

Middle East

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The Hungarian Government concluded an agreement direct with the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, as the Czechoslovak Government had done in 1969, on the payment of a lump sum for Hungarian cases still in abeyance. The ICRC therefore brought this part of its work to a close.

Middle East

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE ARAB COUNTRIES

As fresh outbreaks in hostilities broke out, the International Committee of the Red Cross sent, on 11 April, the following message to the Powers engaged in the Middle East conflict.

Despite the cease-fire, acts of war continue to occur in the Middle East. It is alarming to observe the escalation of hostilities in regions where military installations sometimes co-exist with civilian populations, thus involving ever greater suffering.

In view of the tragic development of this situation, the International Committee of the Red Cross urgently appeals to the governments and all the forces engaged in that part of the world to apply, in all circumstances, the universally recognized rules of humanity.

It emphasizes that when signing the 1949 Geneva Conventions, Powers solemnly undertook to observe a series of standards which demand, *inter alia*, that non-combatant populations shall be spared and that no attacks shall be directed against them, that military and civilian detainees shall be treated in a fitting and humane manner, and that no maltreatment and reprisals shall be directed against persons and property. Hospitals shall enjoy particular protection.

The International Committee of the Red Cross urges the parties concerned to give its delegates greater support and increased facilities for the discharge of their mission. It is imperative that, through its representatives in the area of conflict, the ICRC be permitted to carry out its plans to provide more effective protection for non-combatants.

The Committee, which has often confronted the responsible authorities with their obligations, earnestly requests them to observe the essential rules of humanity and to abstain from all acts likely to make efforts to find a peaceful solution to the conflict more difficult.

A new cease-fire agreement was concluded on 7 August.

The ICRC continued its humanitarian action for prisoners of war, civilian internees and detainees and the civilian population. To that purpose, it continued to maintain its delegations in Israel and the occupied territories, the United Arab Republic (UAR), Jordan, the

Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon. The number of delegates amounted to more than 20 persons, in addition to a large complement of locally-recruited personnel.

Mr. André RoCHAT, ICRC delegate-general for the Middle East, carried out a series of visits, to various countries: Jordan (March), Israel (April and May), UAR, Syria and Lebanon (May). In all those countries, he examined with the authorities concerned the humanitarian problems arising from the Middle East conflict.

PRISONERS OF WAR

On 5 and 6 December 1969, the ICRC had organized the general repatriation of all prisoners of war in the Middle East. But, as further prisoners had been made since then, it resumed its action in this sphere in the three countries holding prisoners in 1970, namely, Israel, the United Arab Republic and the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Middle East cease-fire agreement concluded on 7 August 1970 stipulated in its last article: " Both sides will abide by the Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the treatment of prisoners of war, and will accept the assistance of the International Committee of the Red Cross in carrying out their obligations under that Convention ". On 18 August, the ICRC sent a note to the Israeli, Jordanian, and United Arab Republic authorities in which it recorded with satisfaction the renewed determination of the Parties to respect the obligations they undertook when acceding to the Third Geneva Convention. It called upon them, moreover, to furnish it with all possible assistance in carrying out its mission on behalf of prisoners of war.

The mission, it may be recalled, consists principally in visiting all places of detention where prisoners are held in order to examine the application of the rules laid down in the Convention. The visits are followed by reports which are later transmitted to the Detaining Power and to the Power of Origin. If necessary, the ICRC approaches the authorities of the Detaining Power with a view to the implementation of the provisions laid down in the Convention.

(a) Israel

The delegates of the ICRC paid regular visits to the 122 Arab prisoners of war in Israel, who were interned in the prison of the mili-

tary camp at Sarafand; they were authorized to do so within a period varying from 2 to 25 days after their capture. Among the prisoners of war, there were 72 Egyptians, 39 Syrians, 10 Lebanese and one Jordanian, captured at the end of December 1969 and during 1970. Another Lebanese prisoner of war, who had been wounded when taken prisoner on 12 May, was repatriated on 1 June under ICRC auspices.

During their visits, which took place on an average once a month, the ICRC delegates handed over to the prisoners of war books, writing material, records, games, food and cigarettes. They enquired if any of them had any special wish to be fulfilled and saw to the forwarding of family mail. The above observations also applied to Israeli prisoners of war in the United Arab Republic and the Syrian Arab Republic.

(b) United Arab Republic

The delegates of the ICRC also visited the 13 Israeli prisoners of war who had fallen into the hands of the armed forces of the United Arab Republic at the end of 1969 and in 1970. With the exception of two of the prisoners of war, who had been severely wounded and had been visited the day after their capture, the delegates had to wait 6 to 12 weeks before they could see the Israeli prisoners of war. The ICRC expressed its deep concern over this situation and repeatedly insisted that the visits should take place without delay. It made several representations regarding this matter, not only in Cairo, to the authorities there, through its delegation and the delegate-general for the Middle East, but also in Geneva to the Permanent Mission of the UAR.

Once the first visit had been authorized, the ICRC delegates obtained thereafter all facilities to carry out visits at regular intervals to the Israeli prisoners of war who were interned at Abbassieh military prison and to the wounded lying in Maadi Hospital near Cairo.

The ICRC also approached the UAR authorities with a request for the unilateral repatriation of 5 seriously wounded Israeli prisoners of war, in accordance with Articles 109 and 110 of the Third Convention. The UAR authorities agreed to give effect to ICRC requests in a single case, that of the Israeli pilot of an aircraft shot down on 3 August, who had been wounded and was lying in a critical state. The repatriation was carried out by plane on 15 August, via Cyprus. The ICRC dispatched to Cairo its chief medical adviser who accompanied the

wounded pilot to Nicosia, where the latter was taken in charge by two ICRC delegates in Israel. The delegates found that, from the time he was captured to the date of his repatriation, the prisoner had received the requisite care to be given to a person in his condition.

At the request of the Israeli authorities, the ICRC also arranged for the repatriation of the mortal remains of an Israeli pilot who had died the day after his capture on 4 August. In October, the ICRC transmitted to the Egyptian Government a complaint from the Israel Government regarding the circumstances surrounding this pilot's death.

(c) Syria

In Syria, too, despite urgent representations made orally and in writing, the ICRC was not allowed to see three Israeli pilots who had fallen into the hands of the armed forces of the Syrian Arab Republic in 1970 until eighteen weeks, in the case of two of them and eight weeks in the case of the third, had elapsed since their capture. Later, the ICRC delegates were allowed to visit them at regular intervals, but never, contrary to Article 126 of the Third Convention, at the place of detention.

(d) Repatriation of the dead

In 1970, the ICRC delegates arranged for the bodies of about 50 Egyptian, Syrian and Israeli soldiers who had fallen in enemy territory to be repatriated.

