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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-

work of the border conflict which had broken out between Democratic Kampuchea and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

The activities started in 1975 consisted mainly of the "Indo-China Section" relief action (INDSEC), carried out jointly by the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies in Viet Nam, Thailand and Laos; the repatriation of foreign residents wishing to leave Viet Nam; and visits to persons arrested for illegal entry into Thailand. For these operations the ICRC maintained its delegations in Hanoi, Bangkok and, until October 1978, Vientiane.

The joint relief organization was formally dissolved on 30 June 1978, following a decision of the ICRC-League coordinating body that from that date INDSEC would be wound up, that the two institutions would once more take up their respective responsibilities in the three countries concerned (this had already been the case in Thailand since 1st January 1977) and that the relief programmes which were in the course of completion should be wound up by 1980.

In order to complete these programmes, and for administrative reasons, a few members of the staff of "INDSEC"—the organization set up in April 1975 to co-ordinate and conduct the joint action—would continue to supervise their smooth progress. Besides this, the ICRC delegations in Hanoi, Bangkok and Vientiane would continue to represent INDSEC on the spot until the different programmes were completed.

As in previous years, "INDSEC" sent regular reports to donors (governments, National Societies and other organizations) to inform them of the use made of their gifts and of developing needs. The financial status of the INDSEC action is shown in Tables VIII and IX on pp. 80 and 81.

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In addition, the ICRC maintained its regional delegation in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), which covers the countries of *South-East Asia* and whose principal activities are for the benefit of "political detainees".

On the other hand, the ICRC greatly reduced the activity of the delegation in New Delhi (India) for the *Asian Sub-Continent and neighbouring countries*.

Continuation of activities on behalf of victims of the Indo-Chinese conflict

VIET NAM

Visit made by the Viet Nam Red Cross

From 31 March to 7 April, a delegation of the Viet Nam Red Cross (VNRC), including Dr. Nguyen Van Tin, Vice-Chairman, Mr. Truong Xuan Nam, Deputy Secretary General and Mr. Le Dong, member of the Central Committee of the Society, came to Geneva to review the activities of the International Red Cross (IRC) in Viet Nam. The delegation had interviews for that purpose with Mr. Alexandre Hay, President of the ICRC, Mr. Henrik Beer, Secretary-General of the League, and Mr. Hocké and Mr. Robert-Tissot, joint directors of the ICRC-League relief action. They also took part in several working sessions with staff directly concerned from the two institutions and from "INDSEC". These permitted an assessment of the

programmes carried out in previous years and allowed the Geneva institutions and the VNRC to give details of current and future projects.

Within the framework of the joint ICRC-League assistance for relief action carried out by the VNRC, the VNRC proposed that the IRC finance four projects, which were, in order of priority:—

- (1) provision of building material, hospital equipment and ambulances to enable, with the help of other donors, the Rach Gia hospital to be expanded from 250 to 500 beds;
- (2) an ambulance equipped for resuscitation, for the health and first-aid centre in Ho-Chi-Minh City;
- (3) medical equipment for a 200-bed hospital in the Hanoi district (Tu Liem);
- (4) the provision, on the basis of a list submitted in November 1977, of pharmaceutical products for local production of medicines, mainly for use by the VNRC medico-social teams.

The total cost of the projects was estimated at approximately 3 million Swiss francs.

Collaboration between the Central Tracing Agency (CTA) and the VNRC was examined. Questions were raised concerning the repatriation of foreigners residing in Vietnam, the reuniting of families and the exchange of family news. It was agreed that collaboration and exchange of information between the VNRC and the CTA on these various points would be strengthened.

Assistance programmes

In accordance with the projects worked out with the VNRC, INDSEC bought and sent 125 tons of iron bars and 1,115 tons of cement for the enlargement of the Rach Gia hospital (cost: 300,000 Sw. fr.), and hospital equipment to a value of 24,000 Sw. fr. Similar shipments are planned for 1979 and 1980, when the extension to the hospital should be completed.

The ambulance needed for the first aid centre in Ho-Chi-Minh City was provided by the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany (90,000 Sw. fr.).

The provision of medical equipment for the Tu Liem hospital and the shipping of chemical raw materials remained in abeyance at the end of 1978.

