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The year 1979 was marked by a substantial increase in ICRC commitments in Asia, especially in the south-east region.

The Sino-Vietnamese conflict led the ICRC to undertake protection activities both in China and Viet Nam, while fighting in Kampuchea called for large scale assistance for the Kampuchean people, both in Kampuchea itself and in Thailand. It was in this context that a delegation was established in Kampuchea, at Phnom Penh, and three sub-delegations in Thailand.

The Central Tracing Agency (CTA) carried out substantial activities in south-east Asia for refugees. Several of its delegates were seconded to the National Societies of the ASEAN countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) to help them establish the structure called for by the growing needs of the ever-increasing number of refugees.

The ICRC also continued its traditional activities in the countries of the Far East and, in co-operation with the Indonesian Red Cross, undertook an assistance action in East Timor.

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The ICRC offered its services on various occasions to the Afghan authorities and continued to provide technical assistance in the repatriation of non-Bengalis from Bangladesh to Pakistan.

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Mr. Jean de Courten was appointed delegate-general for Asia on 1 February.

Sino-Vietnamese conflict

Offers of services by the ICRC

On the basis of official statements about the fighting between the armed forces of the People's Republic of China and those of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, the ICRC, on 19 February, addressed itself to the parties to the conflict, to call their attention to the provisions of the Geneva Conventions and to offer them its services.

In its reply on 26 March the Vietnamese Government asked the ICRC to send a mission to Viet Nam as soon as possible to put into effect proposals contained in the ICRC offer of services.

On 1 March the ICRC repeated its offer to the People's Republic of China, through its Permanent Mission in Geneva. The Permanent Mission, on 5 April, transmitted its Government's invitation to send an ICRC mission to Beijing.

Missions to Viet Nam

An ICRC mission in the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam from 5 to 14 April had two objectives: to carry out activities of protection for military and civilian prisoners under the terms of the Geneva Conventions and to evaluate the needs of civilians in the affected zones for assistance and relief.

The two delegates from Geneva were accompanied during their brief stay in Viet Nam by the head of the ICRC delegation in Hanoi and by two doctors. They had several interviews with officials in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and with representatives of the Red Cross of Viet Nam. No agreement could be reached, however, on the procedures whereby the ICRC would exercise its protection activities, and it was agreed to reconsider the question later.

In the course of this mission, the ICRC delegates were able to go to the provinces of Lang Son and Cao Bang and visit the provincial capitals and adjacent areas. On the basis of estimates made in these two provinces, the ICRC gave the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam relief valued at about 6,925,000 Swiss francs for the benefit of displaced persons in six provinces most seriously affected by the fighting. The greater part of this relief, 1,300 tons of food worth about 6,668,500 francs, was a gift from the EEC. The ICRC itself supplied medicaments valued at about 256,500 francs.

Subsequently, an agreement was reached between the Vietnamese authorities and the ICRC on procedures to be followed in visits to Chinese prisoners of war. A second mission, from 24 to 31 May consisted of the head of the Hanoi delegation and two delegates from Geneva. Its primary objective was to develop protective action in conformity with the Geneva Conventions, for the benefit of Chinese prisoners of war captured by Vietnamese armed forces. Secondly, the delegates were instructed to continue to consult with the Vietnamese authorities on the question of assistance to civilian victims of the conflict.

On 26 May, the delegates went to the Taï Nguyen camp, 90 kilometers north-east of Hanoi, where they visited 187 Chinese soldiers and had interviews with them without witnesses. On the day of the visit, 10 prisoners were away from the camp. On 28 May the delegates visited at Lang Son the provincial centre of the Red Cross, where the ICRC medical relief had been delivered and stored, and a provincial dispensary where they noted that the medicaments sent by the ICRC as a result of the April mission had arrived and were being distributed.

The ICRC delegates also turned over to the Director of External Services of the Red Cross of Viet Nam 600 family messages written by Vietnamese prisoners in Chinese hands and which had been gathered by ICRC delegates who had visited them in the People's Republic of China (see below). A list of 551 names, drawn up on the basis of these messages, was also delivered to the Red Cross of Viet Nam.

Mission to the People's Republic of China

The mission to the People's Republic of China, from 24 April to 9 May, was one of particular importance, inasmuch as the last previous visit by the ICRC to that country had been in 1971.

The mission, headed by Mr. Marcel A. Naville, former President of the ICRC and a member of the Committee, had two primary objectives: to carry out, as stipulated in treaty agreements, the activities of protection for the benefit of Vietnamese prisoners and to resume a dialogue with the Chinese authorities and Red Cross. Talks took place with various officials of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, including one of the Vice-Ministers, the Vice-President of the Permanent Committee of the National People's Congress, and leaders of the Chinese Red Cross.

The ICRC delegates visited, in conformity with customary criteria, 1,621 prisoners in six camps in the autonomous region of Guangxi and the province of Yunnan and a hospital in the southern part of the country. They distributed family message forms which were filled out by 600 prisoners.

Contacts with representatives of the Chinese Red Cross made it clear that that National Society wished to develop co-operation with the international Red Cross, and especially with the ICRC.

Repatriation of prisoners of war

Pursuant to an agreement reached between the authorities of the People's Republic of China and those of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, a simultaneous operation for the repatriation of 120 Vietnamese prisoners and 43 Chinese prisoners took place on 21 May under the auspices of the Chinese and Vietnamese Red Cross Societies, in the presence of the ICRC delegates.

The Chinese and Vietnamese Governments reached an agreement on 26 May to repatriate all the prisoners of war who were still being detained and they exchanged complete lists of the prisoners they were holding. Accordingly, four further repatriation operations took place, on 28 May and on 5, 13 and 21 June, affecting 1,516 Vietnamese and 195 Chinese prisoners of war.

Conflict in Kampuchea

The early days of the year were marked by a resumption of fighting between the armed forces of Democratic Kampuchea, on one side, and those of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and of the *Front uni de Salut national du Kampuchea* on the other side. On 7 January, Phnom Penh was captured and a new government, the "People's Revolutionary Council of the People's Republic of Kampuchea" was established.

