

# Africa

Objekttyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **Annual report / International Committee of the Red Cross**

Band (Jahr): **- (1964)**

PDF erstellt am: **24.04.2024**

## **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Inhalten der Zeitschriften. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern.

Die auf der Plattform e-periodica veröffentlichten Dokumente stehen für nicht-kommerzielle Zwecke in Lehre und Forschung sowie für die private Nutzung frei zur Verfügung. Einzelne Dateien oder Ausdrucke aus diesem Angebot können zusammen mit diesen Nutzungsbedingungen und den korrekten Herkunftsbezeichnungen weitergegeben werden.

Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. Die systematische Speicherung von Teilen des elektronischen Angebots auf anderen Servern bedarf ebenfalls des schriftlichen Einverständnisses der Rechteinhaber.

## **Haftungsausschluss**

Alle Angaben erfolgen ohne Gewähr für Vollständigkeit oder Richtigkeit. Es wird keine Haftung übernommen für Schäden durch die Verwendung von Informationen aus diesem Online-Angebot oder durch das Fehlen von Informationen. Dies gilt auch für Inhalte Dritter, die über dieses Angebot zugänglich sind.

they obtained the following assurances : free circulation for Turkish doctors supplied with a protective Red Cross pass, unrestricted transport for the sick from one zone to another under the ICRC's guarantee, and the recognition of the legality of Turkish hospitals.

**Special cases.**—In general, the members of the delegation noted that the emblem of the ICRC was highly regarded and its neutrality respected by both sides. The Geneva representatives were therefore constantly asked to intervene to protect civilians who felt themselves to be threatened.

The delegates thus had to undertake a considerable amount of transporting, especially of prisoners' families. In fact, according to the regulations the detainees had the right to receive visits from their relatives ; but these did not dare to venture on territory occupied by the adverse party in which the prison was. Only one way remained to visit a detainee and that was to travel in an ICRC delegate's vehicle. Such visits occurred regularly. In addition, delegates transported a certain number of persons who for humanitarian reasons had to go to hospital, to the airfield or to the port. It never happened that passengers travelling in vehicles bearing the ICRC emblem were in any way molested.

After Mr. de Cocatrix's departure, the heads of the ICRC mission were successively Mr. Max Stalder, Mr. Pierre Boissier and Mr. Stalder once more.

## **2. AFRICA**

### **Algeria and Morocco**

Following on the frontier dispute which had broken out in the autumn of 1963 between Morocco and Algeria, the ICRC had visited more than 300 Algerian military captured by Moroccan forces during the fighting<sup>1</sup>. At the beginning of 1964, a delegate, Mr. Jacques de Heller, visited some fifty Moroccan prisoners in the hands of the Algerian military authorities. The ICRC saw almost all the prisoners of war captured on both sides during the course of

---

<sup>1</sup> See Annual Report 1963, p. 12.

the conflict and distributed relief to them. It fulfilled the functions assigned to it by the Geneva Conventions, notably in ensuring exchanges of correspondence between the prisoners and their families.

In Morocco, the ICRC also visited five Egyptian officers, captured behind the Moroccan lines after making a forced landing in an aircraft. Shortly afterwards, these were released and repatriated.

Subsequently, Algeria and Morocco decided to exchange prisoners and representatives of the Algerian and Moroccan Red Crescent met at Rabat to arrange methods for this operation.

This took place during the night of 14/15 April at Oujda on the frontier between the two countries. In all, 433 prisoners of war were exchanged in the presence of Mr. de Heller, ICRC delegate, and the representatives of the two Red Crescent Societies.

The ICRC representative then went to Algiers to discuss with the authorities the question of former harkis, French Army auxiliaries, still detained in prison.

## Congo

Since the beginning of 1964, troubles again broke out in various regions of the Congo (Leopoldville). In February the situation was particularly tense in Kwilu, where disturbances occurred causing numerous victims amongst the population.

Accompanied by senior officials of the United Nations and representatives of the Congolese Red Cross, Mrs. Jeanne Egger, ICRC delegate in Leopoldville, went to Kikwit in February, in order to co-operate with the action organized by UNO in the troubled province of Kwilu. Thanks to aircraft made available by the United Nations and to foodstuffs supplied by "Caritas" and the "Entraide protestante", it was possible to provide for the most urgent needs. Prisoners also benefited from food distributions.

As troubles spread to other regions in the following months, the ICRC intensified its activity amongst the native population as well as for foreign residents. It entrusted Mr. G. C. Senn with a new mission in the Congo. He was accompanied by Mr. Laurent Marti as assistant-delegate.

After having made contact with the Congolese Government at Leopoldville, the ICRC went to Bujumbura (Burundi) in order to be in close proximity to the particularly troubled area of Albertville. One delegate only having obtained permission, Mr. Senn left for that town, then occupied by rebel troops. He was met there by Mr. Gaston Soumialot, one of the leaders of the insurrection, and obtained his authorization to have evacuated certain European nationals finding themselves in difficulties.