In 1977 the Canadian Red Cross had contributed 400,000 Sw. fr. to the INDSEC action to equip a blood bank being installed in Ho-Chi-Minh City. Following the recommendations of the Canadian Red Cross experts, "INDSEC" shipped various pieces of equipment to the VNRC to a value of 326,500 francs. By the end of the year orders had been booked for the remainder of the equipment.

Repatriation of foreign residents

After 30 April 1975, a large number of foreign residents in the south of Viet Nam had applied to the ICRC delegation in Viet Nam with a view to returning to their country of origin or to going to a country of asylum. Close collaboration for this action was established among the VNRC, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Hanoi, the Committee of Foreign Affairs at Ho-Chi-Minh City, the ICRC and the various countries of origin. Since the end of 1975 the ICRC had organized repatriation flights which enabled thousands of people of various nationalities to return to their country of origin.

This action continued in 1978. Eleven repatriation operations took place between 13 May and 30 November, in the course of which 1,621 persons reached Taipeh via Bangkok.

Apart from having numerous contacts with the relevant authorities in Hanoi to finalize the repatriation programme, the ICRC delegate was permitted to go to Ho-Chi-Minh City and to remain there during the operations. From the end of July to the end of August, when there were frequent flights, the ICRC sent an additional delegate to Ho-Chi-Minh City.

The ICRC carried out two missions in Taipeh. The first aimed at restarting flights which had ceased in September 1977. It obtained assurances from the Taipeh authorities that the repatriation operations could start again and that all persons with an entry visa would be accepted. The second mission, in mid-June, was aimed at accelerating the frequency of repatriation flights.

From September 1976, when the repatriation of Taiwan nationals began, to the end of 1978, 2,508 persons reached Taipeh. Several hundred others were still waiting to take advantage of this action.

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Despite repeated requests to Vietnamese authorities, the ICRC delegate was not permitted to visit a number of detained foreigners who had no diplomatic representatives to look after their interests.

Reuniting of families

The ICRC was an intermediary between various parties in organizing the reuniting of several families. In one such case, two small Vietnamese girls were reunited with their family in Denmark.

THAILAND

The refugee problem

Since 1975, Thailand has had to face the serious problem of an increasing flow of Indochinese refugees. Three years after the fighting in Indo-China the number had risen, by the end of 1978, to more than 130,000, despite the reception programmes in several Western countries.

The ICRC has been reducing its involvement in the assistance programmes on behalf of refugees in the camps. It has gradually given the task over to specialized organizations, its principle being to intervene only in emergency situations and in those cases where no other body is able to do anything for the refugees. In this respect, under the agreements reached in 1975 between the Thai authorities and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (HCR), it is the latter body which is responsible in the first place for material assistance to Indochinese refugees.

In 1978 the ICRC co-operated with the Thai Red Cross in setting up a training programme for health workers selected in the refugee camps. The programme called for four theory courses to be organized by the National Society in Bangkok. When the participants return to the camps, they receive practical training, given in collaboration with the medical personnel of the Thai Ministry of Health and the voluntary agencies in the camps. By the end of the year, three theory courses had been

completed, the final one being planned for February 1979. The British and Norwegian Red Cross Societies agreed to finance the project which had been budgeted at approximately 170,000 Swiss francs.

The Swiss Red Cross sent a mobile ophthalmological unit manned by a doctor and two nurses, who treated not only refugees in the camps, but also the local population. For this project, the ICRC delegation in Bangkok had negotiated with the relevant Thai authorities. The delegation also placed its offices and personnel at the disposal of the ophthalmological team as often as necessary.

Persons detained for illegal entry into Thailand

On the other hand, the ICRC continued its assistance to persons arrested for illegal entry into Thailand. Before being transferred to refugee camps, these persons are detained for a time in frontier police stations and transit camps. The ICRC action consists in visiting the places of detention, in noting information concerning the number of persons arrested and later transferred to refugee camps, and, more particularly, in distributing relief to new arrivals and leaving a small stock in the police stations. During their period of detention, these persons receive no help from the HCR. In 1978, the ICRC made 390 visits to 107 police stations, 6 transit camps, 4 refugee camps and a detention centre in Bangkok where several thousand persons were detained for illegal entry.

In view of the size of the problem and the distances which have to be covered, the delegates co-operate with other voluntary organizations for the distribution of relief. These measures allowed the ICRC to intensify its activities, particularly in the second half of 1978, in the main entry zones (from Laos and Kampuchea) and in areas where no aid had been provided until then.

