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## AFRICA

*There were profound political changes on the African continent in 1991. This affected social stability and led to a further deterioration in living conditions for the civilian population, which was more exposed than ever to the effects of war, famine and disease.*

*Although the peace agreement concluded in Angola put an end to nearly 15 years of strife, the tragic effects of those years continued to be felt. In Ethiopia, the overthrow of the Mengistu government also brought a halt to the fighting in Eritrea and Tigray, but the problems generated by the protracted conflict and by persistent drought and famine remained unsolved.*

*Mediation efforts undertaken in Sudan and Mozambique did not yield the hoped-for results, and insecurity continued to prevail in Liberia. In other countries there was an alarming escalation of violence. Somalia, in particular, was prey to a civil war of unprecedented savagery, and there were deadly clashes in South Africa, Mali, Nigeria, Zaire and Togo, to mention but the most striking examples.*

*In this extremely volatile situation, the ICRC pursued its efforts to protect civilian and military victims of conflicts and to bring them emergency material assistance. At the same time, it helped the population to survive during the transition period in countries to which peace had recently been restored. The year under review also brought several breakthroughs for the ICRC in Africa. The*

*institution's mandate and its role as a neutral intermediary were better understood by the parties concerned, whether government forces or armed opposition movements. As a result, delegates gained greater access to people detained for political or security reasons and, in other cases, obtained the agreement of belligerents to respect the wounded, prisoners and civilians caught up in the fighting. This welcome development did not, however, diminish the difficulty of the ICRC's mission in terms of logistics, funding, and the security problems linked with humanitarian work. To an increasing extent, ICRC activities were carried out in ill-defined situations in which the combatants were often unaware of essential humanitarian principles. Consequently, the ICRC also stepped up its efforts to spread knowledge of and urge respect for its role, activities and emblem, especially among military leaders and police forces.*

*While the international community turned its attention to other areas of the world, the ICRC continued to give priority to Africa, where the growing number of emergency situations did not cause it to lose sight of medium and long-term considerations. Particular emphasis was placed on strengthening the operational capacity of the National Societies, mainly through dissemination and training programmes organized by the regional delegations. This support helped the National Societies to meet the ever-increasing needs of the population in their respective countries.*

### *10 delegations:*

South Africa  
Angola  
Ethiopia  
Liberia  
Mozambique  
Namibia  
Uganda  
Rwanda/Burundi  
Somalia  
Sudan

### *7 regional delegations:*

Dakar  
Harare  
Kinshasa  
Lagos  
Lomé  
Nairobi  
N'djamena

### *Staff\*:*

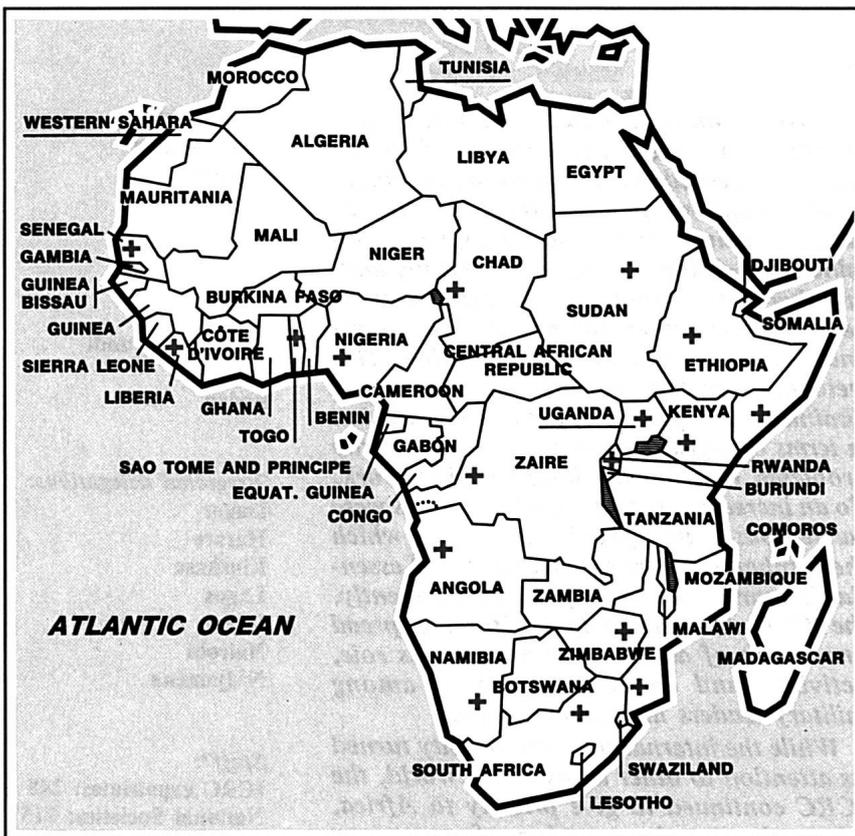
ICRC expatriates: 248  
National Societies: 215  
Local employees: 1,893

### *Total expenditure:*

267,128,500 Swiss francs

\* Average numbers calculated on an annual basis

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## *Southern Africa*

### **SOUTH AFRICA**

A number of important events took place in South Africa in 1991, including the official abolition of apartheid. Nevertheless, violence and insecurity persisted in the townships, in particular in the Reef and Natal areas, where the number of victims remained very high.

The ICRC's main task, in that context, consisted in providing protection and assistance to the victims of the unrest, and to various categories of prisoners.

The situation improved somewhat in 1991 as regards visits to places of detention. Being denied access to all detainees covered by its mandate, the ICRC had suspended its pro-

gramme of prison visits in 1986. In April 1991, the institution was invited to conduct a series of special visits to sentenced detainees, whether security prisoners or persons detained for breaches of public order. That series of visits coincided with the signing by the South African government and the ANC<sup>1</sup> of the so-called 'Pretoria Minute Agreement', which provided for the release of all political prisoners on 30 April 1991. The ICRC was not directly involved in the release process (even though its visits facilitated the process), but supplied the prisoners with economic assistance to help them in the initial phase of reintegration in society.

The ICRC continued negotiations with its government contacts with a view to obtaining authorization for the formal resumption of visits to persons arrested for reasons of security or acts connected with the unrest, and with the ANC with a view to visiting persons detained by that movement.

Finally, with the idea of decentralizing its activities, in January the ICRC opened an office at Port Elizabeth in the south-east of the country, from where it covers the Eastern Cape, Border, Ciskei and Transkei regions.

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#### **Activities for detained persons**

Following an invitation issued on 9 April by the South African Minister of Justice and the National Intelligence Service, Kobie Coetsee, as from 15 April the ICRC carried out a series of special visits to places of detention. Ten extra delegates, including three doctors, were required to reinforce the team already on the spot. During the series of visits, which was completed on 26 April, the ICRC saw 1,143 prisoners in 37 places of detention.

In September, the ICRC was granted unrestricted access to all detainees in the 'homelands' of Bophuthatswana and KwaZulu. Delegates went to 14 and 12 police

<sup>1</sup> African National Congress.

stations respectively, where detainees were being held. In addition, the ICRC visited 19 prisoners at Middeldrift prison, in the "homeland" of Ciskei. This was also the first visit since 1986.

In 1991, the ICRC carried out a total of 72 visits to 67 places of detention in South Africa, seeing 1,327 detainees who had been sentenced under the Internal Security Act or for acts connected with the unrest.

However, by the end of the year the ICRC had not visited the ANC's camps (in particular in Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia), despite an agreement in principle.

#### *Activities associated with the Pretoria Minute Agreement*

Following the signing, by the South African government and the ANC, of the Pretoria Minute Agreement for the release of political prisoners, scheduled for 30 April, the ICRC was approached by the Commissioner of Prisons, asking that its delegates inform detainees in all prisons throughout the country of the amnesty measures concerning them. Considering that this task was the duty of the penitentiary administration, the ICRC nevertheless agreed to intervene as a neutral and impartial body to ensure that prisoners' rights were respected (in particular, the right to request amnesty). To this end, from 6 to 25 May ICRC teams went to the 202 South African prisons, where they observed that all detainees had been properly informed of the measures concerning them.

The releases, scheduled for 30 April, were delayed, prompting hunger strikes in some places of detention. At the request of the Commissioner of Prisons, in May a delegate and a doctor from the ICRC conducted special visits to three groups of detainees on hunger strike in prisons in Pretoria, Johannesburg and Pietermaritzburg, in order to check their state of health and their treatment.

As stated above, the ICRC did not take any direct part in the release process. However, it provided released prisoners with one-time assistance (in the form of vouchers)

to facilitate their integration. In addition, prisoners' families received food aid and travel tickets for family visits to prisons, for a total value of 653,000 Swiss francs.

#### **Tracing Agency**

The ICRC Training Agency focused its attention primarily on restoring family ties between Mozambican refugees and their families still in Mozambique, and more than 1,200 messages were exchanged in 1991. Tracing requests were received relating to 56 people, 15 of whom were successfully located.

On 17 August, the ICRC received and accommodated in Johannesburg 20 former ANC detainees who had been repatriated from Uganda (the return operation, involving some 30 persons, was organized by UNHCR<sup>2</sup>).

#### **Assistance for the civilian population and refugees**

Assistance continued to be provided last year to victims of the violence (displaced persons, families whose breadwinner had been killed or imprisoned, people made homeless, etc.). This assistance work, which concerns mainly the Natal and Reef areas, is carried out jointly with the South African Red Cross Society; the ICRC only intervenes on its own in regions where the National Society is not operational. These programmes brought relief supplies in the form of food parcels, blankets and other basic necessities to around 50,000 people.

The ICRC also continued to help Mozambican refugees (about 1,500 per month) fleeing the conflict in their country and entering South Africa through the "homelands" of Gazankulu and KaNgwane. They receive material relief (blankets, soap and kitchen sets) during the first three months after their arrival.

In all, a total of 557 tonnes of food and non-food assistance was provided by the

<sup>2</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

ICRC to South African victims of the violence and Mozambican refugees, for a value of 1,260,000 Swiss francs.

#### Cooperation with the National Society

Apart from the efforts of the joint ICRC/Federation committee for restructuring of the South African Red Cross (see also *Cooperation within the Movement*), the ICRC continued to help the National Society to develop its operational capability. To this end, two new departments were set up at the Society's central headquarters, the first to deal with operations and special programmes, and the second to take care of communication and dissemination of the Red Cross principles and international humanitarian law. The ICRC also supported regional branches in their first-aid programmes, dissemination and assistance campaigns and the establishment of offices in the townships and areas of unrest.

### ANGOLA

After 16 years of bloody conflict, the Angolan government and UNITA<sup>3</sup> concluded a peace agreement in May 1991. For the civilian population, however, this does not mean that the suffering caused by the war has suddenly been dispelled, even though roads were gradually reopened as soon as the cease-fire became well established and many displaced persons were thus able to return to their home areas, chiefly on the Planalto. For the ICRC, which has been present in the country without interruption since 1979, the events of 1991 were also decisive. Under the Bicesse agreements the institution, as a neutral intermediary, was called upon to supervise the release of prisoners in the hands of the parties to the conflict, while the second half of the year saw the launching of a large-scale assistance operation to enable the population to survive the interim period until the next harvest, and to pave the way for other humanitarian organizations to move in.

<sup>3</sup> National Union for the Total Independence of Angola.

By the end of the year, the ICRC had already cut back its infrastructure and staff on the spot; the offices in Likwa and Kakuchi (south-east Angola) and the sub-delegation in Kuito were closed, while some of the stocks of goods and logistic resources were handed over to the United Nations agencies and to non-governmental organizations which had recently arrived on the Planalto.

The headquarters agreement officially instituting the ICRC delegation in Angola was signed on 24 June.

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#### Activities for detained persons

During its 13 years of uninterrupted presence in Angola, the ICRC had repeatedly requested access to the various categories of prisoners in the hands of both the government in Luanda and of UNITA. A few visits were made to government soldiers captured by UNITA in south-east Angola, but the ICRC never had access to UNITA combatants in government hands.

In June, ICRC Vice-President Claudio Caratsch travelled to Luanda to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Angolan Minister of Foreign Affairs, authorizing the ICRC to visit security detainees.

Moreover, the Bicesse cease-fire agreement, signed on 31 May 1991, stipulates that the cease-fire entails the release of all civilians and military staff taken prisoner as a result of the conflict between the government of the People's Republic of Angola and UNITA. Verification of their release will be entrusted to the ICRC.

In accordance with the agreement, on 13 July ICRC delegates began to visit government and UNITA detention centres in order to interview detainees without witnesses, verify their identity and ascertain whether they wished to return to their home areas or not.

By the end of the year, some 3,000 persons had been released on both sides under the supervision of the ICRC, which supplied them

with personal items (clothes, blankets, foodstuffs) to facilitate their return to their villages.

### Tracing Agency

Despite the gradual restoration of means of communication in the country, the ICRC Tracing Agency was kept very busy last year: more than 4,700 Red Cross messages (as against just over one thousand in 1990) were exchanged between families in Angola and their relatives abroad (mainly in Namibia, Zaire and Zambia), and within Angola itself (between the south-east and other parts of the country). The Agency also elucidated the cases of 367 persons and organized 34 family reunifications.

### Assistance for the civilian population

With peace returning to Angola, one of the ICRC's most extensive and longest assistance operations of the last 13 years came to an end. In all, during that period the ICRC distributed nearly 70,000 tonnes of food and other relief, including 8,000 tonnes of seed, equivalent to 300,000 tonnes of food.

Between 1979 and 1991, the ICRC kept hundreds of thousands of civilians alive by preserving them from periods of famine. Its work was nonetheless disrupted by numerous security incidents, logistic problems and various other setbacks. In January 1991, for instance, the ICRC's assistance operations had come to a standstill, as its cross-line and cross-border convoys and its flights to bring supplies to the population of the Planalto had been suspended at the beginning of December at the request of the parties to the conflict.

In an attempt to resolve the impasse, the Delegate General for Africa went to Luanda from 20 to 29 January, where he met high government authorities, in particular the Minister of Planning, França Dias Van-Dunem; Mr Van-Dunem in turn met ICRC Vice-President Claudio Caratsch in March for further talks in Geneva. Other contacts took place in Angola and Geneva, including the visit to ICRC headquarters by UNITA Presi-

dent Dr. Jonas Savimbi, who was received by ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga in May. On each occasion the ICRC stressed how necessary it was, for the sake of the population constantly threatened by food shortages resulting from the situation, that authorizations enabling it to work in an atmosphere of openness and mutual trust be issued by the persons concerned.

