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## MIDDLE EAST

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In 1981, the ICRC had seven delegations in the Middle East, in Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel and the occupied territories, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Its activities were connected mainly with the war between Iraq and Iran, the conflict between Israel and the Arab countries and the Lebanese conflict. In addition, the ICRC continued its protection tasks in Jordan, the Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. It was also active on behalf of persons detained in connection with events inside Iran.

In 1981, the total value of material assistance and medical relief supplied or dispatched by the ICRC to the Middle East amounted to 7.8 million Swiss francs (see Table, p. 54).

### **Conflict between Iraq and Iran**

In connection with the hostilities between Iraq and Iran, the ICRC continued discharging the tasks falling to it under the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions, namely visits to some 10,000 prisoners of war and assistance to the civilian population in the occupied territories and to persons displaced by the fighting. At times, however, difficulties arose, and the ICRC had to insist that both sides more closely honour their obligations under the Conventions, to which end it recommended various improvements in keeping with the provisions of international humanitarian law.

To carry out its numerous activities, the ICRC had to strengthen its delegations in Baghdad and Teheran, where staff was increased from 7 and 8, respectively, in 1980 to 11 and 12 (not counting locally recruited personnel), including three medical delegates and several specialists from the Central Tracing Agency.

### **Repatriations**

After months of negotiations, 62 Iraqi prisoners of war and 102 Iranian prisoners of war and civilians were repatriated under the auspices of the ICRC, in conformity with Article 110 of the Third Convention. All of them were seriously wounded or sick persons whose health required their repatriation, which was organized in three airlifts between Teheran and Baghdad, via Larnaca airport (Cyprus), on 16 June, 25 August and 15 December.

On its first two flights, the plane chartered by the ICRC conveyed from Geneva to Teheran 8.5 tons of emergency

relief (tents, blankets, medicaments and sugar) provided to the Iranian Red Crescent by the Swiss Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies, for the victims of the Golbaf earthquake.

### **Missions by the President**

In 1981, the President of the ICRC, Mr. Alexandre Hay, and the delegate-general for the Middle East, Mr. Jean Hoefliger, made several journeys to Iraq and Iran.

From 29 March to 4 April, President Hay was in Iraq, where he had discussions with the Vice-Prime Minister, Mr. Tarek Aziz, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Saadoun Hammadi. Mr. Hay laid special emphasis on Iraq's obligation to honour its commitments under the Conventions, particularly the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions relative to the treatment of prisoners of war and the protection of civilian persons in time of war. Both ministers assured Mr. Hay that their Government had the firm intention to discharge these obligations, especially in granting the ICRC rapid access to all protected persons.

During his second visit to Iraq, from 18 to 23 October, President Hay met Mr. Tarek Aziz once again, and the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Al Yassin. He expressed the ICRC's satisfaction at the opening of a third prisoner-of-war camp and the improvement of detention conditions in the POW camp he himself had visited in the course of his previous mission. Mr. Hay nevertheless had to raise again the main problems still facing ICRC delegates and remind the Iraqi authorities of their obligations under the Conventions (access to all prisoners of war, separation of civilian and military prisoners in the camps, unilateral repatriation of civilians and respect for treaty provisions on detention conditions).

From 21 to 26 June, Mr. Hay and Mr. Hoefliger were in Iran, where they met the Prime Minister, Mr. Ali Rajai, the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hachemi, the President of the Islamic Party and of the Supreme Court, Ayatollah Beheshti, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, General Fallahi, the Attorney General of the Islamic Revolutionary Courts, Ayatollah Qodoussi, and the President of the National Assembly, Mr. Rafsanjani. This journey was a follow-up to Mr. Hay's previous mission in Iraq. Discussions were held on the ICRC's activities to protect the victims of armed conflicts and its visits to persons detained in connection with events in Iran.

## **Appeal for funds**

To gather the necessary funds for its activities, the ICRC appealed on 16 June to a number of governments and National Societies for 4,350,000 Swiss francs to cover the period from 1 April to 31 December 1981. Despite this appeal, the shortfall in December unfortunately amounted to 772,337 Swiss francs; a reminder emphasizing the gravity of the financial situation was issued at the end of the year.

