

Zeitschrift: Annual report / International Committee of the Red Cross
Herausgeber: International Committee of the Red Cross
Band: - (1985)

Rubrik: Information

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 13.03.2026

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

PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTS

Anxious to help find realistic solutions to the problem of the safety of journalists—humanitarian aspects related to the disappearance or capture of a journalist in time of war or his detention in a context of internal tensions and unrest—the ICRC organized a Round Table at Mont Pèlerin-sur-Vevey (Switzerland) in April 1985, the theme of which was “The safety of journalists on dangerous professional missions”. Sixteen international and regional media associations were invited to attend.

Concerning the possibilities for ICRC action, it should be explained that, under international humanitarian law (Article 79 of Protocol I), journalists engaged in professional missions in areas of armed conflict are considered as civilians, with the exception of war correspondents accredited to the armed forces who, if they fall into enemy hands, have the right to be treated as prisoners of war (Article 4A (4) of the Third Convention).

At the close of the Round Table, the participants asked the ICRC to examine a number of concrete proposals requiring its intervention and designed to increase the protection of journalists on dangerous missions.

As a consequence, from October 1985 the ICRC established a “hot line” to enable professional associations and newspaper offices to contact it round the clock to alert it to any emergency situation requiring its intervention on behalf of a journalist in peril.

In addition, the ICRC and the Union of African Journalists (UAJ) jointly organized a first regional seminar at Nairobi in September 1985 which brought together about forty journalists from 24 African countries. The main objectives of this seminar were to make the possibilities and limitations of ICRC action better known and understood, and to examine the role of the media in sensitizing public opinion and promoting humanitarian rules.

INFORMATION FROM THE FIELD

The human dramas unfolding on the African continent in 1985 necessitated considerable reinforcement of Press Division staff in the field. In addition to two full-time information specialists, the ICRC delegation in Ethiopia during the year received six professionals to carry out *ad hoc* missions to ensure the production of the audio-visual support material essential for a proper understanding of the situation in the field and of the efforts made by the Red Cross to meet the needs.

Press Division representatives also visited Angola on two occasions to improve knowledge of widespread ICRC activities not covered by the international media.

During the latter half of the year, a delegate responsible for information was based at Peshawar, where his work mainly consisted of receiving the numerous press correspondents interested in the progress of humanitarian activities in connection with the Afghan conflict, and providing them with information.

INFORMATION FROM HEADQUARTERS

In Geneva the Press Division's relations with the international media and the information services of the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies followed the course of worldwide current events: out of 14 press files sent to the National Societies, six were devoted to activities carried out in Ethiopia and three to those in Angola, while the last five covered operations in Pakistan, the Middle East and on the Khmer-Thai border, as well as the work of the Central Tracing Agency.

At the same time, the media were kept regularly informed about developments in humanitarian action on the various continents through *ad hoc* dispatches or through the usual publications—the ICRC *Bulletin*, appearing monthly in four languages and those of topical interest such as the review “ICRC in Africa: The early 80s”. All publications were sent as well to circles interested in the institution's activities (National Societies, government and academic circles, private individuals, etc.).

As usual, bilateral contacts were cultivated to take the needs of each interlocutor into better account, whether spokesmen for the representatives of the media, or persons responsible for information intended for the National Societies.

To improve the quality of this service to the international community, the Division made a special additional training effort with the support of the Aga Khan Foundation, which agreed to finance a programme prepared for a number of Information Department staff, especially its press attachés. Focussed on improving knowledge of the media in countries in which the ICRC works, this programme includes additional training in audio-visual expression, the setting up of a media library and the production of a manual for the training of future Press Division staff. The funding provided by the Aga Khan Foundation covers the three years of the programme, i.e. 1985 to 1987.

The ICRC also participated in the Swiss Industries Fair at Basle (MUBA) where its 750 sq.m. pavilion illustrating its work attracted several tens of thousands of visitors.