Other activities and organization of staff

The main activity of the tracing bureau of the Bangkok delegation was still the preparing of repatriation flights to Taipeh (see above, p. 34). Numerous ICRC travel documents were issued on behalf of Indochinese refugees in Thailand.

In order to carry out the different activities described above, the Bangkok delegation comprised, in 1978, a head of delegation, a field delegate, a CTA delegate and an administrator. During the period when repatriation flights between Ho-Chi-Minh City and Taipeh were organized, a second CTA delegate was sent to Bangkok.

LAOS

In line with the decision taken by the ICRC-League co-ordinating body in June 1978, the delegation in Vientiane closed down on 6 October. From that time Laos has been covered by the ICRC delegation in Hanoi.

During the first nine months of the year, the International Red Cross (IRC) continued its medical assistance to the hospitals and the blood bank in Vientiane, providing urgently needed medicines and blood transfusion and other medical equipment (total value: 80,000 Sw. fr.).

Together with the Lao Red Cross, the ICRC continued to distribute relief—blankets, mattresses, mosquito nets, clothing and so on—to victims of fire and flood (30,000 fr.).

Finally, when it closed down, the delegation turned over its remaining relief stocks to the Lao Red Cross, which also received a little financial assistance towards its activities particularly for victims of natural disasters (50,000 fr.).

Conflict between Democratic Kampuchea and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

In 1977, serious skirmishes had taken place between Democratic Kampuchea and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. Fighting continued, growing in intensity in 1978.

ICRC offers of services

On 31 December 1977, the Government of Democratic Kampuchea announced that it had broken off diplomatic relations with the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. Moreover, the authorities in both countries made public statements about victims of clashes in the area. The ICRC was concerned about the situation and on 6 January sent identical messages to both parties. It expressed the wish that current international humanitarian norms should be respected during hostilities, especially for the benefit of the civilian population affected by the conflict and of captured or wounded soldiers. It mentioned that it would be available to the parties for any assistance or protection it could furnish.

At the end of January, both the Vietnamese and Cambodian authorities confirmed that they had captured military personnel. The ICRC sent a further note to the two governments, asking them to send it information regarding these prisoners of war and to grant it facilities to carry out its humanitarian mandate, and in particular to visit the prisoners, under the terms of articles 70, 122 and 126 of the Third Geneva Convention. It also offered its services to the authorities concerned in sending correspondence to the prisoners' families, as laid down in article 71 of the Third Convention.

These notes were sent through the Permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam in Geneva, and the Embassy of Democratic Kampuchea in Vientiane. The ICRC delegate in Viet Nam, moreover, raised the question with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Hanoi.

On 3 March, that Ministry replied to the effect that the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, following its traditional humanitarian policies, was applying the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, subject to its previously stated reservations¹

¹ These reservations, formulated in June 1957, when the Democratic Republic of Vietnam adhered to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, concern article 10 of the First, Second and Third Conventions, articles 12 and 85 of the Third Convention and articles 11 and 45 of the Fourth Convention. In particular, the reservation concerning article 85 of the Third Convention excluded the application of this article to prisoners of war prosecuted and sentenced for war crimes or crimes against humanity.

and local conditions. It added that the Viet Nam Red Cross was studying the ICRC proposals with a view to a subsequent reply.

In its note acknowledging receipt of the communication quoted above, the ICRC pointed out that the reservations formulated by Viet Nam should have no effect on the possibility for the ICRC of carrying out its humanitarian activity and that, consequently, in the spirit of the Conventions, the ICRC would soon submit for the approval of the authorities of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam a list of delegates who would be assigned to the traditional humanitarian role of the ICRC for the benefit of civilian and military victims of the conflict.

The humanitarian problems resulting from the events taking place at the border between Viet Nam and Democratic Kampuchea were also brought up during the visit of the Viet Nam Red Cross delegation to the ICRC (see above, p. 34). The VNRC made it clear that it would support the ICRC offers of services with the authorities in Viet Nam.

As a result, at the beginning of May, the ICRC learnt, through the Viet Nam Red Cross, that two of its delegates would be allowed to carry out a mission in Viet Nam.

Having received no reply from Democratic Kampuchea to its representations of 6 and 30 January, the ICRC repeated its offer of services in a communication delivered on 28 April to the Embassy of Democratic Kampuchea in Peking by Mr. Gilbert Etienne, a member of the ICRC who was on a trip to China at that time.

