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MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

As in previous years, the ICRC carried out its activities in the Middle East and North Africa through seven permanent delegations, in Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Israel and the occupied territories, Jordan, Lebanon (with offices in Beirut, Sidon, Tripoli, Tyre, Jezzine, Jounieh, Ksara and Baalbek) and Syria. In addition, the regional delegation for the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa, hitherto based in Geneva, was split into two in 1987. The Tunisian Government having signified its agreement on 14 September a regional delegate took up office in Tunis in October to cover North Africa (Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, as well as the conflict in the Western Sahara). The regional delegation for the Arabian Peninsula is still based in Geneva.

In 1987, visits to Iranian prisoners of war in Iraq and Iraqi prisoners of war in Iran and protection and assistance activities on behalf of the victims of the war in Lebanon constituted the major part of ICRC work in the Middle East. These operations were funded by special appeals (ICRC special budget).

The ICRC also pursued its work in connection with the Arab-Israeli conflict, stepping up its activities as a result of the unrest that developed from December onwards in the territories occupied by Israel. It also visited Moroccan prisoners in the hands of the Polisario Front, and security detainees in Jordan, the Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.

In March, the President of the ICRC, Mr. Hay, travelled to Tunis for lengthy talks with the Secretary-General of the Arab League, Mr. Khedli Klibi. Discussions focused on various humanitarian questions, with particular regard to the situation in Lebanon.

On 7 September, the new President of the ICRC, Mr. Sommaruga, received the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Mr. Yasser Arafat, at the Committee's headquarters in Geneva. Talks centred on the ICRC's humanitarian activities in the Middle East.

CONFLICT BETWEEN IRAN AND IRAQ

The war between Iran and Iraq continued to claim numerous victims, both civilian and military, and remained a subject of very grave concern for the ICRC, particularly as regards respect for the Geneva Conventions, which are fully applicable in this international conflict.

As in previous years, the problem of Iranian and Iraqi prisoners of war and the indiscriminate bombardment of

civilian persons and objects were matters of serious concern to the ICRC, along with the use of arms prohibited by international humanitarian law. In 1987, in view of the increasing number of acts of indiscriminate violence and, in particular, the intensification of the "war of the cities", the ICRC appealed to the two parties to the conflict and the international community, calling their attention to the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law relating to the protection of civilians and the conduct of hostilities. On 13 January, for instance, the ICRC published a press release urging both belligerents to cease their attacks, which constituted a grave violation of international humanitarian law. Seeing that the bombings were nonetheless continuing, on 11 February the ICRC addressed a solemn written appeal to the governments of the two parties to the conflict, stressing the fundamental rules governing the protection of civilian populations. Simultaneously, the Committee also approached the Member States of the Security Council and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, requesting them to support its initiative by any means they deemed fit. Furthermore, all the States party to the Geneva Conventions were informed of the measures taken. In addition, between 23 and 26 February the Director General and the Director of Operations of the ICRC travelled respectively to Baghdad and Tehran to discuss the ICRC's solemn appeal with the authorities there.

In May, following the report, compiled by a special mission of experts despatched by the United Nations Secretary-General, on the use of chemical weapons in the conflict between Iran and Iraq, the ICRC officially informed the two belligerents of its serious concern with regard to the consequences, in terms of human suffering, of the use of such methods of warfare, which are prohibited by the Geneva Protocol of 1925. The ICRC also informed the Secretary-General of the United Nations of its alarm, indicating that it supported all the efforts deployed and deemed necessary to put an end to the use of chemical weapons. The ICRC made a further approach to the parties to the conflict in July to remind them that the use of chemical weapons runs contrary to international law and is incompatible with the principle of humanity, and to signify its availability to assist the victims of armed conflicts, whether in connection with the use of chemical weapons or attacks perpetrated against civilians. Both Iran and Iraq requested the ICRC to despatch delegates to visit the civilian victims of such acts of indiscriminate violence. In accordance with its doctrine, the ICRC conducted several surveys to assess the effects of certain acts

of war committed against civilian populations in order to provide them with any necessary help.

Missing persons

In 1987, as in the previous year, the ICRC was unable to resume its tracing work in search of persons reported missing in the course of the hostilities (mainly combatants). This work had had to be interrupted in March 1985 on account of the absence or inexactitude of information supplied by the two belligerents about combatants killed on the battlefield. In 1987, the ICRC continued taking steps to remind the two belligerent States of their obligations under the First and Third Conventions concerning notification to the ICRC of enemy soldiers wounded, killed or captured. This concern was raised in particular during the Director General's mission to Baghdad in February and the missions to Tehran conducted by the Director of Operations and the delegate-general for the Middle East in February and August, respectively. It was also the subject of a *note verbale* which the ICRC addressed to the parties to the conflict on 15 September. Despite all these efforts, however, the ICRC had not observed any improvement in this domain by the end of the year.

Repatriations of prisoners of war

In 1987, two repatriations of Iraqi prisoners of war were carried out under ICRC auspices. In March and October, respectively, 76 and 101 disabled, sick or aged Iraqi prisoners of war — selected by the Iranian authorities and mostly corresponding to the criteria set forth in the Third Convention — were handed over to the ICRC by the Iranian authorities and escorted by a team of ICRC doctors, nurses and delegates from Tehran to Baghdad on board an aircraft specially chartered for the purpose by the ICRC. Before each of these repatriations, ICRC delegates ascertained in the course of interviews without witnesses that the prisoners wished to return to their homeland.

No further Mixed Medical Commissions having been set up in the two countries, the ICRC doctors took the opportunity when visiting the camps to draw up lists of prisoners of war entitled to direct and immediate repatriation under the terms of Articles 109 and 110 of the Third Geneva Convention.

Appeal for funds

To obtain the necessary funds for its activities in connection with the conflict between Iran and Iraq, the ICRC

launched an appeal to donors at the beginning of the year to raise 13,702,900 Swiss francs.

IN IRAQ:

The ICRC continued its protection and assistance activities for victims of the conflict through a delegation comprising 18 persons.

In February, the ICRC Director General travelled to Baghdad with the delegate-general for the Middle East and North Africa. This mission, prompted above all by the bombings of civilian areas, provided an opportunity to review with the Iraqi authorities the various humanitarian questions relating to the conflict. The ICRC representatives were received, inter alia, by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Tariq Aziz.