Mr. Marti, for his part, went to Mukavu in Kivu Province, where he visited a camp in which rebels captured by government forces were interned.

**Stanleyville.**—At the end of August 1964, several governments, which were concerned with the position of their own nationals, belonging to about fifteen different countries and who were trapped in areas occupied by the insurgents fighting against the central Leopoldville authorities, asked the ICRC to send a mission to Stanleyville, the seat of the rebellion. The ICRC accepted to undertake this, but stipulated that the mission in question would act in entire accordance with the principles of the Red Cross and would favour all victims of the events without any political or racial discrimination.

On September 4, a special delegate, Dr. Jean-Maurice Rubli, left Geneva to arrange ways and means of implementing this action. The ICRC thereupon immediately informed the Organization of African Unity of this project.

However, since the situation continued to deteriorate, the ICRC launched an appeal on September 18 “to all exercising authority in the Congo”. This appeal insisted on the respect due to prisoners of war and non-combatants, on the prohibition of the taking of hostages and of the bombing of the civilian population.

In the morning of September 19, Mr. Christophe Gbenyé, head of the insurgent government, agreed to the arrival in Stanleyville of an ICRC aircraft carrying a group of delegates as well as medicines and other relief.

On September 22, the aircraft left Basle for Stanleyville. Permission to land there was given on September 25.

The ICRC delegates were met on arrival by Messrs. Gbenyé and Soumialot, heads of the insurgents, with whom they had a series of lengthy discussions. They observed that those with whom they spoke had no knowledge of the provisions of the Geneva Conventions, to which they did not consider themselves bound. The two insurgent leaders, moreover, maintained that the departure of European residents from Albertville had been followed up by bombing. They were of the opinion that a similar evacuation from Stanleyville would lead to the same result.

Discussions on the evacuation of civilians only led to a promise to consider the repatriation, for humanitarian reasons, of certain limited groups. The delegates also received 800 family messages from foreign residents for their relatives. The delegation's doctors made contact with their colleagues left in the town and handed over medicaments to them which had been brought by the aircraft for the whole of the civilian population. They then drew up a list of further medical supplies which were required.

Not being in a position to accomplish any other tasks, the mission left Stanleyville on September 26 to return to Bangui, thence to Bujumbura (Burundi) where communications with Stanleyville were less difficult.

The delegates took every opportunity of attempting to return to Stanleyville and made fresh proposals with a view to realizing the limited evacuations for which agreement had been given in principle. However, their messages to Mr. Gbenyé remained without any concrete answer being forthcoming.

In view of this deadlock, the ICRC decided to continue its efforts by seeking support from the Conciliation Commission of the OAU.

News from Stanleyville indicated that the situation in Stanleyville was beginning to deteriorate. The Gbenyé government publicly threatened to execute certain foreign residents, henceforth to be considered as hostages, should the town be bombed by the Leopoldville forces.

Those governments which in August had addressed themselves to the ICRC then, for their part, made urgent representations to the President of the Conciliation Commission of the OAU, Mr. Kenyatta, for him to take steps himself with Mr. Gbenyé with a view to

supporting the ICRC's efforts. The head of the Kenya government then agreed to intervene in Stanleyville.

This step at last evoked an answer from Mr. Gbenyé. He gave his assurance that the lives of foreign residents were not in danger. He would himself always be disposed to facilitate the activity of the Red Cross and he finally made the offer of an OAU delegation going to him to be reassured.

On the other hand, as a result of the ICRC's representations to him, the head of the Leopoldville government announced that he undertook to restrict the action of his air forces to purely military objectives, to spare the civilian population and respect the Geneva Conventions.

The situation remained largely unchanged at the end of October and the beginning of November. Whilst anxiety for the position of foreign residents in Stanleyville increased, the ICRC in Geneva made a further appeal to Mr. Gbenyé and intervened once again with President Kenyatta.

By way of reply, Stanleyville requested the ICRC "first of all for cessation of American and Belgian bombing", to enable the ICRC aircraft to land. Shortly afterwards, Mr. Gbenyé added that foreign residents would in future be considered as "prisoners of war".

The ICRC general delegate in Africa then went to Nairobi where he was able to have talks with Mr. Kenyatta and his close colleagues. As a result of these steps, the President of the Kenya Government made a declaration on November 12 in support of the efforts made on behalf of the foreign residents in Stanleyville.

Shortly before the Belgian parachute operation, representations were made to the Emperor of Ethiopia and the Secretary-General of the OAU, suggesting to the latter that he persuade the insurgents to agree to the immediate sending of an ICRC mission, accompanied by a delegate of OAU and a representative of each country whose nationals were in Stanleyville.

On November 24, the intervention of the Congolese and Belgian forces altered the situation by making the town accessible once more.

