

Zeitschrift: Annual report / International Committee of the Red Cross
Herausgeber: International Committee of the Red Cross
Band: - (1978)

Rubrik: Middle East

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: 15.03.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

- special distributions of milk to 12,000 children;
- the supply of blankets and clothing to the hospitals and other institutions mentioned above;
- the provision of medicaments and basic medical supplies to the dispensaries and hospitals.

At the same time, it intended to intensify its efforts to trace missing persons and make further attempts to gain access to those detained in connection with the events.

To do so, it had to strengthen its organization; this it did by sending out a head of delegation to take over from the regional delegate, and three other delegates, one of them a doctor.

ASSISTANCE.—The first relief material, sent by air, arrived at destination in mid-June.

Other consignments followed until August, when the ICRC wound up its relief operation except for a few distributions of medical supplies.

In total, and not counting the foodstuffs made available by the Gécamines Company, the ICRC forwarded to Shaba 272 tons of relief material consisting of 250 tons of assorted food (including 22 tons of powdered milk made available by the Swiss Confederation), medicaments and medical supplies to a value of 153,000 francs, clothing, 5,000 blankets and plastic shrouds, altogether worth roughly 800,000 Swiss francs, including transport costs. The Swiss Red Cross participated in this action by supplying the clothing and some of the blankets.

It is worth noting that this action enabled some 25 medical centres to start working again.

CENTRAL TRACING AGENCY.—In June, the Assistant Director of the Central Tracing Agency (CTA) went to Zaire for a few weeks to set up, in collaboration with and under the auspices of the National Society, a Red Cross message service to help trace missing persons and exchange family news following the events in Shaba.

The ICRC medical delegate in Shaba participated in operations led by a Belgian doctor to exhume and rebury some 800 corpses buried after the fighting; the aim was to make a further attempt at identification. This action, which took place in September, permitted the identification of about 200 bodies, a list of which was transmitted to the CTA.

DETAINEES.—Since the beginning of its intervention, and several times afterwards, the ICRC approached the highest civilian and military authorities at Kinshasa, as well as the local authorities in Shaba, to gain access to all the civilian and military personnel detained in connection with the events.

During their overland travels, the ICRC delegates, and the medical delegate in particular, were able to make a number of visits to prisons in Shaba in July and August, and again in November and December. In this way they visited a dozen places of detention where they found hundreds of detainees. Medicaments were distributed in several of these establishments.

At the end of the year, the ICRC received official permission to visit all the detention centres in Shaba. It pursued its efforts to get this authorization extended to such establishments throughout the country, particularly those in Kinshasa, and to all persons detained in connection with the events.

During the weeks which followed the fighting, the ICRC also contacted the representatives of the FLNC in Europe in order, on the one hand, to offer medical assistance to any wounded persons held by the movement and, on the other, to obtain news of a number of missing persons and visit any prisoners that might be in FLNC hands. No results were achieved by these approaches.

Disengagement

By the end of 1978, the ICRC had only two delegates left in Zaire. The emergency was over and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was responsible for assisting those who were returning to Shaba after seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. The main task of these two delegates was to carry out ICRC protection work (visiting places of detention) while continuing to evaluate the situation of the civilian population in Shaba with a view to informing the authorities and competent organizations of the requirements and distributing some medical supplies.

MIDDLE EAST

Because of the continuing conflicts in the Middle East, the ICRC maintained its delegations in the area:

- one delegation in *Lebanon*, to bring help to the victims of the conflict in the country;
- one delegation in Israel and the occupied territories, as well as delegations in Egypt, Jordan and Syria, to carry on its activities in connection with the conflict between *Israel and the Arab countries*.

The entry of Israeli forces into southern Lebanon on 15 March 1978 caused the ICRC delegation in Tel Aviv to become directly involved, for the first time, in events occurring in Lebanon. The delegates, for example, were asked to deal with the following matters, in close collaboration with the ICRC delegation in Lebanon:

- persons captured in southern Lebanon by the Israeli armed forces and taken to Israel;
- Lebanese wounded treated in Israeli hospitals;
- searches for persons reported missing;
- general situation of the civilian population in the territories occupied by the Israeli armed forces, up to the time of their withdrawal on 13 June 1978.

ICRC activities in relation to these problems are dealt with in the chapter entitled Lebanon.

The ICRC delegation in Damascus was also engaged in helping the victims of the Lebanon conflict.

Lebanon

Although the ICRC continued to perform its tasks throughout the country during the whole of 1978, the bulk of its activities in the first six months were carried out mainly in the south

while in the following six months it was more active in and around the eastern part of Beirut.

The first period was marked by the entry of Israeli armed forces into southern Lebanon, where an area was occupied by them for several weeks. In the second period, fighting flared up in the eastern part of Beirut, and was at its fiercest around the end of September and the beginning of October.

Despite serious difficulties as regards its delegates' safety, the ICRC constantly endeavoured to adapt its work to changing circumstances. To that end, the delegate-general for the Middle East visited Lebanon several times, while the ICRC Chief Medical Officer also paid a visit at the end of February.

At the beginning of March the situation became so strained in Lebanon that the ICRC decided to close down its Jounieh sub-delegation and to reduce temporarily the activities of the Tripoli bureau. As the ICRC delegation's Lebanon head-

quarters was in West Beirut, it opened an office in the Achrafieh quarter, in view of the growing tension between the "Lebanese Front" and the Arab peace-keeping (or deterrent) force. The sub-delegation at Tyre was kept up.

With regard, more particularly, to the organization of medical assistance, and with the purpose of making preparations for any emergency that might arise, standard kits containing essential medical material for the treatment of wounded persons were stocked in Beirut and Tyre.

