forty Indian prisoners who were wounded or sick were thus able to go home. They were transported in the aircraft based in Bangladesh which the Swiss Government had made available to the ICRC.

Numerous members of the medical personnel having been captured by Indian armed forces during the hostilities, the ICRC also asked that any doctors or orderlies not assigned to Pakistani prisoners of war be repatriated by the Indian Government, in accordance with Article 30 of the Third Geneva Convention. By the end of 1972, the detaining power had not deemed it possible to comply with the request.

## CIVILIAN POPULATION

Besides prisoners of war and civilian detainees, the ICRC concerned itself in Pakistan and Bangladesh with the civilian population, especially with minorities.

**Pakistan—Bengali minorities:** With the consent of the Pakistan Government, ICRC delegates inquired into the economic conditions and security surrounding Bengali communities, principally at Hyderabad, Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar and Rawalpindi. On three occasions, the ICRC delegation detached delegates from Islamabad and sent them to Karachi, which had a larger Bengali community. There they spent seven to eighteen days in districts where Bengalis were living.

Soldiers of Bengali origin and who had served in the Pakistan armed forces having been disarmed and assembled in repatriation centres, the ICRC asked to be allowed to visit those centres. The Government of Pakistan agreed, and in May the ICRC delegates began to visit some fifteen repatriation centres holding several thousand unmarried soldiers of Bengali origin. They also saw married soldiers living with their families in houses they had

initially been assigned in cantonments in different parts of the country.

**Bangladesh—(a) *Relief action:*** Before the outbreak of hostilities, the ICRC set up a joint action group with the League of Red Cross Societies and made contact with a number of National Societies in case emergency medical action should prove necessary in the Asian sub-continent.

Towards the end of December 1971, in response to the ICRC appeal, six surgical teams—provided by the Danish, Finnish, Netherlands, Norwegian, Swedish and Swiss Red Cross Societies—arrived in Bangladesh to work under ICRC co-ordination. The forty-five members of the team were distributed in hospitals in Dacca, Chittagong, Sylhet, Mirzapur, Khulna and Chuadanga, where they applied themselves to treating both civilian and military victims of the events. From January to mid-March, when they left Bangladesh, the teams dealt with about a thousand cases a day. Altogether they carried out around a thousand operations, and they vaccinated tens of thousands against cholera and measles.

In view of the extent of the requirements, however, the ICRC held an information meeting in Geneva on 7 January. Representatives of the League and of about a dozen Red Cross Societies were invited to the meeting. The ICRC submitted a three-month plan of relief action in Bangladesh which would provide for medico-social teams and food distribution to half a million persons.

On 15 January, Mr. Enrico Bignami, ICRC Commissioner for activities in the Asian sub-continent, submitted a plan of action to the Bangladesh Government, which accepted it.

To supplement the agreement concluded with the Government, a document on the implementation of the plan of action was signed on 24 January by the ICRC and the emerging Bangladesh Red Cross Society. The plan was designed to aid the more needy sectors of the population, whether Bengali or non-Bengali, without any discrimination.

As soon as the agreement with the Government of Bangladesh was concluded, the ICRC appealed to National Societies, Governments and a number of organizations for funds, food, medicaments, blankets, means of transport, and so forth. National Societies were also asked to provide medico-social teams.



In response to the appeal, the ICRC received donations valued at 37,468,000 Swiss francs, including 7,951,000 Swiss francs in cash. Donations in kind consisted of goods and equipment (mainly medicaments, medical supplies, food, blankets, tents, prefabricated houses, ambulances, motorboats, aircraft, etc.).

From 1 February to mid-April, fourteen medico-social teams—provided by the Red Cross Societies of Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, the Federal Republic of Germany,<sup>1</sup> Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, and representing about 160 persons—were operating under the auspices of the ICRC in Bangladesh. They were distributed throughout the country to help Bengalis returning to Bangladesh after seeking refuge in India as well as "non-local" communities and the 2,000 Pakistani civilians who had remained in Bangladesh.

