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Assessing the needs of a heavily damaged neighbourhood in a Beirut suburb. (Photo: Thierry Gassmann)

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

For its operations in the Middle East and North Africa the ICRC had, as in previous years, seven delegations in that area: in Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel and the occupied territories, Jordan, Lebanon (with offices in Beirut, Sidon, Tripoli, Tyre, Jezzine, Ksara and Baalbeck) and Syria. It also maintains a regional delegation, based in Geneva, for the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa.

In 1985, the major part of the ICRC's activities in the Middle East was devoted to visits to Iranian prisoners in Iraq and assistance and protection activities for victims of the war in Lebanon. The ICRC also continued its activities in connection with the Arab-Israeli conflict. In addition, it made visits to Moroccan prisoners detained by the Polisario Front and by Algeria and to security prisoners in Jordan and the Yemen Arab Republic. On the other hand, it was unable to carry out activities on behalf of this category of detainee in other Middle East and North African countries.

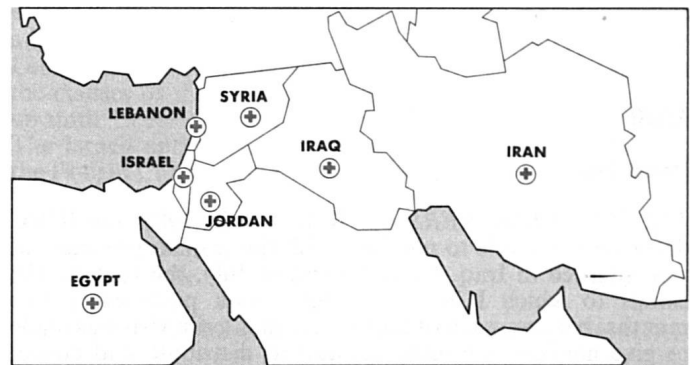
The ICRC's activities in connection with the Iran-Iraq conflict and in Lebanon were financed through donations received in response to special appeals (the ICRC's special budget) while its other activities in the Middle East were financed by the ordinary budget.

CONFLICT BETWEEN IRAN AND IRAQ

Following the intensification of hostilities between Iran and Iraq in the spring and in view of the escalation of the methods of combat used by the belligerents, the President of the ICRC issued an appeal on 28 May pointing out that the bombardment of civilian zones constitutes one of the gravest violations of international humanitarian law and calling for the termination of such practices. The text of this appeal was delivered to the Permanent Missions of Iran and Iraq in Geneva and made public through the press on the same day.

Repatriation of prisoners of war

In 1985, six prisoner-of-war repatriation operations were carried out under the auspices of the ICRC. Four of them, which took place respectively in May, July, August and September, involved 119 seriously ill or wounded prisoners of war designated by an Iraq-ICRC Mixed Medical Commission. Two others were carried out in October and November, on behalf of a further 72 Iranian prisoners of war. Before each of these operations, the prisoners' desire to return to their countries of origin had been ascertained by the ICRC delegates during interviews without witnesses. These operations were conducted in the following manner: the Iranian



prisoners, accompanied by ICRC delegates and doctors, were conducted from Baghdad to Ankara aboard an Iraqi aircraft. At the airport of the Turkish capital, the authorities and the Turkish Red Crescent provided the facilities and medical personnel necessary for the transfer of the Iranian prisoners, who subsequently departed for Tehran aboard an Iranian aircraft, accompanied by ICRC delegates and Iranian Red Crescent medical personnel from Iran.

Iran, for its part, in March, April, July, October and December, repatriated to Iraq 322 Iraqi prisoners of war with the assistance of the Turkish Red Crescent. Owing to the suspension of its protection activities in Iran, the ICRC was not authorized to supervise these operations. Among the repatriated prisoners of war were 41 Iraqis selected by the Iran-ICRC Mixed Medical Commission during a tour of the camps in 1983.

Missing persons

Since 1980, the Tracing Agency has registered 65,733 tracing requests concerning persons reported missing (mainly combatants) in connection with the Iran-Iraq conflict. These requests were transmitted to the respective party to the conflict, requesting it to make the necessary inquiries, so that families without news of their relatives could be informed. On account of the almost total absence of information from the two belligerents concerning the identity of soldiers killed in combat in 1985, the ICRC was able to answer only a few hundred of the tracing requests, primarily relating to persons found in prisoner-of-war camps in Iraq.