In its effort to assist the civilian and military victims, the ICRC, on 4 January, appealed to all the parties to the conflict

to apply the Geneva Conventions. At the same time it renewed the offer of its services. Several simultaneous approaches were made; in New York to Vietnamese representatives and spokesmen for Democratic Kampuchea; in Geneva to the Permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam; and in Hanoi to the Vietnamese authorities and representatives of the People's Republic of Kampuchea.

At the beginning of March, the Vietnamese authorities officially informed the ICRC delegation in Hanoi that all the Democratic Kampuchea prisoners who had been in captivity in Viet Nam had been turned over to the People's Republic of Kampuchea.

Following negotiations with representatives of the People's Republic of Kampuchea in Hanoi, the ICRC was officially invited, on 4 July, to send a mission to Phnom Penh. A similar invitation was sent to UNICEF. After three joint evaluation missions during the summer of 1979, the ICRC and UNICEF, on 23 September, were authorized, respectively, to open a delegation and an office in Phnom Penh, thus making it possible to start a joint ICRC-UNICEF assistance action for the benefit of the Kampuchean population.

Because the situation in Kampuchea had forced tens of thousands of Kampucheans to flee toward the frontier of Thailand, the ICRC undertook as well, in October, to institute a large-scale operation of material aid and medical care, based in Thailand. This action was carried out jointly with UNICEF as was the one inside Kampuchea, in close co-operation with other international organizations and voluntary agencies. In addition, the ICRC was entrusted by the Thai Government with the co-ordination of medical action in Thailand in camps run by the UNHCR.

Financing the action

Since the operation for the benefit of the Kampuchean people at the border with Thailand was an extension of that inside Kampuchea, a single budget was adopted.

A preliminary appeal, based on a project worked out jointly by the ICRC, UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP), was sent simultaneously from Geneva and New York, on 16 October, to representatives of 18 donor governments. The National Societies in these countries were also contacted.

On 19 October a joint ICRC-UNICEF appeal for 111 million dollars for a period of 6 months was announced in New York by Mr. Henry Labouisse, Executive Director of UNICEF. On 5 November, the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, presided over a "pledging conference" composed of representatives of 76 countries and the EEC. The ICRC, UNICEF and the UNHCR were present as observers.

At this conference, the international community was asked to contribute some 250 million dollars to finance the programmes of the ICRC, UNICEF and the WFP for the civilian population of Kampuchea for the ensuing 12 months. In addition to the 111 million dollars required to finance operations for the first 6 months, 140 millions were sought to continue and develop these programmes during the latter part of 1980.

In addition, the UNHCR needed 60 million dollars to finance its action for refugees in Thailand.

The total of contribution announced at this conference amounted to about 210 million dollars. As of 31 December, the ICRC had received 21,951,500 dollars (34,665,700 Swiss francs) and had spent 14,145,270 dollars (23,339,700 Swiss francs) in its assistance programmes for victims of the conflict in Kampuchea.

Activities in Kampuchea

Survey missions

The ICRC had three objectives in sending a mission to Kampuchea in the summer of 1979:

- to find out the measures required to evaluate the needs of the civilian populations affected by the events and to plan an assistance action;
- to determine the best ways and means of delivering relief to these populations;
- to discuss with the authorities of the People's Republic of Kampuchea the prospects for a protection action in conformity with the Geneva Conventions.

During the *first, exploratory, mission* to Phnom Penh, from 17 to 19 July, the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Kampuchea asked the ICRC and UNICEF to develop a programme of assistance to the population of Kampuchea. In that short visit the delegates went to Phnom Penh and Kompong Speu and interviewed government authorities and officials of the Red Cross. They found that there was an enormous need of food and medicine. On the basis of these observations, the ICRC and UNICEF agreed to carry out an assistance programme according to procedures to be negotiated.

The *second mission*, from 9 to 16 August, was sent to examine these procedures. The plane chartered by the ICRC and UNICEF which brought the two delegates of the joint mission to Phnom Penh from Ho Chi Minh City also carried 4.4 tons of urgently needed drugs and medical equipment. The representatives of the ICRC and UNICEF had various talks with the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Health, Education and Trade, to whom they submitted proposals for a general assistance programme. They also met technical officials and representatives of the local Red Cross.

These discussions had two concrete results: the joint mission was authorized to arrange direct flights between Bangkok and Phnom Penh and an ICRC doctor and a UNICEF specialist in logistics were permitted to accompany the two delegates on their next mission.

A *third mission*, from 29 August to 30 September had the objective of continuing the negotiations and finalizing the practical procedures for the ICRC-UNICEF assistance programme. Accordingly, on 29 August, a plane carrying 30 tons of relief landed at Phnom Penh with a representative of UNICEF and an ICRC delegate and medical delegate aboard.

On 23 September, the Minister of the Economy informed the delegates of the agreement of the Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea to the opening of an ICRC delegation and a UNICEF office. This agreement was confirmed on 26 September by the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Joint ICRC-UNICEF assistance programme

The assistance action which had begun on a limited basis on 9 August with an initial shipment of drugs and medical equipment developed from October onwards in conformity with the programme submitted on the 20th of that month to the authorities of the People's Republic of Kampuchea.

Due to difficulties, which were mainly of a logistic character, encountered by the joint mission in the distribution of relief, Mr. Labouisse, Executive Director of UNICEF, and Mr. de Courten, ICRC delegate-general for Asia, went to Phnom Penh on 4 November.

Following their talks with President Heng Samrin and various ministers, distributions on a larger scale were permitted. The authorities also announced the setting up of an interministerial committee for the reception of humanitarian assistance, and for the preparation and carrying out of distribution programmes in co-operation with the ICRC and UNICEF.

On 17 November, the Minister for Foreign Affairs notified the ICRC and UNICEF that the Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea was in agreement with the joint assistance programme which had been presented on 20 October. The Minister also announced on that occasion that his Government favoured the proposal of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR to send a medical team to work in the joint ICRC-UNICEF programme. On the basis of the assurances received, the joint mission decided to speed up the delivery of the vehicles necessary for the distributions.

Mr. Hocké, Director of the Department of Operations, was in Kampuchea from 6 to 10 December. The authorities confirmed to him their agreement with the logistic measures designed to expedite distributions. After completing this mission, Mr. Hocké went to New York from 18 to 20 December to review the joint action with UNICEF, assess its future possibilities and establish the basis for its continuance in 1980 both in Kampuchea and in Thailand. On that occasion he had talks with Mr. Kurt Waldheim, Secretary-General, and with other United Nations officials.