CIVILIAN DETAINEES AND INTERNEES

(a) Civilian Arab detainees in Israel and the occupied territories

Visits : In 1970, the ICRC continued its visits to people from the occupied territories and nationals of various Arab countries held in Israel or in prisons situated in the occupied territories. ICRC delegates carried out 8 series of visits to 14 places of detention, namely the prisons of Ashkelon, Beer-Sheba, Chattah, Damoun, Kfar-Yona, Neve Tirza, Ramleh and Yagour Jalame in Israel; the prisons of Hebron, Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah and Tulkarem on the West Bank of the Jordan, and

also the prison at Gaza. As is customary, these visits were followed by reports, which were transmitted by the ICRC to the Detaining Power and to the Power of Origin.

At the end of the year, ICRC delegates in Israel and the occupied territories visited about 3,300 civilians. The delegates managed to see, generally a month after their arrest, those prisoners held under what are designated as security regulations (sentenced, accused and administrative prisoners) and common law prisoners (sentenced and accused), and to talk with them without witnesses.

In the field of assistance to detainees, the ICRC delegates continued providing aid at various levels. They strove to give those younger detainees who wished to carry on with their studies the possibility to do so. They handed over to the Prisons Service for each prison a complete set of books used in schools on the West Bank, as well as 10,000 exercise-books and 4,000 pens.

They also distributed once a month parcels containing fruit, biscuits, cigarettes and soap to detainees who did not receive visits from their families. About 6,500 parcels were distributed in 1970.

Detainees' families who could not afford to go and see their relatives in prison were given the possibility of taking advantage of aid provided by the ICRC, which organized and paid for 470 trips by coach. Over 30,000 relatives of detainees were transported free of charge to the prisons in this way.

At the request of some of the prisoners, ICRC delegates also enquired into the plight of a certain number of indigent families and drew the attention of the Ministry of Social Affairs in Israel, whose duty it was to provide for the essential needs of the poorer sections of the population, to their case.

In addition to the 14 places of detention mentioned above, delegates of the ICRC visited on several occasions 16 Arabs from Gaza interned in Israeli military camps in Northern and Central Sinai. They were all allowed to return to their homes in 1970.

Release of detainees : Following a further request submitted by the ICRC in May 1970, the Israeli authorities released 55 Palestinian Arab detainees, captured at Karameh in March 1968 in the course of a raid by Israeli armed forces into territory east of the Jordan. The repatriation

operation took place at Allenby Bridge, on 13 May, under the auspices of delegates of the ICRC in Israel and Jordan.

The ICRC also requested the release of two civilian Arab detainees who had been seriously wounded when captured in 1970. The Israeli authorities agreed to release these two disabled civilians although they had been condemned to life imprisonment. After having obtained the consent of both detainees, ICRC delegates moved them to Jordan in December.

Military courts : ICRC delegates were present at several hearings of Arabs from occupied territories accused of acts committed against the security of the State. These hearings were conducted by Israeli military courts in the occupied territories.

(b) Civilian Arab internees in Israel

Egyptian seamen : At the end of December 1969 and in January 1970, Israeli naval forces captured four Egyptian fishing-boats with 46 seamen on board. The ICRC immediately approached the competent authorities to allow visits to be made to those men ; its delegates were able to visit them on four occasions.

In March, the Israeli authorities handed over to the ICRC nine seamen to be repatriated ; they were sent across to the west bank of the Suez Canal on board three boats. The ICRC pursued its efforts for the release of the remaining 37 seamen, who were repatriated under its auspices on 6 May at El Qantara. An Egyptian civilian who had crossed into occupied territory and had been captured three months before was also repatriated at the same time.

On 5 September 1970, Israeli naval forces rescued several shipwrecked seamen from the Greek vessel " Maria Kristina ". There were among them 14 men of UAR nationality. When ICRC delegates visited them on 7 September, the seamen stated that they wished to return direct to Piraeus, where they were employed. The Israeli authorities having decided to release them, the seamen were accompanied by the ICRC delegates to Lod airport, whence they were flown to Athens on 12 September.

Algerian civilian internees : On 14 August 1970, the Israeli authorities arrested two Algerian nationals who were on board a BOAC aircraft that had made a landing at Tel-Aviv on a flight from Hong Kong. The ICRC delegation in Israel at once approached the authorities and asked for the two men to be released. The latter were visited by delegates eight times and were allowed to leave on 14 October.

Lebanese and Jordanian civilian internees : ICRC delegates in Israel visited and repatriated several Lebanese and Jordanian civilians who had inadvertently crossed the border. They also approached the authorities on behalf of Lebanese civilians captured in the course of Israeli raids in Lebanese territory. All those persons were released within a length of time varying from a few days to one month after being captured.

(c) Israeli civilian internee in the hands of Palestinian resistance organizations

On 1 January 1970, a Palestinian commando group operating from Lebanese territory captured an Israeli civilian guard. The ICRC at once approached the parties concerned with a view to getting news of the man, obtaining the authorization to visit him and to forward family messages, and negotiating his release. Delegates of the ICRC were able to see him six times, at first in Jordan and later in Syria. Only the last two visits took place in the actual place of detention, near Damascus.

(d) Israeli civilian internees in Lebanon

ICRC delegates repatriated several Israeli civilians, released shortly after being captured, who had crossed the border into Lebanese territory.

CIVILIAN POPULATIONS

(a) Reuniting of families

United Arab Republic and Gaza-Sinai : Operations organized under ICRC auspices, for the two-way reuniting of families from and to the United Arab Republic and the occupied territories of Gaza-Sinai, con-

tinued during all 1970. Nearly 850 persons, some of whom were from the United Arab Republic and some from Gaza, were able to join their families in Egypt and in the Gaza Strip respectively, bringing to 6,300 the total number of people who have been repatriated either one way or the other since the beginning of this action, in 1967.

In addition, the ICRC organized the transfer to the United Arab Republic of about a thousand Palestinian students who had passed their baccalaureate examination in occupied territory and wished to continue their studies in UAR universities, and had obtained the necessary authorization from the Egyptian and Israeli authorities. Other groups of students, who had been authorized to return to their families in the occupied territory of Gaza for their holidays or at the end of their studies, crossed the canal in the opposite direction in five transfer operations carried out between 24 February and 22 March 1970.

In October, the ICRC also stepped in, in order to organize the transfer to Lebanon of a dozen Gaza students, who had been admitted to Beirut University.

Syria and the Golan Heights : Over 130 persons, displaced in Syria by the war of June 1967, were able, through the ICRC, to rejoin their families on the occupied Golan Heights. The total number of persons repatriated since reuniting operations were begun in March 1969, reached about 600, at the end of 1970.

Jordan and West Bank : All arrangements for the reuniting of families between Jordan and the occupied territory on the West Bank of the Jordan were organized by the Occupying Power from the beginning of 1968. Delegates of the ICRC continued to lend their support only in a certain number of urgent cases for members of separated families. In 1970, out of 119 cases submitted, 75 were accepted.

Central Tracing Agency activities : During 1970, 190,000 family messages were forwarded by the ICRC from and to Arab countries and the territories occupied by Israel. By the end of the year, the total number of messages exchanged since June 1967 reached nearly 1.5 million.

