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II. HEADQUARTERS ACTIVITIES

SUPPORT FOR ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

Function and structure of Operations Department

Essentially, the task of the Operations Department is to conduct the operations which the ICRC undertakes in the field for the victims of conflicts or of related situations, pursuant to decisions of the Assembly and, especially, of the Executive Board. It also proposes action to the Executive Board. Its role, therefore, is to give the necessary impetus to the launching and smooth running of such action, to co-ordinate and control it, and to give the necessary technical backing.

For that purpose, the Operations Department, under a director, is divided into five geographic zones—Africa; Latin America; Asia and Oceania; Europe and North America; and Middle East—each led by a delegate-general, two “support” divisions and two “support” services, namely, the Relief Division, the Medical Division, the Detention Service and the Telecommunications Service.

When required to conduct large-scale actions such as the southern Africa action in 1978, the Operations Department sets up a work unit or “task force”. This unit, directed by the delegate-general or another official in charge of the zone concerned, includes representatives not only of the support divisions and services of the Operations Department but also of other departments or divisions of the institution: the Central Tracing Agency, Finance and Administration, Principles and Law, Personnel, Information and Public Relations, and so on. The “task force” acts as a co-ordinating group and meets as often as required to review the situation, exchange all useful information on the progress of action and take necessary initiative in operations.

Relief Division

The main tasks of the Relief Division consist in:

- obtaining for the ICRC, either by donations or by purchases, the goods it needs for its actions to assist the victims of armed conflicts or of internal tension (except for medications and medical supplies, the concern of the Medical Division);

- organizing the transport of relief supplies to countries of destination, mainly by chartering ships or aircraft, and supplying delegations with the necessary means of transport for relief actions in the field;
- maintaining contact with donor National Societies, with the specialized agencies of the United Nations and other voluntary organizations, with the European Economic Community (EEC) and with the Swiss Government, with all of which the ICRC has concluded agreements relating to food aid;
- managing the ICRC warehouse in Geneva;
- carrying out surveys in the field to determine not only needs but also local possibilities for purchases, storage and transport;
- participating in the training of relief delegates who will be called upon to carry out assistance operations in the field;
- processing statistical data on relief actions, following the progress of such actions and controlling their management.

Relief in 1978

The tables given on pages 48, 49 and 50 illustrate ICRC relief activities in 1978. Forty-six countries received aid, to a *total value of 40.7 million Swiss francs*:

- relief of all kinds in *pecially financed actions*, undertaken by the ICRC with the support of governments, National Societies and various organizations, amounted to a value of 19 million Swiss francs, for a total of about 6,500 tons of supplies forwarded to the areas concerned, either by the ICRC or by the donors themselves direct, under ICRC supervision. The value of relief supplies sent to southern Africa more than tripled compared to 1977;
- thanks to the EEC and the Swiss Government with which it concluded agreements, the ICRC also provided 23 countries with *food aid* (10,923 tons) for a total value of 20.9 million Swiss francs;
- *assistance to “political detainees”* and the most needy of their families amounted to 645,600 Swiss francs (not counting Argentina and Chile, where the action was financed specially);
- finally, the ICRC provided various items, to a value of 88,100 Swiss francs, to some fifteen *National Societies* in aid of their activities.

TRANSPORT
2 million

Transport organized by the ICRC and financed by the ordinary accounts (then generally debited to special actions accounts) was as follows:

	kg.	Sw.fr.
1. Despatch by scheduled transport services		
— Sea or land	262,851	122,648.—
— Air	108,912	539,377.—
2. Transport by chartered aircraft (passengers and freight) ..	173,850	1,205,534.—
3. Free transport		
— By air	16,472	98,832.—
Import	79,394	27,080.—
Insurance		34,906.—
Total	641,479	2,028,377.—


SPECIALLY FINANCED ACTIONS
(relief in kind)
19 million

Sw.fr.

Africa	11,898,790.—
Southern Africa	4,148,500.—
of which:	Sw.fr.
— Angola	79,700.—
— Botswana	433,800.—
— Mozambique	545,500.—
— Rhodesia/Zimbabwe	2,688,100.—
— Zambia	401,400.—
Ethiopia (Ogaden and Eritrea conflicts)	1,741,790.—
Mauritania	11,000.—
Somalia	464,800.—
Sudan (Eritrea conflict)	3,724,700.—
Tanzania	137,800.—
Chad	1,046,500.—
Zaire	623,700.—
Latin America	1,057,300.—
Argentina	131,300.—
Chile ¹	60,000.—
Nicaragua ²	866,000.—
Asia	2,069,500.—
INDSEC	574,000.—
Viet Nam (conflict with Kampuchea)	1,495,500.—
Middle East	3,994,200.—
Lebanon ³	3,994,200.—

¹ Goods to a value of fr. 200,000 remained in stock from previous years.