Activities on the Planalto started up again on a small scale in mid-April, with a few flights and road convoys to various destinations in government zones. But it was not until the beginning of June that regular field operations were able to resume in the provincial capitals and other less accessible locations, on both the government and UNITA sides. Thenceforth the ICRC used its logistic resources, both airborne and overland, to maximum capacity.

Once the main roads were cleared of mines and reopened as from mid-June, convoys of trucks were organized to supply the civilian population, including many people who had lived hidden in the bush for several years, cut off from any outside contact and meanwhile totally destitute. In parallel with the distributions of food, the ICRC launched a seed distribution in both government-held and UNITA areas for over 120,000 beneficiaries farming *nacas* (fields irrigated by streams and rivers).

An emergency operation was launched in September to enable 180,000 families in isolated regions to survive the interim period until the harvests early in 1992 and pending the introduction of development programmes by the humanitarian agencies taking over from the ICRC.

From September to the end of December, this operation mobilized very considerable resources in terms of personnel and means of transport on the Planalto: 60 expatriate staff and 300 local employees, two aircraft and more than 50 road convoys (including the first civilian convoy to use the route from Harare, Zimbabwe, to Huambo since the start of the conflict). In all, during this period a total of over 7,600 tonnes of relief (foodstuffs,

seed, farming tools, clothing and soap) representing a value of 11.7 million Swiss francs was distributed to nearly 700,000 people on the Planalto and in south-east Angola.

#### Medical assistance

When peace returned and the roads were reopened, the civilian population once again had access to Ministry of Health medical facilities, in particular those in certain regions which during the conflict could only be reached by air. During the first half of the year the ICRC medical teams nonetheless continued to travel out to isolated areas in order to supply medical posts, dispense medical treatment and evacuate serious cases to the regional hospitals.

After a survey of needs, the ICRC changed the emphasis of its medical activities as from the end of June, with a view to gradual withdrawal. During the second half of the year, efforts were concentrated on the parts of the Planalto which still required ICRC help, prior to the deployment of other organizations (particularly the United Nations).

In the south-east, the ICRC withdrew its team from the hospital in Luangundu, distributing its stocks of medicines and equipment to that establishment, to the hospital in Chianga and to the local Red Cross.

The end of the conflict did not signal the end of the ICRC's work in the orthopaedic field; quite the contrary, given the large number of war disabled. In 1991, around 700 war disabled were fitted with prostheses. The ICRC workshops at Bomba Alta and Kuito produced a total of over 1,400 artificial limbs and a thousand or so support appliances, in addition to making more than 1,400 repairs.

In view of the immense needs, the orthopaedic centres will probably be gradually handed over to the Ministry of Health as from 1993.

#### Security incidents

Very strict security rules were applied throughout the ICRC's mission in Angola,

with all movements, by air or overland, notified to the various authorities. During the years of conflict, every journey exposed the ICRC teams to the dangers of war (especially ambushes). Now that peace has returned, the countless mines laid almost everywhere for over a decade constitute a hazard for both the population and expatriates. In 1991, therefore, field missions remained subject to strict security regulations.

In spite of these precautions, there are three regrettable incidents to report. On 29 March, an ICRC plane (Twin Otter) was hit by a missile while flying at an altitude of 10,000 feet en route to Kuito (Bié province) with an ICRC delegate and eight war amputees on board, as well as the crew. No one was hurt, and although damaged the plane was able to make a safe landing in Kuito. Following that serious incident flights between provinces were suspended, except for emergency evacuations.

Another incident occurred on 14 June, near the runway at Huambo airport, when an Angolan employee of the delegation was killed by an exploding mine. Lastly, on 13 July, a mine exploded on the runway during the landing of an ICRC aircraft at N'Harea (Bié province), causing only material damage.

#### Logistics

For its assistance operations last year the ICRC used two Twin Otter aircraft, which transported some 500 tonnes of freight. In addition, over fifty road convoys were used to bring supplies to around 20 *municípios* and throughout south-east Angola, mainly between September and December 1991.

## MOZAMBIQUE

In December 1990, the Mozambican government and the armed opposition movement RENAMO<sup>4</sup> signed an agreement in Rome on humanitarian questions and in particular the role of the ICRC. On that occasion, both parties reaffirmed that they

<sup>4</sup> Mozambican National Resistance Movement.

authorized the ICRC to provide humanitarian assistance to all Mozambicans, everywhere in Mozambique, and undertook to respect the ICRC's personnel, installations and emblem. The ICRC, for its part, maintained close contact with the parties, in particular the President of Mozambique, Joachim Alberto Chissano, and RENAMO President Alfonso Dhlakama. In this connection, the Delegate General for Africa and his senior staff conducted numerous missions to Rome and to Maputo, the capital of Mozambique.

Alongside the political negotiations between the parties to the conflict, the ICRC, in its capacity as a neutral intermediary, put forward a number of humanitarian proposals, including the suggested establishment of "combat-free zones" on Mozambican soil along the frontier with Malawi for activities in aid of the Mozambican civilian population — originally from those regions — which has sought refuge over the border. Under the plan, the Tete corridor was to have been used as an access route for humanitarian convoys. However, the discussions did not bear fruit, since the parties were unable to agree on the necessary conditions for setting up such zones.

In addition, in talks with various contacts throughout the year the ICRC stressed the importance of obtaining regular access to regions with extensive humanitarian needs if a tangible improvement in the nutritional condition of assisted persons was to be achieved. It likewise requested authorization to have access to new destinations, so as to develop its activities in RENAMO-controlled areas.

The Vice-President of the ICRC, Mr. Claudio Caratsch, accordingly met the Mozambican President, Mr. Joachim Alberto Chissano, on 5 June, during the African Summit of Heads of State at Abuja (Nigeria), for talks on all the activities deployed by the institution in the country.

The ICRC also continued to seek access to persons under temporary detention in military counter-intelligence (CIM) camps. In the RENAMO-held zones, after years of effort the ICRC obtained permission to forward family messages between families in those

regions and their relatives elsewhere in Mozambique or abroad.

In the field, 1991 was marked by frequent deadlocks, in both the government and RENAMO-held zones. Despite the logistic constraints (every movement had to be notified), it nevertheless proved possible to transport substantial quantities of relief and come to the aid of a large number of people in need, both in government areas and those held by the opposition.

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#### Activities for detainees

As in previous years, the ICRC visited persons detained in places of detention under the authority of the criminal investigation police (PIC), the Ministry of Security and the Ministry of Justice. It was also able to visit 16 persons arrested following the attempted *coup d'état* in June 1991. In all, last year ICRC delegates carried out 38 visits to 28 places of detention, where a total of 514 detainees were being held. Personal items (clothing, blankets, soap, etc.) were distributed in the prisons visited and to released detainees, for a total value of 77,000 Swiss francs.

Representations were made with a view to gaining access to persons arrested and held in temporary detention by the CIM in military camps. The ICRC also sought to gain access to Mozambican refugees turned back from Zimbabwe for security reasons who were imprisoned on their return to Mozambique. An agreement was reached at the end of the year under which action might be taken in favour of such persons (see under Tracing Agency below).

In addition, last year the ICRC continued its efforts to have access to any persons detained by RENAMO. These efforts were still without avail at the end of the year.

#### Tracing Agency

There was a spectacular surge in exchanges of family messages in 1991. The ICRC built

up its network of tracing offices in the neighbouring countries around Mozambique (Malawi, Zimbabwe and South Africa, in particular) and, for the first time, obtained permission to forward family messages from other regions of Mozambique or abroad to the civilian population in RENAMO-held areas. As a result, nearly 20,000 messages were exchanged in 1992, as against 2,723 the previous year. To cope with this increase, the tracing service of the Mozambique Red Cross Society had to be expanded and its employees were organized into mobile teams responsible for distributing and collecting messages. At the end of 1991, the network covered the country's ten provinces.

A total of 293 tracing requests for missing persons were furthermore resolved and 23 family reunifications organized.

With regard to Mozambicans refused entry to Zimbabwe (see above), the ICRC obtained permission for its delegates in Zimbabwe to register their identity in police stations there; the lists drawn up are transmitted to the delegation in Mozambique, which can then make enquiries with the Mozambican police forces to check how such persons are faring.

#### **Assistance for the civilian population**

Assistance for the civilian population affected by the conflict, both in government zones and RENAMO-held areas, continued to be one of the ICRC's main concerns in Mozambique in 1991. Following the statements by both parties to the conflict agreeing to let the ICRC work for the benefit of the civilian population, everywhere in Mozambique, the institution was able to extend its activities in this respect at the beginning of the year, chiefly in RENAMO zones (where the ICRC is the only humanitarian organization present).

Nevertheless, the delegates' work was frequently hampered last year by security obstacles. In August, following a misunderstanding concerning a consignment of used clothing sent by the German Red Cross Society (see below, under Security in-

cidents), the ICRC was obliged to suspend all its relief activities, both in government zones and in the areas held by the armed opposition. It was not until November that the relief programmes for vulnerable groups of persons throughout the country could be resumed.

Security-related difficulties were compounded by logistic problems. This aspect is extremely important in that certain destinations can only be reached by air and flight plans have to be submitted each week to the government authorities and to RENAMO for approval. Suspension of the relevant authorizations meant that the ICRC was unable at times to reach large numbers of people very much in need of aid. Despite these difficulties, more than 1,150 tonnes of relief (for a value of 2.4 million Swiss francs) were distributed last year to the civilian population throughout Mozambique.

#### *Assistance in RENAMO-held areas*

At the beginning of the year, the ICRC was able to carry out assistance activities in four RENAMO-controlled areas, namely Canxixe, Panja and Magunde (Sofala province) and Dindiza (Gaza province). A survey of needs was thus conducted in January by a team of four delegates and a doctor, who travelled to Marringue district (Sofala province), and in particular Canxixe, a region inhabited by a population of around 50,000 people living a self-contained existence in total isolation (and hence without any consumer goods). In view of the needs observed, emergency action was undertaken: a delegate and a nurse were immediately sent out to Canxixe at the end of January; they reactivated the dispensary, trained local nursing staff and organized distributions of non-food relief (e.g. clothing, blankets, soap, farming tools). As from 20 February, similar activities were launched in two other places, Panja and Magunde, and subsequently, as from April, in Dindiza. In Zambezia province, on the other hand, a team was stranded after a survey in Tacuane, a locality only accessible by air. The ICRC was

not authorized by the authorities to send delegates back to Tacuane to continue their work on a regular basis.

The ICRC's activities were suspended in August after the government's general authorization was withdrawn as a result of the incident involving relief sent by the German Red Cross Society. This suspension had an immediate impact on certain population groups, particularly in the Dindiza region, where the onset of famine had already been detected. The ICRC stepped up its representations, stressing the urgent need for food relief and hence for the resumption of its activities in those areas, but it was not until November, after more than four months of absence, that the delegates were able to return to Canxixe and Dindiza. In the latter area, the alarming food situation prompted the ICRC to launch an intensive feeding programme at the beginning of December for 1,600 persons, mainly children (37% observed to be suffering from severe malnutrition).

In all, six teams worked in RENAMO areas, and nearly 100,000 people benefited from ICRC assistance, chiefly during the first six months of the year.

#### *Assistance in government areas*

In government areas, the ICRC, which had negotiated "combat-free zones" in the border region with Malawi and along the Tete corridor linking it to the port of Beira, was able to carry out only part of its activities. It concentrated its efforts on population groups which other humanitarian bodies present in Mozambique were unable to reach, in particular those living according to the traditional lifestyle (dispersed habitat) and groups of people displaced or left homeless by armed clashes. It also continued to support the National Society's assistance programmes.

Over 80,000 people received assistance in government zones last year, either from the ICRC or via the Mozambique Red Cross Society. Since the plan to use the Tete corridor was abandoned, aid intended for the

populations of the area adjacent to Malawi continued to be brought in by road convoys via Zambia.

#### **Medical assistance**

As in previous years, the ICRC continued its medical assistance in government zones in 1991, taking care of the transport of medicines, vaccines and medical staff to provincial and district hospitals on behalf of the Ministry of Health, supplying the National Society's first-aid posts with medicines and basic equipment, and monitoring the work of first-aid workers in the field. The ICRC also saw to the evacuation of casualties to hospitals and their return home after treatment.

In RENAMO-held areas, the ICRC was able to launch extensive programmes of basic medical treatment in Canxixe, Dindiza, Magunde and Panja during the first half of the year. This assistance was particularly important in view of the virtually total lack of medical facilities in those areas, and the consequently high mortality rate. Similarly, the ICRC trained local medical staff, who were then able to man some 30 first-aid posts and nine dispensaries opened by the ICRC. All of these programmes were operational at the end of June 1991.

#### *Orthopaedic workshops*

Last year, the four ICRC orthopaedic workshops at Beira, Maputo, Nampula and Quelimane produced about a thousand prostheses and more than 3,200 pairs of crutches. Some 460 patients were fitted with artificial limbs, and the orthopaedic technicians carried out over 500 repairs.

One of the ICRC's tasks is to train local staff so that they will eventually be able to take over and work autonomously. In 1991, 20 apprentices completed their third year of training at the Beira centre and took the final examination to become orthopaedic technicians.

### Security incidents

In the prevailing context in Mozambique, security constraints are very severe. Any movement (chiefly by air) has to be notified to the government authorities and to RENAMO; field missions, particularly in RENAMO areas, are also subject to very strict rules aimed to ensure respect for the staff and emblem of the Red Cross.

Despite these precautions, delegates travelling in the field experienced several security incidents last year, though fortunately without any danger to their lives.

One ICRC delegate was, however, arrested on 16 June at Beira, where he was supervising the unloading of a consignment of used clothing which had been sent by the German Red Cross Society and contained a number of discarded uniforms. These had already been declared unfit for distribution and were to be destroyed, when the delegate was taken into custody for questioning. The ICRC at once contacted the Mozambican authorities to assure them that both it and the German Red Cross Society had been acting in good faith and to secure the release of its delegate. At the same time, a thorough inspection of the ICRC warehouses in Beira, Chimoio, Nampula and Quelimane was carried out together with the Mozambican police. The delegate was released on 24 July. Thanks to high-level talks, the Mozambican authorities' confidence in the ICRC's humanitarian mission throughout the country was restored.

