Middle East

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Middle East

In the conflict between Israel and the Arab countries, the ICRC pursued its humanitarian action for prisoners of war, civilian internees and detainees, and the civilian population. It therefore maintained its delegations in Israel and the occupied territories, the Arab Republic of Egypt, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon. Apart from the locally recruited personnel, there were 22 delegates.

In the Arabian Peninsula, it pursued its activities in three spheres : prisoners of war, political detainees, and medical and alimentary assistance to the civilian population. It maintained its delegations in the Yemen Arab Republic and in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.

In addition to the delegates sent permanently or temporarily into the field, several ICRC officials went to the Middle East in 1971.

Following a trip to Israel in January, in the course of which a number of current problems were discussed with Government and Magen David Adom representatives, Mr. Jean-Pierre Maunoir, Assistant Director and Acting Delegate-General for the Middle East, attended the meeting of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of Arab-speaking countries held in Beirut during the second half of February. Continuing his round of visits to ICRC delegations in the Middle East, he then proceeded to Syria, Jordan and the Arab Republic of Egypt and also visited the Red Crescent Societies of those three countries.

Mr. Jean-Louis Le Fort, Secretary-General of the ICRC, made a fact-finding visit to the delegation in Israel from 29 May to 6 June.

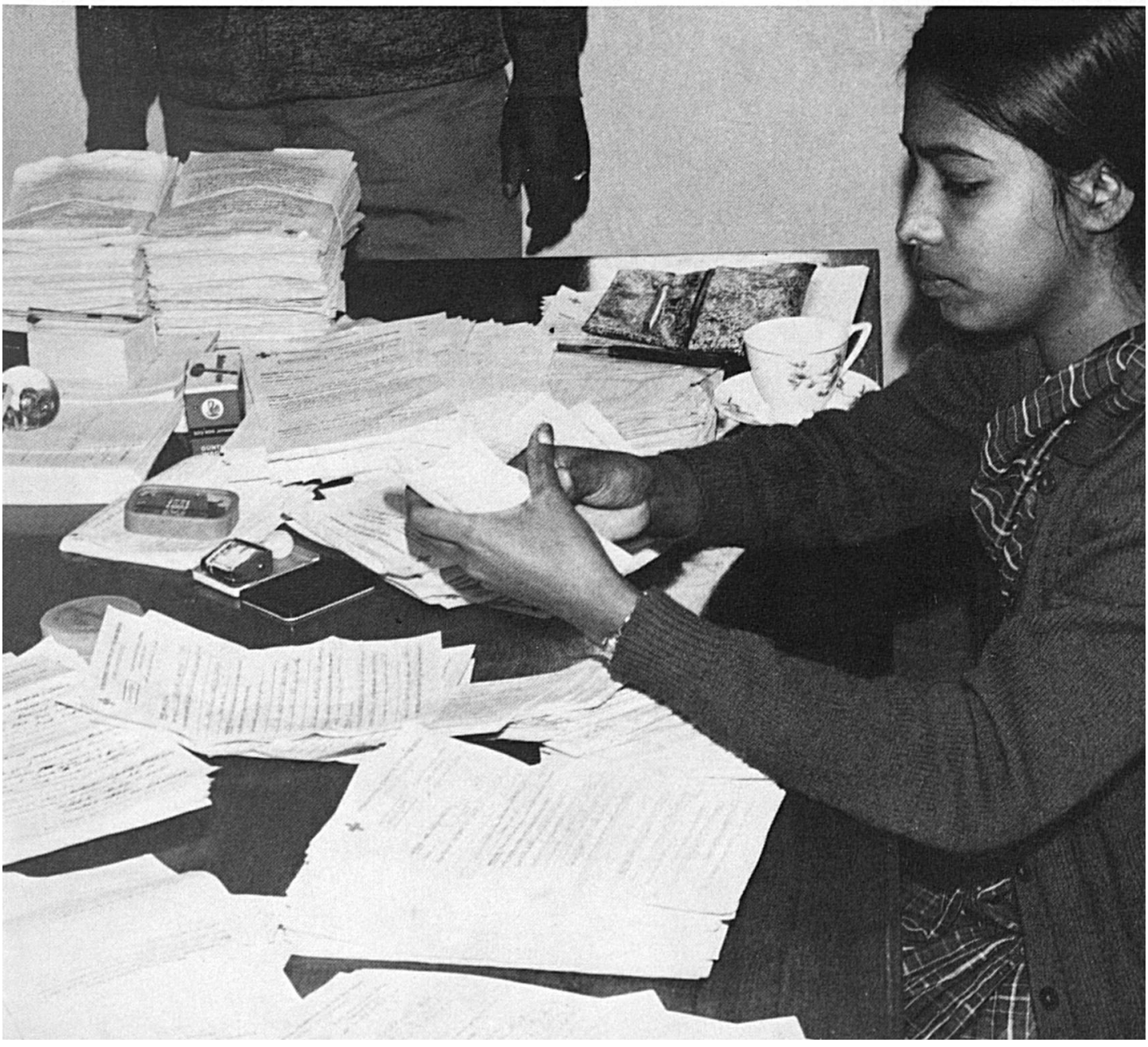
Lastly, in December, three members of the ICRC—Mr. Victor H. Umbricht, Mr. Max Petitpierre and Mr. Frédéric Siordet—carried out missions to Israel, the Arab Republic of Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, to exchange views with government authorities and National Societies on the ICRC's principal humanitarian activities in the Middle East.