## **Ships blocked on the Shatt al Arab**

In October 1980 the ICRC had been approached by the Iraqi authorities, which requested its assistance to evacuate the numerous merchant ships blocked on the Shatt al Arab after the outbreak of hostilities.

The ICRC then made an attempt to negotiate a ceasefire out of concern for the crews. When all of them had finally been evacuated by other means, the ICRC considered that the removal of the ships did not lie within its competence; besides, almost all the vessels had managed to leave the dangerous area. At the beginning of 1981, representatives of the United Nations asked the ICRC to intervene, because the use of the Red Cross emblem had been envisaged in the negotiations between the United Nations and the parties involved in the conflict. In a memorandum to the parties concerned, the ICRC explained its position and the conditions on which it might lend its support for such an operation. At the end of the year, however, the problem had still not been solved.

## **Activities in Iraq**

### **Protection**

Once a month, ICRC delegates in Iraq visited the Iranian prisoners of war. By the end of 1981, they had seen some 2,600 prisoners detained in three camps (Ramadi, Mosul and the new camp opened at Anbar in October) and the military hospitals. A large number of prisoners were examined by the ICRC medical delegate, who drew up lists of the sick and wounded qualifying for immediate repatriation in accordance with the provisions of the Third Convention.

Throughout 1981, the ICRC made repeated efforts to gain access to all Iranian prisoners of war. The opening of a third prisoner-of-war camp at Anbar in October only very slightly improved the situation, and in the course of his second mission, President Hay expressed the hope that the process thus initiated would continue. At the end of 1981, the problem had still not been settled.

The ICRC moreover regularly requested the Iraqi authorities to bring detention conditions into conformity with the provisions of the Geneva Conventions.

The ICRC also drew the Iraqi Government's attention to the problem of the many Iranian civilians detained in POW camps and to its obligations, under the Conventions, to provide for the separate internment of prisoners of war and civilians, and for the latter's subsequent release and repatriation. Further to President Hay's second mission in October, the Iraqi authorities agreed to the unilateral repatriation of 37 civilians, who returned to Iran on 15 December.

### **Visits to the occupied territories**

At the beginning of February, ICRC delegates went to the Khorramshahr area, which had been visited for the first time in December 1980. They went to Shalamjeh in April, where they visited the medical dispensary and contacted the Committee provisionally in charge of the town administration. They also made several journeys to Qasr-e Shirin and Mehran. Since April 1981, however, the delegates have no longer been authorized to visit either Khorramshahr or Shalamjeh.

### **Tracing Agency**

The main tasks of the Tracing Agency in Iraq consisted in the registration of Iranian prisoners of war visited by the ICRC, the drawing up of capture cards and the transmission of family message forms provided by the delegates visiting places of detention to enable the captives to communicate with their families.

Relatives of persons captured or reported missing could submit enquiry requests to the ICRC through the Iraqi Red Crescent tracing office or through a government agency, the Standing Committee for War Victims.

In 1981, 7,349 enquiry requests were received by the Tracing Agency, which transmitted 148,473 family messages.

## **Activities in Iran**

### **Protection**

Up to the end of August, ICRC delegates regularly visited Iraqi prisoners of war in Iran. They then had to suspend their activities for two months, owing to difficulties they had in persuading the authorities to let them carry out their visits according to customary ICRC procedure, which includes

interviews without witness. Not before October, when the delegate-general returned to Iran and discussed the matter with the new Prime Minister, Mr. Mahdavi-Kani, and the new Commander-in-Chief of the Army, General Zahir-Nejad, was the ICRC able to resume its regular visits to the Iraqi prisoners of war.

Unfortunately, as from 25 November, the delegates once again had difficulty in carrying out their protection activities. Negotiations were still underway at the end of 1981, so that visits to POW camps might be resumed as quickly as possible, in accordance with customary ICRC procedure. During the period of suspension, the delegates nevertheless continued registering prisoners of war in the camps.

At the end of 1981, the ICRC had visited some 7,000 Iraqi prisoners of war in three places of detention and the military hospitals. Relief distributed during the visits (pyjamas, underwear and standard parcels) was evaluated at 182,000 Swiss francs.

