# Africa

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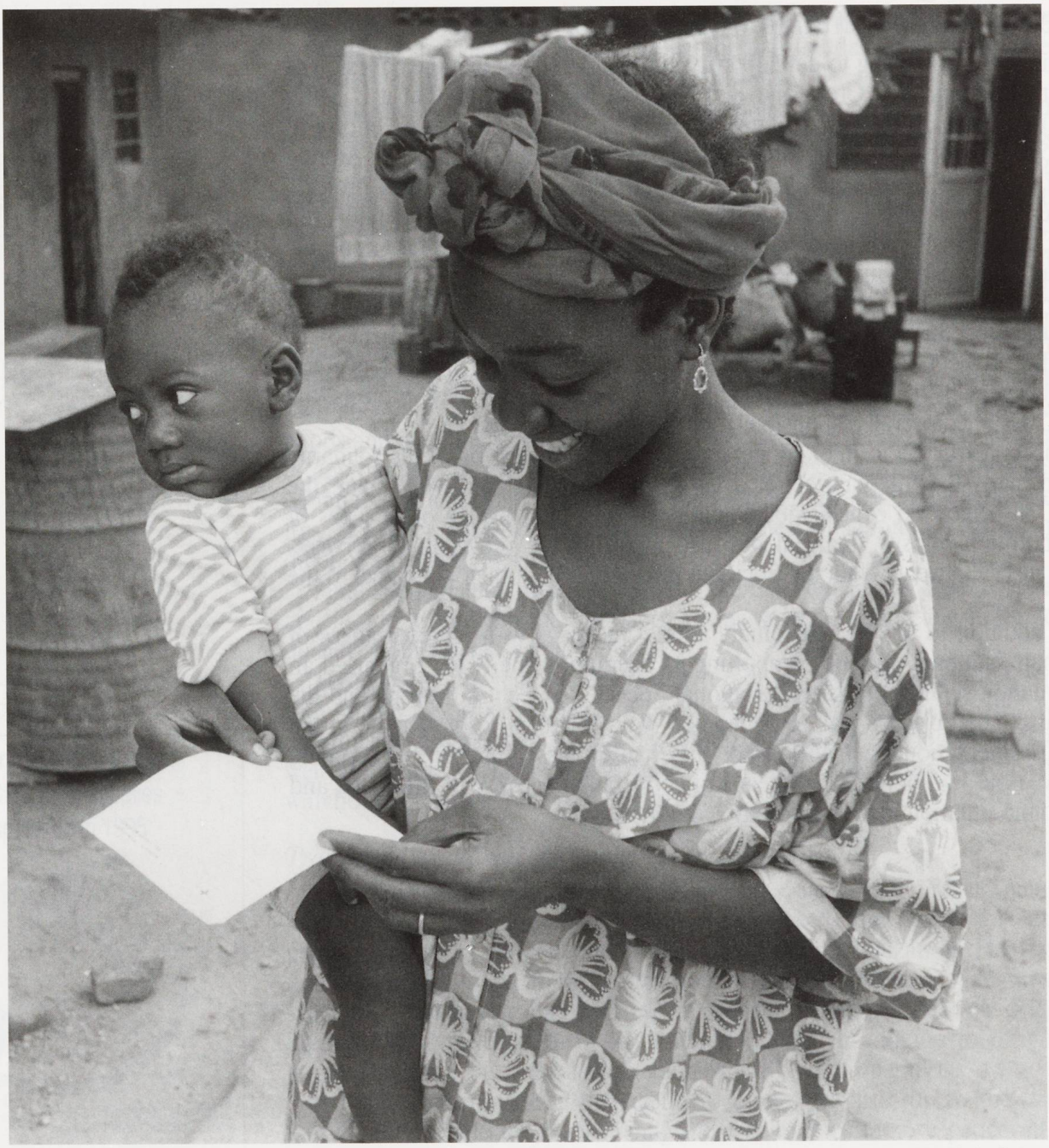


ICRC/C. Sattlberger

Easing the aching loneliness and anxiety: Red Cross messages between detainees and their families help them keep in touch and give them hope for the day when they see one another again. In Africa the ICRC visited 94,199 detainees in 1995, and handled over 75,000 messages to and from their families.