Because of the absence or imprecision of the information provided by the two belligerents, the ICRC decided in March to suspend its tracing activities in relation to persons missing in connection with the Iran-Iraq conflict. This decision was conveyed to the two governments on 6 March by a verbal note reminding them of the provisions of Articles 70 and 122 of the Third Convention. At the end of 1985 no progress had been made in this field.

Appeal for funds

To obtain the funds required for its activities in connection with the conflict between Iran and Iraq, the ICRC launched an appeal to donors at the beginning of the year for the sum of 11,997,000 Swiss francs.

Iraq

Protection

IRANIAN PRISONERS OF WAR. — In 1985, the ICRC delegates were able to regularly visit the Iranian prisoners of war interned in Iraq. Until the end of July, the visits to the camps to which ICRC had access took place every two months; between each of these visits an interim visit was made to give medical consultations and to distribute and collect family messages. From August onwards, complete visits to the camps took place about every six weeks and, consequently, the interim visits were discontinued at the request of the Iraqi authorities. Thus, during the year, the delegates had access to 9,847 Iranian prisoners of war in nine camps and four hospitals and at the military police station in Baghdad. During these visits, toiletries, leisure items and educational materials to the value of some 225,000 Swiss francs were distributed to the prisoners. The capture cards of 884 new prisoners of war were forwarded to the Iranian authorities and to the Iranian Red Crescent so that the families concerned could be informed.

From 7 January to 9 February, a Mixed Medical Commission, composed of two ICRC medical delegates and an Iraqi doctor, made a round of the camps to draw up a list of prisoners of war whose state of health necessitated their repatriation, in accordance with Article 112 and Annexes I and II of the Third Convention. The 119 prisoners designated were repatriated to Iran in 1985, in successive batches, under ICRC auspices. The prisoners were chosen on the basis of a list compiled by the ICRC doctors during their visits to the camps the previous year, as well as lists drawn up by the prisoners themselves. A second Mixed Medical Commission, also composed of two ICRC medical delegates and an Iraqi doctor, during another tour of the camps in November and December, selected 82 prisoners for advance repatriation.

IRAQI PRISONERS OF WAR REPATRIATED. — In 1985, during several visits to Tamuz military hospital, the ICRC delegates were able to see 173 former Iraqi prisoners of war who had been repatriated.

CIVILIAN POPULATION. — In 1985, as in previous years, the ICRC continued to discharge the mandate entrusted to it by the Fourth Geneva Convention, especially Article 143, on behalf of the civilian population. ICRC delegates had regular access to certain displaced persons in Iraq entitled to protection under Article 4 of the Fourth Geneva Convention;

their treatment is laid down in Article 35 thereof and the following articles.

In January, May and October, several thousand families from Khuzistan (Arabic-speaking Iranians) were visited by the ICRC delegates, including a doctor, in the Meisan region in the same villages as in 1984 and in seven new villages to which the ICRC had access, for the first time, in May. Other delegates, including a doctor, also regularly visited the Kurdish refugees of Iranian origin interned at the Al-Tash camp near Ramadi. The total number of persons visited in 1985 amounted to approximately 25,000.

At the request of the Iraqi authorities and in collaboration with the diplomatic representatives of certain countries, the ICRC tried to find host countries willing to accept a number of Iranian nationals who had taken refuge in Iraq and had been regularly visited by the delegates. In 1985, 96 Iranian refugees obtained authorizations enabling them to settle in host countries. In addition, the ICRC endeavoured to expedite resettlement abroad of the Iranian refugees in Iraq by organizing, on 30 September at its headquarters, a meeting of the ambassadors and representatives of countries likely to be interested in the question, as well as with representatives of the UNHCR and the ICM. All the participants received an *aide-memoire* reminding them of the reasons why the ICRC has consented to act as neutral intermediary on behalf of these refugees, and trying to sensitize the participants to the plight of these persons.

Tracing Agency

In Iraq, while registering the new prisoners of war to whom it had access, the ICRC was able to deliver to the Permanent Committee for War Victims 477,129 family messages to the Iranian prisoners of war and to receive 225,491 for families living in Iran. In addition, the Tracing Agency's activities on behalf of Iranian civilians living in Iraq increased perceptibly in 1985: 8,000 family messages were distributed to them and some 17,000 collected for families living in Iran.

Iran

Despite the approaches made to Iran, in response to the ICRC's appeal on 23 November 1984, by certain States party to the Geneva Conventions, in 1985 the ICRC was not able to resume its protection activities on behalf of Iraqi prisoners of war, which had been halted by Iran on 10 October 1984. On numerous occasions, in Geneva, New York, Tehran and Luanda (during the summit meeting of non-aligned countries), the ICRC expressed to the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran its willingness to resume its protection activities in Iran. At the end of 1985, it had not yet received a positive reply to this proposal.