Radio broadcasts

The Red Cross Broadcasting Service (RCBS) continued transmitting omnidirectional and direct-wave programmes. From May 1985 Swiss Radio International ceded to the ICRC air time previously devoted to the broadcasting of musical programmes. Thus, programmes beamed by RCBS to Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America were broadcast twice a month (English, French, Spanish, Arabic and Portuguese). Each month, too, omnidirectional programmes were twice transmitted on the frequency of 7210 kHz (English, French, German and Spanish).

Thus, in all, RCBS is on the air for more than one hundred hours a year. Listeners continued to demonstrate interest by sending in radio reception reports, of which one hundred or so reach ICRC headquarters each month from all over the world. Programmes are also sent in recorded form to some twenty National Societies and to ICRC delegations, as well as a number of national and local radio stations, for broadcasting in their respective countries or regions.

All RCBS programmes were produced and directed in the ICRC studios in Geneva. They were broadcast free of charge with the technical co-operation of the Swiss postal and telecommunications authorities and Swiss Radio International.

In 1985, RCBS also produced monthly programmes in Portuguese for ten radio stations, and a fortnightly programme for the radio station of the German-speaking community in New York.

As it does every year, the RCBS co-operated with the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in preparing for World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day on May 8. The recording of the May 8 message was sent to 109 National Societies.

In addition, within the framework of the programmes produced by international radio stations to mark May 8, a programme on ICRC action in Ethiopia, co-produced by the ICRC and Radio France International (RFI), was broadcast by the latter, as well as being sent simultaneously to 50 African stations, clients of Radio France International, and to the National Societies in 26 countries.

National Societies in 18 countries received a recording of a broadcast in Arabic produced by Radio Swiss International.

Audio-visual activities

In 1985 the Division of Audio-Visual Communications (DICA) once again had to deal with numerous requests both from the ICRC and the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and from the media. The topicality or special nature of the audio-visual material (16 mm films, video cassettes, photos) produced in 1985 made it possible to maintain dissemination, operational information and training activities.

The photographic section carried out three major reporting missions in 1985—Ethiopia, spring 1985: setting up a rural

hospital, activities of the delegation and sub-delegations; Peshawar, Pakistan: setting up a rural hospital, delegation activities; Angola, December 1985: activities of the delegations and sub-delegations. At the same time, numerous prints and enlargements were made of photographs from the archives or of current events taken during the above-mentioned missions or sent by the delegates in different countries.

Film-making activities were also continued. Five main films and a number of video productions were produced, as well as material on various subjects of lesser scope for internal use (mainly training). Certain of these productions—Ethiopia (eight subjects) and rural hospital, Peshawar—were distributed worldwide through ICRC collaboration with a televised information agency "Video News". Each of these nine films was shown by some 50 channels. One of the 16 mm films produced and directed by the ICRC, "Strategy for Salvation", received an award from the Swiss Federal Department of the Interior as one of the best commissioned films of 1985. This documentary, made in Ethiopia, showed the difficulties involved in relief action while centring on the narrative of one of the victims.

Visits to the ICRC

In 1985, over 8,300 persons (members of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, diplomats, officers, student nurses and technical or secondary school pupils), visited the ICRC headquarters in Geneva, either in groups or individually. They were given talks on ICRC activities, illustrated by films. Visits to the Central Tracing Agency were also organized.

International Review of the Red Cross

In 1985, the *International Review of the Red Cross*, the official organ of the International Red Cross and the only publication specializing in international humanitarian law and ICRC principles and policy, continued to be issued every two months, in three main editions—French, English and Spanish—and in an abridged German version.

Apart from various other articles on subjects related to international humanitarian law, of which several have been issued as offprints, the *Review* published an ICRC "Appeal for a Humanitarian Mobilization" which followed a resolution of the Twenty-fourth International Red Cross Conference and marked an important step in the process of sensitizing public opinion, governments and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to the importance of universal respect for humanitarian rules.