Activities for Iranian prisoners of war

As in the previous year, two teams of ICRC delegates, both of them including a doctor, visited Iranian prisoners of war interned in Iraq, following a regular schedule of one complete visit every eight weeks to ten camps and three military hospitals. The ICRC thus visited 12,747 Iranian prisoners of war in 1987. However, in contravention of the Third Geneva Convention, it was not authorized to visit or register the prisoners of war captured since December 1986. The ICRC also continued to concern itself with the plight of prisoners of war to whom it had never obtained access and was again unable to do so in 1987. These are serious problems of constant concern to the ICRC.

The Committee was able to monitor the cases of prisoners of war brought before a judge and to visit them in the prison where they were being held in Baghdad, verifying that the provisions of the Third Geneva Convention relevant to such circumstances were being applied.

During their visits to the camps, the ICRC delegates supplied prisoners with recreational and educational material worth about 220,000 Swiss francs.

Activities for the civilian population

In Iraq, the ICRC is also performing work for various groups of civilians protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention.

ICRC delegates continued their visits to 25,000 Kurdish refugees, natives of Iran, interned at the Al Tash camp near Ramadi. During these visits, which took place in March, June and October, delegates assessed the living conditions of the interned civilians and handled the exchange of Red Cross messages.

On the other hand, similar visits could not be made to persons originally from Khuzistan or Ahwaz (Arabic-speaking Iranians) who have been displaced and are living in villages in the region of Meisan. The last visit to those persons dates back to February 1986, since when differences of views have arisen between the ICRC and the authorities concerning the procedures for visits. The ICRC's efforts to resume the visits were unsuccessful in 1987.

Elsewhere, the ICRC continued its visits to a number of Iranian citizens who have sought refuge in Iraq and are interned in the Shomeli and Ramadi camps, and at the request of the Iraqi authorities endeavoured to find host countries to receive them. As a result of these efforts, 152 Iranian refugees were able to leave Iraq for a third country in 1987.

Tracing Agency

Tracing activities centred mainly on the exchange of Red Cross messages. The ICRC gave the Permanent Committee for War Victims a total of 559,027 Red Cross messages for Iranian prisoners of war and received 313,286 for their families living in Iran or other countries. Several hundred messages were also distributed or collected among the various groups of refugees assisted by the ICRC.

IN IRAN:

Visits to Iraqi prisoners of war, which were resumed in December 1986 after being suspended for two years, accounted for the bulk of the work performed by the ICRC delegation in Iran throughout the year. In order to carry out these visits and associated activities such as tracing operations, the delegation was staffed by ten delegates and some twenty locally recruited employees.

In February, the ICRC Director of Operations travelled to Tehran to discuss various matters of humanitarian importance with the Iranian authorities, in particular bombings of civilian areas and Iraqi prisoners of war. During his visit, he met several high-level representatives of the Iranian Government. In August, the delegate-general for the Middle East spent about ten days in Iran to discuss a series of humanitarian problems connected with the conflict, in particular the procedures and conditions for ICRC visits to Iraqi prisoners of war interned in Iran.

Furthermore, on 24 July the President of the ICRC met the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ali Akbar Velayati, who was passing through Geneva.

Despite its repeated requests to the Government, the ICRC was not granted access to the displaced Iraqi Kurdish populations.

Activities for Iraqi prisoners of war

Visits to Iraqi prisoners of war interned in Iran had been resumed in December 1986, when two camps were visited. ICRC delegates continued the series of visits in 1987 and had access to thirteen other camps and six hospitals. Only one visit to these camps was possible in 1987, since the ICRC was authorized to have only one team of visiting delegates in operation in Iran, including a doctor and an Arabic-speaking delegate; the latter was the sole delegate authorized to interview certain Iraqi prisoners of war without witnesses. These restrictions imposed on the ICRC's work are due to the Iranian authorities' extremely restrictive interpretation of the provisions of Article 126 of the Third Geneva Convention, which specify the ICRC's mandate in this respect. During this series of visits, which was completed in December 1987, the ICRC was able to register 4,252 new prisoners of war and verify the presence of 37,702 others who had been registered during previous visits. However, it was unable to verify the presence in the camps visited of 7,327 prisoners of war already registered on earlier occasions. Nor did it obtain access to more than 8,000 prisoners whose existence is proven by the family messages they have sent. These extremely serious problems result from the Detaining Power's failure to respect fundamental provisions of the Third Geneva Convention.

Tracing Agency

As well as registering the new prisoners of war to whom the ICRC had access, the Tracing Agency handled exchanges of Red Cross messages. Accordingly, 744,486 Red Cross messages were passed on to the Iranian authorities for forwarding to Iraqi prisoners of war and 640,051 messages from such prisoners were sent to their families in Iraq.

IN THE GULF:

On 21 September, American naval forces in the Gulf captured 26 Iranian citizens and retrieved the mortal remains of three persons. The United States immediately signified its intention not to keep these Iranian nationals in its custody. At the request of the Government of Oman, and following contacts with the Iranian, Omani and American authorities, the ICRC despatched a delegate to Oman to supervise the operation at Muscat airport on 26 September, when the Iranian nationals were handed over by American representatives to the Omani authorities; the latter subsequently handed them over to Iranian representatives.

A similar operation took place at Muscat airport on 17

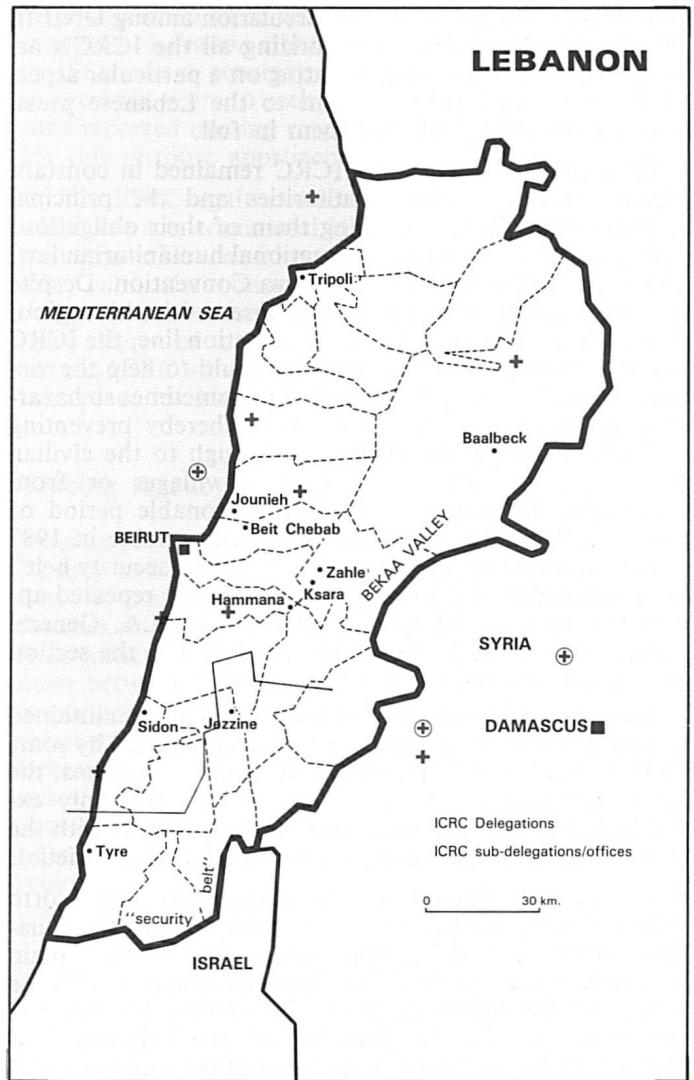
October involving the handing over to Iranian representatives of four Iranian seamen who had been captured by the American navy on 8 October, and the mortal remains of two persons. On the day preceding the operation, two delegates, including a doctor, were able to visit the four wounded Iranian seamen detained on board an American army ship.