To assist the National Society in its activities, the ICRC gave the Iranian Red Crescent parcels worth some 450,000 Swiss francs for distribution among civilians displaced by the conflict.

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Following the intensification of hostilities between Iraq and Iran in spring 1985, the ICRC delegates, accompanied by leaders of the Iranian Red Crescent Society, carried out missions in the bombarded areas. A joint ICRC/National Society team went to different districts of Tehran on 2 April and 4 June, and on 29 May to the prisoner-of-war camp of Heshmatieh, which had been hit.

During another joint mission from 11 to 13 July in the Ziveh region (Iranian Kurdistan), the delegates could not obtain access to the Iraqi Kurds living in the region. As in the past, the Iranian authorities did not request ICRC assistance.

Tracing Agency

Since protection activities were halted, the work of the Tehran delegation was centred on the exchange of messages between the prisoners of war and their families. The delegation in Tehran delivered 458,862 messages for Iraqi prisoners of war to the Iranian Red Crescent and received 508,817 from that National Society for transmission to families living in Iraq.

LEBANON

In 1985, the situation in Lebanon continued to be of extreme concern to the ICRC, on account of the frequent outbreaks of intense fighting which flared up successively in different parts of the country.

From 12 to 16 February the President of the ICRC, accompanied by the delegate-general for the Middle East and North Africa, went to Beirut, where he had talks with Mr. Amin Gemayel, President of the Republic, Mr. Rachid Karami, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Mrs. Issa-el-Khoury, President of the Lebanese Red Cross.

The activities carried out by the ICRC and the National Society were often hampered by a lack of respect for the Red Cross emblem and personnel. Despite the guarantees given by the various parties to the conflict, some Lebanese Red Cross relief workers were killed and others wounded during their work; two abducted relief workers had not been released at the end of 1985. Three ICRC delegates were abducted as well, but were soon released. Also, ICRC and Lebanese Red Cross vehicles were stolen. It is even possible that one of these vehicles carrying the Red Cross emblem was used in southern

Lebanon in a car-bomb attack. Following this serious incident, the ICRC issued a press release on 16 July in which it declared that the use of the protective emblem of the Red Cross for indiscriminate killing and wounding is a detestable act which compromises the efficacy of ICRC activities in Lebanon, to the detriment of the victims themselves.

The ICRC reminded the Israeli occupation forces continually, before and after their withdrawal from southern Lebanon, of their obligations concerning the application of the clauses of the Fourth Convention, in southern Lebanon up until 10 June and in the "security zone" after that date. The Israeli authorities, for their part, do not consider that the Fourth Convention applies either *de facto* or *de jure* in the "security zone".

Appeal for funds

To finance its traditional activities in Lebanon, the ICRC appealed to donors at the beginning of the year for 6,960,000 Swiss francs.

Protection

CIVILIAN POPULATION. — As in past years, the ICRC was greatly concerned for civilians in Lebanon who were seriously affected by the grave events occurring there, brought about as much by the clashes between the various parties to the Lebanese conflict (mainly in Beirut, the Sidon region and Tripoli) as by the Israeli occupation, and then by the withdrawal of the Israeli army from the south of the country. Consequently, the delegates went regularly to the worst affected areas or their vicinity, as soon as any serious disturbances occurred, in an attempt to ensure by their presence the safety of the civilian population. The ICRC also made representations to the Israeli authorities, in particular when there was a renewed upsurge of violence in southern Lebanon during the first six months of 1985, urging them to respect the clauses of the Fourth Convention. The ICRC voiced its concern about the civilians living in the south of the country, who had suffered particularly severely during the first months of the year. On several occasions, the ICRC delegates tried systematically to gain access as quickly as possible to the inhabitants of villages in this region, which were cut off from the rest of the country.

PERSONS ARRESTED. — Throughout the year, the ICRC visited or tried to visit the persons arrested in connection with the Lebanese conflict and the Israeli occupation of the south of the country.

— Until its closure on 3 April 1985, **Ansar camp** was visited 13 times, during which 2,192 civilian internees in Israeli hands were seen and registered. When the camp was closed, the Israeli authorities released 752 civilian internees. The ICRC helped them to return to their families by facilitating their departure for the destination

of their choice (Beirut, Tyre, Nabatyeh, Hasbaiya). The civilian internees who were not released were transferred by the Israelis to Atlit camp in Israel (*see chapter on Israel and the Occupied Territories in the present report*).