Nevertheless, the incident caused a temporary suspension of activities throughout the whole of Mozambique. This measure, along with the many blockages which had occurred since the beginning of the year, prompted the ICRC to reduce the numbers of its field staff. The ICRC delegation in Mozambique was thus cut from 50 to 30 expatriates in September.

### Logistics

For security reasons, most journeys in the country have to be made by air. Last year, the two ICRC aircraft (one Twin Otter

and one Beechcraft) transported nearly 900 tonnes of relief and 4,700 passengers, in the course of 2,300 flying hours.

### Cooperation with the National Society

As stated above, the Mozambique Red Cross Society cooperates closely with the ICRC in the relief and tracing programmes for the civilian population affected by the conflict and living in government areas. Apart from its active participation in those activities, the National Society has developed assistance programmes for certain vulnerable groups (e.g. social welfare cases). The ICRC has supported this activity by providing the National Society with more than 670 tonnes of non-food relief as well as financial aid amounting to 275,000 Swiss francs.

## NAMIBIA

Last year, the ICRC delegation in Namibia centred its work on the tracing of persons reported missing during the struggle for independence, and on support for the emerging Namibian Red Cross Society, which was officially recognized by the government in November.

In addition, until UNHCR was installed in Windhoek, the ICRC regularly visited detained refugees and asylum-seekers, and provided them with *ad hoc* assistance. Similar aid was also given to Namibian detainees released after periods in custody abroad or in Namibia. This assistance represented a total value of around 13,000 Swiss francs.

In November 1990, the Namibian government had approached the ICRC with a view to tracing persons reported missing during the war of independence; the Namibian National Assembly had approved a motion to that effect on 9 November 1990. In June 1991, the ICRC's working procedures were accepted by the Namibian government, mainly for tracing requests formulated by families and cooperation with the authorities of the countries concerned (South Africa, Botswana,

Zambia and Angola). A "liaison officer" for tracing was appointed within SWAPO.<sup>5</sup>

At the end of the year, the ICRC had located 232 Angolan refugees who had been separated from their families, and had forwarded more than 1,450 messages between refugees in Angola and their families in Namibia.

#### Repatriation of civilians

On 9 March, the ICRC delegates in Namibia and south-east Angola repatriated 77 men, women and children who had expressed the wish to return to Namibia. The operation was organized following consultations between the Namibian authorities and UNITA officials, the ICRC having received all the necessary assurances that the people repatriated would be allowed to return home and would not be prosecuted for having left Namibia illegally.

<sup>5</sup> South West Africa People's Organization.

#### Cooperation with the emerging National Society

The ICRC pursued its programme for the development of the Namibian Red Cross Society, helping it to build up its tracing service and to disseminate knowledge of the Red Cross principles and international humanitarian law, in particular within the armed forces and the police.

#### Staff

The headquarters agreement establishing the ICRC delegation in Namibia was signed on 28 June 1991, thereby replacing the previous agreement concluded with the South African authorities before independence.

The ICRC cut back its staff in Namibia to one delegate with effect from 1 September, since the delegation no longer had to provide operational and logistic support for the delegates based in south-east Angola once communications within Angola were restored.

## *Central and West Africa*

### **LIBERIA**

In 1991, the ICRC was able to develop its activities in Liberia quite significantly, despite the extremely precarious security situation and difficult living conditions in general. Although declared hostilities were brought to an end by the peace negotiations undertaken at the end of 1990 between the various parties to the conflict,<sup>6</sup> sporadic fighting and excesses nevertheless continued at the beginning of 1991, making the ICRC's humanitarian mission arduous, and even dangerous at times.

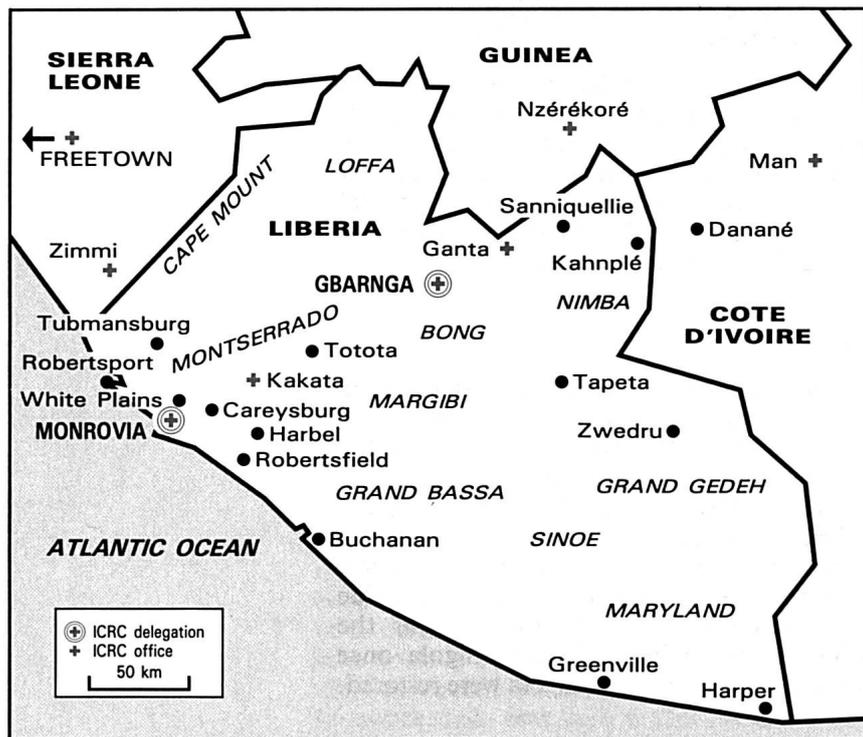
At the end of 1990 there were only five ICRC expatriates in Monrovia, delegates having begun moving back into the capital at the end of October.<sup>7</sup> The first months of 1991 were devoted chiefly to consolidating work in behalf of civilians trying to survive in a completely disorganized city where everything

was in short supply and armed groups roamed the streets. The ICRC gradually began to travel to areas around the capital placed under the control of the ECOMOG peacekeeping forces, while delegates based in Man (Côte d'Ivoire) also tried to gain access to regions of Liberia controlled by the NPFL (the "countryside").

The peace negotiations resulted in a ceasefire at the beginning of 1991. In accordance

<sup>6</sup> Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) led by Charles Taylor, Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) headed by Prince Johnson, Economic Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) of the Economic Community of West African States.

<sup>7</sup> The ICRC had pulled out of Monrovia on 1 August, following the massacre on 27 July of several hundred civilians who had taken refuge in the Lutheran Church under the protection of the Red Cross emblem.



with its mandate as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC proposed an assistance programme, on the understanding that its delegates would receive assurances that they could cross the front lines and do their work in complete safety and at all times.

There were still many security incidents, however, which hampered humanitarian work and made the delegates' task quite perilous. It was not until April that the ICRC was able to station delegates on a permanent basis in the Liberian countryside, opening a delegation at Gbarnga, the seat of the NPRA<sup>8</sup> government, and an office at Kakata.

In parallel, a programme was launched in support of the Liberian Red Cross, whose headquarters had been looted during clashes in 1990, and specialists from the Central Tracing Agency were dispatched to Monrovia and into the countryside, as well as to Côte

<sup>8</sup> National Patriotic Reconstruction Assembly, political wing of the NPFL.

d'Ivoire, where hundreds of thousands of Liberians had taken refuge. The network was subsequently extended with outposts in Guinea, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Ghana, where thousands of refugees had also fled (see below).

Given the chaos which reigned at the beginning of the year, enormous efforts were necessary to establish the infrastructure required for humanitarian activities, there being little understanding in Liberia of the ICRC's objectives and working criteria. It was with this in mind that the ICRC invited Dr. Kou Nehway Gbokolo, Minister of Health of the NPFL, accompanied by Mr. William N.C. Caranda, one of the Vice-Presidents of the Liberian Red Cross, to Geneva for a visit to ICRC headquarters from 22 to 24 July. The visit gave the ICRC an opportunity to explain its principles and the action it could take in situations of internal armed conflict, clarify certain points which were liable to cause misunderstanding and, at the same time, improve security for delegates in the NPFL area.

Fighting in April on the border with Sierra Leone, followed by the incursion of armed groups supporting the NPFL, caused tens of thousands of civilians to flee, creating a new emergency situation both within Liberia and in Sierra Leone (see also *Sierra Leone*).

It was not until the end of the year, after the fourth meeting of the belligerents in Yamassoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, that the peace plan could be implemented, bringing about a slight improvement in the situation in Liberia. In particular, certain roads were reopened and positions hitherto held by the NPFL came under the control of ECOMOG forces. Nevertheless, at the end of 1991 security conditions remained extremely hazardous for ICRC expatriates and for the staff of other humanitarian organizations on the spot.

At the end of the year, the ICRC had 14 expatriates and 102 local employees in Monrovia, and 11 expatriates assisted by 48 local employees in Gbarnga.

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### Activities for detainees

The ICRC spared no effort in trying to gain access to all categories of people detained by all the parties to the conflict.

During the first quarter of the year, delegates in Monrovia visited 55 people captured by ECOMOG forces, including NPFL and INPFL soldiers. These prisoners were released on 26 January, and the ICRC was asked to escort one man back to NPFL territory. On 3 February, the ICRC helped organize the transfer of nine persons taken hostage by the INPFL who were handed over to the Interim Government of National Unity (INGU).

In April the ICRC began visiting prisoners in the NPFL zone, having received authorization from the NPRG government. During the visits, which started on 4 April, some 30 detainees arrested in connection with the conflict were seen. The visits continued throughout the year.

In addition, in January delegates registered some 3,700 civilians of various nationalities (from Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria and Sierra Leone) living in camps. The civilians were provided with urgent relief items (mainly foodstuffs and kitchen utensils) until their repatriation in September. Once ICRC delegates had checked that they did wish to return to their respective countries, over 2,000 Nigerian and Ghanaian nationals were repatriated under ICRC auspices, in cooperation with the Liberian Red Cross.

The ICRC visited a total of 151 persons detained by the ECOMOG and the NPFL in 1991. The detainees in all the places visited were provided with food aid.

### Tracing Agency

The magnitude of the conflict and the consequent extreme insecurity prompted population movements on a vast scale: hundreds of thousands of persons fled their homes to take refuge in other regions of Liberia or in neighbouring countries. Furthermore, displaced populations often moved from one

region or camp to another. These uncontrolled movements contributed to the breakdown of family ties, with the result that thousands of children were abandoned or lost when their parents took flight.

To deal with this dramatic situation, an extensive Tracing Agency network was set up covering, apart from Liberia itself (Monrovia and the countryside), Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Ghana.

The Agency handled the registration and subsequent return to their respective regions or repatriation to their home countries of civilians released on all sides. More than 9,000 tracing requests were processed concerning missing persons, of whom nearly 4,000 were located. To this end, lists of people sought were posted in more than 160 public places and in camps for displaced persons, and published in the press. The programme was carried out in cooperation with the National Societies of the countries concerned.

The Agency arranged for the exchange of over 16,600 messages between members of separated families during the year. Finally, a vast campaign was launched to trace the parents of thousands of lost or abandoned children, whom the ICRC temporarily took into its care (see under *Food aid* and *Medical activities* below).

### Protection of the civilian population

Protection of the civilian population remained the ICRC's major concern in 1991. The violent and anarchic nature of the armed clashes, the widespread insecurity and instability, coupled with the threat hanging over certain vulnerable groups — mainly for ethnic reasons — made the ICRC's work extremely difficult and dangerous. Nevertheless, ICRC delegates took action on many occasions to ensure that the civilian population was respected and to put a stop to excesses (summary executions, harassment, pillage) committed against civilians. The situation in this regard improved slightly in the second half of the year.

### **Food aid**

The ICRC delegations in Monrovia and Gbarnga provided emergency food relief to civilians affected by the conflict in their respective areas.

In Monrovia, between January and April, some 700 abandoned or lost children were given one meal a day (rice, fish, vegetables) for a period of more than three months (a total of 10,000 rations). This programme was subsequently taken over by UNICEF. The ICRC also provided food for hospitals and orphanages in the capital. An economic assistance programme (distribution of fishing nets, seed and agricultural tools; help in raising poultry) was also launched in Monrovia, enabling the beneficiaries to earn some money and regain a degree of self-sufficiency in food. In all, 18.5 tonnes of aid worth around 35,000 Swiss francs were provided in Monrovia.

All the relief programmes were carried out by relief workers and volunteers from the Liberian Red Cross, under ICRC coordination and with its logistic assistance. As other humanitarian organizations gradually returned to Liberia, ICRC assistance remained very specific, targeted at certain categories of persons and regions to which it alone had access.

In the NPFL zone, during an evaluation mission in Montserrado County, near Monrovia, the ICRC discovered some 60,000 civilians cut off by the conflict and living in appalling conditions in an area to which no relief agency had ever had access. An emergency operation to help them was launched by the delegation in Gbarnga and the National Society. From the beginning of July to the end of October, ICRC/National Society convoys bearing the Red Cross emblem crossed the lines with some 500 tonnes of food a month, supplied by the WFP<sup>9</sup> in Monrovia. After that, a survey conducted on the spot revealed that the nutritional situation had reverted to normal and

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<sup>9</sup> World Food Programme.

that the current harvests would enable the population to meet its needs.

Food and other assistance provided in Liberia, both in the capital and the countryside, totalled 2,400 tonnes (worth 2.2 million Swiss francs) in 1991.

### **Medical activities**

Since a large number of assistance programmes were being carried out by non-governmental organizations in Liberia, ICRC aid in this respect was limited, focusing on particularly vulnerable groups and isolated or inaccessible regions.

Three intensive feeding centres operated from June to October in Montserrado County, in Kingsville, Zanna Town and Kakata, for some 350 children suffering from acute malnutrition. In both Montserrado County and Monrovia, the ICRC provided health centres and dispensaries with medicines and medical supplies. It also supplied various orphanages, including one run by the Liberian Red Cross in Kakata, where about 200 disabled children were housed. Medical supplies were also distributed in the prisons visited, and to the National Society for its teams of relief workers. The total value of medical assistance amounted to 155,000 Swiss francs.