The ICRC subsequently addressed a *note verbale* to all States with a military presence in the Arabian-Persian Gulf, reminding them of the conditions of applicability of the Geneva Conventions. The note stressed that international humanitarian law in general (and the Geneva Conventions in particular) apply in the case of declared war or of any other armed conflict arising between two or more High Contracting Parties, even if one of them does not recognize the state of war.

LEBANON

In 1987, clashes in Lebanon continued to take thousands of victims (deaths, wounded, displaced and homeless persons, etc.) and remained a source of serious concern for the ICRC. In addition, the economic situation deteriorated still further, confirming the trend which had already begun to emerge in 1985. Against this background, the ICRC continued its intensive protection and assistance activities for the civilian population affected by the conflict, whilst seeking to extend still further its protection work for persons arrested and detained by the various parties to the conflict. Its humanitarian activities focused on two main aspects: first, events associated with the internal conflict, in particular the "war of the camps" between Lebanese and Palestinian factions, clashes between Lebanese factions and the succession of indiscriminate acts of violence such as car bombs; and secondly, events associated with the situation prevailing in the "security belt" controlled by the South Lebanon Army (SLA), supported by the Israeli armed forces.

Generally speaking, more respect was shown for the Red Cross emblem in 1987 than in 1986. Nevertheless, to the profound regret of the ICRC and the Lebanese Red Cross, military fire was directed on several occasions against relief workers from the National Society. One was killed and three others wounded, as was an ICRC employee last year. In addition, the restrictions placed at various times on the movements of Red Cross representatives prevented the ICRC and the Lebanese Red Cross from duly coming to the assistance of victims, and hence from performing their mission properly. As a result, there were wounded who could not be evacuated in time, and assistance could not be given to isolated and stranded civilian victims of fighting between factions.



Seeking to secure the guarantees essential for continuance of their humanitarian action, the ICRC and the Lebanese Red Cross maintained constant contact with all the parties involved in the conflict. Due to the seriousness of the situation, they were compelled to launch public appeals to this effect. On 10 February, the ICRC delegation in Beirut issued a press release condemning the constraints which prevented it from assisting the victims of fighting in the "war of the camps", both in Beirut and in the southern part of the country. In addition, the ICRC made a special effort to increase knowledge and understanding of the Red Cross message in Lebanon. Information and dissemination meetings were organized for militia leaders and an information booklet on the ICRC and its presence

in Lebanon was published for circulation among UNIFIL troops. Finally, articles summarizing all the ICRC's activities in Lebanon or concentrating on a particular aspect of its work were regularly sent to the Lebanese press, which frequently published them in full.

Throughout the year, the ICRC remained in constant contact with the Israeli authorities and the principal leaders of the SLA, reminding them of their obligations and responsibilities under international humanitarian law, and in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention. Despite the severe humanitarian problems observed in this region, especially in areas close to the demarcation line, the ICRC was not always able to do what it should to help the victims. Indeed, security conditions were sometimes so hazardous as to rule out any movement, thereby preventing delegates from getting assistance through to the civilian population cut off or stranded in villages or from evacuating the wounded within a reasonable period of time. Furthermore, the ICRC was again unable in 1987 to obtain access to persons detained in the "security belt" — in particular in Khiyam prison — despite repeated approaches to both the Commander of the SLA, General Lahad, and to the Israeli authorities (see also the section on "Israel and the occupied territories").

To perform its various activities, the ICRC maintained a team of about 30 delegates in Lebanon, assisted by some 90 local employees. On account of security problems, the ICRC assigned to its delegation in Lebanon only expatriate staff of Swiss nationality under contract with the ICRC, and did not use any members of National Societies.

The delegate-general for the Middle East and North Africa visited Lebanon in June to take stock of the situation with the delegation and discuss the main humanitarian issues resulting from the situation with the leaders of the various parties to the conflict. He also had two meetings with the President of the Lebanese Red Cross, with whom he discussed some of the problems with which the National Society is confronted.

In Geneva, the President of the ICRC met President Gemayel on 3 October, discussing various humanitarian questions in connection with the Lebanese conflict. ICRC delegates met the Lebanese President again in Beirut at the end of October, as well as the Acting Prime Minister Mr. S. Hoss.

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The ICRC was extremely saddened to hear of the death of a nurse at the Beirut delegation, Miss Pernette Zehnder, who was killed in a car accident in Lebanon on 18 October.

Appeal for funds

In order to finance its activities in Lebanon, at the beginning of 1987 the ICRC launched an appeal to donors for a total of 9,831,900 Swiss francs.

Representations on behalf of the civilian population

The civilian population continued to suffer from the tragic events prevailing in Lebanon, and its plight was a source of constant worry for the ICRC. As in 1986, outbreaks of fighting in various parts of the country often compelled groups of civilians to flee their homes or, on the contrary, left them stranded in their villages or camps, unable to get food or medical care. Accordingly, the ICRC approached the parties to the conflict on more than one occasion in order to arrange cease-fires to enable civilians to cross the fighting lines or the Red Cross to evacuate the wounded.