- The ICRC delegates also visited the **detainees under interrogation** in Israeli hands in the interrogation centres in southern Lebanon, until the latter were closed when the Israelis withdrew. The agreement (obtained after numerous negotiations conducted since the start of the Israeli occupation in June 1982) which governed access to this category of detainee—notification within 24 days and visits within 30 days following arrest—was modified after an interview, on 25 February, with Mr. Rabin, Israeli Defence Minister. The time limit for notification was reduced to 15 days, that for the first visit to 20 days following the date of arrest, subsequent visits to take place every 14 days. This agreement, which lapsed when the interrogation centres were closed, enabled the ICRC to visit some 30 detainees at Tyre, Mar Elias and Nabatyeh.
- Despite repeated requests both to the Israeli authorities and the South Lebanon Army, the ICRC was not able to obtain access to the **Khiyam prison**. After Ansar camp and various Israeli army interrogation centres were closed, this prison became the main detention centre for persons taken prisoner in southern Lebanon. The ICRC's inability to visit the Khiyam prison prevented it from discharging a major part of its mandate on behalf of persons detained in this region of Lebanon.
- In 1985, the ICRC pursued its representations in order to gain access to all the persons detained by the various parties to the Lebanese conflict. During the year under review, the ICRC made 47 visits to **481 persons detained by several militias** (Lebanese Forces, AMAL, the Popular Nasserian Organization/ Popular Liberation Army). At the end of December, 121 detainees were being visited regularly by the ICRC.
- throughout the year the ICRC sought to ascertain the fate of **persons missing** in connection with the Lebanese conflict. It especially approached the Israeli authorities and all the parties to the Lebanese conflict concerning persons missing or deceased since 1975. At the end of the year, ICRC inquiries were continuing.
- as far as persons taken **hostage** are concerned, the ICRC continues, in accordance with its policy and principles, to condemn acts committed in violation of the principles of law and humanity. In this area, as in all others, it is guided solely by the interest of the victims and the wish to help them. Likewise in accordance with its established policy, delegates may, when the occasion arises, give the hostages material assistance and, by their presence, moral support. But as a general rule, it is not within their competence to take part in negotiations between the authorities concerned and the parties to such acts.

HIJACKING OF A COMMERCIAL AIRLINER. — On 14 June a TWA plane on a regular flight between Athens and Rome was hijacked and forced to go twice to Beirut and

Algiers. The parties (American and Algerian authorities and the hijackers) having requested the ICRC to intervene, a team of six persons, including the delegate-general for the Middle East and North Africa, went to Algiers on 15 June. The delegates boarded the plane and were able to obtain the release of three passengers, for humanitarian reasons, just before the plane took off for Beirut. There, a delegate and an ICRC doctor had interviews without witnesses with the 37 remaining passengers, one of whom was released at the ICRC's request. They also had access to three members of the crew. All these persons were registered and the registration cards transmitted to the American Red Cross so that the families concerned could be informed. The ICRC did not take part in the negotiations. After the decision to release the 36 passengers, the ICRC organized their transfer and that of three members of the crew from Beirut to Damascus, where it handed them over to the Syrian and American authorities.

Medical assistance

Medical assistance activities accounted for much of the ICRC delegation's work in Lebanon. As in previous years, the delegates carried out regular surveys in 84 hospitals and 125 dispensaries to distribute the medical supplies needed for their efficient operation. In addition, medical assistance to back up the Lebanese medical infrastructure was provided in various regions each time that disturbances broke out. The cost of medical assistance activities in Lebanon in 1985 amounted to some 3.5 million Swiss francs. The National Red Cross Societies of Canada, Denmark, Finland, the Federal Republic of Germany and Switzerland sent the ICRC medical material to a total value of some 870,000 Swiss francs.

In southern Lebanon ICRC and Lebanese Red Cross teams went to certain villages isolated by a blockade imposed by the Israeli army, in order to evacuate the dead and wounded. They subsequently visited these villages regularly to ensure that the inhabitants received adequate medical attention and, if necessary, to give medical consultations there. A mobile medical clinic was put into service by the Lebanese Red Cross in co-operation with the ICRC in order to give assistance to five villages particularly affected by the measures taken by the occupying authorities.