ICRC ACTIVITIES IN SOUTHERN LEBANON

Before the intervention of the Israeli armed forces

The year opened with a period of relative calm, allowing the ICRC, in January and February 1978, to continue its activities in southern Lebanon on the same scale as the previous year.



Special attention was directed, in particular, to *medical treatment* for the civilian population in the area to the south of the Litani river—a region difficult of access to the authorities. The medical team—a doctor and a nurse—attached to the Tyre sub-delegation took supplies of medicines at regular intervals to the hospitals and dispensaries in the area. The team also carried out a complete survey of medical facilities in the south and sent a report on the subject to the Lebanese Ministry of Health, in case the situation should deteriorate again. In addition, it organized the transfer from one zone to another of several persons for medical reasons.

In the sphere of *protection*, the ICRC delegates continued to make visits to persons detained by the “conservative forces” in the enclave of Marjayoun.

All these activities were maintained subsequently.

After the intervention by the Israeli armed forces

In the night of 14/15 March, Israeli armed forces entered Lebanon. After a few days of fighting, they occupied all the southern part of the country as far as the river Litani, apart from the city of Tyre and a coastal strip nearby. A cease-fire was arranged on 21 March, and this was followed by the establishment in the south of the country of a United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) on 23 March and the gradual withdrawal of the Israeli forces, completed on 13 June.

APPLICATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW.—After the first few days of the Israeli presence in southern Lebanon, the ICRC, through its delegation in Tel Aviv, reminded the Israeli authorities of their obligations under the Geneva Conventions. The initial oral communications were confirmed by a note dated 30 March, in which the ICRC stated that it considered the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 applicable in the situation in southern Lebanon as from 15 March 1978. Consequently, it invited the Israeli Government to put the Convention provisions into practice.

In particular, the ICRC drew attention to the fact that all persons not having Israeli nationality and falling into the power of the State of Israel as a result of the events in Lebanon were protected by the Fourth Convention, and that this applied to civilian internees. It urged Israel to grant prisoner-of-war treatment to persons captured in Lebanon whenever it was found that such persons had been bearing arms openly at the time of combat and had belonged to a formation placed under responsible command and respecting the laws and customs of war. It likewise pointed out that civilians in the occupied territories should immediately have the benefit of the provisions of the Fourth Convention. Finally, the ICRC asked to be granted the practical facilities necessary for its delegates to bring aid and protection to the civilian population in southern Lebanon and to detainees.

In the course of several talks with the ICRC delegation in Israel, the Israeli authorities stated that they were willing to grant all practical facilities to ICRC delegates to enable them to carry out their mission in southern Lebanon.

With reference to Palestinian combatants, the Israeli authorities said that there was no question of considering them as

prisoners of war; but the ICRC obtained agreement to include these combatants under the new procedure for visits to inhabitants of the occupied territories and nationals of Arab countries who had been arrested for security reasons and detained in Israel and in the occupied territories (see page 31 of the present Report).

Subsequent to the arrival of the UNIFIL, in southern Lebanon, the President of the ICRC sent a letter to the United Nations Secretary-General concerning the application by the UN Interim Force of the Geneva Conventions and possibly of the Additional Protocols. The ICRC noted that, although the United Nations as such was not a party to the Conventions, each State remained individually responsible for their application when it provided a contingent to the United Nations Force. In order to ensure respect of the Conventions by the States concerned, the ICRC proposed the inclusion of a clause, in the agreements concluded between the United Nations and the Governments supplying contingents, obliging those States to make sure, on the one hand, that the members of national contingents were perfectly acquainted with the obligations deriving from the Conventions and, on the other hand, that the necessary measures were in fact taken to ensure the application of the provisions.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations agreed to the request of the ICRC.

When an Israeli soldier was captured on 5 April south of Tyre by the fighters of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine/General Command (PFLP/GC), the ICRC made representations not only to the PFLP/GC but also to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)* to obtain notification of the capture of this prisoner and permission to visit him, in conformity with the Third Geneva Convention. As reported below, the ICRC received this permission.

FIRST STEPS BY THE ICRC.—As from 16 March, the ICRC delegates in Tyre visited the hospitals and dispensaries in the town and its surrounding areas in order to assess the situation and to hand over packages of medical supplies. Most of these establishments were evacuated shortly afterwards and the ICRC, in co-operation with the Lebanese Red Cross and the “Palestinian Red Crescent”, opened an emergency centre in Tyre to give treatment to the wounded.

As most of the people of southern Lebanon had fled before the advancing Israeli troops, the Beirut delegation of the ICRC at once contacted the responsible Lebanese authorities, the Palestinian representatives and the various aid organizations, in order to find out the number of displaced persons and the nature of their needs. In the period following the Israeli intervention, it was estimated that there were about 150,000 displaced persons in Saïda and West Beirut; by the end of March the total had reached 250,000.

In these circumstances, the ICRC, on 22 March, sent an appeal to a number of governments and National Societies with a view to obtaining the necessary material and financial

* In 1974 the PLO had declared its intention of applying the principles of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949.

support for the expansion of its activities in Lebanon. The appeal was for the sum of 1.3 million Swiss francs (for the purchase of medicaments and for operational expenses) and for the supply of 180 tons of baby food and 20,000 blankets.

The Central Tracing Agency delegates in Lebanon set up facilities and a communications network to cope with the flood of requests from displaced persons in Tyre, Saïda and Beirut for news of their relatives.

From 22 March, the ICRC delegates also began to travel south of the Litani, where they made a general assessment of the situation in the 150 or so villages within the zone occupied by Israeli troops.