In connection with the "war of the camps" in the Beirut, Sidon and Tyre regions, during the first six months of the year, the ICRC had to make numerous representations, both in Lebanon itself and in Geneva, to all the parties to the conflict, in order to ensure that non-combatants were treated with the respect to which they are entitled. Whilst civilians and the wounded were able to receive relief and treatment outside the refugee camps, on a number of occasions the ICRC had cause to deplore the attitude of the parties to the conflict, who prevented access to the camps for months on end, in particular to Borj-el-Brajneh, Chatila and Rachidiyeh, thereby hampering any humanitarian action in favour of Palestinian civilian victims. For instance, whereas fighting had raged since the end of 1986, it was not until 12 March that the ICRC was able to enter Rachidiyeh camp near Tyre; similarly, it was not until 8 and 9 April that ICRC teams were able to go into Chatila and Borj-el-Brajneh camps in Beirut. Subsequently, the ICRC delegates were granted relatively regular access to the camps, where they evacuated the wounded or sick and performed tracing work.

In the south of the country, the people living in villages in and alongside the "security belt" were frequently placed in an extremely precarious situation by the constant clashes which took place throughout the year. Sometimes, they were cut off for several days on account of the fighting. In addition, acts of harrassment forced hundreds of civilians to leave their homes; people were arrested and kept in captivity; more often than not, their family was left without any news of their whereabouts. The daily presence of ICRC delegates on the spot had a significant protective effect, albeit difficult to quantify, for the civilian population suffering from the situation. Nevertheless, their presence was not always as effective and ex-

tensive as the ICRC would have wished, for lack of agreement on the part of all the parties concerned. Whenever security problems made access to certain villages difficult, the ICRC contacted the parties involved to obtain authorization as quickly as possible to travel to the villages concerned and secure adequate guarantees for its work. The ICRC also made general representations to remind all the parties of the basic rules of international humanitarian law.

Visits to detainees and representations on their behalf

Throughout the year the ICRC continued its efforts to visit persons captured and detained in connection with the conflict.

□ ICRC delegates pursued their visits to persons held by various parties to the Lebanese conflict (Lebanese Army, Amal, Lebanese Forces, Socialist Progressive Party, Military Police of the Popular Nasserian Organization in Sidon and various Palestinian organizations). In 1987, 274 persons were visited by the ICRC, some of them more than once. The visits enabled detainees to fill in or receive Red Cross messages and thus maintain contact with their relatives. The detainees received material assistance in the form of blankets, medicines, leisure items, etc. In parallel with these visits, the ICRC continued to make representations to all the parties with a view to gaining access to all detained persons. Unfortunately, most of the approaches remained unsuccessful.

□ Despite repeated requests to both the Israeli authorities and the SLA, in 1987 the ICRC was again unable to obtain access to places of detention in the "security belt", especially Khiyam prison, the largest of them. Under these conditions it could not fulfil its mandate for the detained persons in this region of Lebanon, even though a few tracing activities were possible (see below under "Tracing Agency").

□ The ICRC requested the Israeli authorities to notify it of arrests made by the Israeli army on Lebanese territory and to permit its delegates to visit prisoners wherever they were. Pursuant to this request, in the course of 1987 its delegates in Israel visited 47 persons who had been arrested in southern Lebanon and transferred to Israeli territory (see also the section on "Israel and the occupied territories"). Twenty detainees were released during the year and repatriated to Lebanon under ICRC auspices.

□ The ICRC also approached all parties concerned, unfortunately without success, in an effort to gain access to members of the SLA militia captured during the year. Likewise, it was unable to ascertain what had happened

to seven members of the Israeli army forces captured or missing in Lebanon (three in 1982, one in 1983 and three in 1986). As a general practice, the ICRC continued as in previous years to seek information on the fate of persons reported missing or presumed dead in Lebanon and for this purpose approached all parties to the conflict.

□ The ICRC again condemned the taking of hostages, which are acts committed in violation of the fundamental principles of law and humanity. It should be remembered that, with the consent of all the parties concerned, delegates may assist hostages and, by their presence, give some degree of moral comfort. As a rule, however, it is not the ICRC's role to join in any negotiations which may take place in this connection.

Tracing Agency

As in previous years, the main activity of the Tracing Agency in Lebanon continued to be the transmission of Red Cross messages, above all between prisoners and their families or between members of families separated due to the conflict situation. Once again, urgent transmission of news between Lebanon and other countries was another important task fulfilled by the ICRC. A total of 17,363 messages were transmitted in 1987: 5,785 between Lebanon and other countries; 2,069 between persons detained in Israel or the occupied territories and their families in Lebanon; 4,591 between persons detained in Lebanon and their families; 4,918 between the different regions in Lebanon, including those sent in the context of the "war of the camps".

ICRC delegates also assisted in the transfer of more than 50 persons, about half of whom were detainees who had reached the end of their period of detention in Israel and were being repatriated to Lebanon by the ICRC. In the course of family reunifications, arrangements were made for 82 persons to rejoin their relatives abroad with the help of the ICRC and the National Societies concerned.

The ICRC took charge of transferring or repatriating mortal remains, in particular at the request of the family of a person killed in clashes within the "security belt". Dozens of requests concerning mortal remains were received in 1987. Unfortunately, very few of the many enquiries made were successful, with the result that only seven bodies had been restored to the families concerned by the end of the year, out of 73 cases notified to the ICRC by one or other of the parties to the conflict.

At Khiyam prison, in 1987 the ICRC was again able — although on a smaller scale than in the previous year — to organize family visits to detainees whose relatives live outside the "security belt". These visits, which had been

suspended at the end of 1986, did not resume until November. As a result, by the end of the year only six detainees had received visits from nine persons with ICRC help (in particular travel assistance). As from August, however, exchanges of Red Cross messages between detainees and their families living outside the belt could be organized. A total of 33 messages were thus exchanged through the ICRC.

Finally, it is also a vital function of the Tracing Agency to search for persons reported missing (several hundred requests to that effect were received in 1987). The large number of cases which could not be solved, despite repeated approaches by delegates to the relevant authorities, continued to be a matter of grave concern to the ICRC.