Since the beginning of hostilities, the ICRC received some 13,000 enquiries concerning missing soldiers and civilians, and was able to provide answers in respect of over 3,000 cases brought to its notice ;

in about 50 per cent of the cases, the answer was negative, the missing person not having been traced despite the efforts undertaken to that end.

(b) Assistance to civilian inhabitants in occupied territories

Expropriations : The ICRC delegation in Israel was asked to deal with several cases of expropriation, by the Israeli authorities, of land belonging to the inhabitants of occupied territory, the most important cases being those of Beit-Sahour and Kirbet-Beit Zakaria, west of the Jordan. In the former case, the ICRC delegation in Israel was informed by the local population, at the end of 1969 and the beginning of 1970, that the authorities in occupied territory intended to expropriate for military reasons a considerable portion of the district of Beit Sahour, near Jerusalem ; the delegates took the matter up several times with the authorities on behalf of the persons affected. In the second case, the ICRC delegation in Israel again approached the authorities at the request of a number of landowners concerning the projected establishment of kibboutzim at Kirbet Beit Zakaria ; in November, it delivered orally a note on this subject at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ; the ICRC delegation was informed that the Ministry did not wish to pursue this matter any further.

Evacuation of people : The delegation visited on several occasions, in the new areas assigned to them, three groups of Bedouins from Sinai and Gaza, who had been moved inside those areas for security reasons. After seeing for themselves on the spot the new living conditions of the Bedouins, the ICRC delegates took several different steps on behalf of these people. In particular, they approached the military authorities with requests that the displaced persons might be allowed to return, at least temporarily, to their former dwelling areas in order to tend their trees (mainly palm groves) and gather their crops.

Destruction of houses : In reply to the ICRC's various demands that the destruction of houses in the occupied territories should cease, the Israeli authorities confirmed that they could not consider giving up that method of combating subversive activities. The ICRC delegates, while reaffirming their fundamental position based on Article 53 of the

Fourth Geneva Convention, thereupon concentrated on providing assistance to the victims.

At the end of March, at the request of the inhabitants of the Fadous district at Beit Lahiya north of Gaza, the ICRC delegation approached the military authorities in order that swift measures should be taken to re-house some 280 persons whose homes had been destroyed. In addition, it sent 40 tents and 200 blankets to the Ministry of Social Affairs in Israel to be given out to the homeless.

Emergency relief was also distributed in co-operation with the Ministry of Social Affairs, following the destruction of other houses in Gaza and in parts of the West Bank.

On the Golan Heights, the delegates of the ICRC at Kuneitra found, during 1970, that the Israeli Army was demolishing Arab villages that had been abandoned by their Syrian inhabitants during the June 1967 war. The delegation, on several occasions, approached the authorities concerned on this matter, but without any effect. The Israeli authorities argued that the destruction of these abandoned houses had been ordered for security reasons, as they were used by Palestinian commando groups as arms depots and springboards for attack.

Expulsions : The delegation communicated to the Israeli authorities several times the ICRC's deep concern and its objections over the renewal on an increased scale, during the second half of 1970, of expulsions to Jordan of Arabs from the occupied territories, who were suspected of having taken part in activities endangering the security of the State.

The ICRC had received numerous complaints from the Jordanian authorities, as well as from the Jordanian Red Crescent Society which had sent it a list containing several hundred names of persons expelled.

Examination of the health situation in Gaza and Sinai : In June 1970, a doctor-delegate of the ICRC visited all government and private hospitals and dispensaries in the Gaza Strip and in Sinai. His findings and suggestions were incorporated in a detailed report, which was sent to the two Governments concerned, namely Israel and the United Arab Republic.

Following the appearance of some cases of cholera during the second half of 1970, the delegation enquired from the public health

authorities as to the measures taken to combat the disease. Thanks to these measures, the epidemic had been practically stemmed by the end of the year.

Action for the disabled : Since 1968, the ICRC delegation in Gaza had started to draw up a list of war disabled, in Gaza itself and in Northern Sinai, in need of artificial limbs. It was found that there were 130 persons requiring assistance. Thanks to the financial aid provided by the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany¹ and to the co-operation of the Magen David Adom (MDA), which had agreed to examine amputees free of charge at its Jaffa clinic and to carry out their functional rehabilitation after they had been fitted with an artificial limb produced by a Tel-Aviv specialized firm, an action for the disabled was begun in November 1969.

This was continued all through 1970, when 32 disabled men were fitted with 35 kinds of appliances. They were brought to the MDA by the ICRC delegation which arranged for their transport on several different occasions to Jaffa for medical examination and for fitting the artificial limb.

Hardship relief : The Israeli authorities having given their consent to the ICRC for the dispatch of foodstuffs to the civilian population of Gaza-Sinai and the West Bank of the Jordan, an initial consignment of 300 tons of flour, donated by the Swiss Confederation, was unloaded at the port of Ashdod in November. The consignment was collected and distributed by the Ministry of Social Affairs in Israel, in co-operation with the ICRC delegation in Gaza. By the end of the year, 150 tons of flour had been distributed among some 57,000 Bedouin inhabitants of Northern and Central Sinai.

In September, the ICRC opened a credit of 100,000 Swiss francs for the implementation of a material and technical assistance programme to be extended to the ten local branches of the Jordanian and UAR Red Crescent Societies in the occupied territories. The programme was submitted at the end of December 1970 to the Israeli authorities for approval.

¹ See Annual Report, 1969, p. 52.

(c) Assistance to civilian populations in Arab countries

Jordan : In August 1970, the ICRC dispatched 400 tons of flour, a gift from the Swiss Confederation, to the Jordanian Red Crescent, so that it might supplement, with extra food, the parcels which it had been distributing regularly to persons displaced because of the June 1967 war and who did not receive a monthly food ration from UNRWA.

United Arab Republic : The Head of the ICRC Relief Section went to the United Arab Republic in August 1970, to examine the question of food relief allocations to displaced persons from the Suez Canal Zone. As a result of this visit, the European Economic Community dispatched 500 tons of flour to the Ministry of Social Affairs in the UAR, which was responsible for its distribution, in co-operation with the Red Crescent Society of the United Arab Republic and with the ICRC delegation in Cairo.

ICRC medical mission to southern Lebanon : After the numerous border incidents that occurred in the southern part of Lebanon during the first half of 1970, the ICRC sent to that area a medical team with instructions to offer its co-operation to the Lebanese Red Cross action on behalf of the victims. The team, consisting of a doctor-delegate and a male nurse, left Geneva on 14 July.

The members of the team were based at Saïda, and their mission was to care for persons wounded through military operations and to provide medical aid to civilians in remote villages.

From mid-July to mid-November, they visited about 30 villages in the southern border zone (from Nakoura to Chebaa) as well as groups of people who had temporarily left their villages situated close to the frontier and had gathered in the open fields, living in tents without any medical assistance whatsoever (around Nabaal Haman, Dardera, Bab-et-Tniyé and Saradat). During their rounds, they examined up to 180 patients daily.