The ICRC, moreover, strengthened its Lebanon delegation by sending out extra staff, so that by April it had twenty delegates in Lebanon besides about forty employees recruited locally.

PROTECTION.—In the zone occupied by the Israeli forces in southern Lebanon and in Israel: As a result of representations made by the ICRC, the Israeli authorities at once notified the ICRC delegation in Tel Aviv of the identity of 28 persons captured by Israeli forces in southern Lebanon. Under the provisions of the new agreement between the Israeli authorities and the ICRC, the first visits to these detainees took place on 28 March; by mid-April the ICRC delegates in Israel had seen all of them. The visits were later repeated at regular intervals.

Several of the detainees were released shortly after capture, some of them through the intermediary of the ICRC. By the time the Israel forces were withdrawn in mid-June, 19 persons remained in detention in Israel under administrative regulations.

After the end of hostilities the ICRC several times requested the Israeli authorities to allow these detainees to be repatriated. Acting as a neutral intermediary, it also transmitted to the Israeli Government a similar request by the Lebanese Government.

Five detainees were repatriated during the second half of the year, three of them through the good offices of the ICRC, but 14 were still in prison in Israel at the end of 1978.

The Israeli authorities also supplied to the ICRC delegation in Tel Aviv a list of some sixty Lebanese civilians taken to hospitals in Israel after the fighting. The delegates visited most of these people and arranged for some of them to exchange family messages with their relatives in Lebanon. All those receiving hospital treatment returned to Lebanon afterwards, some of them under ICRC auspices.

The civilians living in the zone occupied by Israeli forces south of the Litani, comprising about 150 villages, were visited periodically by the ICRC delegates based in Tyre. In April, when the persons who had fled were gradually returning to their homes in this zone, ICRC delegates were at the crossing points in order to deal with any problems that might arise. The delegates also continued to visit the persons held by the "conservative forces" at Marjayoun. Three of these persons were released during this period, two of them with ICRC assistance.

On the Palestinian side: The first visit to the Israeli soldier captured on 5 April by the PFLP/GC took place on 29 April. Family messages were exchanged and the delegates spoke in private with the prisoner, to whom the PFLP/GC decided

to grant prisoner-of-war status and treatment. But, contrary to the provisions of the Third Geneva Convention, the visit was not carried out in the place of detention, the detaining authorities having pleaded reasons of security. A second visit to the prisoner was made on 4 July.

In addition to its specific protection activities, the ICRC acted as intermediary between the Israeli authorities and the PFLP/GC in negotiating the repatriation of the prisoner. At the end of 1978, the prisoner had not yet been released.

*ASSISTANCE.—*Besides acting as co-ordinator during the first few days after the Israeli intervention, the ICRC also supplied extra aid for the national relief campaign launched by the Lebanese authorities, the National Red Cross Society, the "Palestinian Red Crescent", UNRWA and other specialized agencies of the United Nations to provide assistance to displaced persons of Lebanese and Palestinian origin. The ICRC delegates also distributed relief supplies, wherever necessary, to people who remained in the occupied zones and later, too, to those who returned there.

The funds received as a result of the appeal made on 22 March enabled the ICRC to make the following purchases at the end of April: 21,480 blankets, of which 10,000 were handed to the Lebanese Red Cross and 5,000 to the "Palestinian Red Crescent", the rest being allotted to specifically ICRC activities in southern Lebanon; 28 tons of detergents, antibiotics, etc. given to the Lebanese Red Cross; 100,000 Swiss francs' worth of medicines bought in Lebanon and given to the "Palestinian Red Crescent"; 10.8 tons of medicines bought in Europe and sent to Lebanon by the ICRC from mid-March onwards; radio sets for the Lebanese Red Cross for its activities throughout the country.

The ICRC also received gifts in kind from eight National Societies and one government, comprising 20,800 blankets, 80 tons of baby milk, 72 tons of food, 6.4 tons of clothing and baby clothes and 2.2 tons of medicines. These supplies were distributed either by the ICRC itself or through the agency of the Lebanese Red Cross or the "Palestinian Red Crescent".

Moreover, under the programme set up by the Lebanese Government for helping persons who fled from the occupied zone to return to their homes, the ICRC, at the request of the national authorities, approached the Government of Israel asking it to allow full facilities to the Lebanese authorities to evaluate the needs in various fields and to take the measures required to meet them. The Israeli authorities having replied favourably to this request, the ICRC delegates took part in the first evaluation mission, at the end of April, in order to facilitate contacts between the authorities of the two countries.

Death of an ICRC delegate

It was during this troubled period that the International Committee of the Red Cross suffered the grievous loss of one of its delegates, Mr. Louis Gaulis, on 29 March. He was killed while on duty in his capacity as a delegate in Tyre.

As a result of this tragedy, and the wounding of another delegate in similar circumstances shortly afterwards in Beirut, the ICRC made every effort to improve still more the safety measures in force.

ICRC ACTIVITIES IN EAST BEIRUT AND IN THE NORTH OF LEBANON

Throughout the year, sporadic fighting broke out in *Beirut*, either between snipers of different parties or between the forces of the "Lebanese Front" and the Syrian units of the ADF. Each time that these combats reached a certain intensity, and providing that it was safe to do so, the ICRC delegates went to the spot to assess the needs, especially in the hospitals and dispensaries in the area affected, to distribute the medicines and supplies required for treating the wounded, and to evacuate some of the victims. For example, the Beirut delegation acted as early as February, during the fighting in the Fayadiyeh barracks, then in the outbreaks that occurred in different parts of East Beirut in the second week of April, at the end of July and in the second week of September. But it was chiefly when the district of Achrafieh was being shelled, first from 1 to 6 July, then from 27 September to 7 October, that the ICRC undertook large-scale actions. Only these are described below.