Food and material assistance

As in previous years, the ICRC distributed food and other relief supplies to various categories of civilians affected by the many violent clashes which continued to cause suffering in the country. During the first three months of the year, the ICRC conducted a comprehensive review of its food and material assistance operations, in the light of the development of the conflict and the effects of the worsening economic situation. Four main categories of beneficiaries were identified:

□ civilians, sometimes but not necessarily displaced, who were directly affected by specific conflicts but would quickly be able to re-establish themselves in a local social structure; such persons generally received a single distribution, the content of which was determined on the basis of the needs observed (family parcels, blankets or kitchen utensils). In 1987, the ICRC assisted 34,300 civilians in this category;

□ civilians who were affected on a long-term basis by ongoing fighting in their home region, more often than not on an active front line; 53,400 such persons received regular food distributions last year, in the form of family parcels, for as long as the difficult situation persisted. Most of them were civilians living along the "security belt" demarcation line in southern Lebanon. ICRC delegates made extremely regular trips to some 50 villages in this area, both for the purposes of distributions and to take stock of the situation in order to gear assistance to requirements. Civilians living near other front lines, for example in the Souk-el-Gharb area, also received ICRC relief distributions, on account of their isolation;

□ the ICRC also provided some material relief to families which, deprived of their bread-winner who had been detained or taken to hospital, found themselves in

a particularly difficult economic situation.

In order to be in a position to carry out its emergency assistance operations, the ICRC maintained a permanent buffer stock of relief supplies in several warehouses (East and West Beirut, Tripoli, Ksara, Jezzine, Sidon and Tyre), sufficient to cover the vital needs of 50,000 persons. These stocks, which were backed up by the regional stock in Larnaca (Cyprus), were regularly replenished throughout the year.

The total amount of material and food relief distributed in 1987 represented a value of 1.1 million Swiss francs, i.e., nearly double that of the previous year.

Medical assistance

Throughout the year, the ICRC continued to ensure smooth operation of the local medical infrastructure, which was impaired not only by the conflict but also by the deteriorating economic situation. As in previous years, a medical team consisting of a doctor and five nurses and on occasions reinforced by medical personnel despatched from Geneva carried out systematic assessments in the country's hospitals and dispensaries. In periods of acute emergency, the team conducted daily visits to the medical centres where the wounded were treated, assessing the situation and distributing medicines and other medical supplies as needed. In this way, the ICRC made nearly 2,700 visits to over 300 establishments in 1987.

In its work, the ICRC continued to concentrate on the regions directly affected by the conflict, which in 1987 were the western sector of the capital and the south of the country. The Committee's medical team gave particular attention to the villages on either side of the "security belt" demarcation line. In addition to distributing first-aid material to dispensaries in those villages, ICRC medical personnel went whenever necessary to isolated villages or places which were difficult to reach because of military operations or lack of security, in order to evaluate needs, distribute emergency medical relief and evacuate the wounded and dead. These tasks were performed in close co-ordination and co-operation with the Lebanese Red Cross. The ICRC also maintained its support for the Lebanese Red Cross in its efforts to set up mobile clinics for villages which do not have any medical facilities. As well as helping to fund those projects, the ICRC facilitated the movement and running of the mobile clinics through its contacts with all the parties to the conflict and by being present on the spot. Ten villages situated on either side of the "security belt" demarcation line, the village of Souk-el-Gharb and villages in the Batroun area were serviced by mobile clinics, which provided medical material or medicines sup-

plied by the ICRC, for a total value of 334,500 francs.

During the first three months of the year, the "war of the camps", which had started up again in October 1986, obliged the ICRC to step up its medical work in the medical centres close to the Palestinian refugee camps, which it was not able to enter, in West Beirut, Sidon and Tyre. Delegates provided medical aid worth around 120,000 Swiss francs.

ICRC medical assistance was also required as a result of the extremely violent clashes which flared up in West Beirut from 16 to 21 February, when the hospitals in the western sector of the capital had to be restocked. This assistance cost some 105,000 Swiss francs.

In cases where first-aid workers from the Lebanese Red Cross were unable to manage alone, the ICRC also organized the transfer, across the front lines, of wounded persons whose condition required treatment in more appropriate medical structures. Nevertheless, it must be noted with regret that during the "war of the camps" neither the ICRC nor the Lebanese Red Cross were able to evacuate the wounded from the Palestinian refugee camps as regularly as they would have liked. During a number of operations to evacuate wounded persons, ambulances were fired upon. One first-aid worker was killed, and others wounded. Upon every such occurrence, the ICRC objected to this violation of the emblem. Despite these problems, nearly 140 wounded persons were evacuated and transferred by the Lebanese Red Cross in the course of the year, with ICRC support.

In 1987, the dispensaries, clinics and hospitals run by the Palestinian social services, and in particular the "Palestinian Red Crescent", received ICRC medical relief worth a total of around 83,000 Swiss francs. In the event of specific clashes or incidents (car bombings, explosions) throughout the country, the ICRC also provided the medical centres concerned with *ad hoc* medical assistance.

Orthopaedics

ICRC orthopaedic technicians continued to give support to the Beit Chebab and Sidon centres. For patients unable to go to the established orthopaedic centres because of hazardous conditions, the three ICRC technicians gave consultations at the Lebanese Red Cross medical and social centre at Mreije (a southern suburb of Beirut) and at the National Society's centres in Tyre, Jezzine and Marjayoun. In 1987, the workshops supported by the ICRC manufactured 207 prostheses and 156 orthoses and carried out 248 repairs. For the sake of co-ordination and in order to standardize working methods, the ICRC maintained close contact with the Hammana orthopaedic centre (joint project conducted by the Lebanese and Netherlands Red Cross Societies) to which an ICRC

technician was regularly assigned in order to replace the Dutch personnel which had to be withdrawn. Likewise, contacts were maintained with the Swiss Red Cross orthopaedist working in the Abou Samra workshop in Tripoli. Total ICRC medical assistance distributed in Lebanon in 1987 amounted to over a million Swiss francs, not including aid given to the National Society.

Support for the National Society

In 1987, the ICRC pursued and further expanded its support for the Lebanese Red Cross. In order to enhance the efficiency of its emergency operations, and also to combat the financial problems it is encountering on account of the worsening economic situation, the Lebanese Red Cross decided at the end of the year to set up within its ranks an emergency committee to identify, plan, co-ordinate and manage all activities relating to first-aid work, its medical and social service, the blood bank, the pharmacy and information and dissemination. The Lebanese Red Cross requested the ICRC to assist it in setting the emergency committee in motion.

Throughout the year, the ICRC financed and provided material support to the first-aid section of the Lebanese Red Cross, *inter alia* by defraying the wage bill for 100 posts and giving support to the first-aid centre in Rmeich, set up in 1986, and the centres in Amioun, Qabr Chmoun, Falougha and Joubjanine, set up during the course of the year. It also supplied logistic and material aid in the form of ambulances, radio installations, blankets and first-aid equipment.