² Including aid to refugees in Honduras and Costa Rica.

³ Including relief supplies delivered by the Damascus delegation for Lebanese and Palestinian refugees.

These figures do not include food aid supplied by the EEC and the Swiss Government (see Table on p. 49).

The values given are those of donations in kind from governments, National Societies and other donors, and of relief goods purchased by the ICRC or INDSEC with cash donations.

Beneficiaries	Totals Sw.fr.	Swiss Government		European Economic Community	
		Commodities	Sw.fr.	Commodities	Sw.fr.
Africa	806,600.—		249,600.—		557,000.—
— Botswana	131,000.—			50 T skimmed-milk powder	131,000.—
— Ethiopia	33,600.—	4.2 T whole-milk powder	33,600.—		
— Mauritania	295,000.—			100 T sk.-milk powder	295,000.—
— Tanzania	40,000.—	5 T whole-milk powder	40,000.—		
— Zaire	176,000.—	22 T whole-milk powder	176,000.—		
— Zambia	131,000.—			50 T sk.-milk powder	131,000.—
Latin America	4,532,700.—		625,000.—		3,907,700.—
— Argentina	40,000.—	5 T whole-milk powder	40,000.—		
— Bolivia	911,000.—			300 T sk.-milk powder	911,000.—
— Chile	1,088,800.—			100 T sk.-milk powder	345,600.—
				100 T butter-oil	743,200.—
— Guyana	40,000.—	5 T whole-milk powder	40,000.—		
— Nicaragua	617,300.—	500 T wheat flour	465,000.—	50 T sk.-milk powder	152,300.—
— Panama	1,131,200.—			400 T sk.-milk powder	1,131,200.—
— Paraguay	80,000.—	10 T whole-milk powder	80,000.—		
— Peru	163,300.—			50 T sk.-milk powder	163,300.—
— Uruguay	461,100.—			150 T sk.-milk powder	461,100.—
Asia	7,339,100.—				7,339,100.—
— Philippines	3,569,600.—			600 T sk.-milk powder	1,878,000.—
				1,581 T rice	1,691,600.—
— Viet Nam	3,769,500.—			1,570 T rice	1,390,000.—
				765 T sk.-milk powder	2,379,500.—
Europe	8,000.—		8,000.—		
— Greece	8,000.—	1 T whole-milk powder	8,000.—		
Middle East	8,250,800.—		1,715,000.—		6,535,800.—
— Israel and occupied territories	6,150,200.—	500 T wheat flour	515,000.—	550 T sk.-milk powder	1,724,500.—
				740 T rice	601,100.—
				280 T butter-oil	2,301,100.—
— Jordan	770,400.—			1,324.5 T wheat flour	1,008,500.—
				100 T sk.-milk powder	293,500.—
— Lebanon	160,000.—	20 T whole-milk powder	160,000.—	662 T wheat flour	476,900.—
— Syria	1,040,000.—	130 T whole-milk powder	1,040,000.—		
— Yemen (People's Dem. Rep.)	130,200.—			198.5 T Wheat flour	130,200.—
Total Sw.fr.	20,937,200.—		2,597,600.—		18,339,600.—

¹ Distribution of this food was frequently entrusted to the National Societies.

**AID TO DETAINEES
AND THEIR FAMILIES**
(Specially financed)

Sw.fr. 645,600.—

Africa	162,300
South Africa	11,500
Angola	2,200
Botswana	10,500
Kenya	700
Rhodesia/Zimbabwe	137,400
Latin America	43,600
Bolivia	200
Colombia	14,300
Guatemala	15,900
Nicaragua	1,000
Paraguay	12,200
Asia	52,700
Bangladesh	400
India	1,100
Indonesia	44,200
Pakistan	200
Philippines	1,600
Thailand	5,200
Middle East	387,000
Egypt	10,800
Israel and occupied territories	335,500
Syria	11,700
Yemen Arab Republic	29,000

**AID TO
NATIONAL SOCIETIES**
(Financed by ordinary budget, not by special financing)

Sw.fr. 88,100.—

Africa	2,800
Comoros	100
Mauritius	300
Uganda	100
Rhodesia/Zimbabwe	200
Somalia	100
Swaziland	2,000
Latin America	39,400
Cuba	400
Nicaragua	39,000
Asia	8,300
Philippines	8,300
Europe	16,600
Portugal	10,000
Various	6,600
Middle East	21,000
Israel (for local Red Crescent Societies in occupied territories)	800
Jordan (for various sections of population) ..	2,000
Syria (for various sections of population, hospitals, etc.)	11,700
Yemen (People's Dem. Rep. of)	6,500

Medical Division

Founded in 1977, the Medical Division selects, recruits and prepares the medical personnel which the ICRC needs for its actions, whether these are in the field of protection, such as visits to prisoners of war, interned civilians or "political detainees", or in that of assistance during or after conflict (care for the wounded and sick, provision of emergency medical supplies, fitting of artificial limbs to war disabled, for example).