In August, the Lebanese authorities had to combat an outbreak of cholera. At their request, the ICRC and the Lebanese Red Cross played a large part in the vaccination of the inhabitants of southern Lebanon. Thus, between 16 August and 3 September the ICRC team vaccinated nearly 10,000 persons in the villages which it used to visit regularly.

This medical aid was terminated in mid-November.

Finally, it should be mentioned that, on two occasions, at the time of the aircraft hijackings and during the Jordan events in September, the team was sent in all haste to Amman, to help in providing care for the victims.

EVENTS IN JORDAN

HIJACKING OF PLANES

On 6 September 1970, two aircraft—one belonging to Swissair and the other to TWA—were diverted to the aerodrome at Zerka, in Jordan, by the PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine). A similar attempt was made on an aircraft belonging to the El Al company, but the attack failed and the plane finally landed in London, where a Palestinian girl and the dead body of the man who was with her were handed over to the British authorities.

On 9 September, a BOAC plane was forced to land at Zerka.

At the request of the countries concerned, the ICRC took action by affording the passengers and the crew of the diverted planes protection and assistance.

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On 6 September, the PFLP contacted the head of the ICRC delegation at Amman. He agreed to proceed to Zerka where he ascertained the conditions under which the passengers were being held. The PFLP stated the terms they laid down for the release of the Swissair passengers: the three Palestinians detained in Switzerland were to be freed within seventy-two hours.

On the following day, the PFLP clarified its position and announced that it would hold the West German, American, British, Israeli and Swiss nationals until the following conditions were fulfilled: release of the six Palestinians detained in Europe, namely three in the Federal Republic of Germany and three in Switzerland; release of the Palestinian girl handed over to the British authorities on the previous day, and release by Israel of a number of Palestinian detainees. The time

limit set was seventy-two hours, namely 10 September at 02.00 hours GMT (subsequently extended to 08.00 hours GMT).

The representatives in Berne of four countries (Federal Republic of Germany, United States of America, Great Britain and Switzerland), whose nationals were among the persons detained, entrusted the International Committee with an assignment to act as a neutral intermediary.

ICRC activities designed to ensure protection for persons held : On 7 September, the ICRC accepted the proposed assignment. It decided to send a special mission to Amman, and made the following announcement on that same evening :

“ The International Committee of the Red Cross, on 7 September, held an extraordinary plenary meeting and decided to strengthen its delegation at Amman by sending a special mission that is to leave tonight for Jordan. Its instructions are to extend its assistance, without distinction of nationality, to the passengers and crews of the two aircraft hijacked on 6 September. It is to get in touch with the Jordanian Government and the Palestine organizations and, if necessary, may act as intermediary between the latter and the governments involved.

The ICRC points out that its role is purely humanitarian. It goes without saying that any decisions to be taken with regard to the conditions laid down for the release of the passengers and crews and for the return of the two aircraft must fall within the sole competency of the governments concerned.

The ICRC underlines, too, that it is incumbent upon the authorities or persons holding the passengers and crews to treat them in conformity with humanitarian rules.”

On its arrival in Amman on 8 September, the special mission contacted the Jordanian Government and the two Palestinian organizations, the OLP and the PFLP. As already mentioned, its primary purpose was to assist the persons held and, if need be, request and supervise the improvement of conditions of detention. It could also act as an intermediary between the parties concerned in organizing the evacuation of the passengers, provided there were no discrimination.

On that same day, the Governments of the Federal Republic of Germany, Great Britain and Switzerland informed the ICRC of their intention to release the Palestinians detained in those countries and asked the ICRC to inform the Palestinian movements of their decision.

Following various approaches made to the Palestinian leaders, on 10 September the special ICRC mission succeeded in having the PFLP ultimatum extended for a further seventy-two hours, to end on 13 September at 08.00 hours GMT. The PFLP proposed releasing the women

and children against the release of the Palestinians detained in Europe, and the men against the release of a number of Palestinian detainees in Israel. The Governments were averse to this proposal as being of a discriminative nature.

On 11 September, it appeared that the Palestinian leaders had decided to evacuate to Amman those still held at Zerka. The evacuation was finally carried out on 12 September, under the auspices of the ICRC, but it was coupled with the seizure of fifty-four hostages. The persons released left Amman for Nicosia on 13 September, mainly in planes chartered by the ICRC.

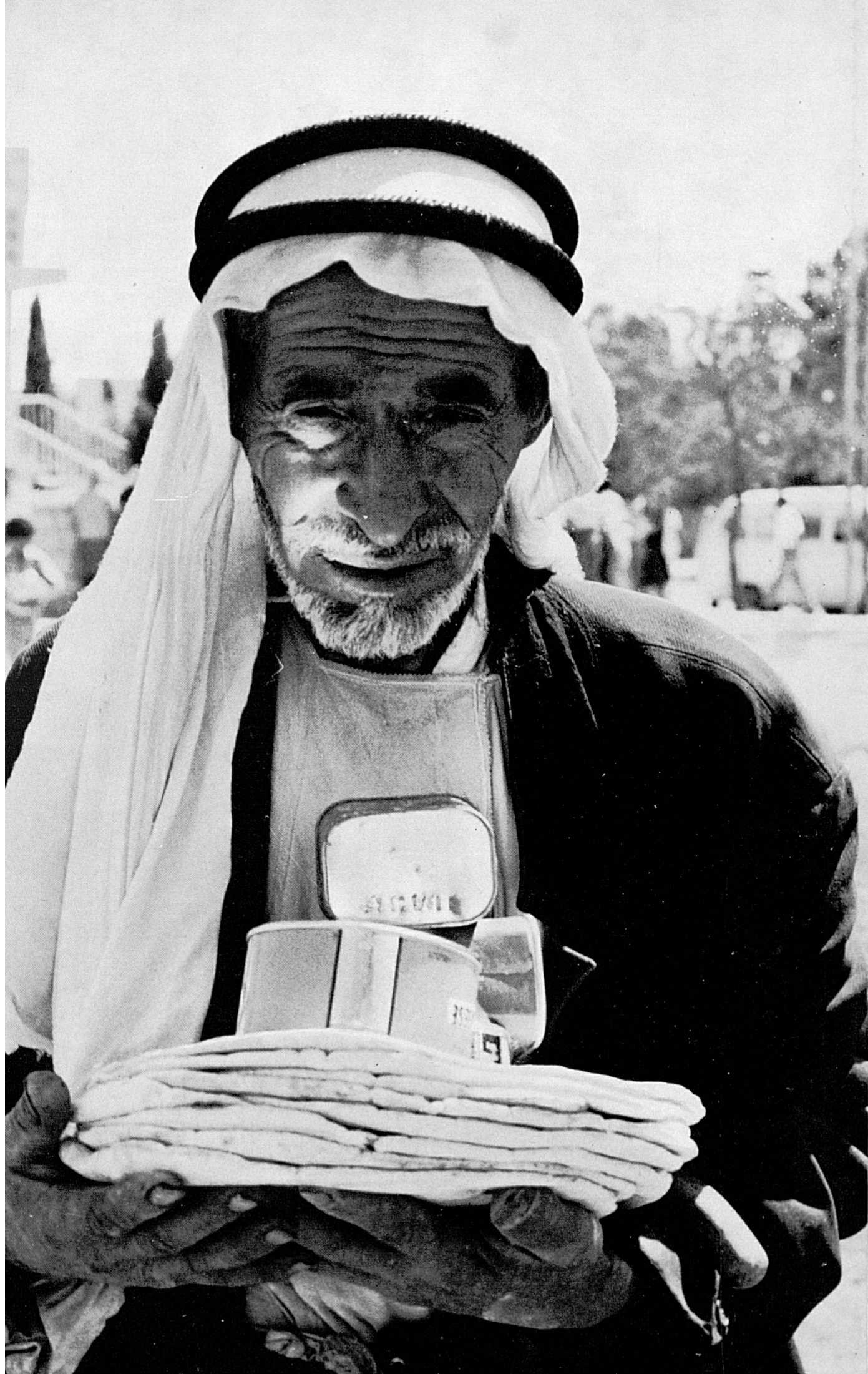
Mr. Jacques Freymond, Vice-President of the ICRC, went to Amman on 11 September to contact the special mission and review the situation. On the following day, being unable to ascertain some of the PFLP claims regarding Israel and faced with the discriminative attitude adopted by the Front—which proposed to negotiate the release of the hostages country by country—the Vice-President of the ICRC decided to suspend negotiations for the time being. On 13 September, he returned to Geneva with part of the special mission, while the ICRC delegation at Amman, along with the special delegates including a doctor who had remained behind, pursued their efforts towards improving the lot of the fifty-four hostages.