### **Sanitation programmes**

The sanitation campaign launched by the ICRC in 1990 continued and expanded in 1991. The programme had a significant impact in Monrovia, where the ICRC embarked on a major project (costing 584,000 Swiss francs) to restore the city's mains water supply. This had been cut off as a result of the fighting owing to the fact that the White Plains water pumping and treatment plant and the Mount Coffee retention dam were located in unsafe areas. Following negotiations with all the parties concerned, an agreement was signed by the ICRC, the water authority and Monrovia city council (which supplied 400 workers), enabling ICRC sanitary engineers

to carry out the necessary repair work and thus to restore about, average 46% of the normal output of clean water. To achieve this result, the ICRC had to restore the plant's mains electricity supply, provided by the Luke Plant power station, which had also been damaged as a result of the events, as well as repairing some 15,000 leaks, cutting off 10,000 connections and installing 52 public standpipes in order to keep water losses to a minimum. In addition, the ICRC financed refuse disposal work in the capital, carried out by city council workers and Red Cross volunteers.

Work was also undertaken in the NPFL zone to put some 20 old wells back into service, sink new ones and teach the population the basic rules of efficient water use. In some instances, electric pumps were supplied. In all, about 50 wells were brought back into service throughout Liberia.

#### Cooperation with the National Society

The ICRC provided considerable aid to the National Society, whose members found themselves separated on either side of the front line. In Monrovia, where the Red Cross headquarters had been ransacked during the fighting in 1990, new premises were fitted out with the support of the ICRC, which supplied equipment and means of transport and paid the salaries of permanent staff until the end of June. The first-aid service was given an ambulance, for use in its programmes in favour of displaced persons returning to the city. Further training courses were organized for more than 50 voluntary workers assigned to the first-aid posts at West Point, Caldwell and James Sprigg's Payne airfield, which treated more than 3,000 patients between April and July.

In the NPFL zone, the ICRC also provided the National Society with material and financial support (mainly for its administrative infrastructure and relief workers), and supplied a vehicle for the Kakata branch.

#### Dissemination

On account of the frequent incidents of misuse of the Red Cross emblem and the precarious security conditions for expatriate staff on mission in Liberia, a sustained campaign to disseminate the basic humanitarian principles had to be conducted throughout the year. To put a stop to misuse of the emblem (which was being displayed for protection purposes by many individuals and shopkeepers), the ICRC, in cooperation with the authorities, launched a systematic campaign to replace it with other more appropriate signs. District by district, teams of volunteers from the National Society erased red crosses on shop signs, houses, vehicles, etc., and painted other emblems such as the caduceus or the green cross in their place. More conventional means of dissemination, such as courses in military barracks and the distribution of publications, were also employed to promote awareness among the armed forces. Further dissemination efforts were directed at the local media (see also *Dissemination in Africa*).

In the NPFL zone, sessions on the rules of humanitarian law were also organized for military leaders.

## SIERRA LEONE

Following clashes on the border with Liberia in April, and a subsequent incursion of armed Liberian groups in May, thousands of Sierra Leonean civilians fled towards the south-east, while at the same time Liberian refugees were flooding into Sierra Leone.

During the events in April, the ICRC Deputy Delegate General for Africa, who was on mission in Liberia at the time, twice travelled to Freetown where he met the authorities, National Society leaders and representatives of UNHCR and reviewed options for action in behalf of the victims of the events. As a representative of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies was also on the spot, efforts were coordinated in the field of assistance (joint dispatch of

emergency medical supplies) and in support of the National Society's work.

Pursuant to its mandate, the ICRC requested authorization to visit persons arrested during the events. After setting forth its working criteria in a memorandum, following a series of talks, the ICRC obtained permission to visit persons captured in connection with the clashes, and on 17 May delegates visited 114 detainees at the central prison in Freetown. Despite repeated approaches, the ICRC was not allowed to carry out further visits, and discussions on the matter with the authorities in Freetown were still going on at the end of 1991.

In September, as fighting continued in the eastern and southern provinces of Sierra Leone (around Zimi and Segbwema), an ICRC team carried out a survey of the region. It was found that although the situation was still precarious for the civilian population there were no urgent medical or nutritional needs, since any such requirements were covered by several humanitarian agencies already on the scene.

As from November, however, the situation deteriorated, especially in the Zimi area, preventing humanitarian organizations from

working there. The ICRC nevertheless managed to conduct a further survey in mid-December, during which delegates observed that large groups of civilians were suffering hardship. At the end of the year, it proposed a plan to protect and assist around 10,000 people.

In view of the behaviour of certain combatants, meetings to explain the basic rules of international humanitarian law to military staff were organized on the spot, in order to secure a measure of protection for civilians and to promote respect for the Red Cross mission and emblem.

## CHAD

The three-year training course for prosthetic technicians, dispensed under ICRC auspices at the Kabalaye centre in N'djamena,<sup>10</sup> was completed in December 1991. Nine Chadians passed the final examinations.

During the year, the Kabalaye workshop fitted over 70 war disabled and manufactured 190 prostheses, 181 orthoses (braces) and about 100 pairs of crutches. Some 200 repairs were also carried out.

## *East Africa*

### ETHIOPIA

Seventeen years after the Ethiopian revolution, the government of President Haile Mariam Mengistu was overthrown on 28 May 1991 following many years of fighting between government troops and those of the TPLF/EPRDF<sup>11</sup> and the EPLF.<sup>12</sup> The final offensive closed in on the capital, Addis Ababa, the EPRDF having taken control in February of Bahr Dar and Dessie, capitals of the provinces of Gojjam and Wollo respectively. At the same time, EPLF troops took control of Asmara and the port of Assab. A provisional government was formed, and a referendum on the independence of Eritrea was promised within two years.

In these circumstances, the ICRC's activities were determined as follows: medical and surgical emergencies had top priority, and the three ICRC surgical teams based in Bahr Dar, Dessie and Asmara worked intensively in difficult conditions; the ICRC also took over the running of the Balcha hospital in Addis Ababa. A large-scale protection and assistance operation then had to be carried out for some 240,000 demobilized members of the former government's armed forces who

<sup>10</sup> The centre is run jointly by the ICRC and SECADEV (Catholic Development Fund).

<sup>11</sup> Tigray People's Liberation Front/Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front.

<sup>12</sup> Eritrean People's Liberation Front.

had been left to fend for themselves, often thousands of miles from their homes.

During the final weeks of fighting the ICRC had numerous meetings in Khartoum, Washington and London with leaders of the armed opposition movements, partly in order to guarantee the safety of the medical teams working in the zones under their control (in particular the team in Bahr Dar, which was cut off from the rest of the world when the town fell to the EPRDF at the end of February), and partly to offer its services to assist the victims, both civilian and military.

Events took a critical turn in mid-May, with the capture of Dessie by the EPRDF and of Asmara by the EPLF, the departure of President Mengistu on 21 May and, finally, the fall of Addis Ababa on 28 May, just as negotiations were beginning in London between governmental and rebel forces under the auspices of the United States. The ICRC Deputy Delegate General for Africa went to London to meet EPLF and EPRDF representatives and to discuss the continuation of ICRC operations in the field, and contacts were established with the new authorities in Addis Ababa. In conjunction with the National Society, an emergency operation was mounted to evacuate and treat the war wounded in the Balcha hospital, where four Soviet teams were working,<sup>13</sup> and in the Health Ministry hospitals that were still functioning.

On 7 June 1991 the ICRC addressed a formal offer of services to the Transitional Government with a view to obtaining access to persons detained in connection with the recent events. The offer was accompanied by a Memorandum on the Humanitarian Activities of the ICRC on behalf of Detained Persons, which emphasized the strictly humanitarian nature of the institution's approaches and activities. The ICRC also presented the plan for emergency food aid

<sup>13</sup> This hospital belonged to the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR. It was converted to a hospital for war surgery, and the ICRC took charge of it during the weeks of unrest in Addis Ababa.

and medical assistance that it had just launched with the Ethiopian Red Cross for the ex-servicemen scattered throughout the country without food, shelter or medical care.

During the month of June the new authorities in Eritrea asked the ICRC surgical team working in Asmara to leave the country. Subsequently, the ICRC sent an offer of services to the Provisional Government of Eritrea on 15 September, proposing a high-level mission to examine the possibility of resuming its activities in accordance with its mandate.

Following a number of talks and contacts, ICRC Vice-President Claudio Caratsch undertook a mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea from 14 to 21 December. In Addis Ababa he met the President of the Transitional Government, Meles Zenawi, with his most senior staff. President Zenawi gave permission for the ICRC to visit all places of detention, beginning in early 1992. Mr. Caratsch had a number of talks in Asmara, in particular with the Secretary General of the Provisional Government of Eritrea, Mr. Issayas Afeworki, and with the Secretary for Foreign Relations, Mr. Mohamed Said Barreh. The Eritrean leaders agreed to the ICRC's returning to the country, but declared that all detainees were in the process of being released. However, the ICRC's offer of assistance in orthopaedic work was welcomed.

#### **Activities for ex-servicemen**

Following the overthrow of the Mengistu regime, tens of thousands of members of the armed forces based in northern Ethiopia were demobilized by the new authorities and began to make their way southwards on foot. The humanitarian services of the EPRDF asked the ICRC to help these men, who were in a situation of extreme destitution. Consequently the ICRC and the Ethiopian Red Cross launched a large-scale assistance programme at the beginning of June to facilitate their return home.

In the first phase, about 20 transit camps were set up along the roads leading south,

and here the ex-servicemen were given medical treatment, food and water, blankets and clothing. At the height of the operation, about 1,000 volunteers from the Ethiopian National Society, 40 expatriates from the ICRC and 15 other National Societies, and around 100 locally recruited employees were working in the camps.

Extensive sanitation work was necessary in the transit camps, but it was difficult to carry out because of the vast numbers of people on the move and unforeseeable fluctuations in each camp's population. The ICRC's sanitary engineers therefore installed lightweight structures capable of being modified at any time (collapsible tanks for drinking water, water distribution frames, latrines, etc.) and recruited volunteers among the ex-servicemen to ensure elementary standards of hygiene and cleanliness.

The medical teams were occupied chiefly in treating patients for exhaustion, dehydration, chronic diarrhoea or recurrent fever, all resulting from the hardships they had suffered.

The second phase of this operation was to provide transport for the men to return to their homes. Almost 380 buses and trucks were necessary for this vast undertaking, which lasted three months. Two main routes were used to reach a clearing camp in Nazaret, south of Addis Ababa, from where buses left for the provincial capitals: the eastern route, running from Eritrea via Adwa/Adigrat, Mekele (in Tigray province) and Dessie (Wollo province); and the western route, running from the border between Eritrea and Sudan to Gondar (Gondar province), Bahr Dar (Gojjam province), then to Nazaret. In the transit camps in Adwa, Adigrat and Gondar the men had a chance to regain their strength after many days or even weeks on the march, before moving on towards the transit centres at Mekele, Dessie and Bahr Dar, and then to the clearing centre in Nazaret. However, this blueprint was not always followed in practice, since the men tended to arrive in waves in already overcrowded camps, while administrative difficulties arose in the

screening process and transport proved inadequate to cope with the vast numbers of people involved.

Despite the problems more than 240,000 men (45,000 of whom had fled to Sudan and were repatriated to the camp in Kassala by UNHCR) had been taken back to their places of origin by the end of 1991.

The third and final phase consisted in helping these men, who had often been away from home for years and had no money and no work, to settle down once more with their families. This programme, begun at the end of 1991, included monthly food rations for a period of five months.

### **Food aid**

At the beginning of 1991, the ICRC and the Ethiopian Red Cross Society signed an agreement to carry out a food-aid programme for civilians living in the government zone in Eritrea. Under the programme about 150,000 people in the Asmara area received food supplied by the WFP. In addition, the ICRC and the Ethiopian Red Cross distributed weekly rations and drinking water to 50,000 needy people in the town of Asmara.

The total amount of aid distributed in 1991 in the course of these various operations, carried out jointly with the Ethiopian Red Cross, and including the programme for the ex-servicemen, was as follows: more than 21,500 tonnes of food and 2,000 tonnes of non-food relief (including 190,000 blankets, 1,000 tents and 48 tonnes of clothing).

### **Medical assistance**

In 1991, medical activities focused on surgery for war casualties and emergency care for the ex-servicemen returning south. At first, health conditions in the transit camps for the latter were extremely poor, and the ICRC was obliged to back up medical treatment with sanitation and disinfection work and measures to control malaria. More than a thousand patients a week were treated in the camp dispensaries and several hundred were admitted

to the tents used as hospitals; the most serious cases (about 300) were taken to Health Ministry hospitals in Addis Ababa.

At the beginning of 1991 the ICRC had three surgical teams, sent by the Finnish and Dutch Red Cross Societies, based in the hospital in Asmara (Eritrea), in Bahr Dar (Gojjam) and in Dessie (Wollo) respectively.

Early in the year the ICRC made approaches to EPLF leaders with a view to expanding its activities in Eritrea, for until then its presence had been limited to the war-surgery team in Asmara and support for the medical programmes of the ERA.<sup>14</sup> However, after the change of government, the ICRC team working in Asmara was told to leave at the end of June. It had carried out almost 600 operations and treated 740 patients.

In February, in view of the drop in the number of war wounded admitted to the hospital in Dessie, the ICRC, with the consent of the Ethiopian Ministry of Health and the National Society, decided to reduce the activities of its surgical team there and to withdraw it in March. In view of subsequent developments, however, the team stayed on and continued to work up to the end of August, by which time the situation had returned to normal. The number of war casualties admitted to the hospital in 1991 exceeded 2,000, and the ICRC team carried out 4,335 operations. During the peak period, from May to July, an extra surgical team was sent to help in Dessie.

The surgical team in Bahr Dar (Gojjam) was completely cut off from the rest of the world for three months, from the end of February until June, following the town's capture by EPDRF troops. The team (a surgeon and three nurses, all women) treated more than 1,000 war casualties and performed over 750 operations between 24 February and 2 June, in conditions of the greatest psychological and technical difficulty (cuts in water and electricity supplies, shortages of

medicines, surgical equipment and dressings). Some Ethiopian members of the hospital staff left when the town was captured and young Red Cross volunteers took over their tasks, working day and night to care for the patients.

The members of the surgical team managed to send news for the first time in mid-March, via Khartoum, and the ICRC was thus able to reassure their families. An ICRC convoy succeeded in reaching Bahr Dar on 6 June to relieve the team and restock the hospital with medicines and surgical supplies. Over the whole year, 1,800 patients were admitted and 2,600 operations performed.

Under an agreement signed on 25 May with the Ethiopian Red Cross and the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR, the ICRC took charge temporarily of the Balcha hospital in Addis Ababa, which admitted 1,200 civilian casualties between May and July.

#### **Orthopaedic programme**

The ICRC pursued its programme of technical assistance to the Debre Zeit rehabilitation centre and the orthopaedic centre in Addis Ababa. Overall, these two establishments produced 1,280 prostheses and 330 other orthopaedic appliances, and admitted more than 950 war disabled for treatment. The ICRC also continued to provide support for the orthopaedic centres in Asmara, Dessie and Harar.

## **UGANDA**

Violent clashes between opposition movements and government forces continued throughout 1991 in the northern and north-eastern areas of the country. These guerrilla attacks took place chiefly in the districts of Gulu, Kitgum and, to a lesser extent, Apac and Lira. In the extreme south-west of the country, clashes occurred along the border in connection with the situation in Rwanda, threatening the security of the local inhabitants.

<sup>14</sup> Eritrean Relief Association (humanitarian branch of the EPLF).

Living conditions for the civilian population remained subject to the uncertain situation. This was particularly true of northern Uganda, where a large-scale military offensive lasting from March to August prevented the ICRC from having access to the area until the end of September. At that time it was able to return to Gulu and Lira, to resume its visits to places of detention. Once the situation had stabilized a permanent ICRC presence in the area was no longer necessary, so the ICRC offices in Gulu and Soroti were closed at the end of the year, regular visits to detainees being carried out from Kampala.

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#### Activities for detainees

The ICRC continued its visits to persons detained in connection with the fighting or for offences against State security. A total of 144 visits were made to 2,730 detainees (of whom 2,079 were seen for the first time) in 68 places of detention, both civilian and military, including police stations and army barracks. However, ICRC delegates did not gain access to unsentenced members of the armed forces held in army detention centres.

The military offensive launched in March by government forces in the north of the country led to further arrests. The ICRC took steps to obtain permission to visit the persons detained in this connection in the region. Despite initial authorization from the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, however, the ICRC was no longer granted access to the northern region, a situation that lasted for some time. During the same period, three Ugandans employed in the ICRC office in Gulu were arrested in the course of their duties. They were freed at the end of June.

The ICRC Delegate General for Africa visited Kampala at the end of May, to draw the attention of the Ugandan authorities to the need for the ICRC to resume its humanitarian activities in the north of the country. It was not until 26 September 1991

that the ICRC was authorized to return to places of detention in that area (especially the prisons in Gulu, Lira and Kitgum).

Relief supplies worth about 57,000 Swiss francs were distributed in the prisons visited: some consisted in food aid for detainees suffering from vitamin deficiency owing to lack of balance in their diet, while items such as cleaning materials, toilet articles, clothes and blankets were handed out as needed. In addition, the ICRC provided material assistance to detainees who were released, to help them resume normal life. Sanitation work was carried out in the government prisons in Kampala, Jinja, Kumi, Mbale and Soroti.

#### Tracing Agency

The ICRC Tracing Agency in Uganda focused on visits to places of detention and work in camps for refugees from Sudan and Rwanda. Detainees visited for the first time were registered by the Agency.

After the closure of the ICRC's offices in Gulu and Soroti, the Uganda Red Cross took over a share of the responsibility for forwarding family messages (over 13,700 handled in 1991). In addition, the growth of activities relating to Sudanese refugees in West Nile province and the arrival of many Rwandan refugees in southern Uganda made it necessary to set up a tracing service with the National Society. During 1991, 218 tracing enquiries were successfully resolved.

#### Repatriations between Uganda and Rwanda

Following the disturbances in Rwanda the ICRC was asked by both Uganda and Rwanda to act as a neutral intermediary in organizing the repatriation of their respective nationals stranded on either side of the border. The first convoy left Kampala on 2 March, with 34 Rwandese students on board, and returned with 30 Ugandans. In the course of three such operations, about 340 Ugandan nationals and 50 Rwandese were able to return home (see also *Rwanda*).

In December, a team of ICRC delegates went to the Ugandan border district of Kisoro

to check on the situation of some 20,000 Rwandans who had taken refuge there.

### Protection of the civilian population

Civilians continued to be the first victims of the fighting in some parts of Uganda. In the north, during the military offensive of March-August, the population was caught between government forces and opposition forces and thus exposed to the dual danger of front-line clashes and reprisal attacks.

As soon as the ICRC was permitted to return to the north, in late September, it made a survey of the situation of civilians, especially those displaced as a result of military operations.

### Assistance to the civilian population

The ICRC continued to provide food and other assistance in 1991 to displaced people in conflict areas. It worked alone around Gulu and Soroti, until it was denied access to those areas, but its assistance activities in other combat zones, such as Kasese in the south-west, were carried out in cooperation with local branches of the Uganda Red Cross.

In the north of the country, the ICRC began an agricultural assistance programme on 12 February to help 30,000 families (approximately 90,000 people) who had returned to their homes after having been displaced to eastern Uganda. The families were also given 82.5 tonnes of emergency food aid. A similar programme was organized in August for 18,500 families in the Soroti area. In all, more than 400 tonnes of seed and 63,000 hoes were distributed. A public health and sanitation programme begun in the Kumi area at the beginning of the year had to be interrupted, as the wells that had been repaired were again destroyed in the fighting, and the ICRC no longer had access to the area owing to the military offensive.

When the ICRC warehouse in Soroti was closed in December, the remaining stocks were transferred to Ethiopia and Sudan, with logistic support from the ICRC delegation in Kenya.

In Kasese, disturbances led to population movements in March. In the course of two evaluation missions, undertaken in cooperation with the National Society, some 3,000 displaced families were registered. Relief supplies and vehicles were provided by the ICRC to the National Society, which carried out the distributions (about 57 tonnes of seed, 5.3 tonnes of food and 24 tonnes of various types of equipment: tools, blankets, jerrycans and cooking utensils).

## RWANDA/BURUNDI

### DISTURBANCES IN BURUNDI

At the end of November disturbances broke out in Burundi, causing 4,000 Burundi nationals to flee to Rwanda and 20,000 others to Zaire. ICRC delegates who were on the spot, having just completed a series of visits to places of detention, were able to take action at once, in particular to evacuate the wounded in some parts of the capital, Bujumbura. The ICRC also broadcast appeals over the radio for the parties to respect the red cross emblem.

During an interview with the Prime Minister, the ICRC received permission to visit persons arrested following the events. These visits began in early December, and by the end of the year the ICRC had registered 650 new security detainees. *Ad hoc* assistance was provided in the prisons visited.

Before the disturbances the ICRC had carried out two series of visits to places of detention, the first beginning in March and April and the second in October and November. In all, 50 visits were made in 1991 to about 15 places of detention, where delegates saw 1,094 detainees who came within the purview of the ICRC.

In December the ICRC visited 228 Rwandan refugees housed in the National Police College in Burundi pending their repatriation. A delegate accompanied these refugees when they returned to Rwanda at the end of the month.

## EMERGENCY ACTION IN RWANDA

Fighting in Rwanda continued throughout 1991. On 31 January the northern town of Ruhengeri was attacked by armed members of the RPF.<sup>15</sup> An ICRC team was in the capital, Kigali, at the time, completing a series of visits to places of detention. These delegates went to Ruhengeri on 24 January, taking with them medical supplies which they handed over to the town's hospital.

The survey they carried out over the next few days showed that some 10,000 people had fled into the countryside, as had happened on previous similar occasions. Consequently, the aid programme initiated in October 1990 by the Rwandese and the Belgian Red Cross Societies and financed through January 1991 by the EEC<sup>16</sup> was taken over by the ICRC to provide help for victims of the new outbreak of violence.

As the disturbances continued, between January and the end of April the number of displaced persons rose to more than 90,000. This situation was compounded by the arrival in November of many refugees from Burundi.

The ICRC lent its support to the Rwandese Red Cross, especially by training staff and giving logistic assistance, to help the Society improve its operational capacity and thus enable it gradually to take over the management of relief programmes for the displaced population.

### Activities for detainees

Following the disturbances of November 1990 the ICRC had obtained permission to visit people arrested in connection with the events. The first series of visits, begun on 20 November 1990 and completed on 14 January 1991, covered more than 4,000 security detainees in 21 prisons. During the following months most of these detainees were released and the number within the ICRC's mandate

<sup>15</sup> Rwanda Patriotic Front.

<sup>16</sup> European Economic Community.

fell to about 60 people, who were visited regularly during the rest of the year.

In June the ICRC requested access to persons believed to be held by the army in military barracks, but this request was not granted.

The delegates were also unable to visit persons presumed to be in the hands of the RPF, despite a favourable response in principle to the ICRC's offer of services.

The ICRC pursued its programme, started in 1990, for improving sanitation in ten prisons. At the beginning of 1991, a sanitary engineer visited the country to initiate the work, which was performed by the detainees themselves.

### Protection of the civilian population

Surveys were carried out in northern Rwanda to determine the situation of people who had been displaced owing to the fighting: most of them were living in camps, while others had found refuge in abandoned "ranches" whose owners had fled to Uganda. The ICRC regularly toured the area in order to prevent, by its presence, any attacks or reprisals against the civilian population. During their travels the delegates took every opportunity to foster awareness of the elementary principles of humanity and promote respect for the protective emblem.

### Tracing Agency

In addition to registering the detainees visited by delegates, the Agency arranged for the exchange of over 4,000 family messages, mainly between detainees and their relatives in Rwanda and abroad. A total of 452 missing persons whose families had filed tracing requests were found during the year.

### Assistance for displaced people

The majority of displaced persons (about 60,000) were located in the Ruhengeri area, while others were in Byumba, Kiyombe, Ngarama and Rukomo districts. The ICRC appealed to the authorities to find better ar-

rangements than the grouping of the displaced people in overcrowded camps, where conditions made them even more dependent on outside aid and favoured the spread of disease.

When the stocks of relief supplies from the EEC had been used up, in mid-March, the ICRC made purchases locally to feed the displaced people. Four logistic bases were set up, from which the Rwanda Red Cross could rapidly distribute the relief. In all, more than 5,600 tonnes of food and other aid worth 3.4 million Swiss francs were provided during 1991.

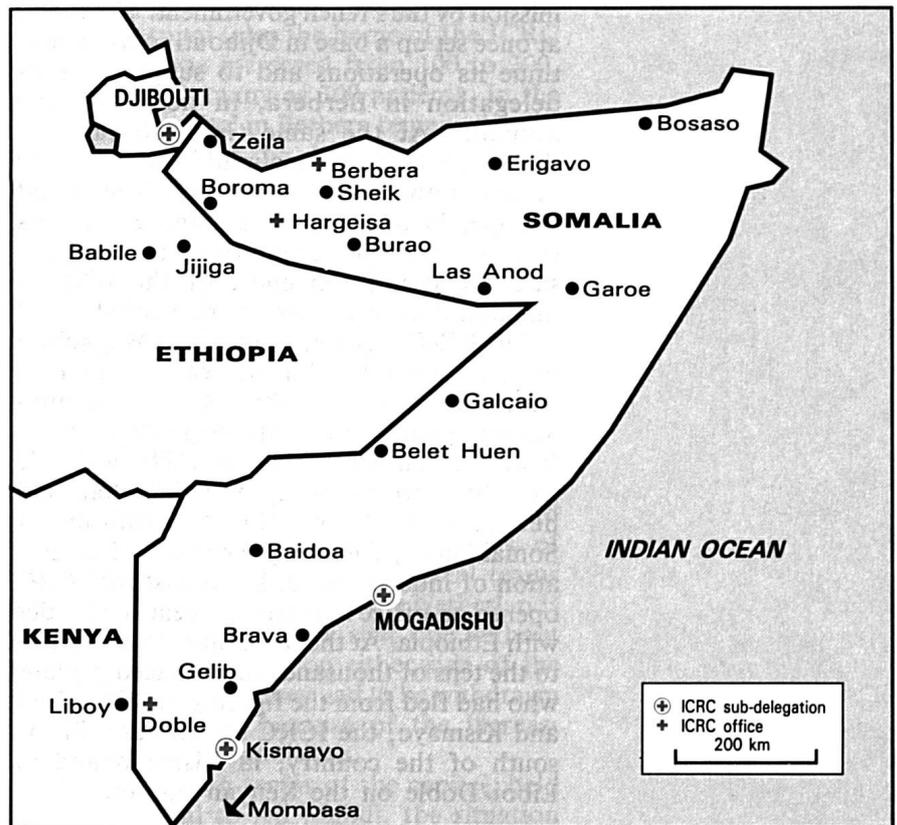
During a mission in north-eastern Rwanda, ICRC delegates discovered groups of displaced persons who had been expelled from Tanzania where they had tried to take refuge. These people were in an alarming state of malnutrition, since they were unable to return to their homes and had no food resources at all. An *ad hoc* programme was set up for them by the National Society, with support from the ICRC.

## SOMALIA

In 1991 Somalia, already ravaged by years of internal conflict in the north-west, was engulfed by a new wave of extreme violence. The fighting between government forces and a number of allied opposition movements (USC, SPM, SSDF<sup>17</sup>), which had reached the capital in December 1990, resulted in January 1991 in the overthrow of President Siad Barre. However, fighting continued between rival factions in the centre and south of the country. The indiscipline of the combatants and the total lack of respect for the most elementary rules of combat took a heavy toll of the civilian population: tens of thousands died, and hundreds of thousands were displaced or became refugees.

Throughout the year the anarchy and violence of the fighting made the ICRC's

<sup>17</sup> United Somali Congress, Somali Patriotic Movement, Somali Salvation Democratic Front.



humanitarian mission in Somalia extremely dangerous, since the country was overrun by uncontrolled armed gangs. Relief administrator Wim Van Boxelaere, seconded to the ICRC by the Belgian Red Cross, was shot and seriously wounded in front of the offices of the Somali Red Crescent in Mogadishu on 11 December, and died on board the aircraft taking him from Nairobi to Antwerp. A Somali who had thrown himself in front of the young Belgian aid worker in an attempt to protect him also died of his wounds.

Several times the ICRC was forced to withdraw its teams for their own safety: early in January, when fighting was raging in the capital, the expatriate staff and a number of local employees, who were finding it impossible to carry out their humanitarian work, were evacuated to Djibouti aboard the *Jules Verne*, a ship sent to the area on a relief

mission by the French government. The ICRC at once set up a base in Djibouti so as to continue its operations and to supply its sub-delegation in Berbera, in north-western Somalia. At the same time, contacts at diplomatic level were maintained with the new Somali authorities, in Djibouti, Kenya and Europe, in order to obtain the guarantees essential for the resumption, in complete safety and independence, of the ICRC'S humanitarian activities in the capital.

The ICRC was able to return to Mogadishu on 24 February; but it was obliged to withdraw its teams from Berbera in mid-March owing to fierce fighting in the north. It was not until July that the ICRC was able to return to Berbera, now in what had become, in May, the "Republic of Somaliland", following a unilateral declaration of independence. In August the ICRC opened an office in Hargeisa, near the border with Ethiopia. At the same time, to bring help to the tens of thousands of displaced persons who had fled from the fighting in Mogadishu and Kismayo, the ICRC set up bases in the south of the country, in Kismayo and in Liboi/Doble on the Kenyan border.

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#### Activities for detainees

The ICRC had requested access to security detainees in 1990. Following the overthrow of President Siad Barre in January 1991, all detainees held in government prisons escaped, but more arrests were made in the months that followed. The ICRC received permission from the new Somali authorities to visit all detainees in the zone held by the SNM.<sup>18</sup> The visits began on 7 March in the central prison in Berbera, but had to be suspended when the situation deteriorated. In September, after permission had been obtained from the authorities of "Somaliland" to visit all places of detention in the north-west, the ICRC again

<sup>18</sup> Somali National Movement.

visited the prison in Berbera, and those in Boroma, Burao and Hargeisa. Delegates also visited persons held by other armed factions, in particular the SSDF in Garoe (north-east) and the SPM in Kismayo (south). In all the ICRC carried out 13 visits to nine places of detention and saw 70 detainees during the year.

#### Tracing Agency

The fighting caused hundreds of thousands of people to flee from their homes into the interior and across the country's borders, and communications (postal and telephone services) broke down completely. The ICRC rapidly set up a network for the exchange of messages between separated relatives and for tracing missing persons. Ten offices were opened on Somali territory, also one in Djibouti and two others in the camps for Somali refugees in Kenya. The service covered many other countries with large Somali communities, including Saudi Arabia, Canada, Italy, the Scandinavian countries and the United Kingdom. More than 22,500 messages were forwarded by the ICRC in 1991, as compared with 1,400 in 1990.

Tracing delegates also succeeded in reuniting 23 Somali families, and in January organized the evacuation to Mombasa (Kenya) of 580 foreigners stranded by the fighting in Mogadishu. This extremely dangerous operation was carried out thanks to the Italian authorities, who supplied a number of aircraft that flew under the protective emblem of the Red Cross.

Also in January, the ICRC repatriated 123 Ethiopian refugees from Boroma in northern Somalia to Babile in Ethiopia. This convoy, the tenth and last, brought to a total of 5,500 the number of refugees returned to Ethiopia.

#### Assistance for the civilian population

In spite of the major difficulties involved, especially in Mogadishu, the ICRC continued to bring help to civilian victims of the conflict. Starting in February it organized regular

relief shipments between the ports of Djibouti and Mombasa (Kenya) and the Somali coast.

From the beginning of the year ICRC delegates carried out numerous surveys of needs in the country, and from March onwards food and other aid was distributed in camps for displaced persons and to groups of civilians suffering particular hardship.

Also in March the ICRC, acting as a neutral intermediary, brought food and medical assistance to approximately 1,000 Somali workers who had been expelled from Saudi Arabia and were stranded aboard a ship off Berbera.

Having carried out a number of nutritional surveys in various regions, the ICRC decided to set up an agricultural programme in the centre and south of Somalia, to help the population recover a degree of self-sufficiency. More than 500 tonnes of seed and farming tools were distributed by the ICRC to about 100,000 families during the planting period (August onwards). In all, over 22,400 tonnes of food and other aid, worth 18 million Swiss francs, were distributed in Somalia in 1991.

### **Security measures**

As the situation deteriorated, organizing assistance operations became more and more difficult: at times ships could not approach the coast; weeks passed before foodstuffs could be unloaded; warehouses were constantly pillaged and vehicles stolen; not to mention the problems that arose after the aid had been distributed. In these circumstances, the ICRC decided to involve the traditional authorities (clan chiefs) in the distribution process.

In addition very strict security measures were taken to protect ICRC teams working in Mogadishu and elsewhere in the country.

### **Medical and surgical assistance**

All through the year, with fighting raging in one part of the country or another, the hospitals in Mogadishu, Berbera and Kismayo were overwhelmed by a flood of war

casualties. In Mogadishu, the capacity of the Martini hospital (also the home of the ICRC delegation) was increased from 100 to 200, and then to as many as 300 patients. In the north, the hospital in Berbera remained operational even after the departure of the expatriate teams, since local staff kept it going under the responsibility of the Somali Red Crescent.

Assessment of surgical needs showed that it was essential to improve the training of the Somali medical personnel. A course in war surgery was organized at the Digfer Hospital, in Mogadishu, where in September and October an ICRC surgeon gave further training to about 20 doctors and surgeons.

Following the savage fighting in November which split the capital into northern and southern sectors and resulted in tens of thousands of wounded, two surgical teams seconded by the Finnish and the Netherlands Red Cross Societies were sent out without delay and set to work on either side of the front line. However, they had to be withdrawn during December, because of the increasingly dangerous conditions.

In the northern sector of the capital, held by forces loyal to Ali Mahdi, the situation quickly became critical as there were no hospitals there and it was completely cut off from the southern sector. Even so, by using a light aircraft that managed to land about 20 kilometres from the city, the ICRC was able to dispatch emergency supplies to the northern districts of Mogadishu, where casualties were treated in makeshift dispensaries set up in private houses.

### **Sanitation programme**

The ICRC launched a sanitation programme to offset the destruction caused by the fighting, especially in the Martini Hospital in Mogadishu. The system for supplying drinking water to the hospitals in Berbera and Kismayo and the public water tanks in Kismayo were repaired by ICRC sanitary engineers. In the Doble area (near the border with Kenya), pumps were installed in the

camps for displaced persons, to provide them with drinking water.

The total cost of medical assistance and sanitation work carried out by the ICRC in 1991 amounted to 2.3 million Swiss francs.

### Logistics

In the extremely difficult and dangerous conditions prevailing in Somalia last year, logistic support for ICRC activities was of major importance. In 1991 the ICRC was the only humanitarian organization with teams in all parts of the national territory. It leased aircraft in Djibouti and Nairobi and trucks in Somalia, and it chartered three ships (which plied between Mombasa and Kismayo or Mogadishu, and between Djibouti and Berbera). Thus, despite the circumstances, which sometimes verged on the impossible, it managed to bring help to the victims of this cruel internecine war.

## SUDAN

The year began for the ICRC in Sudan with a number of major obstacles that held up its operations for several months. At the end of 1990, permission to fly over southern Sudan was withdrawn by the government in Khartoum. This meant that the ICRC was obliged to recall its delegates from all six sub-delegations in southern Sudan by mid-February. The Deputy Delegate General for Africa visited Khartoum from 13 to 20 March for high-level talks, in order to maintain the dialogue and in the hope of being able to resume activities on both sides of the front lines. Finally, at the end of June, the ICRC was able to return to southern Sudan and resume its protection and assistance activities for victims of the conflict, both on the government side and in the zones held by the SPLM/SPLA.<sup>19</sup> In this work the Sudanese Red Crescent is a major operational partner of the ICRC, while in the SPLA areas

<sup>19</sup> Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army.

cooperation with the SRRA<sup>20</sup> is essential for the smooth running of ICRC programmes.

Following the fall of the Ethiopian government, some 300,000 Sudanese refugees who had been living for years in Ethiopia fled back to southern Sudan. They arrived at the height of the rainy season, completely destitute, without shelter or food, and remained stranded in the hills along the border with Ethiopia. The ICRC set up a large-scale relief operation for 100,000 of them, and embarked on a programme aimed at reuniting the more than 14,000 unaccompanied children scattered throughout the area with their families.

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### Activities for detainees

No visits were made in 1991 to persons detained in connection with the conflict, since the ICRC was unable to obtain permission from the government in Khartoum to visit places of detention. In the SPLA areas the ICRC, after being allowed to visit a few groups of prisoners in 1989 and 1990, began negotiations in 1991 to gain access to all those detained in connection with the conflict and for permission to conduct the visits in accordance with its usual criteria (in particular, access to detainees in their place of detention, visits to be repeated and interviews with detainees in private). Authorization to carry out such visits was received on 30 December 1991.

### Protection of the civilian population

In 1991 the ICRC continued its negotiations with the government and the SPLA authorities to secure better respect for civilians caught up in the fighting. In addition to providing food and medical assistance for Sudanese who had returned from Ethiopia and were stranded in the Pochala area, the ICRC urged the authorities to make ar-

<sup>20</sup> Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association, the humanitarian branch of the SPLM/SPLA.

rangements for their resettlement, either in their places of origin or in an area where they would be relatively safe. Talks on this subject were still going on at the end of the year.

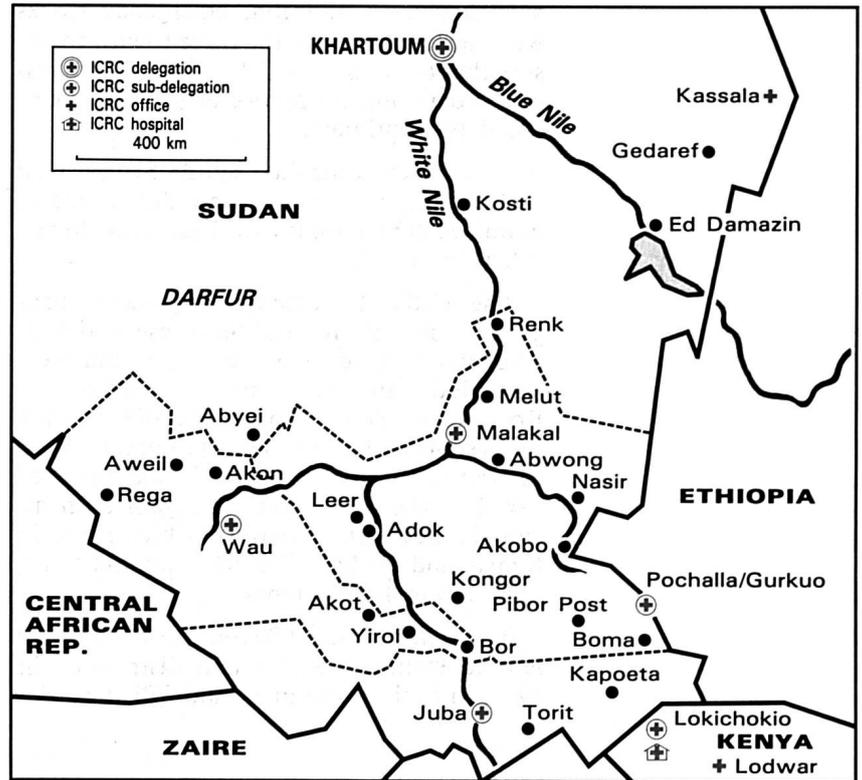
### *Protection of unaccompanied children*

Among the refugees who came back from Ethiopia were about 14,000 children between the ages of 8 and 14, most of them boys. The majority had lost touch with their parents during their stay in Ethiopia. The ICRC was particularly concerned about this vulnerable group of minors, who were in special need of protection.

Discussions were held with the authorities and with the United Nations in order to find a solution under international humanitarian law and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. An "Inter-Agency Plan of Action for the Immediate Assistance, Protection, Reintegration and Resettlement of Non-Accompanied Minors in South Sudan" was adopted as a result, in November 1991. Under this agreement, the ICRC was to register and organize protection and assistance for the children, with a view to returning them to their families. Some 10,000 children had been registered at Pochalla, 2,000 at Nasir and 2,000 at Pakok by the end of the year. However, owing to the resumption of military operations in the area, none of them was able to join his family in 1991.

### **Tracing Agency**

Tracing Agency activities for the population of southern Sudan expanded in the areas where the ICRC was working during 1991. A number of areas remained inaccessible, which meant that certain cases could not be followed up (400 tracing requests remained pending, especially in the area controlled by the SPLA). Nevertheless, over 5,500 messages were exchanged between Khartoum and southern Sudan; 972 missing persons were traced and 11 families reunited during the year. Another 2,800 family messages concerning Ethiopian and Ugandan refugees were also



forwarded. The return of tens of thousands of refugees from Ethiopia, including the 14,000 unaccompanied children mentioned above, greatly increased the Agency's workload in the second half of the year. Extra staff were provided and cooperation in this regard was stepped up with the Sudanese Red Crescent and with the SRRA.

### **Food aid**

In June the ICRC was able to resume relief distributions to displaced people in government towns, who were totally dependent on outside help since all internal communications had been cut. The ICRC distributed more than 1,300 tonnes of relief supplies (mostly seed and tools) to 30,000 families in Wau, 10,000 in Juba and another 10,000 in Malakal, with the aim of restoring a measure of self-

sufficiency. In addition, emergency stocks were again built up in the three towns, to ensure that the joint ICRC/Sudanese Red Crescent programme for particularly needy groups could be continued.

In the area controlled by the SPLA, seed and farming implements were distributed to about 35,000 families in Leer and 20,000 others in Yirol.

The ICRC launched a large-scale programme in July for the Sudanese nationals who had returned from Ethiopia and were stranded in the border area of Pochala/Gurkuo. Some 100,000 people received food, blankets and clothing. In order to bring in the 50 tonnes of food required per day, the ICRC had to organize an air shuttle between Nairobi/Lokichokio, in Kenya, and Pochala. The total amount transported was 4,400 tonnes.

In all, more than 6,000 tonnes of food were sent to southern Sudan and distributed in 1991, in both government and SPLA zones.

#### **Medical assistance**

In spite of the obstacles, medical activities for civilians continued in southern Sudan, in the areas held by both sides. In particular, the ICRC provided support for local health facilities and trained Sudanese medical personnel.