The *Review* also covered current events with regular summaries of the activities of the ICRC and its delegations throughout the world, and of meetings organized for various groups of National Societies (the National Societies of Asia and the Pacific, the Arab Red Cross and Red Crescent

Societies). It notified ICRC recognition of new National Red Cross Societies and listed States' ratification of and accessions to the Protocols additional to the Geneva Convention, commemorated the centenary of the Salvadorean and Costa Rica Red Cross Societies, and published reviews of several recent works on international humanitarian law and the Red Cross.

Throughout, the *Review* endeavoured to maintain a flow of general information and to constitute the necessary link between the members of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

PUBLICATIONS AND FILM PRODUCTIONS

In 1985 the ICRC issued the following publications:

- *Annual Report 1984* (French, English, Spanish, German and Arabic).
- *Summary of ICRC activities 1984* (French, English, Spanish, German and Arabic).
- *International Review of the Red Cross* (a bimonthly periodical in French, English and an abridged version in German).
- *Presenting the ICRC* (Japanese version).
- *Possibilities and limitations of ICRC action on behalf of journalists on dangerous professional missions. "Hot Line"*. (folder: French, English, Spanish, German and Arabic).
- José Ruiz (illustrations), Jean-Jacques Surbeck (scenario): *History of the Red Cross* (comic strip cartoon in French, English, Spanish, German and Portuguese).
- *Rules for behaviour in combat* (French, English, Spanish, Arabic and Portuguese).
- *ICRC in Africa. The early 80s. 1985.* (French, English).
- *Central Tracing Agency of the ICRC.* (French, English, Spanish, German).
- Denise Plattner. *Protection of children in international humanitarian law.* (French and English)—Off-print from the *Review*.
- Françoise Krill: *The Protection of Women in International Humanitarian Law.* 1985 (French, English)—Off-print from the *Review*.
- Yves Sandoz: *Prohibitions or restrictions on the use of certain conventional weapons. United Nations Conference*

on Prohibitions or Restrictions of Use of Certain Conventional Weapons. Final Act. (Arabic version).

- *ICRC Appeal for an Humanitarian Mobilization* (French, English and Spanish)—Off-print from the *Review*.
- Marcel Junod: *El tercer combantiente.*
- *Never Lose Hope.*
- *Resumo das Convenções de Genebra de 12 de Agosto de 1949 e dos seus Protocolos adicionais.*
- *Action by the ICRC in the Event of Breaches of International Humanitarian Law.* (Arabic version).
- *The International Committee of the Red Cross and Disarmament.* (Arabic version).
- André Durand: *Origin and Evolution of the Statutes of the International Red Cross* (Arabic version).
- Stanislaw E. Nahlik: *A Brief Outline of International Humanitarian Law.* (Arabic version).
- André Durand: *The International Committee of the Red Cross in the International Community* (Arabic version).
- Jean Pictet: *Die Entstehung des humanitaren Völkerrechts*—Off-print from the *Review*.

The following were published by the Henry Dunant Institute with the assistance of the ICRC:

- Pierre Boissier: *History of the International Committee of the Red Cross. From Solferino to Tshushima.*
- Quatre études du droit international humanitaire.
- Jean Pictet: *The Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Peace.* (Arabic version).
- Hans Haug: *Can the Red Cross Contribute to Safeguarding Peace?* (Arabic version).

The following was published jointly with the League:

- *Basic Rules of International Humanitarian Law: to be used by Red Cross and Red Crescent First Aiders.* (French, English, Spanish).

The ICRC also produced the following 16 mm films in 1985:

- *ICRC 1984. Retrospective.* 16 mm (French, English, Spanish, German, Arabic, Portuguese).
- *Strategy for Salvation*—16 mm (French, English, Spanish, German, Arabic, Italian).
- *Video News Ethiopia* (French, English)
- *Peshawar: Crossroads of Hope*—video (French, English).
- *Middle East: Operation Elisabeth*—video.