

**Zeitschrift:** Annual report / International Committee of the Red Cross  
**Herausgeber:** International Committee of the Red Cross  
**Band:** - (1976)  
  
**Rubrik:** Southern Africa

### **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>**

time it took for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to organize a longer-term programme. In collaboration with the Protestant and Catholic missions, the medical team focused its efforts on providing a polyclinic service in the villages, distributing milk to children (1,500-2,000 children per day) and protein-rich powder to adults, and organizing six new dispensaries.

In all, 7 tons of relief supplies, worth 7,300 Swiss francs, were forwarded to the area by the ICRC.

### **Displaced persons in the south and refugees in Namibia/South-West Africa**

At the same time, the ICRC assisted persons displaced as a result of the fighting in the south of Angola.

These persons were accommodated in four camps located in Angolan territory, near the border with Namibia/South-West Africa. The South African authorities were ensuring the administration of the camps, and the ICRC's role was restricted to providing the displaced persons with additional material aid in the form of food—particularly for children—medicines, tents and blankets. Those displaced numbered 20,000 at the beginning of March 1976.

Just prior to the withdrawal of the South African troops from Angolan territory, at the end of March, the ICRC made representations to the PRA and South African Governments, drawing their attention to the potential dangers being run by these persons during the interim period before the Angolan authorities arrived. There was indeed a risk that unsupervised armed groups, who had been roaming the area for the past few weeks, might ransack the camps and harm the occupants. A large number of the latter in fact crossed the border into Namibia/South-West Africa on 27 March.

During the initial phase of establishing new refugee camps in Namibia/South-West Africa, the five ICRC delegates concerned continued to distribute relief supplies to the refugees. They also organized a family correspondence scheme and a tracing service.

Between January and mid-April 1976, the ICRC transported some 90 tons of relief supplies, worth 336,000 Swiss francs, to the camps in southern Angola and in the north of Namibia/South-West Africa.

### **ICRC personnel in Angola**

At the beginning of 1976, there were some fifty ICRC staff in Angola, including the three medico-surgical teams made available by the British, Swedish and Swiss Red Cross Societies. From April onwards, staff numbers gradually fell, and only three delegates remained in Luanda on 30 June when the relief programme ended. Their task was to continue the traditional activities of the ICRC for prisoners of war and persons detained as a result of the recent conflict in Angola, whilst keeping up co-ordination links with the southern African liberation movements based in Luanda and to which medical relief supplies were dispatched.

On 31 October 1976, at the request of the Angolan Government, the ICRC closed down its delegation in Luanda and withdrew its last delegate, without having been able to resume its conventional activities.

## **Southern Africa**

During 1976, the ICRC kept a regional delegate in Salisbury (Rhodesia/Zimbabwe), who made periodic visits to South Africa.

The deterioration of the situation in southern Africa led the ICRC to open a regional delegation in Lusaka (Zambia), to cover the following countries: Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, and Zambia. In the first few months of the year, the regional delegate in Lusaka was mainly occupied by problems resulting from the sequels of the conflict in Angola.

### **South Africa<sup>1</sup>**

Assisted by delegates and doctors from Geneva, the regional delegate continued the visits to prisoners in South Africa.

As reported previously, the ICRC had access in this country to *convicted* security prisoners. From December 1976, however, the ICRC received permission to visit persons detained under the *Internal Security Amendment Act*. It was also allowed to double the number of visits to convicted prisoners, from the beginning of 1977, to two visits per year. But the International Committee was not granted permission to visit persons detained under the *Terrorism Act* or other legislation relating to security, despite repeated representations.

Two series of visits were therefore made in South Africa in 1976. During the first one, from 26 April to 4 May, the delegates went to four places of detention—Robben Island, Pretoria, Pretoria Central and Kroonstad—in which there were altogether 258 *convicted political prisoners*. During the second, from 7 to 13 December, they visited six places of detention: in King William's Town, Grahamstown, Poolsmoor, Victor Verster, Modderbee and Johannesburg, where there were 125 *persons detained under the Internal Security Amendment Act*.

The ICRC also offered its services to the South African Government to give aid to the large number of persons arrested, especially children, when the riots broke out in Soweto and in other places in June 1976. The Government did not respond.