In response to the Teheran delegation's repeated requests that all prisoners be transferred to POW camps in conformity with the provisions of the Conventions, the Iranian military authorities set up a new camp at Parandak, to which almost two thirds of all prisoners of war visited in Iran had been transferred by the end of June 1981. In July, when a second camp was opened at Heshmatiyeh, all Iraqi prisoners of war had been transferred to camps in conformity with Article 22 of the Third Convention.

#### Visits to displaced persons

In February and March, ICRC delegates visited several centres for displaced persons in the eastern province of Khorasan. Thousands of civilians fleeing the fighting in the western part of the country had sought refuge in these centres, where they were cared for by the Ministry of the Interior, which co-ordinates assistance activities discharged by the Iranian Red Crescent and organizations run by other ministries.

In the course of surveys carried out in other provinces, the ICRC delegates assessed the situation of persons displaced by the conflict, particularly at Tabriz, in the Ahwaz area and near Kerman, which a delegate visited on 14 and 15 June after the Golbaf earthquake.

These surveys showed that ICRC aid was not required in the displaced persons' camps the delegates had visited.

In response to a request for assistance from the Iranian authorities in October, three ICRC delegates, including a physician, went with a representative of the Iranian Foundation for War Victims to four provinces (Esfahan, Fars, Khuzistan and Ilam), where some 120,000 displaced families had been gathered under the responsibility of the Foundation. After this survey, the ICRC contacted various National Societies to collect warm clothing to be given at the beginning of 1982 to some 130,000 children in the Ilam and Esfahan provinces. In addition, almost two tons of medicines were sent to Iran for the displaced population.

#### Tracing Agency

In close co-operation with the Iranian Red Crescent, one of whose tasks is to distribute Red Cross messages to families inside Iran, the Teheran Tracing Agency office transmitted 178,066 messages between Iranian prisoners of war in Iraq and their families. It received 2,874 inquiries concerning civilians or soldiers reported missing.

In addition to its work in connection with the conflict between Iraq and Iran, the Teheran Tracing Agency office continued its protection activities for political detainees (see below).

#### Iran

Beside its tasks linked to the war opposing Iraq and Iran, the Teheran delegation continued protecting persons detained as a result of events inside Iran. It was also concerned with the victims of incidents in Kurdistan and with various religious minorities.

#### Visits to places of detention in Teheran and the provinces

Up to 20 June 1981, ICRC delegates regularly visited persons detained in Evin Prison, in Teheran.

Visits to places of detention in the provinces, which had been suspended since the outbreak of the conflict with Iraq, were resumed on 17 February at Mashad, and then successively at Tabriz, Ardebil and Gezel-Hasar. The steps taken by the ICRC, particularly during the delegate-general's mission from 12 to 18 March, led, in April, to the Minister of the Interior giving the ICRC his written permission to visit persons detained by the Islamic Revolutionary Committees. On 15 April, the ICRC was also authorized to visit police prisons.

Unfortunately, from 20 June, although the Iranian authorities did not go as far as to call in question the ICRC's activity in the country, the delegates were denied access first to Evin Prison and subsequently to various other places of detention. Visits could still be carried on in some 20 places of detention in the provinces, for example in Iranian Kurdistan, Kermanshah and Sanandaj. As from 13 September, all ICRC activities in aid of political detainees were suspended, since the delegates' authorization to visit places of detention was not renewed. In the course of his mission at the beginning of October, the delegate-general discussed this problem with the Attorney General of the Islamic Revolutionary Courts, Hodjatoleslam Moussavi Tabrizi. At the end of the year, however, the situation had still not improved.

During the year, 3,098 political detainees were visited by ICRC delegates in 7 prisons and 31 Revolutionary Commit-

tees, out of some 300 places of detention accessible to the ICRC in Teheran and the provinces.

## **Israel and the occupied territories**

In 1981 the ICRC continued its activities in Israel and the occupied territories, based mainly on the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilians. It must be mentioned that the ICRC considers that the conditions for the application of the Fourth Convention are fulfilled in the conflict opposing Israel and the Arab countries, whereas the Israeli authorities maintain that the Fourth Convention is not legally applicable, but declare that they are in fact willing to comply with it. Regarding East Jerusalem and the occupied Golan territory, the ICRC tries to ensure that their residents are not deprived of the benefit of the Convention and that their inalienable rights in the meaning of Article 47 are respected.