The Beirut delegation also carried on its work during various clashes that took place in the *north of Lebanon*, particularly in the Zghorta area in June and in the region of Batroun in August. The delegates examined the situation, distributed medicines, and compiled lists of missing and dead persons.

By way of example, there was the operation on 6 September, during which one of the ICRC delegates accompanied three ambulances, first-aid workers and a doctor of the Lebanese Red Cross into the Batroun area. The militia of the "Lebanese Front" and the troops of the ADF were so closely interlocked there that the ordinary medical services could no longer move around freely. The Red Cross operation enabled treatment to be given to some thirty soldiers of the ADF who were seriously ill, and to about 200 inhabitants in seven villages. It also succeeded in tracing 34 persons out of 42 reported missing in a list drawn up by the delegates of the Central Tracing Agency in Lebanon.

First week of July : resumption of fighting in East Beirut

From 1 to 6 July, the district of Achrafieh was the scene of fierce fighting between the "Lebanese Front" and the Syrian troops of the ADF. Until 4 July the shelling was so intense that the activities of the ICRC Beirut delegation in this area were completely paralysed.

In the morning of 4 July, however, taking advantage of a lull, the West Beirut delegation arranged for a convoy to take to the ICRC Achrafieh office an additional delegate and two extra Lebanese helpers, and more packages of medicines and emergency medical supplies. This brought the total staff in the Achrafieh office to two delegates and six local employees.

A little later a convoy left the Achrafieh office to distribute medicines to the Lebanese Red Cross dispensaries. On the way back one of the delegates and two of the Lebanese helpers were fired on and had to take shelter in a building. As the fighting broke out again, they were unable to get back to the office until 7 July.

This incident, as well as other violations (in particular the shelling of hospitals) led the ICRC to publish a press release on 7 July, protesting vigorously against "the use of weapons

which cause such heavy loss of life among the non-combatants of a densely populated town". The ICRC expressed its indignation "at the non-respect of the Red Cross emblem which should be observed for the protection of the medical personnel, units and vehicles which, from the outset, have been repeatedly under attack". Finally, it urged that humanitarian principles be fully respected and that the Red Cross "be permitted to carry out as soon as possible and without hindrance its mission of assisting the victims".

As the fighting had virtually ceased by 7 July, ICRC delegates were able to get in touch with the persons in charge of the Syrian units of the ADF and of the "Lebanese Front", who supplied all the required assurances concerning the ICRC's activities.

From that date, the *assistance* provided included, after delegates had assessed the needs in the hospitals and dispensaries in the Achrafieh district, the distribution of anti-tetanus serum, blood and other medical supplies needed for treating the victims of the fighting.

Under the heading of *protection*, in addition to the usual ICRC procedures for obtaining access to combatants captured by the opposing forces, the Beirut delegation organized the following evacuation operations, at the request of the parties concerned:

- On 12 July, in collaboration with the Lebanese Red Cross, about fifty Egyptian and Syrian workers, stranded since the beginning of the fighting in a hotel in the port of Beirut, in front of which the militia of the "Lebanese Front" had taken up their positions, were transferred from East to West Beirut.
- A similar operation was carried out on 19 July when some thirty people were evacuated.
- On 10 August, an ICRC delegate and two first-aid helpers of the Lebanese Red Cross went to a building in East Beirut in which about 100 persons had been trapped by snipers for ten days and where food and medicines were lacking. An operation was immediately mounted to bring help to these people.
- On 11 September, ICRC delegates transferred from East to West Beirut two Syrian soldiers who had been captured by the "Lebanese Front". They were then handed over to the Syrian military authorities.

The Lebanese Red Cross and the ICRC decided in mid-August to set up an emergency centre in the building housing the ICRC office in Achrafieh, in order to cope with any unforeseen events.

End of September—beginning of October : new outbreak of violence

Beginning on the night of 27-28 September and until the cease-fire took effect on 8 October, East Beirut was again the target of heavy shelling which caused many casualties among civilians. In the brief lulls, the ICRC delegates made some attempts to reach hospitals and dispensaries and distribute relief. The Achrafieh emergency centre began operating, taking in wounded and sick persons and some people seeking shelter. But throughout the barrage, the ICRC's work was made extremely difficult by the fierceness of the fighting, especially as hospitals and ambulances were also hit by shells.

ICRC APPEAL FOR TRUCE.—On 2 October the ICRC sent out an appeal, stating that the civilian population was once more “in the thick of the battle and main victim of the clashes”. It urged the belligerents to “take measures immediately to ensure that medical personnel and hospitals may continue their work unimpeded and in safety, and to agree upon general or local truces to permit endangered civilians to seek safety elsewhere”. The International Committee also called on the belligerents “to cease forthwith the indiscriminate shelling of the civilian population”.

The appeal was repeated on 4 October.

Both appeals were forwarded by the ICRC to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and to all missions of States which were permanent members of the Security Council. On 6 October, the Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution calling upon “all involved to permit units of the International Committee of the Red Cross into the area of conflict to evacuate the wounded and provide humanitarian assistance”.

EVACUATION OF WOUNDED, ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS AND APPEAL FOR FUNDS.—Beginning on 8 October, the date on which the cease-fire took effect, a working party was set up comprising the Lebanese Minister of Social Affairs, the principal officers of the Lebanese Red Cross and several representatives of the ICRC.