Altogether, 10,000 tons of relief supplies, including food, medicaments, blankets, and so forth, were distributed to the needy population.

For Bengali refugees, the ICRC delegates set up eleven transit camps in which 987,000 spent the night and were provided with two days' food rations.

To ensure an effective relief operation, sixty-seven Red Cross delegates (provided by the ICRC, the League and National Societies) worked under the auspices of the ICRC, in addition to the six surgical teams and fourteen medico-social teams. There were 330 local employees.

The relief supplies sent to the ICRC went by air to Dacca or Calcutta, or else by sea to Chittagong, Khulna or Calcutta, where the ICRC had warehouses. An ICRC office was installed in Calcutta to ensure that transit goods were forwarded to Dacca by air. Pending the arrival of a ship with food supplies, most of the items were obtained locally. The Government of Bangladesh and the United Nations Relief Operation Dacca (UNROD) made 7,000 tons of grain available to the ICRC out of their stocks.

To carry relief supplies from Calcutta to Dacca, and from Dacca to inland areas where many bridges, roads and railway lines had been destroyed or damaged, the ICRC had two DC-6 aircraft (pro-

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<sup>1</sup> Two teams.

vided by the Swiss Government), one Hercules aircraft (from the New Zealand Government) and three helicopters (received from the Governments of Sweden and the Federal Republic of Germany through the National Societies of those countries). There were approximately 150 other vehicles such as trucks, jeeps, Land Rovers, ambulances, and so forth.

On 8 March, the Bangladesh Red Cross Society wrote to the ICRC asking that responsibility for the supervision of the relief action be transferred to it. On 18 April, the ICRC and the Society signed an agreement under which the ICRC, having ascertained the donors' wishes, handed over to the Bangladesh Red Cross relief supplies (food, medicaments, tents, blankets) plus some fifty vehicles, thirty prefabricated houses, etc., valued at 4,833,000 Swiss francs.

The ICRC then concentrated on its traditional activities on behalf of prisoners of war and civilian minorities.

On 6 December 1972, the ICRC and the European Economic Community signed an agreement on the supply of 18,543 tons of wheat flour for Bangladesh. The consignment left Europe between 21 October and 30 December 1972.

*(b) "Non-local" communities:* As it had done in the case of Bengalis in Pakistan, the ICRC acted on behalf of the "non-local" communities in Bangladesh in two ways: by extending protection and assistance.

On 28 December 1971, the ICRC sent notes to the Governments of India and Bangladesh with a view to securing genuine protection for "non-local" communities in the latter country. On 1 January 1972, the blockade to which the communities were subjected was raised and about a dozen teams of ICRC delegates inquired into the conditions prevailing as regards food and health. Cholera symptoms having been detected, Red Cross medical teams carried out a general vaccination campaign in the Dacca districts affected. Food and medicaments were distributed to those who stood in greatest need.

Early in February, teams of ICRC delegates were distributed wherever "non-locals" were to be found. They were estimated at around 700,000 mainly in Dacca (300,000), Saidpur (200,000), Chit-

tagong (50,000), Khulna (50,000) and Ishurdi/Rajshai (20,000), with some minor groups in various other districts. Central Tracing Agency offices were opened in a number of settlements. They were responsible for transmitting family messages to and from Pakistan and for drawing up a list of the names of all " non-locals " living in the settlements.

The ICRC delegates frequently asked the Bangladesh authorities to take every possible step to ensure the protection of " non-locals ". In the case of persons who had lodgings and were to be turned out, the ICRC delegates approached the authorities and generally succeeded in preventing the tenants' eviction, at least temporarily. Again, they urged on the authorities the importance of gradually bringing the " non-local " communities back into the country's economic life.

In the context of the aforementioned relief action, the Red Cross teams supplied and cared for more than 400,000 " non-locals ". In January, the food stocks and purchasing power of a great many " non-locals ", who had no prospect of finding employment, were already virtually exhausted.