Throughout the year the 16 members of the Tel Aviv delegation and sub-delegations in Jerusalem and Gaza regularly visited security detainees under interrogation, those awaiting trial and convicted prisoners; they also organized repatriations and transfers across the demarcation lines, intervened in cases of houses' being destroyed and other violations of the Fourth Convention, transmitted family messages and generally assisted protected persons.

### **Protection**

The ICRC continued protecting persons from the occupied territories and from Arab countries detained in Israel or in the occupied territories. Its delegates had interviews without witnesses with security detainees under interrogation, to whom the ICRC has had access since 1978, and with other categories of detainees (sentenced prisoners, those awaiting trial and persons in administrative detention).

**DETAINEES UNDER INTERROGATION.** – In 1981, ICRC delegates carried out 2,700 visits to 1,367 detainees under interrogation: 1,363 visits on the West Bank and 1,337 in the Gaza Strip.

Under the terms of the agreements concluded with the Israeli authorities the ICRC is entitled to have access to detainees under interrogation arrested on security grounds, starting from the fourteenth day after their arrest, and subsequently once every fortnight during their period of interrogation. In 1981, visiting procedures were not changed in any way compared with the previous year.

**OTHER DETAINEES.** – Simultaneously, the ICRC continued visiting other detainees, most of them arrested for security reasons. The delegates saw some 3,000 detainees in 16 places of detention in Israel and the occupied territories.

Generally, each prison was visited once every three months and, as is the custom, reports were made on these visits and sent to the detaining power and to the countries of origin of the detainees. Since 1967, the ICRC has regularly approached the Israeli authorities to obtain an improvement in detention conditions. Overcrowding is still the ICRC's main concern, but some progress has been achieved in other fields, since detention conditions for security detainees in prisons in the occupied territories – much stricter than conditions for prisoners held in Israel – are being progressively modified in accordance with ICRC recommendations. From 1 June, for example, the food provided in both categories of prisons was standardized and in July, the frequency of family visits to detainees was raised from one to two per month.

There was only one administrative detainee left at the end of 1981, five others having been released in October.

**MEDICAL ACTIVITIES.** – From November to early 1982 a medical delegate undertook a new round of all the main places of detention. Pending the general conclusions to be drawn from these visits, preliminary discussions on the subject were held with the Israeli authorities concerned.

### **ASSISTANCE TO DETAINEES AND THEIR FAMILIES.**

– As before, the ICRC continued providing material assistance to detainees and their families. The detainees received books, periodicals, leisure items, and parcels containing winter and summer clothing. The neediest among them were also given financial help to buy a few things in the prison canteens. In addition, the ICRC paid for dentures, medical trusses and spectacles for a number of detainees.

Thanks to the transport facilities provided by the ICRC, families of detainees were able to visit their relatives in detention once a month; 21,888 people benefited from this travel assistance in 1981.

Aid provided to detainees and their families in 1981 amounted to 494,890 Swiss francs.

**LEGAL SAFEGUARDS.** – The ICRC continued to help protected persons against whom legal proceedings had been instituted. Since 1973, the Israeli authorities have notified the ICRC of cases being brought before military courts. As in previous years, the ICRC delegation continued its efforts to obtain notifications of trials in good time. In 1981 the ICRC legal delegate in Israel attended 29 hearings of security cases brought before military tribunals in Ramallah, Nablus, Gaza and Lod and before the High Court of Justice in Jerusalem.

The ICRC once again drew the authorities' attention to the fact that defendants are obliged to sign confessions writ-



ten in Hebrew, a language which most of them do not know. In 1981, new assurances were obtained from the authorities, which seemed determined to find practical solutions to the problem.

The ICRC delegation also repeatedly raised the inability of detainees under interrogation to contact a lawyer. The Israeli military authorities finally agreed to lay down a procedure on the matter, the preparation of which was still under way at the end of 1981.