In the evening of 13 September, Mr. Marcel A. Naville, President of the ICRC, and Mr. Freymond proceeded to Berne to contact the representatives of the Governments concerned. On the following day, the ICRC held an extraordinary plenary meeting at the close of which it issued the following press releases :

“ The International Committee of the Red Cross held an extraordinary plenary meeting on 14 September 1970. It welcomed the members of the special mission, headed by Mr. A. Rochat, who had intervened on behalf of the passengers and crews of the three aircraft in Jordan, and expressed its warm appreciation of all they had done and of the results they had obtained.

The International Committee also took note of the reports submitted by the President, Mr. Naville, and the Vice-President, Mr. Freymond, on the work of the special mission in Amman, and on their meetings in Berne with representatives of the governments concerned.

After having examined these reports, the ICRC reiterated its determination to continue its action for the protection without distinction of all persons detained in Jordan, and to keep in touch with all governments and parties concerned. To this end, it granted to its delegation in Amman facilities to accomplish this task.





In conclusion, the ICRC urgently appeals to all parties to the conflict to refrain from carrying out any reprisal action."

" With the aim of ensuring the continuity of its action on behalf of those still detained in Jordan following the hijacking of the three Swissair, TWA and BOAC aircraft, the International Committee of the Red Cross has asked Mr. P. Boissier, Director of the Henry-Dunant Institute, and Mr. M. Boisard, at present Head of the ICRC delegation in the United Arab Republic, to leave for Amman immediately.

Mr. Boissier will fly from Geneva tomorrow, Wednesday, 16 September, while Mr. Boisard, who is still in Cairo, is expected any moment at ICRC headquarters before proceeding to the Jordanian capital.

The two special delegates of the ICRC will be assisted on the spot by the ICRC permanent delegation in Jordan, headed by Mr. G. Winteler, which will, at the same time, carry on its customary activities on behalf of the victims of hostilities."

At a press conference held on 14 September, the President of the ICRC said: " The ICRC has no intention of giving up the assignment it has accepted in the matter of the hijacking of aircraft. It must secure a clearer statement from the Palestinian organizations regarding the conditions they lay down for the release of their hostages."

The ICRC continued its negotiations—which were further hampered by the outbreak of civil war in Jordan, on 17 September—for visits to, and the release of, the fifty-four hostages. On 25 September, the Jordanian authorities handed over to the ICRC delegation in Amman sixteen hostages found by the Jordanian armed forces and who left the country shortly afterwards. On 26 September, another thirty-two were released, handed over to the ICRC delegation in Amman through the UAR Embassy, and repatriated by the ICRC on the following day. The remaining six hostages were handed over to the ICRC delegation in the same manner, on 29 September, and left Amman the next day.

On 1 October, an RAF plane flew to Cairo with the seven Palestinians released by the Governments of the Federal Republic of Germany, Great Britain and Switzerland.

Assistance to detainees : Concomitantly with its action to ensure the protection of the persons detained, the ICRC also gave them assistance. On 6 September, the ICRC delegation in Amman visited the 281 passengers detained in the two aircraft grounded at Zerka. The ICRC medical team attached to the Beirut delegation proceeded there

immediately, and on 9 September it was joined by a team sent out from Geneva.

Following the diversion of a third aircraft to Zerka with 150 persons aboard, on 9 September, the ICRC chartered an aircraft which left Geneva for Amman on 10 September, with two doctors, several nurses, and a large consignment of medical equipment, tents, blankets, toilet requisites and medicines.

On 11 September, however, following rumours about foreign military intervention, a state of emergency was declared at Zerka aerodrome. The Palestinian commandos ordered an ICRC doctor and the nurse who had come with him to leave the aircraft, and the ICRC convoy carrying relief supplies was prohibited access to the aerodrome.

The ICRC delegates approached the Palestinian leaders several times with the request that the passengers be evacuated from the aircraft and taken to a safe place, and arranged for those who benefited from this measure to be transported to Amman.

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The ICRC already had occasion to intervene in a similar matter on 23 July, when an Olympic Airways plane was captured by Palestinian commandos as it was about to land at Athens airport. The authors of that attempt demanded the release of seven Palestinians who were being detained in Greece and threatened to blow up the plane and all its occupants if their demand were not complied with.

In the meantime, another aircraft, with Mr. A Rochat, Delegate-General of the ICRC for the Middle East, on board, was flying in from Cairo and preparing to land. Mr. Rochat noticed that the aircraft was not being brought in to land the usual way, and, on enquiring, was informed by the pilot of what was taking place on the airport runway down below. As soon as his aircraft had touched down, Mr. Rochat introduced himself to the Chief of Police at the airport and offered to do what he could to save the passengers from the death that was threatening them.

At the request of the Greek authorities, Mr. Rochat first spoke to the commandos from the control tower. It was only after he had pleaded

with them for a long time that the ICRC Delegate-General was able to persuade the Palestinians to allow him to approach the aircraft and finally to enter and to engage in negotiations for the release of the passengers.

After the commandos had obtained from the Greek authorities a promise that their comrades would be released within 30 days, they agreed to let the occupants alight, but insisted on keeping Mr. Rochat with them as a hostage, to ensure that the plane would take off with them. The aircraft ultimately left Athens with eight members of the crew, the seven commandos and Mr. Rochat. After proceeding first towards Beirut, the aircraft changed course for Cairo where it landed early in the evening.