Material assistance

Between 9 August and 31 December, 37,428 tons of relief supplies (including 34,000 tons of food) worth about 16 million dollars, were delivered to Kampuchea as part of the joint ICRC-UNICEF action. Most of the food, about 30,000 tons, was supplied by the WFP.

Of these 37,428 tons of relief supplies, 36,290 tons were carried by chartered planes and ships as described below.

Transport of the remaining 1,138 tons was organized by the donors themselves.

DELIVERIES BY AIR. — About 4,000 tons were transported by air, in 14 flights from Europe, Australia and Viet Nam, from 9 August to mid-November, and 193 shuttle flights between Bangkok and Phnom Penh and between Singapore and Phnom Penh. These shuttle flights were possible because of the assistance of the British, Australian, French and American Governments and of the Netherlands Red Cross, which made aircraft available.

DELIVERIES BY SEA. — Deliveries by ships and barges started on 13 October. Food supplies came mainly by way of Bangkok and Singapore. Trucks sent from Japan, Italy and Great Britain were landed at Singapore and forwarded by plane to Phnom Penh or by ship to Kompong Som.

By the end of December, fourteen ships had delivered to Kompong Som 30,500 tons of relief, consisting of 30,000 tons of food and 500 tons of vehicles, mostly trucks. In addition, two ships carrying 2,000 tons of relief, including 1,000 tons of food and 100 tons of vehicles, went up the Mekong River to Phnom Penh. The total value of the ships' cargoes amounted to 9.36 million dollars.

Other organizations, including the World Council of Churches and OXFAM, delivered 13,455 tons of relief to Kampuchea. Of the twelve vessels used, six discharged at Kompong Som and the other six at Phnom Penh.

Medical assistance

From 29 August to 31 December, the joint mission maintained a doctor in Phnom Penh. On 9 August, he was joined by a nurse. In view of the great destruction of hospitals both in Phnom Penh and in the provinces, reconstruction of a minimal medical infrastructure was a priority task. Medical equipment and basic drugs were therefore distributed to three hospitals, fourteen dispensaries and two orphanages in Phnom Penh and to eighteen hospitals, fourteen dispensaries, an infirmary and an orphanage elsewhere in the country. These distributions were made in co-operation with the local Red Cross.

In view of the shortage of qualified medical personnel, the joint mission started discussions with the authorities to seek approval for the entry of foreign personnel. The admission of a medical team offered by the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR was approved by the Government and the team was expected to arrive in Kampuchea at the beginning of 1980.

From the start of the action up to 31 December 1979, drugs and medical equipment valued at 669,000 Swiss francs were delivered to Kampuchea through the intermediary of the ICRC.

LOGISTICS. — In order to speed up the distribution of relief, taking into account the existing infrastructure, the joint mission decided to import vehicles and attempt to develop

water, air and land transport. Up to the end of the year, UNICEF and the ICRC had seen to the importation of 162 trucks, 18 Land-Rovers, 51 motorcycles and a number of bicycles.

Since the railway between Kompong Som and Phnom Penh could bring in no more than 200 to 300 tons of relief per day, the joint mission asked for the right to utilize the Mekong River route. The authorities gave their approval on 13 November.

Negotiations were also instituted to obtain permission to use a more direct air corridor between Bangkok and Phnom Penh and to make flights within Kampuchea. These negotiations had not been concluded at the end of the year.

ORGANIZATION. — At the end of September, the ICRC delegation in Phnom Penh consisted of a head of delegation, a doctor and a relief delegate. In mid-October, they were joined by three more delegates. At the end of the year, there were seven ICRC delegates and the entire delegation staff numbered thirteen persons.

Activities in Thailand

The events in Kampuchea led to the flight of thousands of civilians to the frontier and to Thailand. Starting on 7 January, the ICRC delegation in Bangkok, in co-operation with the UNHCR, the Red Cross and authorities of Thailand, sought to work out an assistance and protection programme for their benefit.

From 4 to 12 May, the ICRC Director of Operations was in Thailand to discuss with the authorities the possibilities for action for civilians who had fled from Kampuchea. After the Thai Government had agreed, the ICRC President, on 21 May, wrote to Mr. Kriangsak Chamanand, Prime Minister of Thailand, expressing the hope that the ICRC would be able to develop such an assistance programme rapidly. An appeal for funds was launched on the same day, to obtain the contributions needed for the programme. As a result the Bangkok delegation was able to act for the benefit of some 40,000 persons. At the beginning of June, however, the Thai authorities suddenly decided to send these persons back to Kampuchea. The ICRC President immediately sent a new message to Mr. Kriangsak Chamanand expressing his consternation at this situation and asking that the expulsion be delayed.

In view of the deteriorating plight of refugees in south-east Asia, two appeals were made to the international community on 15 and 28 June: the first by the ICRC alone and the second jointly with the League (see page 43).

The purpose of these two appeals was to alert governments and public opinion, and ask the countries of first asylum to permit the ICRC to act for the benefit of the refugees on their territories.

The appeals produced no immediate result. In Thailand in particular the ICRC was obliged to suspend its assistance and protection at the frontier with Kampuchea.

In September, while the number of Kampuchean civilians massed at the border, intending to seek refuge in Thailand, continued to increase, the Thai authorities contacted the ICRC and various other organizations to make certain of their support for a programme they were considering for the reception of refugees. The proposed project was confirmed on 17 October by the Prime Minister, who announced that Thailand was ready to accept these new refugees. Accordingly the ICRC, UNICEF, UNHCR and other specialized agencies of the United Nations and numerous voluntary agencies were once again in a position to engage in a major assistance effort.

The Thai authorities asked the ICRC and UNICEF to develop a food and medical assistance programme at the frontier and, in co-operation with voluntary agencies, to co-ordinate medical action in the camps under the control of the UNHCR.

The Prime Minister of Thailand again confirmed his Government's position on 7 November in an interview with the delegate-general for Asia and the head of the ICRC delegation in Bangkok.