### **Destruction of houses**

Following the destruction of 17 houses and the walling up of seven others in 1981, all of which affected protected persons, the ICRC renewed its protests against these acts contrary to Article 53 of the Fourth Convention.

### **Settlements**

Settlements in the occupied territories, which the ICRC considers to be incompatible with Articles 27 and 49 of the Fourth Convention, continued in 1981.

### **Israeli state law on the Golan heights**

Following the Israeli Government's decision to apply state law, jurisdiction and administration on the Golan heights, the ICRC reminded the authorities that Article 47 of the Fourth Geneva Convention expresses the principle of inviolability of the rights of protected persons in occupied territory. Consequently, any change introduced into the institutions or government of an occupied territory must not deprive the civilian population of the benefits of the Fourth Convention. The ICRC thus tries to ensure that its activities in aid of the civilian population on the Golan heights are not affected.

### **Travel across the demarcation lines**

In agreement with the authorities concerned in the occupied territories and the neighbouring countries, ICRC delegates arranged for certain categories of people to travel across the demarcation lines. These included students from the occupied territories on their way to Damascus to continue their studies, or returning for holidays, people being reunited with their families, sick or disabled persons, released detainees being repatriated or expelled, or persons who had entered the occupied territories without authorization.

In 1981, the following operations took place under ICRC auspices:

*AT ROSHANIKRA*, eleven persons, including a detainee repatriated via Cyprus, were transferred from Israel to Lebanon.

*AT KUNEITRA*, between the occupied Golan territory and Damascus, the operations which took place enabled 52 students to go from the Golan to Syria to continue their studies and 53 to return from Damascus for their holidays. Two family reunions and five repatriations of released detainees were also organized between Syria and the Golan heights.

*AT THE ALLENBY BRIDGE*, 30 prisoners and illegal entrants were transferred either to Jordan (12 persons) or to the West Bank (18 persons).

### **Tracing Agency activities**

ICRC delegates conducted investigations in an attempt to locate missing civilians and soldiers. In 1981, they submitted to the appropriate authorities 69 requests for information, of which 4 concerned military personnel reported missing. Fifty-six replies were received, including 36 related to cases submitted in previous years.

In addition, 36 inquiries, mainly from civilian internees in the occupied territories who were without news of their families, were sent to the Central Tracing Agency in Geneva.

Delegates also arranged the exchange of Red Cross messages and transfers of money between detainees and their families: 5,569 messages were delivered to detainees and 10,860 to families in about fifteen Arab countries. All these activities were carried out in co-operation with ICRC delegations in neighbouring countries and with the assistance of the National Societies of the countries concerned.

*FAMILY REUNITING.* – Under the procedure established by the Israeli authorities, applications for family reuniting involving entry into the occupied territories must be made directly to these authorities by members of families already living in the occupied territories. Only in the event of refusal by the authorities and at the request of the families concerned, will the ICRC consider intervening with the Israeli authorities.

In 1981, 6 requests were submitted (3 for the West Bank and 3 for the Gaza Strip); one was accepted, two refused and three left in abeyance. Since 1978, 62 requests have been submitted, of which 31 have been accepted, 26 refused and 5 were still awaiting a decision at the end of 1981.

### **Food assistance**

The ICRC continued its food assistance to needy civilians in the occupied territories. Provided by the European Econ-

omic Community, the food was distributed under the supervision of ICRC delegates by the Israeli Ministry of Social Affairs and with the co-operation of various charitable organizations.

### Other activities

In the context of the conflict opposing Israel and the Arab countries, the escalation of violence and its toll of civilian victims led the ICRC to transmit, in July 1981, a verbal note to the representatives of Israel and Lebanon in Geneva and to the observer of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), proposing in-depth talks with each party to examine all possible ways of improving protection for the civilian population in the area (see also chapter *Lebanon*).

The ICRC delegation in Israel also continued promoting knowledge of the principles of international humanitarian law and gave lectures to prison wardens following a training course.

The brochure on the ICRC, in Hebrew, published in 1981, was distributed to the Israeli army lawyers taking part in a seminar on international law and to whom an ICRC delegate gave a lecture on the Red Cross world.