**West Africa**

***ICRC delegation:***
Liberia

***ICRC regional delegations:***
Abidjan, Dakar, Lagos

**Central Africa**

***ICRC delegations:***
Burundi, Rwanda, Zaire

***ICRC regional delegation:***
Yaoundé

**Southern Africa**

***ICRC delegation:***
Angola

***ICRC regional delegations:***
Harare, Pretoria

**East Africa**

***ICRC delegations:***
Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan

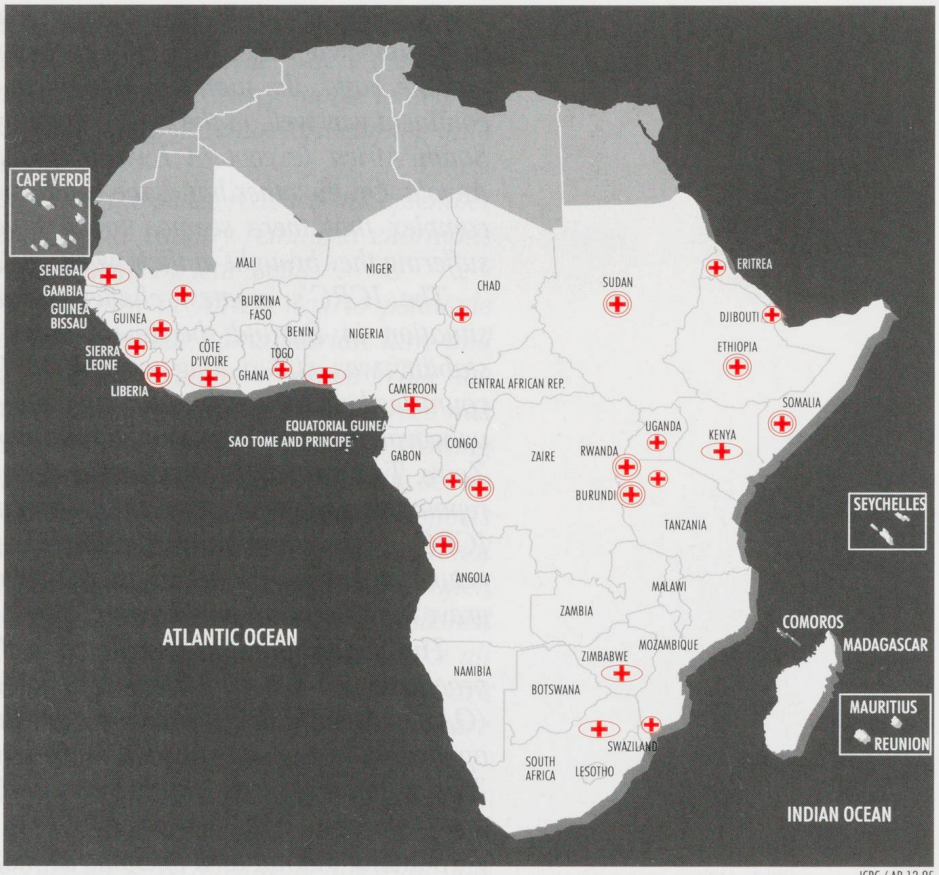
***ICRC regional delegation:***
Nairobi

**Staff**

ICRC expatriates[1] : 440
National Societies[1]: 248
Local employees[2] : 3,619

**Total expenditure**
Sfr 257,065,250

| **Expenditure breakdown** | **Sfr** |
|---|---|
| Protection/tracing: | 62,781,713 |
| Relief: | 122,620,651 |
| Medical assistance: | 27,745,144 |
| Cooperation with National Societies: | 4,553,447 |
| Dissemination: | 6,414,252 |
| Operational support: | 19,313,073 |
| Overheads: | 13,636,970 |




ICRC regional delegation  ICRC delegation  ICRC sub-delegation/office

ICRC / AR 12.95

[1] Average figures calculated on an annual basis.
[2] Under ICRC contract, as at December 1995.