The assistance action soon assumed considerable proportions. To deal with the increase in work the ICRC organization in Thailand had to be restructured and reinforced in every respect: operations, administration, Agency activities and information.

Development of the assistance action

After the decision by the Thai Government to entrust the ICRC and UNICEF with responsibility for co-ordinating relief work at the frontier, the joint medical and material action was developed under conditions comparable to those carried out on Kampuchean territory, with the World Food Programme closely associated. The Thai authorities transferred some of these refugees at the frontier to camps or so-called "holding centres" inside the country, which were under the charge of the UNHCR. The ICRC co-ordinated medical activities.

In addition to the assistance given for the Kampuchean people, the ICRC and UNICEF provided backing to the Thai Red Cross as part of its action for Thai frontier populations displaced because of the events.

Material assistance

This relief action, consisting mainly of food, took place at various points along the frontier for people on Kampuchean territory.

The constant movement of refugees along and across the frontier made it impossible to carry out any accurate census. It was estimated that an average of about 350,000 persons, from October to November, benefited from the international relief effort, receiving a standard daily ration of 550 g of food, including 450 g of rice.

From the beginning of October to the end of the year, 20,070 tons of relief including 19,500 tons of food were delivered to the frontier zone. The greater part of this,

13,220 tons, was supplied by the WFP. All relief distributed in this period, food, blankets, water tanks, tents, etc., represented a total value of 5,628,000 dollars.

Medical assistance

In October, a Red Cross task force including the ICRC, the League and the Thai Red Cross was set up in Bangkok under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General of the Thai Red Cross to co-ordinate all medical operations. Dr. Rémi Russbach, chief medical officer at the ICRC, was designated as "medical co-ordinator" and served in this capacity from 23 October to 24 November. He was replaced on 12 December by Dr. Marcel Dubouloz, his deputy at the ICRC.

Medical assistance was provided in two phases, the first being the setting up of medical structures at the Sakéo, Kamput and Khao-I-Dang camps and the second the provision of medical facilities at the frontier.

CAMPS OPERATED BY THE UNHCR. — On 24 October, 31,000 Kampucheans were transferred to Sakéo. At the time of their arrival, the camp had no medical infrastructure, although many doctors and nurses from voluntary agencies were already at work there, under very difficult material conditions. The ICRC, in four days, set up a 1,000-bed hospital to which several medical teams were assigned. The hospital consisted of five wards: surgery, general medicine, special feeding, pediatrics and obstetrics. It was equipped with a pharmaceutical storehouse. Medical teams set to work to screen the camp population to detect serious diseases and bring the sick to the hospital. After ten days, the medical system was operating in a satisfactory manner. Within a few weeks, there was a substantial drop in mortality. A similar medical infrastructure was set up at the Kamput camp.

On 21 November, the day of the opening of the Khao-I-Dang transit camp, about 100,000 persons were brought in. A 1,000-bed hospital was set up, in which two surgical units were included, with doctors working around the clock. A second hospital, also with 1,000 beds, was installed at the end of the year, as the first could not meet the demands made upon it.

AT THE FRONTIER. — Mobile medical teams were deployed along the frontier to meet the sick and wounded and transfer them to hospitals. From five to eight such teams were at work every day. Security made it necessary, however, to limit this action.

Medical installations were also set up in camps along the frontier, including two hospitals, one at Samet and the other at Makmun, and five dispensaries. Because of the changing situation at the frontier, these installations often had to be moved, as new needs arose.

Medical personnel

On 26 October, the ICRC and the League communicated with a number of National Societies in an effort to recruit 120 doctors and nurses for the Red Cross medical action in

Thailand. With the constant arrival of new refugees at the frontier, however, a further appeal had to be made on 18 November. As a result of these appeals, the medical and paramedical personnel provided by 19 National Societies amounted to 354 persons at the end of the year. The ICRC itself sent 25 persons.

The efforts of all the volunteers and the splendid team spirit among them made it possible to save thousands of lives. Note should also be taken of the excellent co-operation among the organizations engaged in this action.

The cost of medical assistance in Thailand, including that along the frontier, had amounted by the end of the year to 5,552,000 Swiss francs, of which 3,269,000 francs represented donations in kind from National Societies and other donors.

LOGISTICS. — The relief operations in Thailand presented major logistic problems, especially with regard to the delivery of supplies. These problems were finally overcome, thanks both to an infrastructure which was strengthened in equipment and personnel and to the support and assistance of the Thai Red Cross and authorities.

For example, 85 vehicles were made available for the movements of medical personnel and delegates. Another 31 vehicles were rented or otherwise provided to the ICRC. A workshop for servicing and repairs was set up at Watthana Nakhon.

In the field of housing, a great contribution was made by the construction of huts, particularly for the medical teams. About fifteen such units were built in Thailand. In addition, the Swiss Disaster Relief Corps financed the building of 200 huts. At the end of the year, 100 of these were under construction and orders had been given for 100 more.

Central Tracing Agency

There was a great increase in 1979 in the work of the Agency bureau which was integrated with the delegation in Bangkok. Since the “newly arrived persons”—“illegal immigrants” in the terminology of Thailand—did not have refugee status, the Agency had to devote itself first of all to the task of identification. At the beginning of the year, it concentrated on recording the names of Kampuchians who had come to Thailand. This information enabled it to reply to hundreds of tracing requests which it received. From October onward, after the government had authorized the admission of these new refugees, the Agency undertook a more systematic programme of activities, in three phases:

- arranging initial contact between the new refugees and their relatives abroad through the organization of a “postal” service through which 20,000 letters were exchanged;
- searches for the addresses of relatives abroad, in co-operation with National Societies, and searches for persons living in the camps, for which there were some 1,500 requests, 20% of which led to positive results;

- listing of the “newly arrived” Kampuchians in the “holding centres” at Saké, Khao-I-Dang and Kamput, of whom there were about 150,000. This information was passed on to the UNHCR in Bangkok with a view to arranging transfers to other countries.

To accomplish this work, the Bangkok bureau of the Agency had to increase its personnel from 16 to 56 persons. It employed modern means, including a computer, for the rapid processing of information.

ORGANIZATION. — The staff of the ICRC delegation in Thailand, consisting of five delegates at the beginning of the year, eventually totalled some 60 persons, not including the medical teams, at the Bangkok headquarters and the three sub-delegations at Aranyaprathet, Saké and Chanthaburi.