Another of its functions is to plan each action before it is undertaken: it is necessary to take stock of needs, estimate the number of people to be assisted and determine in what respect and how the ICRC can help, taking into account local resources and the actual situation.

The pharmaceutical section, attached to the Medical Division, deals with all questions relating to the purchase and storage of medicaments and medical material. Shipments to delegations and the return of surplus stocks are made in co-operation with the Relief Division.

In this connection we would mention that the new relief depot opened by the ICRC in Geneva in 1978 contains a stock of emergency medicaments and in it are prepared the new standard parcels of medicaments which have been devised for emergency actions.

Main activities in 1978

In 1978 the Head of the Medical Division and his staff carried out several surveys relating to actions conducted in southern Africa (Botswana, Zambia, Mozambique, Angola), in the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia and Somalia) and in Nicaragua.

In all some 80 persons—doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and orthopedists—took part in ICRC actions. More than forty worked in Africa (Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, Botswana, Zambia, South Africa, Ethiopia, Somalia, Chad, Zaire and elsewhere), about twenty in the Middle East (mainly in Lebanon but also in Iran and Israel and the occupied territories), and about fifteen in Latin America (Argentina, Chile, Nicaragua) and in Asia (Indonesia). More than a score of the doctors and nurses were seconded to the ICRC by the National Red Cross Societies of Denmark, Finland, Norway, New Zealand, the Netherlands and Sweden, and by the French organization "Médecins sans frontière".

Compared with the figures for 1977, the number of medical personnel working in the field for the ICRC in 1978 had more than doubled. This was to a large extent caused by the expansion of ICRC activities on the African continent.

Purely medical work in 1978 was characterized by development in the following directions:

1. Help was provided for fitting and reeducating war amputees in close co-operation with the authorities and the National Societies concerned. After its valuable experience in Lebanon where, in co-operation with the Government of the Netherlands and the Swiss and British Red Cross Societies, some 600 amputees were fitted with artificial limbs, the ICRC continued this line of action in Africa. One such project began in 1978 in Mozambique, and two more, one in Ethiopia and the other in Angola, were in course or preparation. The ICRC contribution consists in supplying the equipment necessary for the prosthesis workshops and the specialized personnel such as orthopedists and physiotherapists who, apart from tending the amputees, train local staff to carry on their work after their departure.

2. Help was also given in preventive medicine and public health. With the huge concentrations of displaced persons in countries like Botswana and Zambia, acute hygiene problems arise. In the reception camps the sanitation is often inadequate; the water supply may be insufficient and sometimes polluted by bad drainage. To cope with these problems the ICRC initiated, in co-operation with the authorities and the National Societies, special courses, given by volunteers trained for the purpose, to teach the population on sanitation matters.

3. Finally, the Medical Division endeavoured to establish stricter criteria for the ICRC's traditional task of supplying medicaments and medical material, by instituting a system for the survey missions carried out by specialized staff. The aim is to avoid providing medical aid which proves to be unsuitable.

In 1978 the ICRC provided 300 tons of medical supplies, to a value of more than 7 million Swiss francs, for the victims of conflicts.

Detention Service

The essential function of the Detention Service consists in placing on a systematic footing for all geographic zones the visiting procedure in places of internment and detention, together with related activities, whether the visits are to prisoners of war, interned civilians or "political detainees".

In particular, it:

- prepares for visits to places of detention
- takes part in the training of delegates
- centralizes data on detention all over the world
- processes reports on visits to places of detention
- maintains the central captivity records up to date and co-operates in research carried out in the field of detention.

Telecommunication Service

Radiocommunications

Ten new radio stations were brought into operation by the ICRC in 1978: at N'Djamena (Chad) in February; Faya-Largeau (Chad) in March; Gaborone (Botswana) in April; Umtali and Bulawayo (Rhodesia/Zimbabwe) in May and June; Lubumbashi and Kolwezi (Zaire) in June and July; Francistown and Selebi Pikwe (Botswana) in October; and Fort Victoria (Rhodesia/

Zimbabwe) in October. In addition, since September, connection with the ICRC delegation at Managua (Nicaragua) has been made through an amateur radio station which has been authorized to use the call sign assigned to the Nicaragua Red Cross.

During the year, the ICRC closed down six of its stations—Jounieh (Lebanon), Rawalpindi (Pakistan), Dacca (Bangladesh), Santiago (Chile), Vientiane (Laos) and Bangkok (Thailand)—while the station in New Delhi (India) was put on stand-by.

At the end of 1978 the ICRC radiocommunication network could be illustrated as follows:

