

Egypt

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II. Egypt

At the end of 1951 and early in 1952, when disturbances occurred in the Suez Canal Zone, the ICRC kept in close touch with the Directorate of the Egyptian Red Crescent. On several occasions the latter had recourse to the International Committee's intervention. In view of the special character of the situation it was, in principle, for this National Society itself to give its services on behalf of the victims of the events. In certain cases the ICRC nevertheless made representations to facilitate humanitarian action in the Canal Zone. It should be noted that, in spite of the restrictions imposed upon civilian traffic between this area and the remainder of the Egyptian territory, relief teams and ambulances of the Egyptian Red Crescent were always able to pass through the military control posts, and assist the wounded and sick in hospitals and clinics in this Society's charge.

During the year 1952 the International Committee had the pleasure of receiving in Geneva the President and Secretary-General of the Egyptian Red Crescent. The purpose of their visit was to discuss with the Committee's special services (in the light of the Geneva Conventions and Red Cross traditions) the rights and duties of a National Society in a situation such as that which had developed in Suez. These discussions were continued for over a week, and were instrumental in developing and strengthening the contact already existing between the Egyptian Red Crescent and the ICRC Delegation in Egypt.

After the return to normal conditions in the Canal Zone the Cairo Delegation's work consisted in issuing Travel Documents to refugees and stateless persons, transmitting family

news by means of *Civilian Messages*¹, opening enquiries on persons reported missing after the conflict between Egypt and Israel, and also in assisting the disabled.

At the end of the year, the situation having been stable for several months, the ICRC was able to consider closing down its Cairo Delegation, where work had first started at the outbreak of the Second World War. The Delegation was officially closed on November 15, its work being taken over from this date by the Egyptian Red Crescent according to an agreement between this Society and the International Committee.

¹ See above, page 45.