Dispatch of a mission to Viet Nam

This mission, which took place during the second half of May, had a double purpose: to visit military personnel from Democratic Kampuchea captured in the combat zones; and to evaluate the needs of displaced persons and refugees who had to leave their homes near the border because of the fighting.

Both at the beginning and at the end of their stay in Viet Nam, the two ICRC delegates had several meetings and working sessions with officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and with the Viet Nam Red Cross in Hanoi. They also went to the border provinces of Tay Ninh and An Giang and elsewhere in the south.

The ICRC delegates visited the Xuân Lộc camp, where 205 military personnel from Democratic Kampuchea, captured in the combat zones, were held.

Accompanied by representatives of the Viet Nam Red Cross, they went to the Ben San camp, where they found about 7,000 Cambodian refugees, and also to the Tri Ton and Chau Doc districts, where tens of thousands of Vietnamese civilians and some Cambodian refugees had installed themselves, after having had to flee their villages because of the hostilities. Finally, they visited Long Xuyên hospital, where approximately 100 victims of the conflict were being treated.

At the end of this mission, the Viet Nam Red Cross gave the ICRC delegates a list of the medicaments, food, clothing and other needs of some 725,000 displaced persons.

Appeal for funds

Its delegates having confirmed the urgency of these needs, the ICRC launched an appeal on 8 June to the governments and National Societies of 26 countries, to seek their financial and

other material aid. At the same time it appealed to the EEC and the FAO for large quantities of rice, cereals and powdered milk. It bought medicines to a value of 105,000 Swiss francs in the Far East and sent them to Ho-Chi-Minh City by ship and plane.

As a result of its appeal, the ICRC received contributions in cash from Australia, Canada, Japan, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, and from two organizations, Christian Aid and Oxfam, totalling 476,836 francs.

Contributions in kind included 1,570 tons of rice and 765 tons of powdered milk from the EEC, and an anonymous gift of 262 tons of tinned chicken. Besides this, the Swedish Red Cross donated two ambulances to the Viet Nam Red Cross. At the end of the year, the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany started sending 500 camp beds, and the ICRC ordered further shipments of medicaments amounting to 100,000 francs.

Throughout the year the ICRC shipped relief to Viet Nam for a total value of about 5,265,000 Swiss francs.

The ICRC delegate in Hanoi was invited to go to Ho-Chi-Minh City in late November and early December to check on the safe receipt of the rice from the EEC. He was also present at various distributions of foodstuffs (powdered milk, tinned chicken) organized by the Viet Nam Red Cross in the province of Long-An and elsewhere.

New steps

At the Hanoi meetings in May, the two ICRC representatives had been assured that every facility would be granted to the International Committee, to enable it to continue its activities.

As it wished to extend its treaty protection to all the civilians and military personnel from Democratic Kampuchea who had been taken prisoner in the combat areas, the ICRC put forward several proposals for a second mission before the end of 1978.

The Vietnamese authorities informed the ICRC that they had no objection to a mission undertaking new visits to the prisoner of war camps, but hoped that such visits could be put off until the new year.

In October, the ICRC sent a new note to Democratic Kampuchea. This note was delivered to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in New York. It referred to the two communications which had been simultaneously sent to the two parties on 6 and 30 January and pointed out that the ICRC had undertaken an initial mission to the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam in May, to visit prisoners there and to assess the needs of the civilian population affected by the fighting, with a view to sending them relief. It ended by expressing the ICRC's wish to undertake a similar mission in Democratic Kampuchea. At the end of 1978 no reply on this subject had been received.

Kuala Lumpur regional delegation

Activities of the regional delegate

The ICRC regional delegate for South-East Asia made visits to "political detainees" in *Thailand* and the *Philippines*, and took part in visits to "political detainees" in *Indonesia*. He also went to *Singapore* to discuss problems relating to this category of detainee with the authorities there. For details of all these



ICRC activities and also of the mission undertaken by the ICRC President in Indonesia in November 1978, see pp. 43 and 45.

The regional delegate also took an active part in the preparation and activities of the first Asian Seminar on the Dissemination of Knowledge of International Humanitarian Law which took place in Kuala Lumpur, *Malaysia*, from 14 to 24 November (see p. 58).