CONFLICT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE ARAB COUNTRIES

PRISONERS OF WAR

The ICRC rendered assistance to prisoners of war held in Israel, the Arab Republic of Egypt, Syria and Jordan.

One of the Bengali employees in the tracing service opened by the Central Tracing Agency, at Dacca. Photo Jolliet/ICRC



Bangladesh: many bridges were destroyed during the war. Photo Kurz/ICRC

(a) *Israel :* At the end of 1970, the Arab prisoners of war in Israel numbered 122, namely 72 Egyptians, 39 Syrians, 10 Lebanese and one Jordanian.

The ICRC delegates visited the Arab prisoners of war in the Sarafand military prison about every three weeks. They also visited the Safad Hospital, where three Syrian prisoners of war wounded at the time of capture, were receiving treatment for a number of weeks. In the course of those visits, the ICRC delegates gave the prisoners of war books, writing materials, records, games, food and cigarettes. They enquired whether they had any special wishes and attended to the forwarding of family mail, as did their colleagues in the Arab Republic of Egypt, Syria and Jordan, for the Israeli prisoners.

Following the release of an Israeli civilian by the Palestinian organizations at the end of February 1971, the Israeli Government released ten Lebanese prisoners of war on 23 March. The repatriation operation took place at Roshanikra (Raz Nakoura), on the Israeli-Lebanese border, in the presence of ICRC delegates.

In the course of several operations, the Government of Israel also released 14 Egyptian prisoners of war. One of them, who was wounded, was repatriated on 28 March, at the same time as a wounded Israeli prisoner of war. Three Egyptian servicemen were repatriated on 16 September, while the remaining ten were repatriated at the same time as a second wounded Israeli prisoner of war, on 15 December. All these operations were organized by the ICRC and carried out on the Suez Canal, either at Ismailia or El Qantara.

Lastly, the Israeli Government decided to release a disabled Syrian prisoner of war, in accordance with the provisions of the Third Geneva Convention, and ICRC delegates arranged for his repatriation at Ahmedia on 9 December.

Following these liberations and further captures in the course of the year, the number of Arab prisoners of war in Israeli hands at the end of 1971 amounted to 105, comprising 62 Egyptians, 42 Syrians and one Jordanian.

(b) *Arab Republic of Egypt :* ICRC delegates visited the twelve Israeli prisoners of war in the Arab Republic of Egypt on average every two or three weeks. Ten were interned in the Abbassieh military prison, while the other two, who were wounded, received medical treatment at the Maadi Hospital near Cairo. One of them, whose condition

had improved, was transferred to the Abbassieh military prison at the end of July.