CIVIL WAR

Preliminary measures taken by the ICRC

On 17 September, about ten days after the aircraft were diverted to Zerka aerodrome, civil war broke out in Jordan. From the very start, the building housing the ICRC delegation in Amman was the centre of the fighting area. Before long the delegation's radio station was destroyed and communications with Geneva came to a stop. Incessant shooting prevented the ICRC delegates in Amman—six persons including a doctor and a radio operator—from leaving the building for four days.

Yet on 16 September the ICRC in Geneva had received a last message from its delegation in Amman, asking it to prepare for any contingency and to organize a medical team which could leave at short notice. On 18 September, the ICRC decided to send a large medical team, composed of a surgeon and six nurses, to Amman. It also chartered a plane which left on the same day, carrying 7 tons of medicines, surgical instruments, tents, blankets and other relief supplies. It asked the medical team attached to its delegation in Lebanon to proceed to Amman without delay. Mr. Boissier and Mr. Boisard¹, who were held up in Beirut owing to the outbreak of civil war in Jordan, were instructed to do everything possible to assist the victims of the hostilities.

¹ See page 61 of this Report.

To enable the aircraft it had chartered to fly from Beirut to Amman with two delegates and a medical team of two doctors and three nurses, the ICRC secured the agreement of the Jordanian Government and the Palestinian representatives. On 20 September, the aircraft, bearing the red cross sign was the first to land at Amman since the beginning of the fighting. As soon as the aircraft was unloaded, it returned to Beirut. The following day it took off for Amman with 4 tons of various medical supplies provided by the Kuwait Red Crescent and 600 bottles of blood plasma from the Lebanese Red Cross, escorted by an ICRC delegate. On 21 September, it returned to Beirut with an initial convoy of civilian casualties, who were hospitalized by the Lebanese Red Cross.

Meanwhile the ICRC had received appeals for aid from the "Palestinian Red Crescent". The King of Jordan also appealed to various Governments for emergency aid and asked the ICRC to co-ordinate all relief operations for the victims of hostilities. On-the-spot enquiries made by the ICRC delegates showed that the medical and food requirements were immense. Unfortunately it was virtually impossible to move about in Amman owing to the intense fighting, and even the possibilities of providing relief were limited.

The supply problem was acute, and on 22 September a further ICRC flight carried some 6 ½ tons of food to Amman (bread, tinned food and cheese) which, like the relief supplies flown in two more flights the following day, came from the UNRWA and UNICEF stocks in Beirut.

In view of the size of the relief operation, the ICRC decided, on 23 September, to establish a relief co-ordinating group. It issued the following press release :

" In order to cope with the situation arising from the tragic events occurring in Jordan, the ICRC has set up within its Operations Division, in Geneva, directed by Mr. R. Courvoisier, a relief co-ordinating group led by Mr. K. Warras, Secretary-General of the Finnish Red Cross and Vice-Chairman of the League of Red Cross Societies.

The group's first emergency measure was the immediate dispatch to the Jordanian capital of a four-member mission comprising Dr. R. Marti, ICRC medical consultant, Mr. O. Burckhard, former ICRC delegate to Amman, Mr. A. Beaud, head of ICRC Relief Section, and Mr. H. Mathiessen, Norwegian Red Cross relief expert.

The objective of the mission, which left Geneva on 23 September, will be to determine from each party to the conflict the scope for ICRC action and to step up the relief work already started by the International Committee.

With a view to obtaining the necessary support for its mission, the ICRC, in liaison with the League of Red Cross Societies and after consulting a number of Red Crescent Societies in the Middle East, has launched an appeal to all National Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies on behalf of the victims of the conflict."

Alerted to the situation by its delegates in Amman, the ICRC released the following statement on the same day :

" The International Committee is seriously alarmed by the tragic situation prevailing in the Jordan capital where many military and civilian wounded are uncared for and in grave danger.

The ICRC therefore appeals to the governments and all forces operating in Jordan to apply in all circumstances the universally recognized humanitarian rules which demand that in every conflict, whatever its form, all wounded be collected and cared for.

The ICRC urges the parties involved to conclude a 24-hour truce within Amman and a radius of 20 km round the town, starting at 5 a.m. GMT on 25 September, to permit the removal and treatment of the wounded.

Such truces are provided for in the Geneva Conventions in the following terms: ' Whenever circumstances permit, an armistice or a suspension of fire shall be arranged, or local arrangements made, to permit the removal, exchange and transport of the wounded left on the battlefield'.

The ICRC also asks the fighting forces to grant its delegates the necessary protection and facilities to enable them to discharge their mission. Its delegates are ready to be of service to the authorities concerned in implementing the truce and relief operations."

Under a temporary cease-fire agreement concluded by the two parties to the conflict, the mission responsible for making a survey of the requirements was able to proceed to Amman on 24 September.

The ICRC called a meeting at its headquarters of representatives of several National Red Crescent Societies from Arab countries (Algeria, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and United Arab Republic). A representative of the " Palestinian Red Crescent " was also present. The meeting discussed measures for co-ordinating the relief supplies provided by Arab countries and forwarding them to Jordan through ICRC channels. A Tunisian Red Crescent delegate was appointed to represent Arab National Societies on the relief co-ordinating group set up by the ICRC.

Again on 24 September, the ICRC launched an appeal to all National Red Cross, Red Crescent, and Red Lion and Sun Societies, followed by two further appeals, on 6 and 9 October. The response was immediate. A statement of the contributions is given on page 133 of this Report.

Relief action

Even before hostilities ceased, on 27 September, the ICRC was arranging for the dispatch of the relief supplies already assembled to the regions devastated by fighting whose needs were immense. The operation was developed in several sectors :

- in Amman, where the two aircraft chartered by the Red Cross continually flew in food and medical supplies from Beirut (from 20 September to 31 October there were 92 flights which carried 582 tons of food and other relief supplies) ;
- from Israel to Jordan ; a relief convoy led by the head of the ICRC delegation to Israel had crossed Allenby Bridge as early as 24 September. In the days following, several convoys escorted by ICRC delegates carried almost 1,000 tons of relief from the ICRC, UNRWA, the West Bank population and municipalities, and the Israeli Government ;
- from Syria to Jordan. The ICRC endeavoured to send relief to the north of Jordan from Damascus. A delegate and three doctors went to the Irbid area on 30 September.

At the ICRC's request, as from 26 September a number of National Societies sent medical teams to work under the ICRC flag. In addition, about fifty aircraft sent by the United States, British and French Governments landed field hospitals in Jordan. Shortly afterwards, a medical team sent by the Government of the USSR joined the field hospitals, which were placed under the red cross sign and co-ordinated on the spot by the ICRC.

Towards the beginning of October, with the arrival of additional personnel and the installation of medical teams in given sectors, order was in part re-established. Bases were set up in the King Hussein Hospital and the Amman municipal stadium. A central supply depot was established, and a more effective system of relief distribution came into operation.