# AFRICA

*Considering sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, 1995 was an exceptional year in a number of ways, with both encouraging and alarming developments. On the one hand, the number of conflicts diminished; the southern part of the continent was well on the way to stability, as peace took hold in Mozambique, South Africa (except in KwaZulu/Natal) and to a less obvious extent in Angola. On the other hand, the conflicts that persisted were so intractable and complex that there seemed to be little prospect of alleviating the human suffering they brought in their wake.*

*The ICRC's greatest challenge was in the Great Lakes region. The situation in Burundi became increasingly volatile during the year, while stability was still a long way off in Rwanda. The situation in these two countries kept the entire region in a state of apprehension all year, as a major upheaval in either one would have considerable repercussions on parts of Zaire, Tanzania and Uganda. The decision to give more time to the process of repatriation of almost two million Rwandan refugees was welcomed by the ICRC, as the situation within Rwanda was clearly not yet propitious to their return en masse. Nonetheless, the refugees' return remained an issue with grave humanitarian implications.*

*The Sudan found itself isolated at the end of 1995 having fallen out with practically all its neighbours and with the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Meanwhile, the conflict in the south became more complex, as opposition movements divided and merged almost from one day to the next. This splintering of the conflict was further complicated by the involvement of foreign forces.*

*Somalia did not turn to chaos as many observers expected after the United Nations Operation in Somalia withdrew in March. But internal wrangling within the Somali National Alliance, fighting in Belet Huen and the capture of Baidoa in September signalled a return to the generalized insecurity and localized conflicts that marked 1991 after the fall of Siyad Barre. Somaliland experienced full-blown conflict, as the government there was challenged by the Habr Gerhaji clan. All around Somalia sharia law became increasingly adopted as a way of containing the violence. As before, the ICRC was faced with the urgency of addressing glaring humanitarian needs, while remaining cautious of the dangers of setting up any kind of infrastructure in Somalia. For this reason, the delegation continued to maintain its base in Nairobi, and regular field missions by expatriates were backed up by a solid network of local field officers. Relief operations were executed under ICRC supervision by private Somali companies, which allowed security and effectiveness to be combined.*

*The Revolutionary United Front opposition in Sierra Leone launched a massive offensive early on in the year, but was driven back soon afterwards by*

*the army. The means and methods of warfare employed in the counter-offensive raised the intensity of the conflict in Sierra Leone, where the effects on civilians were catastrophic. Unfortunately, the ICRC was unable to help as much as it would have liked, as security guarantees were not forthcoming until the very end of the year.*

*In Liberia, there was a real possibility that the peace reached in September would hold. But the humanitarian needs in the country remained enormous and many fighters had still to lay down their arms by year's end.*

*Again in 1995 one of the ICRC's priorities in Africa was to persuade combatants to adhere to the rules of international humanitarian law, and thereby prevent unnecessary suffering, especially among civilians. While the traditional form of teaching humanitarian law to structured armed forces was still possible in many countries, it was no longer a viable option in a growing number of contexts. The delegate to the armed forces, based in Nairobi, set up courses in the law of war and backed up the various ICRC delegations' efforts to have humanitarian law made an integral part of training for national armed forces and police. Contact with the many fragmented and often undisciplined opposition groups in different countries was established essentially through the ICRC's local delegations, which sought to make all individuals carrying weapons understand that civilians and the wounded are entitled to respect and that certain minimum standards of behaviour are desirable in conflict.*

*The ICRC's mission to the OAU — to which it was granted observer status in 1992 — enables it not only to gain a broad insight into the political scene in Africa, but also to sensitize African governments to the role and activities of the ICRC around the world and to make them aware of the need for greater recognition and a much wider application of humanitarian law in their respective countries.*

*The deepening gulf between rich and poor in Africa remained an important issue in 1995. One major cause for concern is the recent shift of donor governments away from development towards emergency humanitarian intervention. As long as there is no international resolve to tackle the root causes of the problem and to help African nations overcome their economic difficulties, the potential for popular discontent will remain a constant threat, thereby heightening the risk of conflict in many African countries.*

ICRC delegation  ICRC office

# West Africa

## LIBERIA

The peace agreement signed in Accra, Ghana, in December 1994 held through the first months of the year. However, while the different faction leaders tried to implement the next step of the Accra Accord, fighters on the ground launched a new wave of attacks and banditry, causing the displacement of thousands of civilians, especially in the south-east of the country. Reports of harassment, rape and killings were commonplace. The faction leaders' failure to agree on the composition and chairmanship of the Council of State as provided for in the peace agreement led to massive demonstrations in Monrovia on 14 January and the imposition of a curfew by ECOMOG*.