In addition, the services of about 20 persons were contributed by National Societies, including administrators, information delegates, etc.

Refugees in South-East Asia

In the past four years several hundred thousand Indochinese refugees have poured into various south-east Asian countries. At the beginning of 1979, the migration was on such a scale that some countries which had proved hospitable at the outset began to turn away the new arrivals. The story of the “boat people” was so dramatically presented by the mass media that it again became a matter of great concern to the public.

Confronted by this tragic situation, the ICRC, in co-operation with the League and the UNHCR, intervened:

- by proposing plans of action and by offering its services to the international community in appeals and international conferences;
- by participating in the development and application of an action programme for the benefit of the refugees.

Appeals to the international community

Three appeals to the international community to help the refugees were launched on 12 January, 15 June and 28 June.

In their first joint appeal, the League and the ICRC pointed out that the international Red Cross had always worked for the welfare of refugees; but they also emphasized the responsibility of governments whose duty it was to grant asylum.

With the increase in the number of refugees, the deterioration of the situation and the rejection of refugees by some countries, the ICRC on 15 June again appealed to the community of nations to face up to the magnitude of the tragedy, urging them to devote themselves immediately and with determination to finding solutions on the political level, even to the causes of the disaster. Further, it proposed the development of an overall emergency plan, conceived and

sustained by States, as the only means for stopping the alarming degeneration of the situation.

This plan should have for its objectives:

- to supply provisions to civilian populations which might be driven either by the fighting or famine to leave their countries of origin or residence;
- to institute, in the places of first asylum to which the refugees had already fled, programmes of economic development which would be of benefit to the native populations as well as to the refugees;
- to obtain from the countries of final asylum the granting of more entry visas, so as to share more equitably with the countries of first asylum the very heavy burden of helping these hundreds of thousands of persons.

Taking into consideration both the extension of the practice of driving away refugees, and the failures of earlier representations, the ICRC and the League, supported by certain National Societies, launched a third appeal on 28 June, for immediate and urgent steps to save the very lives of these refugees.

While stressing the impossibility of bringing its own aid to the refugees, the international Red Cross pleaded with governments in the region to stop driving them away and with countries of final asylum to commit themselves quickly to accepting more refugees for final settlement.

The ICRC was invited to attend the Conference on Refugees and Displaced Persons in South-East Asia convened in Geneva by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 20 and 21 July. At this conference, the ICRC suggested that concrete measures be adopted for the benefit of the refugees, assured the participants of its own availability, offering in particular the assistance of its Central Tracing Agency for the tracing of persons, the transmission of mail, and so forth. The ICRC had already offered such services at a meeting of the heads of the National Societies of the ASEAN countries in Manila from 2 to 5 April.

Meeting of the leaders of National Societies in ASEAN countries

At the invitation of the Philippine Red Cross, the ICRC was represented at the meeting of the heads of the National Societies in ASEAN countries at Manila from 2 to 5 April by the delegate-general for Asia, the Deputy Director of the Central Tracing Agency and the regional delegate for south-east Asia.

The ICRC described its possibilities for action in three fields: tracing persons, protection and assistance. With regard to tracing, it expressed its readiness to take responsibility and to co-ordinate tracing activities in all the countries receiving refugees from south-east Asia.

Geneva Conference on Refugees and Displaced Persons in South-East Asia

The Conference on Refugees and Displaced Persons in South-East Asia, called by the Secretary-General of the

United Nations, met in Geneva on 20 and 21 July, with some 60 countries and the UNHCR attending. The ICRC and the League were also represented.

Mr. Alexandre Hay, President of the ICRC, drew the attention of the conference and the international community as a whole to the role which the ICRC was prepared to play, particularly in listing persons, tracing the missing, exchanging messages between members of separated families and reuniting families. He also reminded the conference of what he had stated in his appeal of 15 June, that massive assistance should be accorded to the countries of origin of the refugees, whose populations still suffered the consequences of the conflicts which had afflicted the region for so many years. It was in this spirit, he said, that the ICRC wished to provide its assistance also to the people of Viet Nam. He emphasized that the carrying out of the proposed activities had to have all the support which the governments were willing to give to the ICRC.

Development of an action programme in co-operation with the League and the UNHCR

Following various talks between representatives of the UNHCR and the ICRC both in Geneva and in the field, a memorandum defining the respective functions of the two organizations for the benefit of refugees in south-east Asia was signed in Geneva on 5 September.

Under its terms, the UNHCR agreed to supply the ICRC with data on registered refugees, as it was the task of the ICRC to centralize all such information and to deal with all tracing requests received by either organization. The UNHCR would continue to be responsible for the registration and resettlement of refugees and for the assistance they needed.

In addition, pursuant to the decisions taken by the 20-21 July Conference in Geneva, the League and the ICRC invited seventeen National Societies, including the five in the ASEAN countries, to meet for a discussion of the action programme for the refugees in south-east Asia. This meeting, which took place on 31 July and 1 August in Geneva, agreed on the major lines of future action by the League, the ICRC and the National Societies, as compared to those of the UNHCR. The international Red Cross assumed responsibility for providing food and medical assistance supplementary to that of the UNHCR in the fields of nutrition and medical care, and for giving aid to the civilian populations in the vicinity of refugee camps. The ICRC had already put into effect the programme outlined by the Central Tracing Agency. The National Societies of the donor countries—Belgium, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, Finland, France, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and USA—declared that they were prepared to cover the budget proposed on the basis of the action programmes put forward by the National Societies of the ASEAN countries.

Pursuant to the decisions reached, the special adviser to the Secretary-General of the League for questions of relief and development went to Indonesia, the Philippines, Hong Kong,

Macao and Thailand, to study in detail, from 4 to 28 August, the relief programmes of the National Societies in the "countries of first asylum". In addition, the ICRC sent Agency delegates to the Philippines, Indonesia and Hong Kong to make an initial inventory of needs for message services and tracing. Lastly, at the end of September, the ICRC and the League set up an International Red Cross "intervention group" to co-ordinate their respective activities in south-east Asia.