## Lebanon

At the beginning of 1981, the ICRC delegation in Lebanon had been reduced to seven delegates. In April, however, when fighting suddenly broke out in Zahle, in the east of the country, and tension started building up again, first in Beirut and then in southern Lebanon, new emergency situations arose that required an increase in the staff delegation to 17 members, divided between Beirut, Tyre, Tripoli, Sidon and Jounieh, where the subdelegation had to be re-opened to help the Achrafieh office, which was cut off by the shelling of East Beirut and by the departure of much of its population. In addition, an advanced unit was set up at Chtaura, the city closest to Zahle.

On 3 April, three voluntary workers of the Lebanese Red Cross (two first-aid workers and one nun working as a nurse) were killed on their way to Zahle, when their ambulance was hit, having accidentally left the road. The President of the ICRC, then in Jordan, was deeply shocked by this tragic incident and by the considerable number of innocent victims of this new outbreak of fighting in Lebanon, and more particularly in the Bekaa and Beirut. From Amman, he launched an appeal to the parties involved to respect the fundamental humanitarian principles, spare human lives and protect Red Cross and Red Crescent staff.

In the second half of July, after the Israeli air raids over Beirut and southern Lebanon, the ICRC strengthened its medical support to the Lebanese Red Cross and to the "Palestinian Red Crescent" and provided additional relief to the hospitals and dispensaries in Tyre, Sidon and Nabatieh.

The ICRC's response to the escalation of violence in the Middle Eastern conflict and to the considerable number of victims of the fighting was to propose in-depth talks with each of the parties involved to examine all possible ways of improving the protection of civilians in the area. Its proposal was put forward in July, in a verbal note to the representatives of Lebanon and Israel in Geneva, and to the observer of the Palestinian Liberation Organization.

### Specific actions

Both in the Bekaa and in Beirut, and then in southern Lebanon, the ICRC had to undertake specific actions in 1981. All the parties respected and encouraged the work done by the ICRC, which helped and reassured the population.

- To assist Zahle's civilian population, under siege since April following violent clashes between the Arab Deterrent Force (ADF) and the Christian militias, the ICRC organized, up to 30 June and with the co-operation of the Lebanese National Society, 31 convoys to supply the local Red Cross with medical supplies and food. It removed 361 persons (65 wounded, 68 sick, 186 children separated from their parents, pregnant women and elderly persons, and 42 foreigners) and 12 bodies. For each of these emergency convoys, the ICRC had to negotiate a ceasefire with both parties involved.
- When the fighting had calmed down, after the raising of the siege on 30 June, the ICRC advanced unit in Chtaura was kept open until the end of August to deal mainly with inquiries for missing persons.
- In Beirut, too, the ICRC appealed to the various parties to spare the civilian population and not to shell densely populated quarters. It took advantage of brief lulls in the combats to evacuate the wounded and the dead.
- Hardly had the Zahle blockade been raised than the ICRC had to launch a new emergency operation in southern Lebanon, following the Israeli air raids between 16 and 25 July. As from 18 July, the delegates in Sidon and Tyre were able to provide some assistance to the civilian population. On 19 and 22 July, two ICRC convoys made their way by road from Beirut to Tyre, with 1,625 kgs of medicaments (value: 33,727 Swiss francs), to supply hospitals and dispensaries in the south. Moreover, 500 kgs of medicine were transported to Tyre for the "Palestinian Red Crescent", and also medicaments provided by the Ministry of Health and the Lebanese Red Cross. A third convoy of 1.6 tons of medicaments, one ton of powdered milk and mattresses was organized on 27 July.

Once the emergency period was over, four delegates and two nurses made surveys in the affected areas.

### **Medical assistance**

The ICRC medical department in Lebanon was closed down at the end of February, because the government health services and the hospitals were able to meet all needs. When the situation suddenly deteriorated in April, the ICRC's medical activities had to be resumed and an additional team sent from Geneva. At the beginning of May, the ICRC chief medical officer, Dr Russbach, went to Lebanon to assess new requirements.

In addition to providing assistance to the medical teams working in Zahle, the ICRC regularly visited the hospitals in Beirut and made a number of rounds in southern Lebanon (Sidon, Nabatieh and Tyre areas), to inquire into the needs of the various dispensaries and hospitals and to keep constantly abreast of developments in the situation.