Following the relief action and up to the end of 1972, supplementary food supplies, which UNROD had made available to the ICRC and the Bangladesh Red Cross Society, were being distributed to " non-locals ".

In April, the ICRC delegates submitted to the Government of Bangladesh a programme providing for the construction of bamboo shelters for the homeless before the monsoon. The Government agreed and made land available for the project. The operation started in May and ended in August. Thus shelters were provided throughout the country for 48,700 " non-locals ", namely 30,000 at Mohammedpur (Dacca), 1,000 at Adamjee (Dacca), 2,000 at Bogra, 4,000 at Khulna, 8,000 at Navabganj, 1,700 at Saidpur and 2,000 at Chittagong. In November, several thousand shelters were again being constructed in different places, including Mymensingh.

As from September, the ICRC undertook to pay a monthly salary to some fifteen Bengali doctors and medical students working in the Mohammedpur, Mirpur and Adamjee " non-local " camps. The dispensaries and hospitals in those settlements were regularly supplied with medicines.

To help the economic reinstatement of " non-locals ", the ICRC supplied sewing machines with which workshops might start operating. It also concluded an agreement under which a local contractor was granted a credit for the purchase of material that would provide work for 525 " non-local " cobblers.

Parallel to their activities on behalf of " non-locals ", the ICRC delegates turned their attention to some 2,000 Pakistani civilians who had remained in Bangladesh, about a thousand of whom were accommodated in the " Dogra Red Cross Camp ", at Chittagong, under the auspices of the ICRC.

*Negotiations regarding the repatriation of the civilian population on either side:* Early in 1972, the ICRC approached the Governments of Pakistan and Bangladesh with a view to effecting the transfer of civilian minorities on either side, whether Bengalis in Pakistan or Pakistanis or other " non-locals " in Bangladesh.

In January, the ICRC sent the Governments of Pakistan and Bangladesh a message in which it proposed, *inter alia*, that the two parties should formally declare:

- that they were prepared to permit, facilitate and carry out the transfer from one country to another of individuals and families who desired it, without any discrimination and without any injury to relatives who might decide to stay behind;
- that steps would be taken to ensure that persons who elected to leave were able to take their belongings with them.

Moreover, the ICRC offered its good offices, if need be, to facilitate such transfers.

On his second mission to the Asian sub-continent, at the end of February and early in March, Mr. Bignami took with him a draft agreement on the repatriation of civilian minorities on either side.

While the parties concerned agreed in principle to repatriation and in the following weeks accepted the text of the proposed agreement, subject to some amendments, it became increasingly obvious that a general repatriation of civilian minorities, like the repatriation of prisoners of war, was bound up with political developments.

Meanwhile, the ICRC delegates were drawing up lists of the more urgent cases in which repatriation was necessary for humani-

tarian reasons, and endeavouring to organize a preliminary transfer of 1,000 persons on either side.

Owing to the precarious position of most civilians in the three countries of the Asian sub-continent, in June the ICRC again urged the Governments of Pakistan and Bangladesh to repatriate certain groups of persons who were ready to leave and whose names had been submitted to the Governments of Pakistan and Bangladesh. The ICRC also called upon India to repatriate the more seriously afflicted Pakistani civilian internees.

The question was also discussed in an interview between Mr. Marcel A. Naville, President of the ICRC, and Sheik Mujibur Rahman, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, in Geneva on 1 September.

Towards the end of the year, the Government of Pakistan announced that it was prepared to allow 15,000 Bengalis to return to Bangladesh, while the Indian Government offered to repatriate 6,000 Pakistanis, mainly women and children. Although in 1972 there was no general mutual repatriation of civilian minorities, a number of partial repatriation operations were nevertheless carried out under the auspices of the ICRC.