The ICRC was particularly concerned about the wounded prisoners of war and made a great many approaches regarding them in Cairo, through its delegation, and to the Permanent Mission of the Arab Republic of Egypt in Geneva. Among other things, it requested the unilateral repatriation of the more seriously wounded prisoners of war, in accordance with Articles 109 and 110 of the Third Convention. In exchange for a wounded Egyptian prisoner of war, the Egyptian Government agreed to repatriate a disabled Israeli prisoner of war on 28 March. Following the visit to Cairo, in December, of Mr. Petitpierre, a member of the ICRC, it also decided to release the Israeli prisoner of war who had been undergoing treatment in the Maadi Hospital. As already mentioned, the repatriation took place on the Suez Canal, not far from Ismailia. ICRC delegates proceeded to the simultaneous repatriation of ten Egyptian prisoners of war held by the Israelis.

(c) *Syria :* ICRC delegates paid monthly visits to the three Israeli prisoners of war held by the Syrians. Contrary to the provisions of Article 126 of the Third Convention, however, the visits were never held at the actual place of detention. The ICRC frequently made representations to the Syrian authorities with a view to gaining access to the place of detention.

(d) *Jordan :* The Jordanian Government awarded prisoner-of-war status to an Israeli civilian guard of Druse origin captured by Palestinian commandos in August 1969 and who in January 1971 had come under Jordanian military control. ICRC delegates visited the prisoner, who was interned in the Zerka military camp, every month or two. On 10 September, the Jordanian authorities captured a second Israeli national who had slipped across the border. He, too, was awarded prisoner-of-war status and interned in the Zerka military camp.

APPLICATION OF THE FOURTH GENEVA CONVENTION

While the Israeli Government did not agree with the formal opinion expressed by the ICRC on several occasions, that the Fourth Geneva Convention should be made applicable to the population in the occupied territories, it nevertheless continued to afford the ICRC and its

delegates all the facilities necessary to the successful achievement of their mission for the population. The ICRC delegation therefore applied a pragmatic approach to its efforts to ensure as complete an implementation of the provisions of the Fourth Convention as possible. In many spheres, the co-operation thus set up between the Israeli authorities and the delegation allowed the very appreciable alleviation of the sufferings and difficulties arising from the conflict.

CIVILIAN DETAINEES AND INTERNEES

(a) **Arab Civilian Detainees in Israel and the Occupied Territories**

Visits : ICRC delegates continued their visits to people from the occupied territories and nationals of various Arab countries held in Israel or in prisons situated in the occupied territories. They carried out six series of visits to fourteen 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, and the Gaza prison.

On two occasions they visited the Nahel internment camp, in Central Sinai. The camp was opened in January, following a number of arrests in the Gaza Strip. Early in May, the internees were released and the camp was closed down.

Some thirty Gaza families, who at the beginning of the year had been deported to Abu Zenima, on the east coast of the Gulf of Suez, were visited five times. They were mainly women, children and old people who had been deported because some member of the family was wanted by the police. When the deportees were sent back to Gaza at the end of November, the delegation, in co-operation with the Israeli Ministry of Social Welfare, provided emergency relief for those whose homes had been destroyed by the army and who were destitute.

All visits were covered by reports which the ICRC sent to the Detaining Power and to the detainees' own government.

By the end of the year, about 3,200 Arab civilian detainees had been visited by ICRC delegates in Israel and the occupied territories. As a rule, delegates were able to see both the prisoners described as security risks (sentenced, accused or under preventive detention) and

criminal law prisoners (sentenced or accused) within a month of their arrest, and talk to them without witnesses.

The ICRC approached the Israeli authorities regarding some overcrowded prisons. They also recommended that prisoners should be given more opportunities for work in places of detention. It provided the Prison Service with some ten sewing machines, as a result of which it was possible to equip two places of detention with an additional workshop.

The ICRC continued its monthly distribution of parcels to detainees who received no family visits. In 1971, there were 7,183 such parcels, containing 5 kg of fruit, biscuits, cigarettes and soap. In view of the approaching winter, the ICRC also succeeded in ensuring that detainees who had relatives living in one of the adjacent Arab countries should be allowed to receive a parcel of clothing from them. The operation, which was the first of its kind, was carried out in December, and 701 parcels were sent from Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and the Arab Republic of Egypt. In addition, 300 parcels were provided by the Jerusalem Committee of the Jordan Red Crescent.