At Sidon and in the vicinity, violent clashes between Christian and Muslim forces broke out in April and spread to the Palestinian camps of Mieh-Mieh, Ein-el-Helwe in the Jezzine region and in Iklim el-Kharroub, causing the flight of several thousand civilians. The ICRC stepped up its medical assistance to the hospitals, clinics and dispensaries of Sidon and evacuated the wounded during the short truces. The Kfar Falous hospital, situated to the east of the front line, was then declared a "neutral zone" and placed by the ICRC under its protection in order to set up a surgical team there. However, this team has to be evacuated a few days later, on account of the fighting. A surgical team provided by the Danish, Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish Red Cross Societies treated the wounded evacuated to two emergency centres set up by the

ICRC, one in the heart of the town of Jezzine, the other outside the town. Fifty-eight wounded were treated between 30 April and the end of May, when the region quietened down.

At the end of May and the beginning of June violent fighting broke out in Beirut, especially in the sector where the Palestinian camps of Sabra, Chatila and Bourj Brajneh were situated. The ICRC delegates, in co-operation with the Lebanese Red Cross, were able to give rapid assistance by distributing medical supplies to the victims in west Beirut, south Beirut and in the mountains. But it was only after numerous and urgent appeals to all parties, calling for a cease-fire and for respect for the Red Cross emblem, that the ICRC delegates and Lebanese Red Cross first-aid workers were able to gain access to the Palestinian camps and evacuate some of the wounded. During the fighting in and around the camps the ICRC also, with the help of the Lebanese Red Cross, evacuated 600 patients receiving treatment at the Dar el Ajaza psychiatric hospital, which had been caught in crossfire during the battle at Sabra camp.

During the clashes in Tripoli between different militias from 15 September to 4 October, the ICRC opened an emergency office at Naoura, to the south of the town, to distribute medical supplies to hospitals and dispensaries and thereby give external support to its work in Tripoli itself, isolated by the fighting. Between 29 September and 4 October, the ICRC was not able to move within Tripoli to tend and evacuate the wounded, despite several appeals for a cease-fire to the parties to the conflict. It was not until 5 October that the wounded could be transported to Qalmoun, to a field hospital installed by the ICRC (3 km to the south of Tripoli) and that the Tripoli Islamic hospital could be placed under the ICRC's protection. A surgical team sent by the Finnish and Danish Red Cross Societies treated 50 persons there until 9 October, when the team withdrew. The ICRC delegates subsequently ensured that the hospitals and dispensaries of the region had sufficient medical supplies.

In 1985 the ICRC delivered medical supplies (worth some 19,000 Swiss francs) to the "Palestinian Red Crescent" for its hospitals and dispensaries. Furthermore, ten wounded Palestinians were transported by the ICRC and the Lebanese Red Cross from Palestinian medical centres to Beirut airport to be evacuated abroad for the necessary treatment.

As in previous years, the centres in Beit Chebab and Sidon for patients needing prostheses worked under the auspices of the ICRC: 217 prostheses and 214 orthoses were made there. ICRC technicians gave regular consultations in the Lebanese Red Cross centres in Mreije (southern suburb of Beirut) and Tyre. They also gave training courses in the Sidon centre. In October, a new orthopaedic centre was opened in Hammana, in the Caza d'Aley, by the Lebanese and Netherlands Red Cross Societies, in collaboration with the ICRC which sent a technician for a six-month period.

Relief

As in previous years, the ICRC distributed relief supplies to the civilian populations during the periods of fighting. To be

able to intervene quickly according to the needs observed, it accumulated stocks which it kept regularly replenished in east Beirut, west Beirut, Tripoli, Ksara, Jezzine, Tyre and Sidon: these stocks were planned to cover at all times the most urgent needs of 50,000 persons.

By setting up this infrastructure, the ICRC was able to distribute emergency relief supplies to 80,000 civilian victims of the clashes in April in the Sidon-Jezzine region. During the fighting in May and June in Beirut, around the Palestinian camps of Sabra, Chatila and Bourj Brajneh, distributions were made to 19,200 persons, especially those who had fled the fighting and taken refuge in west Beirut. Conversely, the ICRC had great difficulty in gaining access to people living in the camps themselves (*see section on "Medical Assistance"*). During the clashes in Tripoli at the end of September, the ICRC provided assistance to thousands of people who had remained inside the town or fled the fighting, and to hospitals and dispensaries when the fighting was at its height and Tripoli was totally cut off from the rest of the country. In southern Lebanon, the delegates carried out distributions throughout the year, according to needs, for civilians who were displaced, whose houses had been destroyed, or whose villages had been isolated by the fighting.

The relief supplies distributed in 1985 had a total value of some 2,860,000 Swiss francs (including donations in kind to the ICRC worth some 620,000 Swiss francs by the Belgian, Canadian, Danish, Swedish and Swiss Red Cross Societies).