He was in *Papua New Guinea* from 26 October to 3 November. This was the first ICRC mission to that country since its independence in September 1975. Its main aim was to make the role and activities of the ICRC known to the authorities and to the National Society, and to gain information about the activities of the latter. The regional delegate had various meetings with the leaders of the Papua New Guinea Red Cross and with the Minister of the Interior, the Secretary for Defence and with high officials of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Health and Education. The main topics under discussion were the 1949 Geneva Conventions, to which Papua New Guinea had acceded in 1976, the two 1977 Protocols, and the dissemination of knowledge of international humanitarian law among the armed forces and in schools.

Philippines

The ICRC continued to support the relief action of the Philippine Red Cross for persons displaced by the fighting in Mindanao in the south of the country. In 1978 it shipped 1,581 tons of rice and 600 tons of powdered milk given by the EEC, and valued at 3,569,600 Swiss francs.

In September, during his visits to places of detention in Mindanao, the regional delegate went to three milk distribution centres run by the National Society and to a resettlement centre for displaced persons.

Asian Sub-continent and neighbouring countries

Restructuring of ICRC organization

In the first half of 1978—more than six years after the 1971 conflict in the Asian Sub-Continent—the ICRC began closing down its offices in Dacca (Bangladesh) and Rawalpindi (Pakistan), and drastically reducing its regional delegation in New Delhi (India).

The ICRC took into consideration the fact that diplomatic relations had been set up between Pakistan and Bangladesh since 1976 and that, consequently, its role of neutral intermediary was no longer required, even though the repatriation operations for non-Bengalis were resumed after having been suspended in 1974. When it closed its offices the ICRC handed over to the relevant authorities in Pakistan and Bangladesh the Central Tracing Agency files on:—

1. people who had received the necessary authorization to go to Pakistan but had not been able to do so before the repatriation operations were suspended in 1974, and
2. people whose request for transfer had initially been rejected, but who had successfully appealed to the Pakistan authorities.

The ICRC nevertheless retained a liaison office in New Delhi, periodically visited by the regional delegate based on Geneva.

Its main task was to provide travel documents to various people without identity papers (Pakistanis who had obtained authorization both to go to Pakistan and to leave India, stateless refugees accepted by various countries).

During the second half of 1978, the Governments of Bangladesh and of Pakistan informed the ICRC of their intention to resume repatriation operations for non-Bengalis and requested the ICRC to provide technical assistance, together with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in the preparation and organization of transfers from Bangladesh to Pakistan. The ICRC replied favourably to this request.

Activities of the regional delegate

The ICRC regional delegate for the Asian Sub-Continent and neighbouring countries went on several occasions to *India*, *Pakistan* and *Bangladesh* to work out the technical details of the ICRC withdrawal from the region.

At the beginning of July he undertook missions in *Afghanistan*, following the revolution in April 1978. In Kabul he was received by the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister, and visited the Pulicharki prison where he saw 90 persons, including women and children, all related to the royal family. He also conferred with the Vice-Minister of Education who showed lively interest in the distribution of the booklet "The Red Crescent and My Country" in Afghan schools.

The regional delegate took part in visits to "political detainees" in *Indonesia* (see p. 45) and went to *Burma*, *Sri Lanka* and *Nepal*, to maintain contact with the National Societies and the authorities of these countries.

LATIN AMERICA

In 1978, the activities of the ICRC in Latin America were centred around two main concerns, i.e. "political detainees" (see p. 42), and victims of the fighting in Nicaragua (see below).

In order to carry out these activities successfully, the ICRC was obliged to re-organize its staff to a certain extent.

At the beginning of February 1978, the regional ICRC delegation for the *Andean countries* (with its headquarters in Caracas) was drastically reduced and the regional delegate transferred to Geneva.

The ICRC regional delegation for *Central America and the Caribbean* (with its headquarters in Guatemala) was kept up. However, during the first six months of the year, the regional delegate was assigned to the Argentina operation.

From the end of August 1978, when the ICRC action began in Nicaragua and the adjoining countries, the regional delegate was based in Nicaragua (see below).

Finally, the ICRC regional delegation for the *countries of the "Southern Cone"* (with its headquarters in Buenos Aires) underwent several changes: with the growth in ICRC activity in the "Southern Cone", a second regional delegate was appointed and the permanent ICRC delegation in Chile, set up in 1973, was replaced by a liaison office directly responsible to the regional delegation in Buenos Aires (see p. 43).