In May, at the request of the President of the Lebanese Red Cross, the ICRC launched a special appeal for funds to purchase ambulances needed in Lebanon. Thirty ambulances (including three donated by the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany and one by the Egyptian Red Crescent) were conveyed to Lebanon by the ICRC in 1981, with co-operation from the Government and the Red Cross of the Federal Republic of Germany. Fifteen were given to the Lebanese Red Cross, seven to the "Palestinian Red Crescent", three were placed at the disposal of the Ministry of Health and five were provisionally assigned to the ICRC delegation.

In June, when a case of poliomyelitis was reported in Zahle, the ICRC sent from Geneva 20,000 doses of vaccine, which were conveyed to the besieged city along with other supplies of vaccine from the Lebanese Ministry of Health and the National Society.

From mid-October to mid-December, 50 bags of blood a week were provided by the Swiss Red Cross to the blood bank of the Lebanese Red Cross.

In October, the situation gradually returned to normal and the ICRC was able to reduce its medical staff to one physician and one nurse.

In 1981, expenses incurred for medical assistance in Lebanon amounted to 2,170,580 Swiss francs.

### **Material assistance**

On 2 May, with Beirut airport closed since 21 April and the country deprived of one of its principal means of supply, an aircraft chartered by the ICRC, with 4 delegates on board, conveyed to Lebanon 9 tons of emergency relief, including fresh blood donated by the Norwegian Red Cross, and powdered milk. Stocks could then be constituted in various areas of the country to be distributed when necessary.

The ICRC also provided blankets, mattresses and powdered milk to the displaced population having fled the shelling of East Beirut and sought shelter further north, around Jounieh.

In the latter half of 1981, when the crisis was over, ICRC assistance activities were progressively reduced to occasional distributions for displaced persons in need.

### **Protection and Tracing Agency activities**

ICRC protection work in Lebanon was fairly limited. The delegation was mainly concerned with 68 foreign workers blocked in Zahle (59 Sri Lankans and 9 Indians) and was officially approached by the Sri Lankan Government to organize the repatriation of its nationals; the siege of Zahle was raised, however, before this operation was carried out.

ICRC tracing activities included visits to persons detained by various factions in different areas of the country. The delegation was especially concerned with internees in the enclave of the "Conservative Forces" in southern Lebanon.

In 1981, the Tracing Agency office in Lebanon transmitted 7,537 family messages, within the country or between delegations in the Middle East, concerning requests for news of persons reported missing or arrested. It also undertook 230 investigations (including 108 inquiries from abroad, via Geneva), organized 428 transfers of persons inside Lebanon and 10 repatriations from Israel and the occupied territories.

### **ICRC staffing in Lebanon**

In view of the way the situation developed in the latter half of 1981, the number of delegates was reduced from 17 during the emergency period to 9 by 31 December 1981, in addition to some 30 locally recruited employees.

## **Activities of other ICRC delegations in the Middle East**

### **EGYPT**

Apart from its tracing activities (requests for news, transmission of family messages, issuing of travel documents, etc.), directly related to the conflict between Israel and the Arab countries, the ICRC delegation in Egypt was active in promoting awareness of international humanitarian law and the Red Cross principles within the armed forces.



A few foreign detainees, held in prisons near Cairo, were interviewed by an ICRC delegate in the presence of witnesses.

The Cairo delegation continued concerning itself with the situation of civilians residing in the part of Sinai under Egyptian administration. In 1980, a programme of distribution of 100 tons of powdered milk to needy persons in the Sinai had been set up by the ICRC. The distributions begun at the end of September 1981 were done by CARE (Co-operative for American Relief Everywhere); by the end of the year, they had benefited some 33,000 persons.

## **JORDAN**

The Amman delegation continued its protection work in aid of detainees in Jordan. In two series of visits, one in May and June, and the other in October and November, delegates saw some 3,000 detainees in the 15 prisons and the two interrogation centres in the country. The ICRC delegates made regular visits to the interrogation centres twice a month.