The ICRC gave assistance to the Sudanese Health Ministry and transported medicines and vaccines to the hospitals in Malakal, Juba and Raja. It also evacuated patients to hospitals in Khartoum; and in Kassala an ICRC doctor and nurse took part in the repatriation (organized by UNHCR) of Ethiopian soldiers, by preparing those who were sick or wounded for the journey ahead.

Medical assistance was also provided for Ethiopian refugees living in camps in Ed Damazin, on Sudanese soil. Moreover, an ICRC convoy from Khartoum managed to reach the Ethiopian towns of Dessie and Bahr

Dar, which had been cut off from the rest of Ethiopia for several months, to bring medical supplies and to relieve the ICRC surgical team that had remained there throughout the fighting (see also under *Ethiopia*).

In the area controlled by the SPLA, once flights had resumed medical supplies could again be sent where needed, especially to Leer (where the surgical unit was renovated), Yirol (where the hospital was repaired and reopened) and Pochala. In addition, the ICRC monitored the nutritional status of the people who had returned from Ethiopia and were massed in Pochala; the results showed an alarming degree of malnutrition among children. Special assistance was provided for this vulnerable group.

#### ***Surgical hospital in Lokichokio***

A large number of war casualties continued to arrive from Sudan at the ICRC surgical hospital in Lokichokio, on the Kenyan side of the border. The number of admissions rose sharply from April, and by December more than 900 patients had been treated, over 60% of them for war wounds. The two ICRC surgical teams on the spot performed 2,400 operations during the year.

The ICRC also provides training for Sudanese medical personnel in the Lokichokio hospital. The increased number of local doctors in the SPLA zone and the distance of the ICRC hospital from the front line made these further training courses even more necessary than in the past.

Orthopaedic activities and physiotherapy were initiated in the hospital in 1991 in view of the numerous war-disabled patients treated there. Training was given to four assistants, who then returned to hospitals in Sudan. Production of prostheses was begun, in cooperation with the Kabele orthopaedic workshop in Nairobi, but could not keep pace with needs. It was planned to create a permanent post for an orthopaedic technician in Lokichokio in 1992.

### Orthopaedic programme

The workload of the ICRC orthopaedic centre in Kassala greatly increased in 1991, following the arrival of many Ethiopian ex-servicemen from Tigray and Eritrea. The ICRC also continued to support the orthopaedic workshop in Khartoum. Together the two workshops produced a total of almost 500 prostheses and more than 300 orthoses during the year, and treated over 600 amputees and other war-disabled patients.

### Veterinary programme

This programme, set up in 1988 by the ICRC and carried out by the Danish Red Cross in 1990, was able to proceed in 1991 despite the suspension of ICRC flights. Sudanese staff trained by the ICRC continued vaccination operations during the flight ban and the vaccines were conveyed by other organizations, such as UNICEF. Some 250,000 head of cattle were vaccinated in the first three months of the year. When flights resumed in June, the ICRC was again able to supply the veterinary teams itself, and 95,000 more animals were immunized against rinderpest, chiefly in the areas around Leer and Yirol.

### Logistics

Between June and December the ICRC used several aircraft to reach southern areas that were inaccessible overland. For its operations in government towns the Khartoum delegation had the use, for two months, of a Hercules C-130 transport plane, and for the rest of the year it had a light aircraft. For the areas under SPLA control, which have only rudimentary airstrips, STOL aircraft were used. Nevertheless, a heavy transport plane was used for about six months to air-drop relief supplies over Pochala.

### Security incidents

A Hercules aircraft hit a mine on 2 September when taking off from Wau. The crew members were wounded and were evacuated to Khartoum. After a break of three days for security reasons, flights were resumed on a reduced schedule to all destinations, whether in the SPLA zone or in government areas.

Two civilians were killed during an air-drop of relief supplies over Pochala on 24 October when sacks fell wide of the runway. Extra safety precautions were taken to avoid the recurrence of such accidents.

## REGIONAL DELEGATIONS

The ICRC's six regional delegations played a major part in its work in Africa in 1991. Not only did the presence of delegates give the authorities, the armed forces and police, university circles and the general population an insight into the institution, the fundamental Red Cross and Red Crescent principles and the basic rules of international humanitarian law, but a more active policy of cooperation helped to strengthen the operational capacity of a good number of National Societies. The first stage of a telecommunication network connecting all the National Societies in Africa was completed, while numerous seminars were held in various countries (see also *Dissemina-*

*tion in Africa*). In the field of cooperation, priority was given to preparation of emergency work, having regard to the threat of internal violence hanging over several countries of Central and West Africa. The plans drawn up and the equipment and support provided by the ICRC proved extremely useful during various events in the course of the year, since the regional delegates were in a position to take immediate measures to coordinate assistance operations (evacuation of the wounded and emergency relief distributions), with the active and efficient support of teams of volunteers from the National Societies, and also to perform, in agreement with authorities

receptive to the humanitarian cause, the ICRC's traditional tasks (visits to detainees, in particular).

***DAKAR (Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Senegal)***

**SENEGAL** — On 10 May, the headquarters agreement establishing an ICRC regional delegation in Dakar was signed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Senegal, Mr. Djibo Ka, and the regional delegate.

In view of the civil unrest affecting the Casamance region in the southern part of the country, an evaluation mission was carried out in May. The ICRC and the National Society jointly undertook an assistance programme for a value of 140,000 Swiss francs to help 5,000 victims of the disturbances. An assistance and training plan was drawn up and financed by the ICRC for the Ziguinchor branch of the National Society, to enhance its capability to take action in behalf of people affected by the events.

Even after the Bissau peace agreements were signed, the regional delegate continued to make regular visits to the region, where tension remained high.

**MALI** — During clashes which took place in January and again in March, resulting in the overthrow of President Moussa Traoré, the ICRC regional delegation in Dakar provided the Mali Red Cross with active support in its preparations for emergency work, and subsequently in carrying out a major relief operation in Bamako. Teams of relief workers provided first aid and evacuated several dozen casualties, under extremely difficult conditions.

Thanks to the emergency plan, put into effect the day after the first disturbances, and comprehensive dissemination efforts aimed at the authorities, police and security forces and the media, relief workers were able to take effective action during the riots in March.

From the very beginning of the unrest on 23 March, the regional delegate and an ICRC

doctor were working in the Malian capital, having brought with them a consignment of medicines and emergency relief supplies.

On 28 March, two days after the fall of General Moussa Traoré, the ICRC was authorized by Lieutenant Amadou Toumani Touré, President of the National Reconciliation Council (CRN),<sup>21</sup> to visit people arrested in connection with the events and, in particular, members of the former government. A first visit was carried out the following day, on 29 March, to some 30 detainees in three detention centres in the capital. Two other series of visits took place in June and November. In spite of an agreement in principle, however, by the end of the year the ICRC had not yet been able to visit former President Traoré and his wife.

**Conflict zone in the north** — As soon as clashes resumed in 1991 between government forces and Tamashek (Tuareg) armed groups in northern Mali, the ICRC offered its services, in its capacity as a neutral intermediary, to maintain a presence in the area and thus provide a measure of protection for the civilian population and other victims of the violence and insecurity (displaced people without resources, detainees, etc.) in a region already suffering hardship because of desertification.

On 6 January 1991, peace agreements were signed in Tamanrasset, Algeria. However, after an initial period of implementation the situation again deteriorated, and in February hostilities resumed, prompting a vicious circle of violence and repression which had dire effects on the civilian population.

The highest authorities of the transitional government granted the ICRC every facility to accomplish its mission as neutral intermediary. The main Tuareg movements also showed good understanding of the ICRC's mandate.

<sup>21</sup> This Council was subsequently replaced by the Transition Committee for the Salvation of the People (CTSP).

### *Visits to places of detention*

The Malian authorities granted the ICRC access to all categories of persons arrested and detained in prisons, police stations and army barracks. The visits began in Gao and Bamako in July, with a visit to detainees arrested in connection with the events.

In October, the ICRC received formal authorization from the Minister of Defence and Internal Security, allowing delegates unrestricted access in accordance with the institution's customary procedures to all categories of persons arrested and detained in connection with the disturbances in the north, whether in military or civilian hands.

Thus, from 25 November to 5 December, the delegates (including a doctor) conducted a second series of visits to all places of detention in Diré, Gao, Goundam, Kidal, Léré, Menaka, Niafouké, Tonka and Timbuktu. Apart from 24 Tamashek detainees held in Bamako, the delegates found no one detained in connection with the events during the visits (see also *Mauritania*, in the *Middle East/North Africa* section).

### *Activities for civilians*

On account of the clashes and prevailing insecurity, tens of thousands of civilians fled to Algeria and Mauritania and into the desert, far away from the areas in which they usually lived around Lake Faguibine. The resumption of the hostilities also disrupted trading links and prompted the departure of the non-governmental assistance organizations which had been working in the region. The displaced people thus found themselves without resources in an increasingly hostile environment.

As soon as the fighting resumed, the ICRC was asked to act as neutral intermediary in helping to protect the civilian population and providing assistance to certain vulnerable groups as necessary.

It emerged from an initial exploratory mission, conducted with the cooperation of the Mali Red Cross in July and August, that there

was a need for a delegate to be based permanently in the region most severely affected by the conflict, around Timbuktu. Following a second survey carried out in September by a delegate and a doctor, a programme to provide protection for civilians was initiated, including a food and medical assistance component. The delegate already on the spot was joined by a nurse and together they set up outposts in the main localities affected by the conflict (Goundam, Diré, Niafouké, Léré and Bintaougou, north of Lake Faguibine).

At the same time, a medical project was launched with the aim of putting the hospital in Diré, the hospital complex in Goundam and Ministry of Health dispensaries (which had been deserted by their staff and no longer received supplies) back into service, by arranging for the return of staff and providing stocks of medicines and medical equipment. The ICRC nurse also carried out regular rounds not only to give consultations but also to provide administrative and technical support for the establishments which had reopened. Medical aid amounted to a total of 32,000 Swiss francs.

As far as relief was concerned, distributions were organized as needed for isolated and vulnerable groups. In particular, 10,000 people in the Timbuktu area received 300 tonnes of foodstuffs. These distributions, organized with the agreement of all the parties concerned, helped to ease ethnic tensions in the region.

During the clashes which took place in Timbuktu during the night of 11 to 12 December, the two ICRC delegates there immediately arranged for evacuation of the wounded to hospitals in the town and, for five of them, to the Kati hospital near Bamako.

At the same time, ICRC delegates went several times to the Mauritanian border to establish contacts with Tamashek refugees in Mauritania and prepare programmes to assist them (see also *Middle East and North Africa*).

**HARARE (Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe)**

In 1991, the ICRC regional delegation in Harare concentrated on Tracing Agency tasks and protection for Mozambican refugees seeking refuge in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Swaziland and Zambia. The ICRC also stepped up its support to the National Societies concerned.

An agreement was signed on 1 February with the authorities of Zimbabwe (Ministry of Social Welfare and Commissioner for Refugees) setting out the framework for ICRC and Zimbabwe Red Cross Society activities on behalf of Mozambican refugees.

Within that framework, three mobile teams from the Zimbabwe Red Cross Society started work in June, covering the whole length of the frontier with Mozambique. Their task consisted in visiting police stations and military camps so as to register newly-arrived Mozambicans, and then to transport them directly to one of the five refugee camps run by UNHCR.<sup>22</sup> During their six months of activity in 1991, the mobile teams registered more than 3,000 Mozambicans on their arrival in Zimbabwe. In addition, the ICRC provided the Zimbabwe Red Cross Society with the necessary foodstuffs to enable volunteers to produce daily meals for new arrivals during their stay in the police stations and military camps on the frontier.

**Tracing Agency**

The Tracing Agency network in the countries covered by the regional delegation (Zimbabwe, Malawi, Swaziland and Zambia) was reorganized and its staff increased to cope with the heavier workload resulting from the influx of Mozambican refugees (+ 80% in 1991), and from Mozambique's authorization for family messages to be distributed throughout the country, including the areas held by RENAMO (see also *Mozambique*).

<sup>22</sup> Tongogara (42,000 refugees), Mazowe River Bridge (28,000), Nyangombe (16,000), Chambuta (5,000) and Nyamatikiti (2,500).

Personnel from the four above-mentioned National Societies received special training during a course held in Harare by specialists from the ICRC's Central Tracing Agency. In Zimbabwe, tracing facilities have thus been set up in the five refugee camps and the work is conducted by National Society employees, while the ICRC delegation's tracing office is staffed by five specialized employees. In Malawi (where almost a million Mozambican refugees have found shelter), the tracing service of the National Society in Blantyre has eight employees and handles the collection and distribution of messages, while in Swaziland the National Red Cross Society is operating in two camps containing around 20,000 refugees. Finally, in Zambia, seven employees have been based in the camps and regions where Angolan and Mozambican refugees are installed. Last year, nearly 14,000 messages were transmitted between Zimbabwe and Mozambique, and more than 13,000 others in the other countries covered by the regional delegation.

The ICRC tracing service in Harare also elucidated the cases of 289 persons, primarily Mozambican refugees, of whom their relatives were without news.

**KINSHASA (Congo, Zaire; up to November: Gabon, Central African Republic, Sao Tome and Principe)**

**ZAIRE** — The ICRC regional delegation in Kinshasa, which had scaled down its activity at the beginning of the year following measures taken by the Zaire government regarding detention, had to increase its staff at short notice to cope with the events that occurred in September and October.

Violence broke out in Kinshasa and in several other towns, as from 23 September. The ICRC and the Red Cross of Zaire immediately took action to evacuate the wounded and dead and to meet the food and medical needs of certain vulnerable groups of the population, especially in hospitals, orphanages and prisons. The ICRC provided the National

Society with the necessary logistic facilities and relief supplies and coordinated the work of relief workers. On several occasions, the ICRC arranged for messages to be broadcast on the national radio network emphasizing the need to respect the work of Red Cross volunteers and the protective emblem.

Following an evaluation of needs by ICRC delegates and doctors, assistance in the form of medicines, medical equipment and food was distributed to establishments which were already encountering substantial supply problems before the riots.

After the disturbances which broke out in October in all regions of Zaire, delegates also conducted surveys, travelling to Goma in the east, Kisangani in the north and Lubumbashi in the Shaba region. In Shaba, emergency dispensaries were opened in cooperation with the local branch of the Red Cross. Stocks of medicines were established in Kolwezi, Likasi and Lubumbashi.