The permanent delegations of the ICRC in Lebanon, Syria and Israel provided the logistic support required by the bases and the teams in the field. Radio communication was established between Beirut, Amman, Damascus and Geneva, and also by means of the two Red Cross aircraft. Moreover, the ICRC delegation in Beirut, one of the

main ports of the Middle East, had splendid co-operation from the Lebanese Red Cross, which played a major part in the general effort.

The administrative staff from Geneva headquarters made regular trips into the field. The head of the relief operation arrived in Jordan on 4 October, and the report which he made gives a clear idea of the situation :

" It is hard to assess the present situation, owing to the dearth of reliable information and statistics. The precise number of killed and wounded will probably never be known. An immense amount of damage has been caused in some areas, while in others it has not been as serious as it was said to be. Living conditions are gradually improving although the lack of water and electricity is still a major problem. In the medical sphere, eleven teams comprising 516 doctors and nurses, plus the technical personnel, have treated 5,107 patients. Despite all the difficulties, the activities of these teams have been effective and extremely well co-ordinated, thanks to the daily meetings held by the personnel as well as the use of the wireless network made available by the British team. The preliminary emergency phase may be regarded as ended ; we are now entering upon the second stage, the stage of consolidated action, which will enable us to meet the continuing needs created by the situation."

Following this report, plans were immediately drawn up for the second and more important phase of the operation. In Geneva, two further appeals were made for funds and supplies. The recruitment of additional and replacement staff was successfully launched.

Better working conditions were prevailing in Jordan. Plans were laid for regular distribution, in co-operation with the Jordan National Red Crescent Society and the " Palestinian Red Crescent ". Thus the situation gradually improved even though security was still relative. The Red Cross co-ordinated the activities of the medical teams. Planning was undertaken with a view to assessing the amount and the duration of the medical care to be given to about 150 wounded civilians who, owing to their condition, still required hospitalization.

The third and last phase of the operation was planned and carried out at the end of October. It called for the gradual withdrawal of the medical teams and for a regrouping of the wounded who were still under medical supervision in a single hospital. This was done under an agreement between the Red Cross and the Jordanian Ministry of Health whereby the King Hussein Hospital was made available to the Red Cross. The staff was jointly supplied by the Ministry of Health, the Army Medical Services and the Red Cross medical units. By 30 October everything had been got ready. Moreover, the Governments of

France, Great Britain and the United States of America agreed that the equipment of their medical teams be assigned to the Red Cross hospital, which was thus able to work efficaciously. In addition to this material it received supplies from various National Societies and from individual donors.

By 30 November, the 174 wounded who had been transported to Lebanon by the ICRC at the outbreak of hostilities had left the Lebanese hospitals. Only twenty-three of them, who were still receiving treatment and therefore not ready for repatriation had to wait until 29 November before they could be flown to Jordan. From the case files held by the Red Cross and the medical teams sponsored by various Governments, it emerges that about 2,500 patients were admitted to the hospitals in which the teams were working. More than 2,300 operations were carried out, and more than 7,850 out-patients came for consultations.

From 1 November to the closing of the operation, the distribution of relief was carried out by the Jordan National Red Crescent Society and the "Palestinian Red Crescent", under the supervision of the Jordan relief co-ordinating group. In the confusion which set in at the start of the conflict, it was not possible to register the arrival of all supplies in systematic fashion. The records show, however, that more than 1,800,000 kg of relief supplies were received and distributed by the teams taking part in the Jordan operation. The supplies included 1,500,000 kg of food, 112,000 kg of pharmaceuticals and medical material, plus a considerable number of tents, blankets, clothing and other articles.

On 1 December, talks were initiated with the officials of the King Hussein Hospital regarding wounded persons still in hospital. The number of patients was decreasing from day to day, and the Jordanian medical authorities decided, in agreement with the Red Cross doctors, that the local medical personnel were perfectly able to provide the care required. It was therefore agreed that the remaining Red Cross medical personnel should leave Jordan on 10 December. On that day the hospital had only fourteen in-patients.

The last relief convoy for Jordan left Beirut on 5 December with food, medical supplies, clothing and tents. It reached Amman on 6 December and the Red Cross immediately carried out the distribution of supplies with the aid of the "Palestinian Red Crescent".

On 9 December this last mission ended, and on 10 December the doctors, nurses and other Red Cross personnel left for home.

Throughout the relief action, the ICRC benefited from the support of a number of National Societies, which helped it bring its task of co-ordination to a successful conclusion by delegating experts, both in Geneva and Beirut. These experts worked with ICRC officials particularly in the field of relief, transport, information and public relations.

Conventional activities

Prisoners : Parallel to the relief action described, the ICRC applied itself to carrying out the traditional tasks incumbent upon it under the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

The ICRC permanent delegation in Amman approached the Jordanian authorities with a view to visiting prisoners. On 26 September, it had access to three Syrian prisoners-of-war. It also visited several hundred Palestinian detainees. A few days later, the Jordanian authorities informed the ICRC that all prisoners of war had been released.

Family messages and tracing requests : In the absence of postal communications between Jordan and the territories occupied by Israel, and as it had been impossible to establish any contact between Jordan and the outside world since the beginning of the civil war, the ICRC delegation in Amman was faced with a large influx of messages received through the ICRC's various delegations in the Middle East and the Central Tracing Agency in Geneva. The Agency immediately sent one of its officials to Amman to set up at the delegation's headquarters a card index of the names of all persons to be traced, whether soldiers or civilians. This office, once it was installed, followed the system used in Geneva. A locally recruited Jordanian official was trained to apply the methods and subsequently continued the work, under the responsibility of the ICRC delegates.

In the first place, some 25,000 messages had to be transmitted to the addressees. With the efficient co-operation of the Jordan National Red Crescent Society, the Jordanian postal authorities (who gave priority to messages from the delegation) and a large number of volunteers throughout the country, the messages were distributed and most of them returned within four weeks to the enquirer, with a reply.

Lastly, it is worth mentioning that the ICRC representatives travelled throughout the country to inform the inhabitants of remote villages and hamlets that they could write to the delegation in Amman, which would undertake to forward family messages, to trace missing persons and to help everyone solve any other problem of a purely humanitarian nature, where the intervention only of a neutral institution such as the Red Cross was possible.

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It will be recalled that the ICRC was already active in Jordan before the outbreak of civil war, in June 1970. At the request of the governments concerned and after securing the agreement of the Jordanian authorities and the Palestinian movements, it organized the evacuation from Jordan of 540 nationals of different countries, on 12 and 13 June, in five flights by the two planes chartered for the purpose.

On 13 June, it flew out 6 tons of medicaments for the wounded in the Amman hospitals.

ARABIAN PENINSULA

During 1970, the ICRC delegation in the Arabian Peninsula, composed of the head of the delegation and a delegate, was active in three fields: prisoners of war, political detainees and medical and food assistance to the inhabitants.