The ICRC provided the central pharmacy of the Lebanese Red Cross with financial aid and helped to establish mobile clinics and dispensaries. Its support for the medical and social centre in Mreije (southern suburb of Beirut) also continued, and it gave some assistance for the programmes in favour of the disabled and poor, as well as to the National Society's blood bank, which also receives donations from the Norwegian and Swiss Red Cross Societies.

In all, this assistance to the Lebanese Red Cross represented a cost of 1,744,000 Swiss francs in 1987.

ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

In Israel, and especially the occupied territories, 1987 marked the twentieth year of the ICRC's activities in pursuance of the Fourth Geneva Convention relating to the protection of civilian populations. In the conflict between Israel and the Arab countries, the ICRC considers that the conditions for application of the Fourth Convention are

fulfilled in all of the occupied territories, namely the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Golan and East Jerusalem, whatever status the Israeli authorities ascribe to those territories. Article 47 of the Fourth Convention lays down the inviolability of the rights of protected persons in occupied territories. The Israeli authorities, however, consider that the *de jure* applicability of the Fourth Convention presents difficulties, but state that they apply its provisions *de facto* in the Gaza Strip and on the West Bank.

Throughout the year the ICRC maintained regular contact with the Israeli authorities in order to protect and assist, in accordance with its mandate, the protected persons in the territories occupied since 1967. It also discussed with the authorities the position of protected persons in southern Lebanon ("security belt", see the section on "Lebanon" in this report).

Further to the discussions which the Director General of the ICRC and the delegate-general for the Middle East and North Africa had had in August 1986 with the highest Israeli authorities concerning the prevailing humanitarian problems in the occupied territories and southern Lebanon, the ICRC sent the said authorities a memorandum dated 27 February reviewing the situation in the "security belt", as well as a large number of letters to the ministers concerned by the problems relating to detainees under interrogation or application of the Fourth Convention in the occupied territories. The delegate-general for the Middle East and North Africa conducted a mission to Israel and the occupied territories in April, primarily to discuss the situation with the delegation.

Activities for detained persons

In 1987, the ICRC continued its protection activities for persons arrested, not only in Israel and in the occupied territories but also in Lebanon and at sea (seizures of vessels).

Regular visits to **persons sentenced or awaiting trial** continued throughout the year. ICRC delegates made regular visits to all places of detention. During the annual series of complete visits to each place of detention they were accompanied by a medical delegate. Eleven police stations were visited in April and May, while the seventeen places of detention under the jurisdiction of the Prison Service were the object of another series of visits from mid-August to the beginning of December. The prison population averaged about 4,000 throughout the year.

During the hunger strikes which broke out sporadically in twelve prisons (nearly 1,600 detainees) between 25 March and 18 April 1987, the ICRC delegates travelled to the prisons concerned as of the fifth day of the strike, and about every five days thereafter. In this way, they were able to check the medical treatment provided by the

Israeli authorities to detainees requiring and requesting care. A doctor, a delegate of the ICRC, was despatched especially from Geneva to Tel Aviv for this period.

In addition, ICRC delegates continued their activities for **detainees under interrogation**. During the year, they conducted about 1,500 interviews without witnesses with almost 1,000 detainees on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, despite the problems arising as a result of late or incomplete information from the Israeli authorities concerning transfers of prisoners between prisons or from one section to another. It will be remembered that under an agreement concluded with the Israeli authorities in 1977 and amended in 1979, the ICRC must be notified of arrests within twelve days and have access, within 14 days of their arrest, to security detainees under interrogation. Following several approaches by the ICRC, in October 1986 the detaining authorities had confirmed their intention to implement fully the 1977-79 agreement, including the transfer of detainees to the general sections after a period not exceeding four weeks of detention, except where imperative or absolute military security or necessity so requires.

However, despite this confirmation and a large number of approaches made during 1987, the notifications were not regular and moreover the proportion of detainees remaining under interrogation for periods in excess of the four-week limit remained very high throughout the year.

In October 1986 the Israeli authorities had also agreed to notify the ICRC of arrests of protected persons from East Jerusalem and to give it access to them in accordance with the same arrangements as those applying to protected persons from Gaza and the West Bank. With the reservation that the notification of transfers was sometimes delayed or incomplete (see above), delegates did in fact have access to those protected persons. On the other hand, the Israeli authorities persisted in refusing to extend such measures to protected persons from the Golan, with respect to whom the ICRC thus found it impossible to fulfil its mandate.

The increasing unrest which began at the end of 1986 and persisted throughout the year before culminating in December 1987 prompted the Israeli authorities to open military detention centres. In addition to the Fara'a camp, which has existed for some years and "el Katiba" camp in the Gaza Strip, which was opened in 1986, three centres were opened, in Tulkarem in April, and in Atlit and Dahariye (near Hebron) in December.

During the events in December, the ICRC delegation collected all available information concerning civilians arrested in connection with the events and endeavoured to visit them as soon as possible at their place of detention. At the end of December, 218 detainees had been seen in Katiba camp.

The ICRC delegates also continued their visits to **administrative detainees**. After reaching a peak of 70 in mid-year, the number of such detainees fell to less than 50 by the end of the year.

Persons arrested in southern Lebanon were also visited by the ICRC delegates in Israel, as well as **passengers and crew members of several vessels** seized in the Mediterranean by the Israeli armed forces. However, the ICRC was not routinely notified of such captures on land or at sea, or in some cases was informed only after excessively long delays. Furthermore, the Committee pointed out that the detention in Israel of persons arrested in southern Lebanon is contrary to the Fourth Convention, which forbids such transfers from one country to another.

The ICRC also continued its activities in connection with **penal prosecution**. Its legal delegate attended public hearings in the trials of security detainees and remained in contact with their lawyers and with the Israeli judicial authorities to make sure that the guarantees to which protected persons are entitled were respected.

During the year, the ICRC pursued its material assistance operations for detainees and their families. During visits to prisons, delegates distributed leisure articles and medical material worth around 294,000 Swiss francs. This figure also includes a small allowance given to the poorest detainees to enable them to buy food at the prison canteen.

Finally, as in previous years the ICRC facilitated family visits to detainees by providing buses for monthly trips between homes and prisons. This activity, under which over 40,000 persons were transported, cost some 334,000 Swiss francs in 1987.

Activities for the civilian population

The ICRC continued to concern itself with the plight of the population in the occupied territories. It intervened in particular with regard to certain excessive measures for the maintenance of order and certain aspects of the administration of the occupied territories which violate the provisions of the Fourth Convention.