On page 50 of this report, we have already mentioned the operations conducted at Wagah in mid-September, enabling several hundred Pakistani and Indian civilian internees to go home. Between 7 and 11 November, 184 Pakistani civilian internees and seriously wounded prisoners of war were repatriated in the aircraft which had been made available to the ICRC.

A few days later, the aircraft returned to Bangladesh some 160 Bengali pilgrims who had been held up in Pakistan. Seven Pakistani orphans were repatriated by the same means.

In February, July and December, the ICRC repatriated by air about 420 Afghan nationals who had been held up in India and Bangladesh.

## POLITICAL DETAINEES

**Bangladesh:** In January and February 1972, ICRC delegates visited approximately fifteen prisons in the interior of Bangladesh. They saw some 14,000 detainees (including 4 to 5,000 "non-locals"), whom they provided with medicaments, food and blankets. The



visits were suspended, however, by a decision of the Dacca authorities.

**Pakistan:** Late in 1972, the ICRC delegates in Islamabad were authorized in principle to visit certain categories of Bengali detainees in Pakistan.

## CENTRAL TRACING AGENCY

The Central Tracing Agency forwarded five million letters addressed by Indian and Pakistani prisoners of war to their families in India and Pakistan, while 1.5 million family messages were exchanged between the civilian population of Pakistan and Bangladesh. The Agency also received 6,000 inquiries regarding missing civilians and servicemen; 3,000 of them elicited a favourable reply.

In order effectively to fulfil its various duties, including the registration of prisoners of war and civilian detainees, whether Pakistani or Indian (the card index for the Asian sub-continent contained over 300,000 cards), the Central Tracing Agency had to increase its Geneva staff by ten. It detached experts for the tracing bureaux opened in Islamabad, New Delhi and Dacca, which had a staff of about five, ten and fifty each, including a large number of local employees.

## Indonesia

Early in 1972, the ICRC approached the Indonesian Government with a view to making further visits to places of detention.<sup>1</sup> The Indonesian Government replied that, owing to technical reasons, it would prefer the visits to be postponed to a later date.

## Malaysia

*Visits to places of detention:* Mr. Bernard Daniel, an ICRC delegate, was in Malaysia from 3 to 23 April. With the agreement of the competent authorities, he visited six places of detention—namely, the preventive detention centres at Kuching (Sarawak), Kota Kinabalu (Sabah), Muar (Johar), Taiping (State of Perak),

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<sup>1</sup> See Annual Report 1971, page 26.

Batu Gajah (State of Perak), and the "correctional centre" in the island of Jerjah (State of Penang)—where he saw more than 1,940 political detainees. As usual, reports on the visits were sent to the competent authorities.

*Installation of a regional delegation:* At the end of 1972, the ICRC requested permission of the Malaysian Government to open a regional delegation in Kuala Lumpur. The Malaysian Government agreed to the installation of such a delegation, which besides Malaysia would cover Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Burma.

Mr. Daniel, who had gone to Malaysia for that event, attended a Red Cross Youth information course held jointly by the Malaysian and Singapore Red Cross Societies at Kota Kuala Bharu (State of Selangor), from 26 November to 2 December. He spoke about the ICRC's organization and activities.

## **Philippines**

In May, Mr. Daniel went on a mission to the Philippines. First he attended a seminar of the Disaster Preparedness and Relief Assistance Institute, organized by the Philippine National Red Cross, in co-operation with the League of Red Cross Societies, for the benefit of National Societies in Asia and the Pacific. He addressed the seminar on the subject of assistance to victims of international and non-international armed conflicts.

The delegate also conferred with government authorities during his stay in the Philippines. He secured permission to visit Camp Crame, holding twenty-two political detainees with whom he was able to talk privately. Lastly, Mr. Daniel went to the island of Mindanao, south of the Philippines, where disturbances had broken out between the Christian and Muslim communities.

## **Singapore**

The ICRC sent a delegate to Singapore to attend a regional meeting of the International Friendship and Training Camp for the Red Cross Volunteers from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore, from 7 to 14 April.