The summit of ECOWAS* heads of State in Abuja, Nigeria, on 17 May represented a new step in the peace process but was inconclusive. However, the meeting there in June between the leader of the NPFL* and the Nigerian President was a major step forward in reconciling these two long-standing enemies and key players in the conflict.

The fighting factions of Liberia finally signed another peace treaty in the Nigerian capital on 19 August and the majority of the provisions set out in the various agreements were met: the cease-fire, effective as of 27 August, was generally respected; all leaders of the different factions met in Monrovia on the appointed date of 31 August; a new government, the LNTG II,* was established, including all the main parties; parts of the country that had been inaccessible for security reasons were reopened and movement was relatively free; and the atmosphere in the capital and other accessible towns was peaceful and calm.

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* ECOMOG: Monitoring group of the Economic Community of West African States
* ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States
* NPFL: National Patriotic Front of Liberia
* LNTG II: Liberian National Transitional Government II

Faction leaders made repeated oral commitments concerning disarmament, the reconstruction of the country, and the organization of fair elections.

On the military side, ECOMOG announced at the end of September that it was satisfied with the disengagement of troops. Problems occurred only at the Lofa bridge, a strategic point in western Liberia giving access to the diamond-rich area. The two ULIMO* wings continued fighting for control of this area, violating the cease-fire. A serious incident occurred in Gbarnga, when the NPFL were allegedly attacked by fighters of the ULIMO-Mandingo wing. In the heat of the fighting, three vehicles of international organizations were hijacked by NPFL fighters and one expatriate was harassed. The cars were returned shortly afterwards, but humanitarian operations were put on hold for some time.

On 30 November, the government in Monrovia announced an agreement between the NPFL and ULIMO-Mandingo leaders, providing for the creation of a buffer zone guaranteeing the security and free movement of people in the centre of the country between Gbalatuah and Ganglota. The two leaders also ordered their troops to respect the neutrality of the ECOMOG forces that were starting to move out of Monrovia and be deployed in the zones controlled by the NPFL and ULIMO. However, a serious setback occurred in late December, when ULIMO-Krahn troops attacked the ECOMOG base in Tubmanburg and fierce fighting broke out.

## Activities for the civilian population

Banditry and the absence of credible security guarantees from the different factions had prevented any significant humanitarian work from being accomplished since September 1994. Assistance was able to reach only the ECOMOG-controlled counties of Montserrado, Margibi and Grand Bassa, until in September 1995 access to other areas became possible.

From February onwards, large numbers of displaced people fleeing the armed conflict streamed into the Buchanan area, where they received immediate assistance from the ICRC and the Liberia National Red Cross Society, which cooperated with MSF* and AICF* to provide shelter, water and other aid. Displaced people also continued to arrive in Greater Monrovia and to flee to neighbouring Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire, particularly from the south-east of Liberia, to escape from the struggle between the NPFL and the LPC* for control of Maryland. In mid-June the conflict even spilled over onto Ivorian territory.

IN 1995 THE ICRC:

- gave support to two health centres run by the Liberia National Red Cross, each treating 5,000 patients per month, by providing medical supplies and staff incentives, and improving water supply and sanitation facilities;
- assisted the National Society's mobile clinic for Monrovia Central Prison;
- visited 51 detainees held by ECOMOG, the NPFL and the Liberian Ministry of Justice, and acted as a neutral intermediary during the release of detainees held by these authorities;
- distributed 104 tonnes of non-food items (39,300 blankets, 14,660 cooking pots, 12 tonnes of soap and 14.5 tonnes of clothing) to around 50,000 displaced people.