The Minister asked the ICRC to organize convoys to evacuate the wounded from East Beirut to Jounieh. He also asked the ICRC to take over from the officials of the OSD (Office of Social Development) in providing aid to the civilian population of East Beirut, as he considered that the OSD would probably be able to perform its work in the mountains above Jounieh (Metn, Kessrouan and Jbeil), where hundreds of thousands of people had fled from the fighting, but that it would not be able to operate in East Beirut, which was blockaded. This was the case until 20 October, nobody being able to enter East Beirut except the ICRC and the Lebanese Red Cross when accompanied by ICRC delegates.

The ICRC thereupon arranged the transfer of forty wounded persons out of East Beirut, in two operations.

The emergency centre of the ICRC and the Lebanese Red Cross, which had the benefit of the services of two doctors and two nurses from the organization “Médecins sans frontière”, carried on its activities until 24 October. Its function was that of a clearing station rather than of a hospital, enabling wounded people to be given immediate treatment before they were sent to one of the hospitals still functioning in East Beirut. The centre received a total of fifty wounded persons and treated seventy out-patients.

The ICRC delegates took advantage of the cease-fire to make a systematic survey of the needs in East Beirut, to distribute medicines, milk powder and water, and to organize the exchange of family messages, as a great number of requests for news had been received.

Surveys were also begun in the mountain areas, where 200,000 to 300,000 displaced persons were in a state of penury, 32,000 of them children under five years old.

A preliminary report on the situation sent to the National Societies and donor governments on 5 October was followed

by a first appeal on 13 October, while on the spot the ICRC was already making the most urgently needed purchases. Once the overall estimate of the needs had been completed, the ICRC launched a general appeal for funds and gifts, on 17 October, asking for 100 tons of baby milk, 50 tons of baby food, 10,000 sets of clothing for children between 2 and 5, 10,000 sets of baby clothes, 50,000 blankets and the sum of 3 million Swiss francs.

Following the appeal, four aircraft (one chartered by the ICRC, another by the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany, a third by the Danish Red Cross, and a fourth by the British Government and Red Cross) made the flights necessary to transport part of these relief supplies to Lebanon.

By the end of October, most of the supplies were being distributed. In East Beirut the distributions were taken over by the ICRC and the Lebanese Red Cross, while in the mountains they were made, with a few exceptions, by the OSD.

An office in Jounieh was reopened by the ICRC in October to deal with the distribution of relief. The staff, which had been reduced to twelve delegates before the latest outbreak of fighting, was increased once more to 21 delegates, assisted by about 40 Lebanese employees.

When the emergency phase was over, and several organizations—among them the OSD, Caritas and the Lebanese Red Cross—were providing aid to the displaced persons in the mountains, it was decided that the ICRC would limit its operations to:

- a “blanket” campaign, through the OSD and the Lebanese Red Cross, for emergency distribution in specific areas;
- a relief operation for children under five (milk, baby food, layettes, clothes);
- occasional distributions to religious or foreign minorities and front-line villages, if urgently needed.

OTHER ACTIVITIES AND STATISTICS

SYRIA.—Following the Israeli intervention in southern Lebanon, some wounded persons were admitted to the hospital of the “Palestinian Red Crescent” in Damascus. In addition, some cases of Palestinian families who were particularly badly off were notified to the ICRC delegation in the city.

On the basis of information from its delegate, the ICRC, in collaboration with several National Societies, supplied the representatives of the “Palestinian Red Crescent” in Damascus with emergency medicines, various types of equipment for their hospital and blood bank, and an ambulance, as well as infant food to a total value of 62,318 Swiss francs.

The ICRC delegation in Syria also continued during 1978 a small-scale relief operation for Lebanese refugees in Damascus, providing mattresses, blankets, medicines and milk powder, supplied mainly to a dispensary giving free consultations to the refugees.

Finally, during the events of October, the Damascus delegation organized the transport and distribution of blankets and mattresses for 400 families who had fled from Beirut and were living in the village of Anjar, in the plain of Bekaa, close to the Syrian frontier.

The value of the relief supplied by the ICRC in these two operations (blankets, mattresses, medicines and milk powder) amounted to 85,850 Swiss francs.

OPERATION "PROSTHESES".—In 1976 the ICRC started a programme for amputees, numbering about a thousand. It first drew up a list and then approached various organizations who might be willing to do something for them. The Dutch Government first sent out a team of prosthetists and physiotherapists who had previously worked in different Lebanese centres for the disabled until July 1977. At that time a Swiss Red Cross team, consisting of two prosthetists, two physiotherapists and one ergotherapist, had worked for two years in the centre for the disabled at Beit Chebab, north of Beirut, and in September 1977 a British team had begun a project which lasted until July 1978.

By that date, the number of prostheses fitted by the Dutch and British teams totalled 620 (387 and 233 respectively). The Swiss team continued its activities, consisting in fitting amputees who had not yet received a prosthesis and in following up patients who had already received a prosthesis from the other teams and, where necessary, making adjustments.

CENTRAL TRACING AGENCY.—Throughout the year, the tracing bureau forming part of the Beirut delegation, together with the sub-delegation in Tyre which acted as a forwarding office, continued to carry on the exchange of family messages to and from the southern part of Lebanon.

In the same context, the delegates of the Central Tracing Agency (CTA) took charge of the transfer from one zone to another of a number of persons, some of whom wished to be reunited with their families, while others were moved for medical reasons.

During the two periods of extreme tension within Lebanon in 1978—in March and April, after the Israeli intervention in the south of the country, then in October when East Beirut was being shelled—a huge number of requests for news and messages poured in to the CTA in Geneva and to the tracing bureau of the Beirut delegation.