Technical seminar at Kuala Lumpur

Following the meeting of National Societies on 30 July and 1 August, the ICRC and the Malaysian Red Crescent organized a technical seminar at Kuala Lumpur. This was held on 6 and 7 September and was attended by representatives of the League and the National Societies of Hong Kong, Indonesia, Macao, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. The ICRC was represented by its delegate-general for Asia, its two regional delegates for south-east Asia and five Agency delegates.

The purpose of the seminar was to discuss the programme for tracing missing persons and for the transmission of messages for the refugees in south-east Asia. It was also necessary to determine the respective tasks of the Agency in Geneva and of the National Societies of the ASEAN countries. The meeting had the following results:

- a co-ordination system was established and centralization and co-ordination by the Agency was accepted;
- Agency delegates were sent to serve as advisers to the National Societies in Hong Kong, Indonesia, Macao and the Philippines.

Financing the League-ICRC programme

To finance their joint programme, the League and the ICRC, on 12 September, launched an appeal for 22,751,500 Swiss francs to cover the period from 1 August to 31 December. Of this amount, 1,475,500 francs was to cover technical and material support for the Agency, while the balance was to finance the activities of the National Societies involved.

This appeal to governments and National Societies in 126 countries was covered to the extent of 68% by 31 December 1979.

Other activities in the Far East

Thailand

Persons detained for illegal entry into Thailand

In addition to its assistance action for Kampuchean people massed along the frontier with Thailand (see page 41), the ICRC continued to intervene on behalf of persons arrested for illegal entry into Thailand, from Kampuchea and from Laos.

Refugees

The ICRC continued to co-operate with the Thai Red Cross in training paramedical personnel among the refugees in camps run by the UNHCR. This programme, financed with funds provided by the British and Norwegian Red Cross Societies, permitted the training of 160 persons. Due to the increasing number of refugees, however, the ICRC agreed to a further programme proposed by the Thai Red Cross for the training of another 200 persons.

Meanwhile, the mobile ophthalmological team sent by the Swiss Red Cross in July 1978 (See Annual Report 1978, page 35) continued treating refugees under the administrative and medical direction of the ICRC. The Swiss National Society continued to finance and carry out this action. In 1979, this team gave more than 5,000 consultations and performed 470 operations.

Viet Nam

Repatriation of foreign residents

From 1975 onwards, the Agency bureau in Bangkok received many requests to help persons in Viet Nam join their families abroad. In addition, in co-operation with the ICRC delegation in Hanoi, it assisted nationals of countries which had no diplomatic representation in Viet Nam (Yemen, Taiwan, Saudi Arabia) but who lived in Viet Nam, in their efforts to be repatriated.

As part of this operation, for example, from May 1977 to November 1979, 22 flights were arranged from Ho Chi Minh City to Taipei (Taiwan) by way of Bangkok, for a total of 3,385 persons.

The ICRC delegate in Hanoi was responsible for presenting these applications to the Vietnamese authorities and arranging for the departures of those leaving. For this purpose, he was authorized to go to Ho Chi Minh City and remain there for the duration of the operation. This activity diminished with the passing of time and the departure of many people. Six flights in 1979 permitted the repatriation of 565 persons.

The ICRC delegate also intervened with the Vietnamese authorities on several occasions, with a view to visiting some foreigners whose countries had no diplomatic presence in Viet Nam and who were under detention. By the end of 1979, none of these overtures had been successful.

The ICRC raised with the Vietnamese authorities the case of a U.S. national living in Viet Nam who wished to return to his country. On 22 March, after obtaining the approval of Vietnamese and American authorities, the ICRC brought this person to the United States consular representative in Bangkok. An interview without witness had preceded his departure from Viet Nam. In addition, three U.S. nationals who had entered the territorial waters of Viet Nam in a private yacht were liberated on 5 July upon the intervention and under the auspices of the ICRC.

The head of the ICRC delegation in Hanoi, at the beginning of April, went to Laos, where he had several talks with representatives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and of the Red Cross.

Assistance by INDSEC

Even though the "Indo-China bureau" (INDSEC), jointly operated by the ICRC and League to provide relief in Viet Nam, Thailand and Laos, had been closed on 30 June 1978 (see Annual Report 1978, pages 34-35), the relief actions included in its programme were still being carried out in 1979.

Under this programme, 125 tons of iron bars and 1,115 tons of cement for the expansion of the Rach Gia hospital (total value 350,000 Swiss francs), and hospital equipment (25,000 francs) and four ambulances (130,000 francs) were purchased and shipped.

A refrigerator truck valued at 40,000 Swiss francs was sent by ship to the Vietnamese Red Cross, thus completing the equipment for the blood bank established by the Vietnamese Red Cross in Ho Chi Minh City, in co-operation with the Canadian Red Cross.

Malaysia

Protection

Between the end of March and the end of April, the regional delegate for south-east Asia, based at Kuala Lumpur, made visits in Malaysia to 755 persons arrested under the Internal Security Act and held in three places of detention. Following the visits a confidential report was submitted to the Malaysian authorities. The preceding visit had been in the summer of 1977.

In the final interview with the Secretary-General of the Ministry of the Interior, on 18 May, the regional delegate raised the question of access to all detainees held under the provisions of the Internal Security Act. The ICRC has not yet obtained authorization to visit sentenced detainees and those under interrogation.

Central Tracing Agency

Following a mission by the Deputy Director of the Agency at the beginning of January, a tracing bureau was established on 15 February within the National Red Crescent Society in co-operation with the UNHCR, which provided the necessary funds, and with the League, which made available two delegates from the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany to train local personnel.

This bureau, with a staff of some 20 persons, transmitted mail and parcels between refugees in the camps and their families. It was also busy tracing missing persons.

Indonesia

Protection

Since the Indonesian authorities had agreed to the continuance in 1979 of visits to political detainees with the status "G30S/PKI" (see Annual Report 1978, pages 45-46), the ICRC made approaches to the authorities at the beginning of the year, to agree upon procedures. The same procedures as those for the 1978 visits were accepted by the authorities in an interview between the head of the ICRC delegation in Jakarta and Admiral Soedamo, the head of "Kopkamtib", on 15 March.