Support for the National Society

In 1985, the ICRC increased its support for the Lebanese Red Cross, especially the latter's first-aid centres and mobile clinics, and gave financial support to certain of the National Society's projects. It provided standard medical kits and the equipment necessary for blood collection, delivered ten new ambulances, nine used ones and three other vehicles, and equipped ambulances and treatment centres with radio sets. In addition, the ICRC donated relief supplies, mainly intended for the relief worker section, for certain *ad hoc* relief activities.

To promote the Lebanese Red Cross Society's programme in aid of the disabled, the ICRC and the Canadian Red Cross Society gave it 300 wheelchairs. The Red Cross Societies of Finland, Norway, Switzerland and the Federal Republic of Germany provided it with blood and plasma after appeals launched by the ICRC during the periods of fighting.

The total value of the assistance given to the Lebanese Red Cross in 1985 was approximately 1.5 million Swiss francs.

Tracing Agency

In 1985, the ICRC delegates registered 686 new prisoners visited at Ansar and 430 in other places; they delivered 9,140 certificates of captivity to the detainees' families; so that they could present them to the competent authorities. They also participated in the release and repatriation of prisoners, and

the transfer of 1,423 persons across the front lines. The major part of the Tracing Agency's work in the Lebanon consisted, however, of the exchange of 53,615 family messages between members of families separated by the fighting. In addition, family visits were organized until March to certain persons detained at Ansar camp.

Throughout the year, the ICRC remained gravely concerned by the high number of tracing requests for missing persons that remained unresolved, despite the delegates' approaches to the competent authorities. Only 118 tracing requests could be resolved in the course of the year, leaving hundreds of others unanswered.

ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

In Israel, and more particularly in the territories occupied since 1967, the ICRC continued its activities, which were principally based on the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons. The ICRC considers that the conditions specified for the application of the Fourth Convention exist in the conflict between Israel and the Arab countries, whereas the Israeli authorities maintain that the Fourth Convention is not legally applicable. They state, nevertheless, that they wish to comply *de facto* with certain of its provisions.

Throughout the year under review, the ICRC maintained regular contact with the Israeli authorities to protect and assist, in accordance with its mandate, the protected persons in the occupied territories since 1967 and in southern Lebanon (until the Israeli withdrawal from the north of the "security zone"). At the ministerial level, the head of the ICRC delegation twice met Mr. Rabin, Israeli Defence Minister, on 25 February and 23 October. These talks concerned persons protected by the Fourth Convention in southern Lebanon, persons detained in that region to whom the ICRC does not have access, including those detained in the Khiam prison (see chapter on "Lebanon" in this report), in Israel and in the occupied territories.

During the second half of 1985 the occupying power expelled protected persons from the occupied territories and took administrative detention measures; the number of houses destroyed or walled up increased. The land seizures, the restrictions on freedom of movement, and the establishment of new settlements continued, as in the past, as did the incitement to collaboration.

Protection of arrested persons

In 1985, the ICRC continued its protection activities on behalf of persons arrested not only in Israel and the occupied territories, but also in Lebanon or the Mediterranean (seizure of vessels).

Regular visits to persons convicted or awaiting trial continued in 1985 in accordance with the system adopted in 1982, which provided for one complete visit per year to all the places of detention. Under this new system, partial visits of the premises or special one-day visits may also take place in order to conduct interviews without witnesses. In 1985, apart from the series of complete visits, the ICRC carried out 86 partial visits of premises and 73 special visits to detainees in 17 prisons, 12 police stations and a military prison: in all, some 4,000 detainees were visited and 2,993 interviews without witnesses conducted.

In 1985, the ICRC delegates carried out 2,325 interviews without witnesses with 1,405 **detainees under interrogation**, whom they visited in nine places on the West Bank and in the Gaza strip. The system of visits adopted in 1982 was maintained: the detainees under interrogation are no longer all seen systematically each time the delegates visit the interrogation centres; the emphasis is placed on the first visit.

Under an agreement concluded with the Israeli authorities in 1977 and amended in 1979, the ICRC is entitled to receive notification within 12 days of an arrest and to have access to security detainees under interrogation not later than 14 days after their arrest. In November, the ICRC asked the Israeli authorities to modify this agreement by shortening the waiting time between the first visit and those following: the Israeli authorities turned down this request.

From September, the ICRC delegates also visited 133 administrative detainees: these persons had been placed under preventive arrest by the Israeli authorities in violation of the clauses of the Fourth Convention.