In all, the Lebanon tracing bureau transmitted in 1978 about 21,000 family messages, while the CTA in Geneva sent 1,130. Of the thousand or so requests sent to the CTA in Geneva for news or for searches for missing persons, about 500 required an inquiry to be made by the Beirut bureau. Such inquiries were successful in 65 per cent of the cases.

PROTECTION.—As reported earlier, the ICRC delegates twice visited the Israeli prisoner of war in the hands of the PFLP/GC.

They also periodically paid visits to the persons held by the "conservative forces" in Marjayoun. Of these detainees, numbering fifteen in all, ten were released during the year, some of them through the intermediary of the ICRC.

The ICRC also obtained access on two occasions to a wounded Lebanese combatant, captured by the ADF and treated in the hospital at Ablah, in the plain of Bekaa. This prisoner was freed at the end of April.

The International Committee of the Red Cross continued to make representations to political and military leaders of the

different parties and armed groups in Lebanon, in order to remind them of their obligations concerning the treatment of prisoners in conformity with the spirit of the Geneva Conventions.

The tracing bureau in Beirut continued to establish and keep up to date lists of persons reported missing, some of them presumed to be detained. To be able to reply to the requests for news received from families, the CTA delegates presented these lists to the various authorities and parties, especially the ADF and the "Lebanese Front". The results obtained as a result of these efforts, carried on since 1976, remained meagre up to the end of 1978, particularly in relation to persons thought to be detained in Syria.

MATERIAL ASSISTANCE.— Excluding medical assistance (dealt with later), the ICRC sent 503 tons of relief supplies, to the value of 2,706,570 Swiss francs, to Lebanon in 1978. They comprised 244 tons of food, 108,105 blankets, 24 tons of clothing, and 70 tons of various other articles. Of the total of 503 tons, 423 tons had been distributed by the end of the year.

The National Societies and Governments of the following countries contributed to the relief action in Lebanon (as well as to that in Syria) by gifts in kind: Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The Association of Armenian Friends, the Migros cooperative society, and the Galactina company also sent gifts.

Cash contributions, amounting to 6,267,494 Swiss francs, were made by the donors listed in Table VII on pages 78 and 79.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE.—For the victims of the conflict in Lebanon, the ICRC supplied medicines and medical supplies to a total value of 1,299,396 Swiss francs. With this sum the ICRC financed the dispatch from Geneva (to a value of 849,200 francs) and the local purchase (to a value of 367,879 francs) of medical aid totalling 1,217,079 francs, while the remaining sum (82,317 francs) was provided by the National Societies and Governments of the following countries: Brazil, Cyprus, Denmark, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States.

Conflict between Israel and the Arab States

After the cease-fire which followed the war of October 1973, and the repatriation in 1974 of the last prisoners of war, the ICRC's main activities in the context of this conflict have been carried on for the Arab civilian population in the occupied territories. Its work is based on the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 relating to the protection of civilians in time of war; it intervenes or tries to intervene chiefly in the spheres of action given below:

- detention of protected persons;
- displacement of civilians and the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories;
- reuniting of families;

- destruction of houses;
- the passage across demarcation lines of certain categories of persons and the transmission of family messages between the occupied territories and the neighbouring Arab countries;
- food aid.

For these various tasks, the ICRC during 1978, maintained, in the countries directly involved in the conflict, an organization comparable to that of previous years, as follows:

- One delegation in Israel and the occupied territories, with headquarters in Tel Aviv (the delegate responsible for the occupied territory of Golan was also based there) and two sub-delegations in Jerusalem and Gaza. At the end of 1978 the number of persons in this delegation was 16 delegates and 35 employees engaged locally.
- One delegation in Egypt, with headquarters in Cairo, comprising two delegates and 6 local employees.
- One delegation in Jordan, with headquarters in Amman; two delegates and 6 local employees.
- One delegation in Syria, with headquarters in Damascus; one delegate and 4 local employees.

In order to remain in close contact with the inhabitants of the occupied territories and to discover their humanitarian needs, the delegates travelled all over this area. Their assignment included weekly visits to the twelve local offices opened by the ICRC in the principal towns of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and in El Arish (north of Sinai), and frequent missions to places in the Sinai desert and on the Golan Heights.

The delegations in Cairo, Amman and Damascus helped, among other tasks, to organize operations for conducting persons across the demarcation lines.

ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Applicability of the Fourth Convention

The Israeli authorities' attitude concerning the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention is known: they maintain that the Convention does not apply legally, but state that they put its provisions into practice.

The ICRC, on the other hand, has always considered that the conditions for the applicability of the Convention were met and has repeatedly said so to the Israeli authorities. As it was given permission by the latter to operate on a pragmatic basis, the ICRC therefore made every effort to ensure that the provisions of the Fourth Convention were in practice observed as fully as possible.

Bearing this purpose in mind, and subsequent to the re-appraisal of its activities in the occupied territories (see 1977 Annual Report, pp. 8-9), the ICRC sent a memorandum to the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs in December 1977, summarizing certain points on which it wished to see improvements. These referred chiefly to: administrative custody, notification of arrest of persons from East Jerusalem, the reuniting of families, the destruction of houses, the displacement of protected persons and the establishment of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, as well as several problems relating to the trials of protected persons.

The ICRC had received no formal reply from the Israeli authorities, but it continued to negotiate with them on the various points.

ICRC activities in relation to detention

This was the area in which progress had been most marked, during the negotiations undertaken by the ICRC with the Israeli authorities in connection with the re-appraisal of its activities. These talks resulted in a new agreement concerning the visits of the ICRC to the inhabitants of the occupied territories and to nationals of Arab countries who were detained in Israel and in the occupied territories.