As soon as they were informed that the landing-ground at the airport was practicable, the ICRC delegates left Bujumbura for



Stanleyville. The special ICRC aircraft, carrying foodstuffs and emergency medicaments, landed in the morning of November 25, whilst firing was continuing in several quarters of the town. Three delegates, one of whom was a doctor, were in the aircraft which also carried a thousand family messages for the civilians who had long been separated from their relatives.

Leaving one delegate on the spot, the ICRC aircraft took part in the evacuation of a certain number of civilians, nationals of Asian and African countries. It then returned to Stanleyville, where a delegation was to have been installed for the purpose of assisting victims to whichever party they belonged.

However, the chaotic situation existing in the area rendered such an activity impossible. The special mission of the ICRC therefore had to withdraw and returned to Geneva.

The ICRC remained nevertheless represented in Leopoldville, where its delegate, Mrs. Egger, intervened with the government in order to ensure the protection of the detained insurgents. At the end of the year, in company with a member of the Swiss medical unit in the Congo, she visited the Ndolo and Makala prisons near the capital. She distributed to the detainees relief supplied by the "Entraide protestante".

## **Burundi**

During his visit to the Kingdom of Burundi, the delegate of the ICRC, Mr. Senn, visited prisons and places of internment and notably the central prison of Bujumbura, the capital. He then submitted a report on his visits to the authorities. The delegate was received in audience by the Mwami of Burundi.

## **Rwanda**

At the beginning of the year, the ICRC received communications from various quarters drawing its attention to the serious events which were said to be taking place in Rwanda. The Watutsi tribe, it was alleged, was being subjected to brutal acts of reprisal.

Officially informed of this matter, the ICRC sent Mr. G. C. Senn to the spot. It instructed him to examine the situation there and

discover to what extent it might be possible to come to the aid of the victims of these events.

The delegate arrived in Rwanda on January 26. At Kigali, the capital, he was received by Mr. Kayibanda, President of the Republic, who extended a warm welcome to him and declared that he was prepared to facilitate his mission as far as this was in his power.

At the Ministry of Justice, Mr. Senn obtained general authorization to visit all prisons and examine their conditions of detention. Accompanied by Mr. Maurice Frauchiger of the League of Red Cross Societies, he then started on a tour through various regions of the country. The two Red Cross representatives visited the prisons of Nyanza, Kibungo and Gyangugu, where they met several hundreds of political detainees. On their way, they also stopped at several Christian missions in which some of the Watutsis had taken refuge during the course of the recent troubles.

The delegates of the Red Cross lost no opportunity in insisting on respect being given to the humanitarian rules. On the termination of their mission, it appeared that their mere presence as representatives of the International Red Cross had already resulted in contributing to some extent to the easing of tension and the prevention of violence.

During their stay in Rwanda, the delegates had talks with various leading personalities interested in the creation of a National Red Cross Society. The President of the Republic himself expressed his interest in the subject.

Accompanied by Mr. Laurent Marti, assistant-delegate, Mr. Senn returned to Rwanda in August. The two ICRC representatives visited the prison of Ruhengeri. They insisted on the observing of the humanitarian principles based on the Geneva Conventions.

## **Zanzibar**

Shortly after the revolution which overthrew the Sultanate of Zanzibar, the ICRC sent Mr. Georg Hoffmann, general delegate for Africa, to the island. Arriving on February 26, he was received by Mr. Abeid Amani Karume, President of the Republic and he also met the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Health.



Mr. Hoffman had excellent contacts with the local Red Cross which gave most effective assistance to the victims of the events especially to the detainees and their families. He studied the different problems relating to such assistance and visited five places of detention in the island, in which there were about 1900 persons arrested during the course of the events. Concerned in the fate of the Arab minority, he had discussions with the authorities in order to discuss a humanitarian solution for this element of the population.

After this first mission of one week in Zanzibar, the ICRC's general delegate returned there for a further brief visit in June. He was received by the Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Health, as well as by the head of the Prisons Department. Together with two representatives of the local Red Cross he visited the central prison of Zanzibar. He also went to various parts of the island where there were groups of refugees and he also visited a reception camp.

The ICRC subsequently made innumerable representations on behalf of the Arab minority trapped in Zanzibar in order to facilitate its evacuation to Arabian areas, chiefly Oman and Muscat, from which it mostly originated. For this it was in contact in particular with the Sultan of Muscat and Oman, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the British Red Cross.

\* \* \*

### **Mission of the ICRC General Delegate for Africa**

Throughout 1964, the general delegate of the ICRC for Africa, Mr. Hoffmann, extended his contacts with the governments and Red Cross Societies of many African countries. This was the case notably in Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda, Sudan, Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. He made use of each occasion to give more information to those he met of the ICRC's rôle and mission, insisting also on the necessity for disseminating the Geneva Conventions. In the South African Republic, the general delegate visited detainees who had been arrested on account of the special legislation existing in that country.