For example, curfews and bans on travel were regularly enforced and sometimes extended to whole districts. Houses were destroyed or walled up by the Israeli authorities, who cited reasons of security, preventive or punitive.

The occupying power also continued its practice of expelling protected persons from the occupied territories, in violation of the Geneva Conventions.

Lastly, the practice of inciting persons to collaborate by methods contrary to the provisions of the Fourth Convention also continued to be of concern to the ICRC.

Throughout the year, pieces of land were seized or

declared to be "government land". Settlements continued to expand and the presence of Israeli settlers in the occupied territories was a source of severe tensions.

In most of the above cases, which often constitute grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention, ICRC approaches are disallowed by the Israeli authorities who consider that the ICRC oversteps its mandate by such interventions.

On a large number of occasions in 1987, the ICRC acted as a neutral intermediary in connection with demonstrations by protected persons in the occupied territories. Representations were made to the Israeli authorities concerning the cases of civilians wounded or killed during clashes or as a consequence of measures taken to restore order. In particular, the ICRC was obliged to intervene systematically in connection with the violent clashes which took place in the occupied territories during the last three weeks of December 1987.

Delegates travelled to a large number of hospitals on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip to evaluate the medical infrastructure and visit a number of wounded civilians. Simultaneous approaches were made to the Israeli authorities with a view to securing respect for and the protection of wounded persons and the evacuation and transfer of the wounded to hospitals.

Tracing Agency

The ICRC continued its attempts to trace persons reported missing in connection with the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Furthermore, the Tel Aviv delegation and the sub-delegations in East Jerusalem and Gaza exchanged more than 10,604 Red Cross messages between persons detained in Israel and the occupied territories and their families in Arab countries.

With the consent of the authorities on both sides, the ICRC organized several transfer operations across the demarcation lines, usually for former detainees. Such operations also made it possible to reunite families and transport sick persons, with the assistance of the National Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies concerned. In 1987, more than 40 persons benefited from such operations.

Dissemination

In 1987, ICRC delegates gave lectures on international humanitarian law to officers of the Israeli armed forces and civil servants in the civil administration of the occupied territories as well as to students and teachers from the Palestinian University of An-Najah, where a small library of works on international humanitarian law was constituted.

CONFLICT IN THE WESTERN SAHARA

As in the previous years, the ICRC repeated representations with a view to visiting all prisoners detained by the different parties to the conflict. It was unfortunately evident, however, that it was still not possible to provide all the combatants captured in the conflict in the Western Sahara with the protection to which they are entitled.

In March, the new regional delegate and his predecessor conducted a mission to Algiers and to the Sahara to resume contact with the ICRC's principal interlocutors. The two delegates were received by Mr. Mohamed Abdelaziz, Secretary-General of the Polisario Front, with whom they reviewed ICRC activities in connection with the conflict in the Western Sahara. As a result of the mission, in June a team of three delegates, including a doctor, was able to visit 120 Moroccan prisoners detained by the Polisario Front and interview them without witnesses, although not in their usual place of detention. After this visit, limited assistance in the form of leisure items was distributed by the ICRC to all the prisoners in the hands of the Polisario Front seen to date. However, the ICRC has still not been informed of the identity of all Moroccan prisoners in the hands of the Polisario Front nor of Sahrawi prisoners in Moroccan hands. For lack of authorization, the ICRC's last visit to Sahrawi prisoners in Moroccan hands dates back to 1978.

On 25 May, 102 Algerian military prisoners and 150 Moroccan prisoners were released by Morocco and Algeria respectively, without any action on the part of the ICRC.

In 1987, the Tracing Agency organized the exchange of 435 Red Cross messages between Moroccan and Algerian prisoners and their families, prior to their release in May. These exchanges were made possible by the collaboration of the respective National Societies. In addition, the ICRC forwarded to the Moroccan Red Crescent parcels delivered by the Algerian Red Crescent for Algerian soldiers detained in Morocco and vice versa.

OTHER COUNTRIES

In February, the President of the ICRC, Mr. Hay, and the President elect, Mr. Sommaruga, conducted a mission to four countries in the Gulf, namely Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar, to review the ICRC's various activities, particularly in the Middle East. In September, the Deputy Director of Operations also carried out a mission to three countries in the Gulf, namely Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, to strengthen ties with the

authorities and National Societies of the Arabian Peninsula still further.

□ In **Saudi Arabia**, Presidents Hay and Sommaruga had talks chiefly with Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Sheikh Faisal bin Abdul Aziz Al-Hejailan, Minister of Health, as well as leading officials of the National Society, in particular its President, Dr. Hamad A. Al-Sugair.

□ In **Bahrain**, Presidents Hay and Sommaruga met the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Mohammed Bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa, and the Minister of Education, Dr. Ali Mohammed Fakhro, who is also President of the Bahrain Red Crescent, as well as other National Society officials.

□ In **Kuwait**, Presidents Hay and Sommaruga were received by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and by the Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Mr. Rashid Abdulaziz Al-Rashid. They also had talks with National Society officials, including the President, Mr. Abdulaziz Al-Saqer.

□ In **Qatar**, Presidents Hay and Sommaruga attended the XVIIIth Conference of Arab National Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies in Doha (see the section on "Cooperation within the Movement").

□ In **Egypt**, the programme for dissemination of international humanitarian law implemented by the ICRC in cooperation with the Egyptian Red Crescent Society continued throughout the year. In this connection, close ties were maintained with the Ministry of Defence and contacts were developed in university circles. In 1987, lectures on the International Red Cross reached an audience of over 1,000 persons from different walks of life, including a group of Egyptian army officers undergoing training as military judges. Lectures on international humanitarian law were also presented by the ICRC delegate based in Cairo at the Universities of Asyut, Alexandria and Zaqaq, this subject having been included in the curricula of those universities' law faculties.

In addition, the ICRC delegation continued to exchange Red Cross messages and to deal with other Central Tracing Agency matters involving persons living in Egypt and members of their families in other countries, especially the territories occupied by Israel.

In Geneva, on 9 July the President of the ICRC met the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, H.E. Mr. Hosni Mubarak, with whom he discussed various humanitarian questions.

□ In **Jordan**, the ICRC had access to all places of detention, to all persons detained for security reasons, straight

after their arrest, in accordance with its customary visiting procedures. In 1987, ICRC delegates thus made 21 visits to detainees under interrogation at the prison of the General Intelligence Department (GID) in Amman and eleven visits to detainees under interrogation at the prison of the Military Intelligence Department (MID), also in Amman. A further eleven visits took place in civilian prisons, including three to new prisons brought into service in the course of the year. Two visits were made to Zerka military prison.