VISITS TO DETAINEES UNDER INTERROGATION.—

The new agreement took effect on 1 January 1978. It provided that the Israeli authorities would notify the ICRC, within 14 days, of the arrest for security reasons of any protected persons. Within the same period of time the ICRC would be permitted to visit without witnesses all the detainees, including those under interrogation. With respect to the latter, the visits, which could be repeated every two weeks up to the end of the period of interrogation, were intended to allow the delegates to verify the detainees' identity and state of health. If necessary, these visits could be followed by a medical examination carried out by the ICRC medical delegate. Finally, the Israeli authorities undertook to carry out an inquiry each time that in their own opinion or in that of the ICRC a delegate's report justified such a procedure, and to inform the ICRC of the inquiry's conclusions.

Under the new agreement, the ICRC delegates made about 1,280 visits to 780 detainees under interrogation in 1978.

Since the Israeli authorities and the ICRC had reserved the right to re-examine the provisions of the agreement after a few months, the delegates began to draw up a report of their activities and to have talks with the authorities as from the middle of the year. The ICRC delegate-general for the Middle East travelled to Israel for this purpose several times.

In December 1978, the ICRC presented to the Israel Government, in the persons of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Defence, proposals for amendments to the agreement concluded one year previously. The proposals in no way questioned the principles of the agreement, but were aimed at integrating it better into the whole complex of protective activities carried out by the ICRC for the benefit of protected persons detained in Israel and in the occupied territories, and to define the procedure, in order to eliminate all sources of divergent interpretations. The ICRC proposals concerned principally the period for notifying arrests, which had to be short enough to give the ICRC the physical possibility of making the first visit within fourteen days. The follow-up to the first visit was also the subject of an amendment, the ICRC wishing to be able to visit the detainee a second time within a very short period, should he still remain under interrogation, rather than after the expiry of another 14 days. Finally, before the new agreement was signed, the Israeli authorities had always stated to the ICRC that, apart from exceptional cases, the period of interrogation was never more than a month, after which

period the detainees could be visited by the delegates as often as they wished. However, it appeared that the interrogation did sometimes exceed one month, in which case the interview without witnesses, under the new agreement, was permitted to refer only to the detainee's state of health. This clause was a step backward in comparison with previous practice. Consequently, the ICRC asked not to be held to this restriction for visits that took place after the 28th day of detention, even if the detainee was still under interrogation.

At the beginning of 1979 the ICRC was waiting for a reply from the Israeli authorities to its proposals for amendments.

Moreover, despite renewed approaches, the ICRC, when still operating under the old procedure, had never received any notification concerning the arrest of persons living in East Jerusalem, even though in practice the delegates had been authorized to visit them on the same conditions as those for other protected persons held in detention.

Again in 1978, the ICRC requested to be notified of the arrest of inhabitants of East Jerusalem and to have the new agreement on visits to detainees applied to these persons also. By the end of the year the question was still under consideration by the Israeli authorities.

VISITS TO OTHER DETAINEES.—Alongside their visits to detainees under interrogation, the ICRC delegates continued to see other categories of detainees: those who had been sentenced, those awaiting trial and persons in administrative custody. During 1978, their number totalled more than 3,000, most of them being security detainees.

Every two months the ICRC delegates visited 14 prisons in Israel and in the occupied territories. In order to devote more time to visiting detainees under interrogation, the ICRC decided, on a trial basis from September 1978, to extend the period between regular prison visits to three months. In accordance with current practice, reports on those visits were sent by the ICRC to the Detaining Power and to the countries of origin of the detainees.

Another request made by the ICRC to the Israeli authorities was that the system of administrative custody should be brought to an end or, if that were not possible, that administrative detainees should be put together and granted special privileges. At the end of 1978 there were thirty administrative detainees, including 14 arrested in the south of Lebanon in March.

ASSISTANCE TO DETAINEES AND THEIR FAMILIES.—The various relief programmes undertaken by the ICRC for the detainees and their families were continued.

For example, every month each detainee was given a parcel of fruit. The poorest among the detainees also received a small sum of money which they could spend on a few purchases at the prison canteen.

Summer and winter packages (3,000 and 650 respectively), containing garments and underclothing, were also distributed to the detainees, as well as books and magazines.

In addition, the ICRC continued to pay for the provision of different types of prostheses (dentures, medical trusses, orthopedic shoes, hearing aids, eye glasses) to detainees who needed them.

As part of the aid to detainees' families, the delegates organized the transport, by bus and taxi, of more than 2,700 persons each month (a total of 32,680 over the whole year), to enable them to visit their relatives in detention.

The total cost of this assistance was 335,500 Swiss francs.

ATTENDANCE AT TRIALS.—Since 1973, the Israeli authorities have notified to the ICRC the cases to be tried by military courts. It was agreed that notifications should be received not later than one week before the beginning of the trial and should specify at least the name of the accused, the title of the court, the charge, and the date and time of the first hearing.

In 1978, the jurist delegate attached to the Tel Aviv delegation attended twelve trials before the military tribunals in Lod, Gaza, Hebron, Nablus and Ramallah. Part of his work was to maintain regular contacts with the lawyers defending the detainees, as well as with the prosecuting counsel and the Israeli judicial authorities.

The ICRC took steps to ensure that the period of notification was observed and that the notifications contained all the necessary details, which was not always the case.

It also requested that the detainees' statements, particularly the written confessions, should be, not in Hebrew, which the accused usually did not know, but in Arabic. The Israeli High Court granted the request.

