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Introduction

The ICRC Annual Report 1978 is divided into two sections, the first devoted to activities throughout the world and the second to work at headquarters.

Activities throughout the world

This section first deals with ICRC field work on behalf of victims of international and non-international armed conflicts; the work done is grouped according to geographical area. A further chapter then gives information on what has been done for victims of internal troubles and tensions, namely, "political detainees".

Work at headquarters

Section II, entitled "Work at headquarters", opens with an account of the Operations Department which, as its name implies, is responsible for the management of operations. There are also a number of statistical tables relating to relief work carried out by the ICRC in 1978.

There then follows a brief description of the Central Tracing Agency of the ICRC (CTA) and its work at headquarters; its activities in the field are incorporated in the different chapters of Section I of the Report.

The central chapters of Section II report on ICRC activities relating to the development, reaffirmation and dissemination of international humanitarian law and the Principles and ideals of the Red Cross. There is also information on ICRC relations with the Red Cross world and the international organizations and on its information and public relations work.

Lastly, following some statistics on the staff of the ICRC, the Report closes with a chapter on the institution's financial situation and accounts.

Statistics

Never since the Second World War was the ICRC simultaneously engaged in so many theatres of operations as it was in 1978. For instance, 323 delegates and doctors were sent into the field, as against 256 in 1977; in 25 countries they visited some 41,000 persons deprived of their freedom, including 29,000 "political detainees", 10,000 civilian detainees and internees and 2,000 prisoners of war. Compared with the previous year, therefore, when the ICRC visited roughly 17,800 detainees, its protection work more than doubled.

With regard to assistance, in 1978 the ICRC transmitted about 17,400 tons of relief material to some 50 countries, for a total value of 40 million Swiss francs.