In all, during its 45 visits in 1987, the ICRC met over 630 detainees, 192 of whom were registered by name and received regular ICRC assistance.

The ICRC delegates also facilitated contacts between detainees and their families, in particular through the exchange of Red Cross messages. Material relief (books, games, etc.) and medical supplies were also distributed to detainees, for a value of some 31,000 Swiss francs.

Furthermore, the ICRC delegation in Jordan pursued its tracing work, in particular the exchange of Red Cross messages between Jordan and the territories occupied by Israel. In all, it distributed and collected around 3,400 such messages.

□ In April, an ICRC delegate participated in a training seminar on the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in **Libya** organized by the Libyan Red Crescent for the leaders of its various local sections.

□ In **Morocco**, the ICRC was involved in a series of six seminars on international humanitarian law organized by the Moroccan Red Crescent with the support of the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany. Six target groups attended the seminars: officers of the armed forces, representatives of various ministries, National Society staff, young people, doctors and journalists.

The ICRC delegation in **Syria** pursued its tracing activities in connection with the Arab-Israeli conflict, chiefly involving the exchange of Red Cross messages, in co-operation with the Syrian Red Crescent, between detainees and the populations in the territories occupied by Israel and their families in Syria. The delegation also arranged for eleven persons to be transferred across the demarcation line between Syria and Israel.

The ICRC continued to support the Syrian Red Crescent assistance programmes for the benefit of children assisted in the dispensaries run by the National Societies. During the previous year, a greater variety of foodstuffs had been made available following two missions by an ICRC nutritionist. In 1987, a doctor and a nutritionist, both ICRC delegates, carried out further missions to Syria, one in July and the other in November, to evaluate the effectiveness of the feeding programmes with staff of the Syrian Red Crescent. Milk distributions were replaced

with a diet of wheat, soya and milk for children treated in the dispensaries, and information was given to their mothers. To this end, 20 tonnes of wheat, soya and milk were delivered to the National Society in 1987.

The ICRC also participated in an introductory course on tracing activities organized in November by the Syrian Red Crescent for representatives from its various local sections. An audience from the country's four main sections heard an account by the delegate based in Damascus describing the work of the Central Tracing Agency in Geneva and the ICRC's field activities.

Moreover, the ICRC continued to support the orthopaedic centre in Damascus which was established in 1983 in co-operation with the Swedish Red Cross and the "Palestinian Red Crescent", and which has been under the entire responsibility of the latter organization since April 1986. An ICRC orthopaedic technician based in Lebanon made monthly visits to Damascus to supervise the work carried out by technicians who had been trained on the spot.

The delegate-general for the Middle East and North Africa travelled to Damascus in June to meet the Syrian authorities for discussions on humanitarian matters of common interest. He had talks with the President of the Council of Ministers and Prime Minister, Dr. Abdel Raouf El Kassem, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Dia Allah El Fattal, and General Adnan Tayyara, leader of the Syrian Arab delegation. The mission also provided the delegate-general with an opportunity to meet the President of the Syrian Red Crescent, Dr. Fouad Hamza.

□ In March, the President of the ICRC, Mr. Hay, accompanied by the delegate-general for the Middle East and North Africa, travelled to **Tunisia** for meetings with representatives of the authorities and the Tunisian Red Crescent. Talks focused inter alia on the opening of a regional delegation in Tunis. The Tunisian authorities having signified their agreement, an ICRC delegate took up his duties in Tunis in October.

The National Society organized a symposium on international humanitarian law, with ICRC participation, for staff from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, university professors and representatives of the press. Three ICRC delegates were involved in the symposium.

□ As in the previous year, the ICRC had access to persons detained for security reasons in the **Yemen Arab Republic**. Three delegates, including a doctor, made visits from 27 June to 14 July to the central prison in Sana'a and to those of Dhamar, Hajjah, Hodeida, Ibb, Al Qashlah and Sijn Al Amm in Sadah, as well as Ta'iz prison. The visits took place in accordance with the ICRC's customary procedures. Delegates saw about 4,000 prisoners including 42 security detainees, with whom they

had interviews without witnesses. At the end of the visits, medicines and various relief supplies were given to the detainees. In addition, the regional delegate made several visits to Sana'a, before and after the series of visits, for meetings with the authorities. He was received in particular by the Minister of the Interior, Mr. Abdulah Hussein Barrakat and other government representatives, as well as officials from the National Society.

A seminar on international humanitarian law and the work of the ICRC was organized in Geneva for representatives of the Yemenite Ministries of Education, Information and the Interior, and the armed forces. Seventeen persons attended the seminar, which was held in Arabic. A previous seminar of this type had taken place in 1985.

In response to the offer of services which the ICRC

had submitted, following the events of January 1986, to the authorities of the **People's Democratic Republic of Yemen** in March, the ICRC obtained permission to visit persons detained in connection with those events. In April 1987, a team of three delegates, including a doctor, thus visited 89 detainees in Al Mansourah prison in Aden, in accordance with the Committee's customary procedures. The regional delegate for the Arabian Peninsula also travelled to Aden in July, meeting the Minister of the Interior, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Deputy Minister of State Security and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. During those meetings the authorities signified their agreement of principle for the ICRC to visit, as soon as their sentences had been pronounced, 94 other prisoners detained in connection with the events of January 1986 and currently on trial.

RELIEF SUPPLIES DISTRIBUTED BY THE ICRC IN 1987

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Country (in French alphabetical order)	Recipient	Relief		Medical assistance	TOTAL Sw. fr.
		Tonnes	Value in Sw. fr.	Value in Sw. fr.	
Iraq	Prisoners of war and refugees	12	224,856	16,490	241,346
Iran	Prisoners of war	—	4,383	11,485	15,868
Israel/occupied territories	Civilians and detainees	206	273,974	16,971	290,945
Jordan	Detainees	1	31,086	—	31,086
Lebanon	Displaced civilians, the disabled, National Society and detainees	725	1,373,298	1,621,561	2,994,859
Conflict in the Western Sahara	Prisoners of war	—	2,794	—	2,794
Syria	National Society and the disabled	20	45,426	—	45,426
Yemen Arab Republic ...	Detainees	—	—	5,038	5,038
TOTAL		964	1,955,817	1,671,545	3,627,362



(Photo: ICRC)

Consultation by a mobile medical team in Lebanon.