During these events, the ICRC supplied over 90 tonnes of food and other relief, for a value of 98,000 Swiss francs.

#### **Activities for detainees**

ICRC delegates went to detention centres at varying intervals during the year to visit people arrested for State security offences. They conducted 41 visits to four places of detention in Kinshasa, under the responsibility of the national police, the civil guard, military security forces and the Ministry of Justice.

During the events in September and October, delegates provided most of the food supplies (36 tonnes) in places of detention. Already in June, in view of the severe malnutrition observed, the ICRC had helped the National Society to launch and implement intensive feeding programmes for detainees. In all, aid provided in prisons amounted to 40,000 Swiss francs.

In October, two Zambian and 19 Angolan detainees were released and repatriated to their respective countries under ICRC auspices.

#### **Libyan prisoners of war**

As from December 1990, ICRC delegates regularly visited the 594 Libyan former prisoners of war who had been taken to Kamina, in southern Zaire, on board aircraft chartered by the American government. The ICRC's presence ensured that the 240 former prisoners of war who had chosen to return to Libya were repatriated. The people in question were registered by the ICRC before being handed over to the Libyan authorities in Kinshasa.

At the beginning of February, 354 former prisoners of war were transferred to Tikha in Kenya, under the auspices of the American authorities. In March, the ICRC delegates in Nairobi were able to ascertain, during interviews without witnesses, that their decision not to return to Libya had been made without any external pressure. The ICRC issued these people, who had in the meantime been granted refugee status, with travel documents for their journey from Kenya to their host countries.

In December 1990, during the transfer of prisoners from the Chadian capital, and subsequently at the beginning of 1991, the ICRC had approached the various authorities concerned to request that the provisions of the Third Geneva Convention on the protection of prisoners of war be applied (in particular that captives be allowed to express freely, in the presence of the ICRC, whether or not they wished to return to their country). In the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the prisoners repatriated from Kamina were visited in February by ICRC delegates, who found that they had settled down to social and family life.

#### **Tracing Agency**

Following the events which occurred in November in Burundi, some 20,000 Burundi nationals took refuge in eastern Zaire (around Bambouti, Mboki and Zemio). The ICRC conducted an evaluation mission in the region. While the material needs of the refugees were taken care of by UNHCR and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red

Crescent Societies, who were already on the spot, the ICRC handled Tracing Agency tasks: over 200 messages were exchanged between separated families and some 40 tracing requests concerning missing persons were processed.

In addition, the Tracing Agency delegate in Kinshasa carried out several missions to camps in Haut-Zaire where more than 90,000 Sudanese refugees had found shelter. Missions were also conducted to refugee camps for Angolans in the south of the country. During the year around 170 tracing enquiries were successfully concluded and over 1,700 family messages were exchanged between refugees and their families in their respective countries.

**CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC** — Following the missions conducted by the ICRC Tracing Agency delegate based in Kinshasa to the camps in eastern Zaire, the ICRC suggested that the National Society of the Central African Republic should designate an employee to take charge of tracing tasks, in order to supplement the arrangements made in Zaire.

**LAGOS (Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone)**

**CAMEROON** — A regional delegation was opened at the end of the year in Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon. As from 1992 the new regional delegation will cover, as well as Cameroon itself, Chad, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, the Central African Republic, and Sao Tome and Principe.

The regional delegate approached the Cameroon authorities several times to request access to persons arrested following the unrest in the country. A memorandum setting out the ICRC's working criteria in this respect was submitted to the Ministry of Territorial Administration in July. At the end of the year, however, negotiations were still continuing.

The ICRC provided assistance to the Cameroon Red Cross, with a view to developing its services in the field of emergency aid.

A plan of action was drawn up, both for Yaoundé and for the branches in western Cameroon, and stocks of first-aid supplies were constituted. A nurse was dispatched from the ICRC delegation in Uganda to train first-aid workers.

The emergency preparedness work carried out within the National Society proved invaluable during the disturbances that broke out in the country on several occasions.

**GHANA** — A regional workshop on Tracing Agency activities was organized in Accra, Ghana, for the National Societies of Gambia, Ghana and Sierra Leone, in connection with the work undertaken in favour of Liberian refugees (see also *Liberia*).

**GAMBIA** — As in previous years, the ICRC regional delegate based in Lagos visited the 38 people detained in Banjul prison since the events of 1981. While ICRC delegates were in Banjul, 35 of the 38 detainees were released. They were given assistance to help them resettle into society, while the three detainees remaining in prison received basic relief as needed. This assistance represented a total value of nearly 4,000 Swiss francs.

**NIGERIA** — Following the disturbances which took place in October in the Kano region, the ICRC allocated financial support to the Nigerian Red Cross for the purchase of relief supplies for victims of the events. Assistance was also distributed to Nigerians returning from Liberia.

**LOME (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Togo)**

**TOGO** — The regional delegation took action on several occasions in connection with the various clashes and disturbances in Togo in 1991.

The ICRC actively supported the National Society by providing financial, logistic and material resources and gave backing to first-aiders during the riots which took place in

mid-March, in April and during the last quarter of the year, first of all in the capital and subsequently throughout the country. Action focused on first aid and evacuation of casualties, and distribution of emergency relief to victims of the events. Full benefit was derived from the preparations for emergencies which had been made at the very beginning of the year, insofar as relief workers were able to take effective action when the time came and the Red Cross emblem commanded due respect. The National Society teams evacuated several hundreds of wounded and dead. Information on the role and mission of the Red Cross was published in the press and broadcast on the radio, to ensure the safety of relief workers.

At the end of April the incidents spread to the north of Togo, prompting population movements, and the ICRC and the National Society set up a programme to provide basic material assistance. During the last three months of the year, violence again flared up in Lomé and various other areas, the most violent events taking place in the north.

The ICRC regional delegate took action on 27 November in connection with the attack on the Primature (the Prime Minister's office) in Lomé. She began negotiations with a view to enabling the ICRC, in its capacity as a neutral intermediary, to take care of the wounded and civilians trapped in the fighting. On 3 December, after providing these people with basic necessities, the ICRC was able to evacuate more than 50 casualties and civilians with the aid of the Togolese Red Cross.

The ICRC regional delegation also supported the assistance work conducted by the Togolese Red Cross following inter-ethnic strife between nomadic Peulh tribes in the north of the country. Material and medical relief for a total value of around 40,000 Swiss francs was supplied by the ICRC in this connection.

#### Activities for detained persons

The ICRC regional delegate was received for talks on 27 March by the President of

Togo, General Gnassingbe Eyadema, and General M. Amegi, Minister of the Interior and Assistant Chief of Staff of the armed forces. The ICRC received permission to visit people arrested in connection with the events, and subsequently saw 17 detainees in three places of detention.

When security detainees were released in April, eight of them were handed over to the ICRC for repatriation to their home countries, namely Benin and Ghana. They received basic assistance (clothing, medical treatment) prior to their repatriation. The regional delegation made representations to the Togolese authorities on several occasions in behalf of persons in need of protection on account of the internal unrest or in connection with the conflict in Liberia.

*BURKINA FASO* — Burkina Faso entered a turbulent period at the end of the year, with clashes in October and December. The ICRC regional delegation provided support in the form of first-aid supplies to the Burkina Be Red Cross, whose relief workers evacuated about 50 casualties.

*NAIROBI (Comoros, Djibouti, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, Tanzania)*

*DJIBOUTI* — The ICRC had no staff permanently based in Djibouti in 1991, the country being covered by the regional delegation in Kenya. On account of the emergency situation prevailing in neighbouring Somalia, however, the ICRC sent delegates to Djibouti on several occasions during the year. In February, as fighting raged in the Somali capital Mogadishu, the ICRC organized the transport of relief by sea from Djibouti to the northern Somali port of Berbera (see also *Somalia*).

In Djibouti itself, clashes broke out in January and again in November between the government armed forces and the FRUD.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy.

The disturbances, which occurred primarily in the northern part of the country, led to numerous arrests. The ICRC offered its services, as a neutral intermediary, to protect and assist the victims (visits to detainees, assistance to the civilian population). The offer was accepted by the authorities.

Consequently, the ICRC regional delegate in Nairobi travelled to Djibouti for meetings with high-level officials as soon as the ceasefire was announced at the beginning of December. Visits to persons arrested in connection with the events began on 7 December, and a total of 236 detainees were seen (including people arrested in January 1991 during the first wave of unrest) in five places of detention. The ICRC was ultimately unable, however, to gain access to detainees in the hands of the FRUD. The latter had requested the help of the ICRC and other international organizations in providing assistance to civilians in two towns in the north, Tadjoura and Obock, which were surrounded by government forces. The ICRC requested authorization to travel to the region in order to assess the situation. An agreement in principle was received from the authorities at the end of December.

In these circumstances, and bearing in mind the logistic facilities used for its work in the Horn of Africa, the ICRC approached the Djibouti authorities with a view to stationing delegates in Djibouti on a permanent basis.

**KENYA** — The ICRC regional delegation in Nairobi was reorganized in 1991 on account of the expansion of operational support tasks

brought about by the ICRC's work in Somalia and southern Sudan, which required the presence of more than 30 expatriate staff (relief coordinators and coordinators of air and sea transport, logistic staff, Central Tracing Agency specialists, etc.).

Work was distributed between the head of the delegation, who handled activities in the country itself (mainly cooperation with the National Society, dissemination), and the regional delegate, who dealt with matters concerning island States in the Indian Ocean, Djibouti and Tanzania. The regional delegate travelled to several countries for contacts with the authorities and National Societies.

In addition, in February the ICRC registered and visited 354 Libyan former prisoners of war who had been transferred to Tikha from Zaire by the American authorities following their release in Chad in December 1990 (see also *Zaire*).

**MADAGASCAR** — The ICRC provided support for the National Society in its efforts to evacuate the wounded during skirmishes in July/August in the Malagasy capital. A medical coordinator was dispatched from the ICRC delegation in Maputo (Mozambique) and about 15 sets of dressings were sent for first-aid teams. From 10 to 15 September, the regional delegate was in Antananarivo where, in cooperation with the Malagasy Red Cross, he organized an information meeting on the principles governing Red Cross work for leaders of the government and opposition parties.

## DISSEMINATION IN AFRICA

Throughout the year, the ten delegations and seven regional delegations covering the African continent worked particularly hard at dissemination and cooperation with National Societies.

The ICRC's five priority target groups were the armed forces and police forces, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies,

political circles and humanitarian organizations, academic circles, and the media.

Most National Societies in Africa now have a public relations, information and dissemination department which receives ICRC support.

ICRC delegates not only conducted dissemination activities in the traditional form

of seminars, workshops, conferences and presentations, they also had more frequent contact with the media (radio, television and in particular all new newspapers) and held national and regional seminars for journalists in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zaire, Congo, Liberia and many West African countries. Giving the press a heightened awareness of the ICRC role was an important part of their preparation for emergency action.

In order to demonstrate the practical import of knowledge of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and of compliance with the essential rules of international humanitarian law, the ICRC facilitated the work of first-aiders in certain National Societies, providing basic medical equipment and supplies and financial support during disturbances in Madagascar, Zaire, Mali and Togo. The authorities and the public were on the whole favourably impressed, and the reputation of the Societies concerned doubtless enhanced, by these activities conducted in the heat of the moment.

In South Africa the ICRC and the National Society co-produced a new comic book reflecting actual conditions in that country. The

100,000 copies printed were intended primarily for Red Cross members active in areas of unrest.

Two pan-African meetings were held last year. The first was the Conference on International Humanitarian Law for the Armed Forces of OAU<sup>24</sup> Member States, held jointly by the ICRC and the OAU in Nairobi from 2 to 6 December and attended by 79 officers from 41 countries, plus 8 observers. This was the first time that any such event organized by the ICRC was attended by so many high-ranking officers from such a large number of African countries.

The second was the African seminar for officials of penitentiary services, held in Mauritius from 4 to 8 November by the Henry Dunant Institute with ICRC backing, and attended by about 30 participants and experts from 20 English and French-speaking countries. The seminar ended with an urgent unanimous declaration reminding States that persons deprived of their freedom should be treated humanely and with respect for their dignity.

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<sup>24</sup> Organization of African Unity.

**RELIEF SUPPLIES DISTRIBUTED BY THE ICRC IN 1991**  
**AFRICA**

Country (in French alphabetical order)	Medical assistance	Relief		Total
	Value in Sw. fr.	Value in Sw. fr.	(Tonnes)	Sw. fr.
South Africa .....		1,260,004	557.4	1,260,004
Angola .....	160,210	10,412,838	6,331.1	10,573,048
Angola (south-east) .....	50,635	1,316,313	1 346.1	1,366,948
Benin .....		31,639	8.6	31,639
Burundi .....	8,953	22,243	4.0	31,196
Cameroon .....	4,822			4,822
Côte d'Ivoire .....	5,252			5,252
Djibouti .....	2,446			2,446
Ethiopia .....	1,947,731	28,480,308	23,604.3	30,428,039
Ethiopia (Eritrea, via Sudan) .....	80,460			80,460
Gambia .....	7,490	9,113	4.0	16,603
Guinea (Conakry) .....	6,535			6,535
Liberia .....	735,747	2,321,465	2,353.2	3,057,212
Madagascar .....	7,430			7,430
Mali .....	32,135	37,074	68.9	69,209
Mozambique .....	711,648	2,485,594	1,258.3	3,197,242
Namibia .....		13,504	8.4	13,504
Uganda .....	25,451	1,108,906	901.2	1,134,357
Rwanda .....	26,919	3,439,433	5,634.9	3,466,352
Senegal .....		116,155	224.9	116,155
Sierra Leone .....	4,186			4,186
Somalia .....	2,107,958	15,574,515	22,419.7	17,682,473
Sudan .....	325,460	2,643,585	1,504.5	2,969,045
Sudan (conflict in southern Sudan, via Kenya) .....	781,792	2,621,310	4,648.8	3,403,102
Chad .....	81,439	1,186	0.4	82,625
Togo .....	20,254	22,075	5.5	42,329
Zaire .....	55,564	98,463	90.7	154,027
Zambia .....		178,026	37.0	178,026
Zimbabwe .....	19,833	23,703	12.0	43,536
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>7,210,350</b>	<b>72,217,452</b>	<b>71,023.9</b>	<b>79,427,802</b>