Detainees' families who could not afford to go and see their relatives in prison were able to take advantage of aid provided by the ICRC, which organized and paid for some 800 trips by coach. Over 51,000 relatives of detainees were thus transported free of charge to the prisons.

Lastly, the ICRC delegates instituted a procedure for speeding up the exchange of news between detainees and their families. The Israeli authorities agreed that detainees who for several months had received no word from their relatives should be allowed to send a special card bearing the words " Anxious for news " and that those cards should be given priority by the censors.

The ICRC also asked the Israeli authorities to notify it of the identity of prisoners. On the occasion of Mr. Umbricht's visit to Israel in December, the Israeli authorities agreed to consider with the ICRC delegation in Tel Aviv ways and means for ensuring that notification.

Repatriation of civilian prisoners : On 15 February, the ICRC delegates arranged for two disabled civilian detainees to be repatriated to Jordan across the Allenby Bridge. At Roshanikra, on 26 February, a young Lebanese captured by the Israeli authorities the year before

was repatriated. These various cases of repatriation came after the ICRC had made various approaches and ascertained that the persons concerned were in fact anxious to go home.

ICRC delegates also made representations on behalf of one of the last Palestinian combatants captured at Karameh (Transjordan) on 21 March 1968 and still held in Israel. The Israeli authorities agreed to release the man, and on 29 October the repatriation operation was carried out across the Allenby Bridge, under ICRC auspices.

Lastly, the ICRC delegates organized the repatriation of an Arab civilian detainee of Syrian origin captured in 1967 and who had served his sentence.

Palestinian combatants : The ICRC was also concerned about 90-odd Palestinian combatants who had surrendered to the Israeli authorities following the July armed insurrection in Jordan. ICRC delegates visited them in the Nablus prison, where they were being detained, and proposed that the men be allowed to settle on the West Bank. By the end of the year, 54 had in fact been released in occupied territory.

Military courts : ICRC delegates were present at several hearings of Arabs from occupied territories who were accused of acts prejudicial to the security of the State.

(b) **Civilian Infiltrators in Israel, Lebanon and Jordan**

Israel : In 1971, ICRC delegates organized the repatriation of about twenty Lebanese civilian infiltrators who had inadvertently crossed the frontier between Lebanon and Israel. A Lebanese fisherman, wounded when captured by the Israeli authorities in April, was twice visited by ICRC delegates in the Haifa Hospital before being released in June.

The ICRC delegation in Tel Aviv also intervened on behalf of seven Egyptian fishermen whose boats had been stopped by Israeli coast-guards. On 12 July, the fishermen were repatriated under ICRC auspices ; the operation was carried out at El Qantara, on the Suez Canal.

Lebanon : ICRC delegates organized the repatriation of six Israeli civilian infiltrators in Lebanon. Three of them were interned in the Tyr prison for some weeks and were visited several times before being repatriated.

Jordan : Lastly, ICRC delegates arranged for the repatriation of an Israeli civilian who had inadvertently crossed the cease-fire line between Israel and Jordan.

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

The ICRC continued to concern itself with the case of an Israeli civil guard kidnapped on 1 January 1970 by Palestinian commandos operating from Lebanese territory.[1] In 1970, ICRC delegates visited the internee six times, first in Jordan and later in Syria. In 1971, two further visits were made in Syria.

As a result of ICRC approaches, the Palestinian organizations agreed to release the detainee. The repatriation operation was carried out at Roshanikra, on the Israelo-Lebanese border, on 28 February. The Israeli authorities simultaneously released a Palestinian civilian detainee, and on 23 March they released the ten Lebanese prisoners of war (see above).

REUNITING OF FAMILIES

Arab Republic of Egypt and Gaza-Sinai : In 1971, five family reuniting operations, organized under the auspices of the ICRC, took place between the Arab Republic of Egypt and the occupied territories of Gaza and Sinai. They enabled 702 persons from Egypt or Gaza to join their relatives in the Valley of the Nile or in the Gaza Strip. This brought the total number of those repatriated on either side, since the action started in 1967, to approximately 7,000.