The ICRC delegates visited in Israel **persons arrested in southern Lebanon**. At Atlit 1 they saw five times, prior to their release, 121 Palestinian and Lebanese ex-prisoners who, according to the formal pledge of the Israeli authorities, should have been released on 24 November 1983 but had instead been transferred from Ansar camp (Lebanon) to Israel in violation of the Fourth Convention. At Atlit 2 camp, the delegates made six visits to 1,240 Palestinian and Lebanese civilian internees, of whom more than one thousand were transferred to Israel when Ansar camp was closed on 2 April. On 3 April, the ICRC issued a press release making public this violation of Articles 49 and 76 of the Fourth Convention. Under these articles, protected persons in occupied territory must, if detained, be held in detention in that territory and deportations are prohibited.

Certain Atlit 1 and 2 detainees were released in successive batches under the auspices of the ICRC, respectively 32 detainees on 11 April, 37 on 18 April, 300 on 3 July, 101 on 13 August, 113 on 28 August, and 119 on 10 September. The ICRC delegates took charge of them at Ras Bayada, situated in the Israeli "security zone" on Lebanese territory, from where they were sent on to the destinations of their choice (Tyre, Nabatyeh, Sidon, Beirut and the Bekaa).

In 1985, despite approaches to the Israeli authorities, especially on 30 July to Mr. Rabin, Defence Minister, the ICRC was not able to visit all the **passengers and crews** of several boats seized or sunk in the Mediterranean by Israeli

forces during the year, nor was it notified of the identity of the persons taken prisoner, with the exception of six passengers of the boat "Anton", who were visited in September.

On 20 May, a large-scale operation led to the release of a number of prisoners from Atlit 1 and 2 and other places of detention situated in Israel. Thus 605 Palestinian prisoners were able to return home to the West Bank, the Gaza strip and Arab localities in Israel, whereas 151 Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners were released at Kuneitra (on the border between the occupied territory of Golan, and Syria), to return to Lebanon via Syria. Simultaneously, 394 other prisoners were transferred by air to Geneva, where they were released to return to Libya. The release of these 1,150 prisoners detained by Israel was carried out in exchange for three Israeli prisoners detained by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine/General Command in Syria (PFLP/GC). The terms of this exchange were negotiated through the intermediary of Austrian diplomats. The desire of all the released prisoners to go to the various places cited was ascertained by the ICRC delegates in the course of interviews without witnesses.

Assistance

In 1985, the ICRC continued to provide detainees and their families with material assistance. During visits to prisons, the delegates distributed leisure items and medical material worth some 660,000 Swiss francs. The most needy detainees were given money enabling them to make purchases in the prison canteen.

The ICRC also continued to encourage family visits to the detainees, by placing a bus at the families' disposal enabling them to make a monthly visit to the prisons. This assistance came to 440,000 Swiss francs during the year under review.

As in previous years, the ICRC shipped relief supplies from the European Economic Community (800 tonnes) for distribution by the Israeli Minister of Social Welfare to the most disadvantaged strata of the population living in the occupied territories.

Dissemination

In 1985, the ICRC gave four four-day courses on international humanitarian law for prison directors and officers carrying out important duties in the occupied territories.

Tracing Agency

The ICRC continued to conduct inquiries to locate persons missing in connection with the Arab-Israeli conflict. In 1985, 98 tracing requests were registered, 39 of which received a positive response.

In addition, the delegation in Tel Aviv exchanged some 11,000 family messages between persons detained in Israel and the occupied territories and their families; moreover, some

15,000 family messages collected in Israel and the occupied territories were transmitted to addressees living in other countries.

CONFLICT IN THE WESTERN SAHARA

In 1985, the ICRC continued its efforts to obtain access to all the prisoners detained by the parties to the conflict in the Western Sahara. Despite repeated approaches to all the parties, it was nevertheless unable, as in 1984, to provide the prisoners with the protection to which they are entitled.

Protection

At the end of April and in December, two delegates, accompanied by a medical delegate, visited 35 Moroccan prisoners captured by Algeria in June 1984. During the December visit, one of these prisoners was seen in the camp hospital and one in the military hospital in Algiers.

At the end of June, two delegates visited 208 Moroccan prisoners detained by the Polisario Front in three detention centres and a military hospital.

In 1985, the ICRC renewed its representations to gain access to Algerian prisoners and to the combatants of the Polisario Front taken prisoner by Morocco, but without result.