PRISONERS OF WAR

In the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and in Saudi Arabia

In the fighting which, in November 1969, broke out in Hadhramaut (the frontier province in the northern part of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen) between the armed forces of Saudi Arabia and of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, thirty-seven Saudi Arabian soldiers and twenty-four Southern Yemeni soldiers were captured and interned at Aden and Riyadh respectively.

Following the approaches made to both parties by Mr. Rochat, Delegate-General for the Middle East, the ICRC delegates visited the prisoners of war three times in 1970. The thirty-seven Saudi Arabian prisoners were visited on 13 January, 6 June and 5 December, and the Southern Yemeni prisoners on 21 January, 23 June and 15 December.

As fighting did not last very long, the ICRC delegates also approached the Government of Saudi Arabia and of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, to organize a general exchange of prisoners of war. The negotiations lasted until December, when the two parties agreed that the exchange should take place in Cairo, under the auspices of the ICRC. The operation was in fact carried out early in 1971.

POLITICAL DETAINEES

In the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen

With the agreement of the Southern Yemeni authorities, the ICRC delegates continued to visit a number of political detainees in Aden. They visited the Mansura prison three times—in January, June and October—and saw more than 220 detainees.

On each visit, the ICRC delegates handed parcels containing food, clothing and books to any detainees who received none from their families. Medicines and spectacles were also provided for detainees who were in need of them.

The ICRC delegation issued a weekly supply of rice, flour, sugar, tea and milk to about fifteen particularly needy families of political detainees.

MEDICAL AND FOOD ASSISTANCE TO THE POPULATION

In the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen

The surgical team which the USSR Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies made available to the ICRC in November 1969—a team comprising two surgeons and one anaesthetist, all of whom were highly qualified—operated in the Aden Republican Hospital up to 20 May 1970. During its mission, which lasted from 20 November 1969 to 20 May 1970, the team carried out 898 operations, treated 589 fractures, and held 4,870 polyclinic consultations.

With the departure of the Soviet doctors, ICRC medical assistance in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen came to an end. In November 1967, on the eve of the country's accession to independence, the ICRC had sent an initial surgical team to Aden to relieve the shortage of medical personnel following the withdrawal of the British forces. As the new Government was not in a position to set up its own health services, the ICRC continued its emergency action in 1968, 1969 and 1970, thanks to the co-operation of a number of National Societies which provided the requisite personnel.

On the other hand, in the field of food assistance, the ICRC pursued its activities throughout 1970. Several consignments of food were sent. On 11 March, an ICRC aircraft carried 4 tons of powdered milk, 2 tons of rice and 1 ton of medicaments to Aden. Further consignments, totalling 76 tons of powdered milk and 50 tons of flour, went by ship. The medicaments were handed over to the competent authorities and to hospitals, while the food was distributed through the local Red Crescent to needy families in Aden and its surroundings. About 1,200 families were supplied with milk and flour every month.

To ensure that this action should be brought to a successful conclusion, the ICRC obtained about 30 tons of milk from the Swiss Confederation, and 50 tons of flour and 50 tons of milk from the European Economic Community. The value of the consignments totalled about 490,000 Swiss francs.

In the Yemen Arab Republic

During the first few weeks of 1970, the northern provinces of the Yemen Arab Republic were the scene of incidents between the governmental army and royalist tribes.

From 6 January to 14 February, the ICRC delegates tried to install a surgical team composed of a surgeon, an anaesthetist and a nurse, at Saada, in the northern part of the country. After treating nearly 2,670 patients, the team had to leave Saada because there was no guarantee regarding security or the arrival of supplies.

On 19 February, the Yemeni Minister of Health proposed that the ICRC should install its surgical team in the hospital at Khamer, a small town 90 km north of the capital. This was the hospital nearest to the troubled area. The ICRC team was installed there in March. Its first

task, after bringing the equipment and medicaments donated by the ICRC, was to ensure that the institution, constructed in 1967 but never yet used, was put into operation. No sooner had it begun to function, on 1 April, than about a hundred persons came for various types of treatment every day. This activity continued up to the end of August, when the ICRC withdrew its surgical team from Khamer. By that time there were virtually no more wounded requiring care, and the emergency because of which the team had been sent out was over.

At the request of the Government of Yemen, the ICRC endeavoured, as far as its means would permit, to assist those most badly hit by the drought in the Tihama coastal area. In 1970, the harvest was absolutely nil and famine drove the rural population into towns, especially Hodeidah and Sana'a.

Having several dozen tons of powdered milk for the Yemen Arab Republic, the ICRC sent out a doctor-delegate who made a careful study of the food and health situation and determined what were the most urgent needs.

Following this survey, in August the ICRC set up a milk distribution centre at Hodeidah, which ensured a daily distribution of milk to several hundred children. In October, the centre was turned over to the emerging Yemeni Red Crescent Society—established on 4 July 1970—and operated with the aid of League of Red Cross Society advisers.

A similar centre, established by the ICRC delegation, was already operating in Sana'a, where several hundred children continued to receive a daily food supplement.

In 1970, the Yemen Arab Republic received 60 tons of powdered milk donated by the Swiss Confederation and the European Economic Community, plus 4 tons of medicaments, to a total value of about 400,000 Swiss francs.

In March, the ICRC set up a workshop in Sana'a for the manufacture of orthopaedic appliances for war invalids.¹

¹ See page 78 of this Report.

Iraq and Iran

In September 1969, the ICRC installed a delegation in Baghdad, to work for the reunion of Iranian families who were dispersed between Iran and Iraq owing to the tension between the two countries over the Shatt-al-Arab and the forced repatriation of a large number of Iranians living in Iraq. In October and December, two preliminary operations were held under the auspices of the ICRC and more than a hundred Iranian nationals were allowed to return to their homes in Iraq.

On 16 January 1970, a third operation, involving forty-six persons, was carried out between the two countries. As the situation returned to normal, the ICRC recalled its delegation from Baghdad in March 1970

Central Tracing Agency

During 1970, the Central Tracing Agency received 45,316 requests and communications and sent out 43,510 letters. It opened 10,091 enquiries with National Red Cross Societies, ICRC delegations, the International Tracing Service at Arolsen and various other relevant bodies, and it was able to close 10,661 files, 4,936 of which had given positive results.

The Central Tracing Agency is constantly coping with a double task. It has to fulfil its very urgent and frequently arduous duties dictated by current events without, however, neglecting the many activities resulting from past conflicts. Whenever a new conflict flares up, the Central Tracing Agency immediately sets everything in motion in order to trace soldiers and civilians reported missing, to record information on captives as supplied by the Detaining Powers, to inform the Powers of Origin and families, and to transmit correspondence sent by prisoners of war and civilian internees to their families and vice versa. It must handle also the transmission of messages between civilians who have not been interned and those members of their families who are unable, owing to events, to correspond through normal channels.

Once hostilities end, the Central Tracing Agency continues to hold valuable information regarding the captivity and state of health of