In addition, the ICRC organized the transfer to the Arab Republic of Egypt of more than a thousand Palestinian students from Gaza who, having passed their baccalaureate examination in occupied territory and wishing to continue their studies in Egyptian universities, had secured the necessary permits from the Egyptian and Israeli authorities. Nearly 700 students, who were allowed to join their families in the occupied territory of Gaza for holidays or at the end of their studies, also crossed the Canal under ICRC auspices, in the course of seven operations at El Qantara between 9 August and 6 October.

Syria and the Golan Heights : Fifty persons displaced by the June 1967 conflict were able to join their families on the occupied Golan

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[1] See Annual Report 1970, page 52.

Heights, in five operations organized by the ICRC at El Quneitra. By the end of 1971, the approximate number of persons repatriated since the action started in March 1969 was 650.

Israel and Lebanon : At Roshanikra, ICRC delegates arranged for seven persons to join their relatives in the Lebanon.

Jordan and West Bank : As in previous years, ICRC action was confined to lending support to requests to the Israeli authorities which were of special humanitarian interest and which had not proved successful under the normal procedure. During 1971, 64 persons benefited under the hardship procedure.

Central Tracing Agency activities : In 1971, the ICRC forwarded 93,243 family messages between the Arab countries on the one hand and Israel and the occupied territories on the other. By the end of the year, the total number of messages exchanged since June 1967 exceeded 1.6 million.

During the year, the number of enquiries concerning soldiers and civilians missing since the hostilities was much lower than in previous years. Out of 87 enquiries in 1971, it was possible, in co-operation with the Israeli military authorities and Magen David Adom, to locate nine persons who were being sought by their relatives.

STUDY OF HEALTH SITUATION ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS, IN GAZA AND SINAI

In March 1971, an ICRC doctor-delegate made a survey of the medical situation on the Golan Heights. In August, two similar surveys were conducted in the Gaza Strip and in Sinai, where all government and private hospitals and dispensaries were visited. Comprehensive reports were sent to the governments concerned.

In the course of an operation carried out under ICRC auspices at El Qantara, on 17 November, eleven doctors, who had originally come from Gaza and were living in Cairo, crossed the Suez Canal from west to east to resume work in the Gaza Strip, where a serious dearth of medical personnel was still prevailing.

ACTION FOR THE DISABLED

With the financial aid provided by the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany and the medical and technical co-opera-

tion of the Magen David Adom, the ICRC delegation in Gaza was able to continue registering war disabled who required an artificial limb and transporting them to Tel Aviv for treatment.

In 1971, eighteen disabled persons were fitted. The number of cases treated since the beginning of the action thus rose to 62, and the number of artificial appliances 56. At the end of the year, 38 new applications were still to be dealt with.

RELIEF

From January to April 1971, the Israeli Ministry of Social Welfare, co-operating with the ICRC delegation, continued to distribute to some 50,000 Bedouin of Northern and Central Sinai the 300 tons of flour, donated by the Swiss Confederation and unloaded at the port of Ashdod in November 1970.

An additional 3,600 tons of flour donated by the European Economic Community arrived at Ashdod in July. Under a programme worked out with the ICRC, the Israeli Ministry of Social Welfare distributed 2,800 tons of flour to 60,000 Bedouin by the end of December, at a monthly rate of 5 kg per person. Six hundred tons earmarked for the Gaza orphanage was supplied at a rate of 60 tons a month.

In August and again in October, the ICRC transmitted to the poverty-stricken inhabitants of Sinai and Gaza two further gifts, totalling 570 tons of food, blankets and textiles. This relief was distributed at the same time as that supplied by the European Economic Community.

In October the ICRC sent the Israeli Ministry of Social Welfare ten tons of powdered milk for needy persons on the West Bank.

ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL RED CRESCENT COMMITTEES IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

In September 1970, the ICRC made available a provision of 100,000 Swiss francs for the implementation of a programme of material and technical assistance to the ten Jordanian and Egyptian Red Crescent branches in the occupied territories. Of this sum, about 45,000 Swiss francs was used in 1971 to subsidize specific projects such as the purchase of materials for dispensaries, workrooms, nurseries, and so forth. In August, 28 kg of medical supplies were sent to the ICRC delegates on the West Bank, who handed them over to the local Red Crescent.