From 19 June to 30 August, an ICRC team consisting of two regional delegates for south-east Asia, a visitor delegate, a medical delegate and two interpreters visited 31 places of detention on the islands of Java (Western, Central and Eastern), Sulawesi and Kalimantan. The team saw 2,043 detainees with the status "G30S/PKI", i.e. arrested following the events of 30 September 1965, of whom 524 were described as "sentenced", 485 as being in "Category A", 908 in "Category B", 13 in "Category X" and 113 other detainees.

These visits took place in conformity with customary procedures, including the possibility of talking without witness with detainees chosen by the delegates and provisions for repeated visits. They concluded with interviews with the authorities in charge of the places of detention and were the subjects of reports transmitted by the ICRC to the Indonesian Government.

Central Tracing Agency

With the influx of refugees into the islands of Indonesia in 1979, the Indonesian Red Cross had to face an avalanche of letters and requests for the tracing of missing persons. It soon became clear that the National Society needed a bureau employing the methods of the CTA and co-ordinating its activities with those of other tracing bureaus in south-east Asia. For that purpose a CTA delegate went to Jakarta on 13 August. Her first task was to despatch thousands of letters which had not been posted for lack of money. Secondly, she undertook a survey to refugee camps on Bintan Island, Galang and elsewhere. She found it necessary to open another tracing bureau at Tanjung-Pinang. This was done on 28 September and an Agency delegate took charge of the office in October.

The Tanjung-Pinang bureau provided for the delivery of mail to the camps and carried out investigations. Tracing work was centralized in Jakarta where files were kept, based initially on a hundred requests received in August and then on a UNHCR list coming mainly from the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) and from authorities. The mass of information grew constantly, calling for an increase in Indonesian Red Cross staff, who were trained by the Agency delegate.

East Timor

During his visit to Indonesia in November 1978, the President of the ICRC had received an agreement in principle from the authorities for a preliminary ICRC visit to East Timor in 1979 (see Annual Report, 1978, p. 45). Later, the head of the Jakarta delegation made various approaches to settle the procedures. Finally, in an interview in Geneva on 28 March between the President of the ICRC and the Indonesian Minister for Foreign Affairs, the latter confirmed his Government's approval of the procedures proposed.

Visit to East Timor

The preliminary visit took place from 18 to 26 April. Two delegates and a doctor went to a number of villages in the interior of the island and were thus able to make the first estimate of the food and medical needs of the displaced civilian populations. On the basis of this estimate, the ICRC proposed an emergency assistance programme for East Timor.

The broad outlines of this programme, to be under the direction of the Indonesian Red Cross with the co-operation of the ICRC, were agreed to on 15 June by the Indonesian authorities. The procedures for co-operation between the ICRC and the National Society were specified in an agreement signed on 19 June.

Pursuant to that agreement, a relief delegate and a doctor from the ICRC, together with representatives of the Indonesian Red Cross, carried out from 21 to 28 July a survey in thirteen villages in East Timor to examine in detail the needs for the next six months. This direct contact in the field also disclosed the extent of the logistic problems involved in making deliveries of relief to the interior of the island. Of the thirteen villages visited, the eight in the greatest need were included in the programme, which thus covered about 60,000 persons.

Appeal for funds

Once the programme had been agreed upon by all parties, a detailed letter setting forth the budget for the action and calling for about 13 million Swiss francs was sent by the President of the ICRC on 21 August to National Societies and to the Governments of Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, the Federal Republic of Germany, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States and the United Kingdom, and in addition to the European Economic Community.

In response to this appeal, by 31 December the ICRC received donations in kind valued at 3,540,000 Swiss francs and contributions in cash amounting to 9,000,000 francs.

The inception of the assistance programme

On 8 October, a Hercules aircraft delivered from Jakarta to Dili the medical relief needed for the first four months of the programme, together with enriched foodstuffs. The first relief

ship, carrying 640 tons of food, four Land-Rovers and three trucks left Jakarta on 13 October and reached Dili on 20 October.

By the middle of October, medical teams from the ICRC and the Indonesian Red Cross had begun to make censuses of the people in the eight villages chosen. The relief distributions started on 19 October in the village of Hatolia, which was accessible by road, and ten days later at Laclubar, where deliveries had to be made by helicopter.

On 31 December, three ships from Jakarta had brought 2,680.7 tons of relief to Dili and one ship from Australia had delivered 1,315.8 tons. In addition, four Hercules aircraft delivered 49 tons. A total of nearly 4,000 tons of food, ten vehicles, drugs, blankets and soap had been brought in by the end of the year. Nearly one-third of the food had been distributed by that time.

LOGISTICS. — Only two of the eight villages chosen could be supplied by road at all times of the year, while the others had to be provisioned wholly or in part by air. These logistic difficulties obliged the ICRC and the Indonesian Red Cross to lease three helicopters and a "Britten Islander" aircraft to bring relief to the interior of the island. This means of transport was very costly and economies were made by setting up two logistic bases on the coast, at Laga and Beaco, to which food was brought in barges supplied by the Catholic Relief Services.

The total cost to the ICRC of logistics, spent or committed by the end of December, amounted to 1,646,000 Swiss francs.

ORGANIZATION. — In mid-September, a doctor, a nurse and a relief delegate from the ICRC were in East Timor, where they were joined by four doctors, five nurses, twenty volunteer workers and five staff members of the Indonesian Red Cross.

Personnel provided by the Indonesian Red Cross by the end of the year amounted to about 190 persons, including nine doctors, eleven nurses and 121 volunteers from East Timor.

Central Tracing Agency

FAMILY REUNITING IN PORTUGAL. — Pursuant to ICRC negotiations with both the Indonesian and Portuguese authorities, the latter agreed, in October, to the reuniting in Portugal of the first twenty-eight persons with their next-of-kin. The Portuguese authorities made only one condition, that the reuniting would be carried out through the intermediary of the ICRC and the Portuguese Red Cross. The first family reunion took place in December under the auspices of the ICRC.

Philippines

Protection

The ICRC regional delegate for south-east Asia was in the Philippines from 15 to 27 October, first to negotiate the resumption of visits to places of detention and second to assess the situation of displaced persons on Mindanao.