Displacement of protected persons and the creation of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories

The ICRC considers that the establishment of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories and the displacement of populations that may result are contrary to article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

In April 1978 the ICRC submitted to the Israeli authorities a memorandum on the problem relating to expropriations and the displacement of the civilian population in the region of Rafah-Sheikh Zwayed (coastal strip north of Sinai). The memorandum summarized the history of the displacements carried out in 1969-1972 in this region, reviewed the situation of the displaced populations in 1978 and the relocation projects undertaken by the Israeli authorities, and described the problems as seen from the latest complaints made by protected persons to the ICRC delegates.

This memorandum, to which the Israeli authorities have not officially replied, was the subject of several meetings at high level. The Israeli authorities refused to discuss the principle of the displacements and merely supplied to the ICRC delegates some replies on individual cases brought to their notice.

Reuniting of families

For people wishing to go to the occupied territories of Gaza, Sinai and the West Bank to be reunited with their families under the procedure laid down by the Israeli authorities, requests must be addressed to the latter by the members of the family living in the occupied territories. Only in the event of a refusal and if the family so requests does the ICRC in some particularly distressing case intervene with the authorities.

In 1978 the ICRC presented 19 such cases for the West Bank. Eight requests were accepted and two refused, while the remaining nine were still under consideration by the authorities at the end of the year.

Of two cases presented for the Gaza Strip, one was refused and the other was still under consideration at the end of the year. The ICRC received six positive replies on cases it had submitted earlier.

Destruction of houses

Two cases of the destruction of houses, were notified to the ICRC in December 1978. One was in the district of Ramallah and the other in the Nablus area.

The ICRC renewed its protests to the Israeli authorities, as this kind of measure was contrary to article 51 of the Fourth Convention. The delegates also supplied emergency relief to one of the families affected.

Action in favour of disabled persons

Since 1972, the Magen David Adom (MDA) has administered a fund provided by the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany for the supply of prostheses to disabled persons in the Gaza Strip. The ICRC's role is to transmit the funds concerned to the MDA and to send it patients for treatment. From July 1977 to the end of 1978, about fifty disabled persons obtained artificial limbs.

Passages across the demarcation lines

The ICRC delegates in the occupied territories and in neighbouring Arab countries, after agreement with the authorities on each side, organized the passage of several categories of persons across the demarcation lines. The persons concerned were students from the occupied territories going to universities in various Arab capitals to continue their studies, or returning home to spend their vacations with their families; visitors and pilgrims; people being reunited with their families; and detainees who had been released and persons who had inadvertently strayed across the lines of demarcation and were being sent back to their own country's authorities.

In 1978, the following operations were carried out under ICRC auspices:

BETWEEN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES OF GAZA/ SINAI AND CAIRO.—Thirty-three operations took place at El Khirba, in the United Nations buffer zone in Sinai, in the course of which 7,408 persons entered the occupied territories and 7,213 travelled to Cairo. Most of the people were students and visitors, but some were rejoining their families (14 in the occupied territories and 30 in Cairo) and six of them were Egyptian sailors who had been shipwrecked off Haifa and were being repatriated.

BETWEEN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORY OF GOLAN AND DAMASCUS.—Six operations were carried out at Kuneitra, in the United Nations buffer zone on the Golan Heights. They included ten cases of families who were reunited, nine of them (involving 50 people) in the occupied territory and one (two people) in Syria. In addition, 31 students from the Golan Heights who were studying at the University

of Damascus went home for their summer vacation, 30 of them returning afterwards to Damascus, together with seventeen new students. Sixteen students whose families lived in the Gaza Strip also used this route to go back home and four later returned to Syria. One person who had inadvertently strayed across the line was returned to the Syrian authorities through the good offices of the ICRC.

BETWEEN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORY OF THE WEST BANK AND AMMAN.—Ten persons (six detainees released by the Israeli authorities and four persons who had inadvertently crossed into Israel) were transferred to Jordan and ten others (who had strayed into Jordan) were returned to the West Bank and Israel in the course of 17 operations which took place at the Allenby Bridge.

AT THE ISRAEL-LEBANON FRONTIER.—Fourteen repatriation operations took place at Roshanikra, a frontier town between Israel and Lebanon, in the course of which 24 people returned to Lebanon. This number included twelve Lebanese nationals arrested by the Israeli forces in the south of Lebanon in March and July 1978, three Lebanese sailors arrested on ships off the coast of Israel, one person who had strayed across the frontier, and eight Lebanese civilians cared for in hospitals in Israel following the events of March 1978.

CENTRAL TRACING AGENCY.—In connection with the various operations referred to above, the ICRC delegates in the occupied territories and in the Arab countries carried out the exchange of more than 13,000 family messages (some of them between members of dispersed families and mostly between civilian Arab detainees and their families).

Food assistance

The ICRC continued to supply aid in the form of food to the needy civilian population in the territories occupied by Israel and, also, to displaced persons living in Jordan and Syria after the conflicts of 1967 and 1973, thanks to large quantities of foodstuffs made available by the European Economic Community and the Swiss Confederation (see table, page 49).

The distribution of these supplies was made in the presence of ICRC delegates, in collaboration with the Israeli Ministry of Social Affairs and various voluntary agencies, in the case of the occupied territories, and with the National Red Crescent Societies, in the case of Jordan and Syria.

In the occupied territory of Sinai, the ICRC also organized the transfer across the demarcation line of 25 tons of cement and 25 tons of food, dispatched from Cairo for St Catherine's Monastery, in the south of Sinai.

ASIA

Area of action and organization of staff

In 1978, *Indo-China* remained an important area of action for the ICRC. On the one hand, it continued the activities started in 1975 in favour of victims of the aftermath of the Indochinese conflict. On the other, it was led to offer its services in the frame-