Assistance

At the beginning of March, at the request of the "Sahrawi Red Crescent" and of a number of National Societies, two delegates and an ICRC doctor carried out a medico-nutritional survey in the Sahrawi refugee camps in the south of Algeria. This mission enabled them to identify the needs there, especially those of the vulnerable groups of the population (children, pregnant women, old people) who found refuge in Algeria following the fighting between the Moroccan forces and the Polisario Front from 1975 onwards. As a result of this mission, the ICRC on 30 April launched an appeal to 15 National Societies and to the European Economic Community requesting donations in kind (medicaments and food) enabling it to cover 20% of the needs of about 80,000 persons for six months. In addition, after the sandstorms which devastated the Sahrawi refugee camps, a supplementary appeal for the acquisition of 1,500 tents was made on 4 May.

In addition, the ICRC passed on to the Moroccan Red Crescent 529 parcels which it had received from the Algerian Red Crescent for Algerian prisoners detained in Morocco.

Tracing Agency

During the year under review, the Tracing Agency exchanged 396 family messages between the Algerian prisoners

detained by Morocco and their families, and 93 family messages between the Moroccan prisoners detained by Algeria and their families. These exchanges were carried out via the Algerian and Moroccan Red Crescent Societies. In addition, 214 letters from Moroccan prisoners in the hands of the Polisario Front were delivered to the Moroccan Red Crescent for transmission to their families.

OTHER COUNTRIES

— In 1985, the ICRC delegation in **Egypt** continued its activities for the dissemination of knowledge of international humanitarian law among the armed forces, Egyptian Red Crescent Society volunteers and certain government and university circles concerned. In addition, via the delegation, it exchanged 418 family messages between persons living in Egypt and detainees in other countries.

— As in previous years, the ICRC continued its protection activities on behalf of security detainees and detainees under interrogation in **Jordan**. Thus, in 1985, the delegates visited more than 600 detainees belonging to these two categories in places of detention and interrogation centres under the authority of the army or the civilian administration. During these visits recreational and educational items worth some 28,000 Swiss francs were distributed among the detainees.

Furthermore, the Tracing Agency exchanged 8,344 family messages, on the one hand between the detainees and their families, on the other, between separated family members,

some living in the territories occupied by Israel and others in Jordan or in other Arab countries.

— The ICRC, having received in 1984 the authorization to visit all the prisons in the **Yemen Arab Republic** and to have access to security detainees, a delegate, accompanied by a doctor, at the end of January visited some 5,000 detainees, of whom 72 were security detainees, at the central prison in Sana'a and in five places of detention in the provinces.

— In 1985, the activities of the ICRC delegation in **Syria** were concerned mainly with the protection of three Israeli prisoners detained in Syrian territory by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine/General Command (PFLP/GC): these prisoners were visited by the ICRC delegates several times before their release at Geneva airport under ICRC auspices. This release took place as part of the exchange of prisoners between Israel and the PFLP/GC (*see the chapter on "Israel and the Occupied Territories" in this report*).

In the course of its tracing activities the Damascus delegation registered a recapitulatory list, transmitted by the Syrian authorities, of the Syrian soldiers reported missing in connection with the Arab-Israeli conflict. The delegation also transmitted 3,541 family messages in co-operation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent between the prisoners detained in Israel or in the occupied territories and their families. In addition, 413 certificates of captivity or release were issued to their families for presentation to the competent Syrian authorities.

The orthopaedic centre in Damascus, established in 1983 with the co-operation of the Swedish Red Cross and the "Palestinian Red Crescent" made 242 prostheses in 1985. The ICRC technician continued to train local employees with the objective of making them self-sufficient in their work in the near future.

RELIEF SUPPLIES DISTRIBUTED BY THE ICRC IN 1985

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Country (in French alphabetical order)	Beneficiaries	Relief		Medical Assistance	Total Sw. fr.
		Tonnage	Value in Sw. fr.	Value in Sw. fr.	
Iraq.	Prisoners of war and re- fugees	9	230,962	31,384	262,346
Iran.	National Society for dis- placed civilians	26	451,300	—	451,300
Israel/occupied territories	Civilians and detainees	1,254	1,187,806	13,389	1,201,195
Jordan	Detainees	—	27,300	—	27,300
Lebanon	Displaced civilians, Na- tional Society, detainees	1,348	3,681,057	3,496,159	7,177,216
Conflict in the Western Sahara .	Displaced civilians	541	2,700,981	3,627	2,704,608
Syria	National Society, the dis- abled	22	218,013	86,588	304,601
TOTAL		3,200	8,497,419	3,631,147	12,128,566