As he had been the subject of accusations concerning the treatment of the mentally sick—in particular, that political detainees had been placed in psychiatric institutions—the South African Health Minister invited the ICRC to visit such institutions.

Before accepting the invitation, the ICRC preferred to make an exploratory mission. The purpose of this mission, carried out

---

<sup>1</sup> For the Cuban prisoners of war in South Africa, see "Angola" section of present report.

by an ICRC psychiatrist and the ICRC delegate general for Africa, was to collect information on the number of psychiatric hospitals and the legislation in force relating to governmental and private establishments, and to confer with the Ministry of Health, with those working in the field of psychiatry and with other persons concerned with mental health. The information thus acquired would enable the ICRC to decide whether or not to visit psychiatric hospitals, a decision that had not been taken at the end of 1976.

## Rhodesia/Zimbabwe

**Visits to places of detention.** — In Rhodesia, it is administrative detainees, held without trial under the *Emergency Regulations*, to whom the ICRC has access. Nevertheless, it has continued to press for permission to visit also detainees under interrogation and those already sentenced, i.e., to see any person detained because of the conflict.

Two series of visits were made to detainees under the *Emergency Regulations*; the first from 13 to 25 May and the second from 11 to 25 November. The centres of detention, eight altogether, were as follows:

Chikurubi, Salisbury Remand, Gwelo, Wha Wha, Gatooma, Connemara, Que Que, Buffalo Range. At the time of the second series of visits, the total number of detainees was 792.

In South Africa and in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, the ICRC delegates spoke without witnesses to detainees of their choice. In both countries, the Committee gave material aid to the detainees to a total value of 35,000 Swiss francs.

**Application of humanitarian law.** — The delegate general for Africa and the regional delegate took the opportunity of their missions in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe to draw the attention of the authorities and in particular of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Internal affairs, Justice and Defence to the question of application of the Geneva Conventions and of the principles of humanitarian law in the Rhodesian conflict.

In addition, during the Conference in Geneva on Rhodesia/Zimbabwe in November and December 1976, the President of the ICRC met the heads of the delegations attending the Conference, as well as its Chairman. With them he studied means of increasing the ICRC's protection and assistance to victims on both sides. He stressed how important it was that humanitarian principles should be observed in the Rhodesian conflict, and hoped that the different parties would give a public undertaking to respect these principles.

**Assistance.** — In the areas affected by the fighting, the ICRC supplied material assistance to the civilians who had been relocated by the Salisbury authorities into "protected villages". The value of local purchases of supplies amounted to 65,000 Swiss francs in 1976.

At the end of the year, the ICRC asked the Salisbury delegation to carry out a fresh assessment, as thorough as possible, of the humanitarian problems and needs, in particular with regard to medical treatment for civilian victims.

## Liberation movements

The ICRC delegates maintained contacts with the representatives of nationalist movements in southern Africa, especially those of ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People's Union), ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union), ANC (African National Council), and SWAPO (South-West Africa People's Organization).

The purpose of the meetings was to develop co-operation between the movements and the ICRC concerning protection (prisoners) and assistance, and in spreading knowledge of humanitarian law and Red Cross principles.

Several consignments of medicines were handed to representatives of these movements in Angola, Mozambique and Zambia.

## Indo-China

The relief operation carried out jointly by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies to assist victims of the conflict in Indo-China continued throughout 1976, through the administrative body set up on 1 April 1975 and known as the Indo-China Secretariat (INDSEC). This bureau was responsible for co-ordinating and directing the international relief operation mounted by the Red Cross.

The total value of relief supplied in 1976 through INDSEC was over 15 million Swiss francs, the main beneficiary being Viet Nam. INDSEC sent regular reports to donors (governments, Red Cross Societies and other organizations) on how their gifts had been used and describing what current needs were. The financial statement on INDSEC is shown in Tables IX and X, pp. 64 and 65).

## Viet Nam

### Delegation in Ho Chi Minh City

During the first half of 1976, the International Red Cross (IRC) delegation in Ho Chi Minh City, composed of four ICRC delegates, performed various activities in close collaboration with the Red Cross Society and the authorities of the Republic of South Viet Nam.

In June, two delegates left, this first step towards disengagement coinciding with the reunification of the country, thenceforward to be called the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (SRVN).