In the context of the conflict opposing Israel and the Arab countries, the Amman delegation, in co-operation with Tel Aviv, organized 17 crossings of the Jordan for 27 persons, most of whom were detainees released from Israeli prisons and repatriated or expelled to Jordan, or persons having illegally entered one or the other country on either side of the Jordan valley.

The delegation also transmitted over 10,000 messages between members of dispersed families, some being in Jordan and others in the territories occupied by Israel.

## **SYRIA**

The Damascus delegation continued its activities connected with the conflict between Israel and the Arab countries. It transmitted 2,263 family messages from and to the occupied territories and Israel, organized two family reunions and the passage, during the holidays, of some 100 students to and from the occupied Golan territory, through Kuneitra.

In the context of the Lebanese conflict, the Damascus-based delegates supported their colleagues in Lebanon during the Zahle events. As they had done the previous year, they also continued approaching the Syrian authorities, and the Prime Minister in particular, to obtain permission to visit Lebanese nationals arrested by the Arab Deterrent Force (ADF) and detained in Syria; no progress, however, could be achieved.

The ICRC delegates transmitted a few family messages to Syrian nationals detained by the "Conservative Forces" in Lebanon.

The ICRC continued providing assistance to displaced persons in the Golan (transmission of Red Cross messages, family reunions and distribution of powdered milk offered by the Swiss Confederation).

## **Yemen Arab Republic**

In December 1981, the ICRC regional delegate for the Arabian Peninsula went to the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR), where he visited 67 places of detention holding some 1,100 detainees. The last ICRC visits to Sana'a Prison dated back to 1980 and to the other places of detention to 1976 and 1977. At Sana'a, however, the visit had to be carried out in the presence of witnesses, so the regional delegate immediately intervened with the Ministry of the Interior to obtain permission to proceed with interviews without witness, according to ICRC customary procedure. His efforts had not yielded any results by the end of 1981.

During his stay in Yemen, the regional delegate also had talks with the Ministers of Health and the Interior and with senior officials of the National Society.

## **People's Democratic Republic of Yemen**

From 25 February to 8 March, the ICRC regional delegate for the Arabian Peninsula was on mission in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, where he met members of the Government (including the Minister of Defence, the State Minister to the Presidency and the Minister of Health, who is also the President of the country's emerging Red Crescent Society), and several other senior State officials.

After obtaining the authorities' permission to visit places of detention, the regional delegate went to Mansoura and Sabr Prisons, where he had access to some 400 detainees, including 7 political prisoners. He was able to have interviews without witness with four of the detainees. The last ICRC mission to the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen dated back to 1976 and the last prison visits made in the country to 1973.

The ICRC continued maintaining relations with the emerging Red Crescent Society, which it assisted up to the end of 1981 by regularly providing it with anti-hemophilic fractions. This aid was to be continued by the Swiss Red Cross in 1982.

**RELIEF AND MEDICAL AID SUPPLIED  
OR DISPATCHED BY THE ICRC IN 1981 \***

*MIDDLE EAST*

Country	Beneficiaries	Relief		Med. Aid	Total (Sw.fr.)
		Tonnage	Sw.fr.	Sw.fr.	
Egypt. . . . .	Civilians and others	100	425,900	—	425,900
Iran. . . . .	Prisoners of war	9.3	307,500	14,600	322,100
Israel . . . . .	Detainees and their families, local Red Crescents, ci- vilians in occupied terri- tories	1,996.4	3,617,970	21,020	3,638,990
Jordan . . . . .	Detainees and their families	1.2	21,510	—	21,510
Lebanon . . . . .	Displaced civilians, detainees, the sick	78.4	620,960	2,170,580	2,791,540
Syria . . . . .	Civilians, refugees, hospitals	70.5	611,510	27,000	638,510
Yemen (Arab Re- public) . . . . .	Detainees	—	20,000	—	20,000
Yemen (Dem. Re- public) . . . . .	National Society	—	—	10,160	10,160
TOTAL . . . . .		2,255.8	5,625,350	2,243,360	7,868,710

\* Including food assistance from the EEC and the Swiss Confederation, aid to National Societies, aid to detainees and their families, and aid provided within the framework of specially financed actions.