Repatriation of a civilian internee on the Israelo-Lebanese border, on 28 February 1971. Photo " Starphot " — Tel Aviv

EXPULSIONS

The ICRC continued to receive from the Red Crescent Societies of Jordan and the Arab Republic of Egypt many complaints that Arab residents of the occupied territories, suspected of having taken part in activities endangering the security of the State, were being expelled and sent to Jordan.

In February 1971, the Jordanian authorities established near the Allenby Bridge, the crossing point over the cease-fire line, a transit camp where persons expelled could be received, and their identity checked, pending transfer to Amman. On two occasions, ICRC delegates went to the camp, which was closed down early in summer for climatic reasons. They also made ten visits to the Karak police station and to the Maan and Mahatta prisons in Amman, where a number of persons recently driven out of the occupied territories were being provisionally interned.

The ICRC approached the Israeli authorities several times with a view to stopping expulsions which it regarded as being contrary to Article 49 of the Fourth Convention. In a communication addressed to the Prime Minister of Israel at the end of February, the President of the ICRC expressed the ICRC's concern regarding the dire consequences for the persons stricken by such measures, against which appeal was not possible and which provided for no time-limit. The Prime Minister replied that the expulsion orders had been dictated by security considerations and that they were to be preferred to detention over an indefinite period. As the explanations given failed to allay ICRC apprehension, Mr. Umbricht, a member of the ICRC who went to Israel towards the end of 1971, confirmed that the ICRC wanted the expulsion of Arabs from the occupied territories to cease. The Israeli authorities agreed to consider individual applications from persons who had been driven out and who wanted to return.

DESTRUCTION OF HOUSES

In view of the continued destruction of houses in the occupied territories, the President of the ICRC made a renewed appeal to the Israeli Prime Minister at the end of April that her Government should abandon a method to counter subversive activities which the ICRC regarded as being contrary to the provisions of Articles 33 and 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. In her reply in August, the Prime Minis-

Rehabilitation training, in the artificial limb workshop installed at Sana'a by the ICRC. Photo Convers/ICRC.

ter stated that the Government of Israel could not renounce measures which it deemed essential for the maintenance of security in the occupied territories.

ICRC delegates in the field therefore concentrated on rendering material aid to those whose homes had been destroyed. They provided the Israeli Ministry of Social Welfare with 199 tents and 1,675 blankets for the homeless.

EXPROPRIATIONS

The ICRC continued to follow with close attention the question of expropriations in the occupied territories. However, as the Israeli Government declared at the end of 1970 that it did not want to enter into any discussion on the subject, ICRC delegates confined themselves to submitting strictly humanitarian problems to the authorities as and when they arose.

DISTURBANCES AND POPULATION TRANSFERS IN THE GAZA STRIP

In view of the deterioration of the situation in the Gaza Strip and the outrages which caused victims mainly among the civilian population, Israeli security forces, in January 1971, took certain steps in refugee camps and more particularly in the Beach Camp. The ICRC delegation received a number of complaints about brutal treatment, forced transfers, the destruction of houses, and so forth. It made various approaches to the Israeli authorities and asked that such excesses should cease. Simultaneously, the President of the ICRC approached the Permanent Representative of Israel in Geneva. In accordance with the requests made, the Israeli Government strengthened its control over the security forces and inflicted penalties in certain cases of abuse.

On 21 July, the ICRC delegation in Gaza was informed by refugees that the Israeli army the day before had started to transfer refugee families to El Arish or to unoccupied camps on the West Bank of the Jordan. At the same time, in the Jabalia, Shatti and Rafah camps, work had started on the destruction of some of the shelters and on the laying of new avenues in order to reduce the camp population and facilitate supervision.

The occupation authorities, whom the ICRC delegates immediately contacted, ascribed the measures adopted to overriding security

needs. They explained, however, that arrangements had been made to rehouse and compensate the persons displaced.

By the end of August, more than 14,700 persons had been affected by those measures. Most refugees were dissatisfied with their new housing and before long returned to Gaza. Relatives or friends provided shelter, usually in the camps. By the end of the year, some 200 families were staying on at El Arish and around fifty on the West Bank.