In interviews with various officials of the Command for the Administration of Detainees (COMCAD) and of the Ministry of Defence, the delegate obtained the list of places of detention and of detainees—except for the category designated as “sentenced”. The ICRC asked for authorization to visit the “sentenced” category also. A reply from the Philippine Government was expected early in 1980 on the occasion of a further visit to the Philippines by the ICRC regional delegate.

Assistance on Mindanao

During 1979, relief valued at 31,120 Swiss francs was sent by the ICRC to the Philippine Red Cross for the benefit of displaced persons on Mindanao. The regional delegate, accompanied by representatives of the Philippine Red Cross, made a visit to the island and saw that a reassessment of needs was necessary in some regions.

Central Tracing Agency

In October, a Central Tracing Agency delegate was sent to the Philippines to advise the National Society. Her main task was to participate in the restructuring of the National Society's tracing service. The postal service was operating in a satisfactory manner. It was found that the assistance of the Agency would be needed after the end of December until the filing system was established and the personnel trained.

Hong Kong

At the end of March, the Deputy Director of the Central Tracing Agency went to Hong Kong to confer with government authorities and leaders of the local Red Cross on problems resulting from the great influx of refugees. It was agreed that all tracing activities concerning refugees arriving either by land or sea would be dealt with directly by the Hong Kong Red Cross, a branch of the British Red Cross. The Hong Kong tracing bureau, set up under the auspices of the British Red Cross, has been functioning since April 1979.

At the request of the Hong Kong Red Cross, an Agency delegate went to Hong Kong in October to advise it on its new activities. The gathering of information, from lists of the UNHCR, ICEM and the Hong Kong immigration authorities, constituted a major task. At the end of the year, the card-index of the bureau had about 92,000 cards.

The Agency delegate also assessed the situation in the camps and established a system for the transmission of letters and the tracing of missing persons.

Macao

The Agency delegate based at Hong Kong also established, in November, a tracing bureau in Macao, which was to be run by the National Society, a branch of the Portuguese Red

Cross. An index system was set up on the basis of cards which had previously been filed in Hong Kong but which concerned Macao.

People's Republic of China

From 23 November to 4 December, a joint League-ICRC mission visited the People's Republic of China in connection with the action of the International Red Cross for refugees in south-east Asia. The purpose of the ICRC representative was to study, in co-operation with the Red Cross of the People's Republic, the problems of listing and searching for persons, arising from the presence of some 250,000 refugees from Viet Nam. The League was concerned with providing medical assistance. The delegates of the League and of the ICRC visited a number of State farms in the Provinces of Fukien and Canton, where some of these refugees had been installed.

On 21 December, the League and the ICRC launched a joint appeal to National Societies for aid to the Chinese Red Cross in its relief operations for the benefit of the refugees.

The Indian sub-continent

A regional delegate resident in Geneva has been in charge of ICRC activities in the Indian sub-continent and only a liaison office has been maintained in New Delhi. In 1979, this delegate carried out several missions in India and Pakistan.

In *India*, which he visited twice, in March and June, the regional delegate was occupied in dealing with current matters at the liaison office and various practical questions with leaders of the National Society.

In *Pakistan*, from 14 March to 3 April, he had talks with the heads of the Pakistan Red Crescent on the situation of Afghan refugees and with government officials on the question of repatriating non-Bengalis (Biharis) from Bangladesh to Pakistan.

Following this mission the ICRC, in April, allocated assistance amounting to about 20,000 Swiss francs for the benefit of some 3,000 Afghan refugees in northern Pakistan.

The regional delegate went again to Pakistan from 23 September to 1 October to assess the situation of the Afghan refugees. On this occasion, he visited the camp at Gundaf, with nearly 1,000 persons.

On 20 December, after receiving a request from the Pakistan Red Crescent for emergency assistance, the League and the ICRC made a preliminary appeal to a number of National Societies asking for the immediate dispatch of relief consisting mainly of tents, blankets and clothing for Afghan refugees fleeing into Pakistan. They also announced that a joint League-ICRC mission would go to the country in early January to evaluate the situation in the camps, especially from the medical point of view, and to draw up an action plan in co-operation with the Pakistan Red Crescent.

Sequel to the 1971 conflict in the Indian sub-continent—repatriation of Biharis

The ICRC had agreed in the autumn of 1978 (see Annual Report 1978, p. 38) to co-operate with the UNHCR in organizing transfers of non-Bengalis (Biharis) from Bangladesh to Pakistan, on the condition that its role would be limited to technical assistance.

Accordingly, on 25 May, a Central Tracing Agency delegate went to Bangladesh where he stayed until 30 May to devise, with Bangladesh authorities and representatives of Pakistan and of the UNHCR, the practical procedures for this operation. A plan was agreed upon for repatriations by both sea and air, with ships being provided by the governments concerned while the UNHCR would provide for air travel. The respective tasks were clearly defined and the role of the ICRC was limited to providing technical assistance and serving as an intermediary between the parties. Preliminary control and the transfer of the Biharis was to be carried out by the authorities of Bangladesh while the administrative tasks were the responsibility of the Pakistani authorities. The UNHCR financed the operation.

Three ships, transporting a total of 6,172 persons, sailed from Chittagong on 22 June, 15 July and 5 August. From 14 to 26 September, fourteen flights repatriated 1,587 persons. A final sailing on 20 November with 1,489 passengers, brought to 9,248 the total number repatriated in 1979.

As agreed, the ICRC sent delegates to Dacca to observe all these operations.

Afghanistan

Alarmed by the situation in Afghanistan following the changes in that country, the ICRC, on 13 July, sent the Afghan Head of State an offer of services and proposed the sending of a delegate on a protection mission. On 1 August the Secretary-General of the Afghan Red Crescent replied that the visit would have to be postponed.

On 5 September the President of the ICRC sent President Nur Taraki a new offer of services based on Article 3, common to the four Geneva Conventions. The Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, on 29 September, sent his Government's negative reply to the offer.

The ICRC made a similar offer of services to representatives of Afghan opposition movements.

In December, following a renewal of fighting, the ICRC twice repeated the offer of its services to the Afghan authorities, on 21 December, prior to the change of government in Kabul, and again on 31 December to the new Head of State, President Babrak Karmal. The second offer was accepted by the Afghan authorities and an ICRC delegation was expected in Kabul early in 1980.