The ICRC made various approaches of a general nature to the Israeli authorities. It expressed concern about the forced transfers and urged that rehousing and compensation should be accelerated and intensified.

In addition, ICRC delegates contacted a number of families whose houses had been destroyed ; on two occasions they went to El Arish to see in what conditions the displaced persons were living. They also conveyed to the authorities the complaints they had received about the matter of compensation.

The Israeli Government subsequently informed the ICRC that the operations, which had considerably reduced the number of outrages, were to cease for the time being. It assured the ICRC that, should any further transfers be contemplated, new housing would first be provided near the areas to be evacuated, to ensure that the persons displaced would be promptly rehoused.

UPROOTING OF PEOPLE

In December, the ICRC delegation intervened on behalf of a Bedouin tribe of about 260 persons whom the Israeli authorities had compelled to leave their lands near the Dead Sea and to settle in the Bethlehem district. As a result of the transfer, those people were deprived of their lands and their livelihood. The place where they found themselves did not belong to them, and their flocks could not graze there.

The ICRC delegates approached the Israeli authorities with a view to the Bedouins' return to their former site. They supplied the Ministry of Social Welfare with 20 tents, 100 blankets, 200 kg of sugar, 200 kg of rice and 50 kg of wheat, for the displaced Bedouins.

Syria

At the request of the Syrian authorities, the ICRC sent to Syria, during the first half of 1971, 564 tons of wheat donated by the Swiss Confederation, 112 tons of powdered milk and 4,428 tons of flour from the European Economic Community, 20 tons of detergent and disinfectant from the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany, and 100 tons of powdered milk and 750 kg of medicaments which it donated itself, to assist some 100,000 persons who had been displaced from the Golan Heights following the June 1967 conflict and who were not receiving UNRWA aid. ICRC delegates were present at several distribution operations carried out by the Syrian authorities.

Jordan

Relief Action : From the funds left over after the relief action launched during the September 1970 events in Jordan [1], the ICRC decided to allot the sum of 250,000 Swiss francs for assistance to war disabled in that country. Owing to the large number of such disabled people, particularly in the refugee camps, there was an urgent need to develop the possibilities offered by the Cheshire Home for their treatment.

The Cheshire Home is attached to the government Ashrafieh Hospital in Amman. Various types of contribution are also made to it by organizations such as UNICEF, WHO, the Commonwealth Save the Children Fund, the Norwegian Refugee Council, CARE and the Swedish Organization for Individual Relief. The Norwegian and Swedish institutions, for instance, have constructed a workshop for artificial limbs and have equipped it with machine-tools and basic materials.

To secure the agreement of the Jordanian Ministry of Health and co-ordinate its action with that of the above-mentioned organizations, the ICRC delegated Miss Anny Pfirter, Head of the War Disabled Section, to Jordan in March 1971. It was decided that the ICRC should send an orthopaedic surgeon to Amman, to assess the needs and priorities for the future development of the Cheshire Home, which he would direct and administer for about a year.

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[1] See Annual Report 1970, pages 63 ff.

In October, Miss Pfirter went on a second mission to Amman, with the doctor selected, whose activities were to start in January 1972.

In view of the relief action launched in Jordan, the ICRC opened a warehouse in Beirut for the storage of food, medicaments, clothing and medical supplies, so as to be able to meet any emergency in the Middle East.

In 1971, the ICRC withdrew from its stocks 100 tons of powdered milk, 35 tons of biscuits, some blankets and clothing, and a generator, which it handed over to the Jordan Red Crescent for its activities on behalf of needy persons, plus 5 tons of powdered milk and various articles of clothing which it delivered to the Lebanese Red Crescent. It also presented the " Palestinian Red Crescent " with 35 tons of powdered milk, 5 tons of biscuits, a generator and some clothing.

Delegation's activities in the northern area : ICRC delegates in Amman made weekly trips to northern Jordan (especially to Irbid, Jerash and Zerka) to contact the civilian population and carry out various tasks on behalf of the Central Tracing Agency (tracing the missing, reuniting families and transmitting family messages). The work was done in co-operation with the Jordan Red Crescent.

At the time of the clashes between the Jordanian army and the Palestinian organizations, particularly in January, March and July, the ICRC delegates, who had received various requests from the " Palestinian Red Crescent ", asked to be allowed to go to the scenes of fighting. They were able to do so only after some delay, as the Jordanian authorities objected that the areas concerned were military zones. By the time the delegates arrived there, they found that the situation was practically back to normal.

Persons detained owing to the events : The ICRC was concerned about a number of persons who had been detained owing to the events, particularly Palestinian combatants captured by the Jordanian army. It made various approaches to the Government of Jordan with a view to visiting them.

In February, Mr. Maunoir was in Amman and discussed the matter with the Jordanian Minister for Foreign Affairs. The ICRC delegation continued its approaches to the Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister of the Royal Court, the Minister of the Interior, and the Head of the Prison Service. The matter was again taken

up by Mr. Frédéric Siordet, a member of the ICRC, during a mission to Amman.

On 18 July, the ICRC delegation was allowed to visit, in their place of temporary detention at Deir-'Allah (in the Jordan Valley), a group of 58 Palestinian commandos who had just been captured by the Jordanian army during the Jerash and Ajloun events. On 31 July, the ICRC delegation gained access to the Mahatta Prison, where it saw 11 Palestinian detainees from the West Bank. From time to time, it saw in Mahatta Prison detainees about whom it had been asked for news, such as a woman detainee, whom it visited on 1 November, and on 26 October and 15 December a Lebanese national who had hijacked an aircraft of the Alia Jordanian air lines. The Jordanian authorities also agreed that the ICRC delegation might transmit messages, money and parcels from the families of detainees in the Jafr and Mahatta Prisons.

Arabian Peninsula

During 1971, the ICRC delegation in the Arabian Peninsula, composed of a delegate in Aden and one in Sana'a, was active in three fields : prisoners of war, political detainees, and medical and food assistance to the inhabitants.

PRISONERS OF WAR

People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia : In the fighting which broke out in November 1969 in the Hadhramaut (a border province in the north of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen) between the armed forces of Saudi Arabia and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, 37 Saudi Arabian soldiers and 24 Southern Yemeni soldiers were captured and interned at Aden and Riyadh respectively. The ICRC delegates visited the prisoners of war on either side three times in 1970. They also started negotiations with the Governments of Saudi Arabia and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen for a general exchange of the prisoners.

The operation was carried out on 31 January 1971. Two planes, carrying ICRC delegates, brought the Riyadh and Aden prisoners to Cairo, where the exchange took place.

POLITICAL DETAINEES

People's Democratic Republic of Yemen : In September, ICRC delegates made a further visit to Mansoura Prison, in Aden, where they saw about 250 political detainees. The ICRC delegates were not allowed to talk with the detainees without witnesses. On the other hand, they were able to provide them with various relief supplies (cigarettes, books, clothing, etc.).

In addition, ICRC delegates went frequently to Mansoura Prison to supply the doctor with medicaments not available in the prison pharmacy.

Lastly, in co-operation with the competent authorities, the ICRC delegates succeeded in solving some difficult social cases involving detainees.

MEDICAL AND FOOD ASSISTANCE TO THE POPULATION

People's Democratic Republic of Yemen : The ICRC delegation in Aden continued its monthly distribution of food (particularly milk and flour) to families in straitened circumstances because their breadwinners were in Mansoura Prison.

To ensure the success of the action, the ICRC replenished its Aden delegation's stocks in September by sending 20 tons of powdered milk donated by the Swiss Confederation. Part of the supply was handed to the local Red Crescent for distribution to needy families in Aden.

Yemen Arab Republic : In Sana'a, several hundred children continued to receive a daily ration of milk at the distribution centre installed by the ICRC delegate in that town.

In addition, every month about 800 mothers of infants were provided with seven kg of powdered milk. In November the ICRC sent to Sana'a two tons of cheese, a gift from the Swiss Confederation for the Taiz Hospital.

As regards medical assistance, in June the ICRC sent 40 kg of medical supplies to Sana'a for the Turba Hospital. It also continued its action for Yemeni war invalids.[1]

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[1] See p. 59.