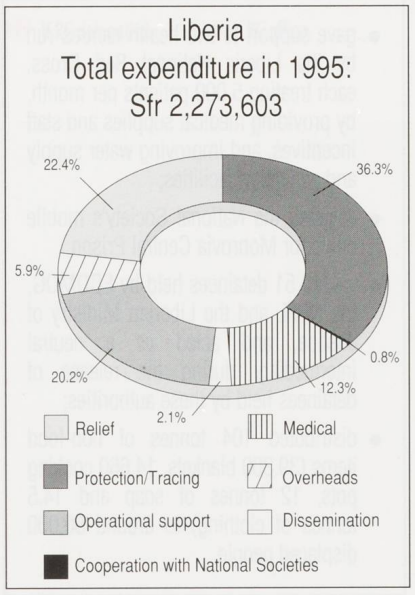
* ULIMO: United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia
* MSF: *Médecins sans frontières*
* AICF: *Action internationale contre la faim*
* LPC: Liberian Peace Council

When in mid-May hostilities between the two ULIMO factions resumed north of the capital, ECOMOG proceeded to clear the highway leading to Bomi and Grand Cape Mount counties and to man all checkpoints with ECOMOG troops. Tubmanburg, Tiene, Bo Waterside and Kle Junction were declared "safe havens". Civilians subsequently began to move to Tubmanburg and approached the checkpoints, attracted by the new-found security, some leaving behind their looted villages, others fleeing forced labour in the mines. Mid-year, the ICRC received security guarantees from the ULIMO-Krahn leaders regarding access to the parts of Bomi and Grand Cape Mount not protected by ECOMOG.

The signing of the peace agreement in mid-August led to the reopening of the roads towards central Liberia. Humanitarian agencies were able to return to Upper Margibi and to Bong, Nimba and Lofa counties. Difficult road conditions after five years of war prevented a return to other areas. Mid-September, the ICRC went into central Liberia to conduct an assessment tour with the National Society. The clinics in Gbarnga, Gbatala, Totota and Salala had not been supplied by the ICRC/Liberia National Red Cross since October 1994 and had later been destroyed. A new building was found for the Gbarnga clinic, which was reopened by the ICRC in December to care for the population and the displaced. In Gbatala and Totota, new buildings were located and renovation work was begun at the end of the year.

Non-food distributions were made in Tubmanburg, Klay and Gbah and to selected beneficiaries in several feeding centres and clinics in western and central parts of Monrovia.

Since food stocks at the ICRC's logistics base for Liberia, situated in Man in Côte d'Ivoire, had not been used because security conditions inside Liberia were too hazardous for the relief convoys, the stocks were loaned to the EU* and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies for their refugee relief programme in Côte d'Ivoire.




## Activities for detainees

The ICRC pursued its visits and assistance in Monrovia to detainees held in connection with the September 1994 coup attempt. The coup's major conspirators were not allowed any other visitors. The trial of the plotters finally came to a close and eight high-ranking officers of the AFL* were sentenced to seven years' imprisonment with hard labour. Four other officers, although acquitted, remained in custody because of judicial complications until December, when two were released.

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* EU: European Union

* AFL: Armed Forces of Liberia

Delegates continued to visit the other detainees in Monrovia's central prison and provided them with medical supplies and basic necessities, including blankets, soap and water-drums. In cooperation with the Liberia National Red Cross regular medical check-ups for detainees were begun in May, supported by the installation of a mobile clinic. A scabies treatment campaign was carried out for all inmates in June. The prisoners' health improved significantly as a result.

In connection with the 19 August peace agreement, the ICRC was invited to brief the disarmament committee, composed of ECOMOG, UNOMIL*, the LNTG II and all factions, about procedures for the release of detainees. As provided for in the agreement, the institution offered its assistance in any releases. On 9 November the NPFL and ULIMO factions agreed to free their prisoners and the ICRC was asked to visit the detainees in order to organize their transfer. The detainees in question were subsequently visited by delegates and in December they were finally released and taken to Monrovia under ICRC auspices.

## Tracing activities

In conjunction with a local radio station, in February the delegation began to transmit a programme aimed at reuniting families split up by the conflict.

Several tracing cases were resolved in 1995 and unaccompanied minors were reunited with their families in Monrovia. In order to process such cases the delegation continued to work closely with other humanitarian organizations active in Liberia, notably the Save the Children Fund.

Many of the Red Cross messages received were destined for refugees in camps in Guinea. Liberian tracing officers worked with the ICRC in Conakry and the Red Cross Society of Guinea to set up an effective distribution system.

## Health activities

The Liberia National Red Cross clinic in Buchanan, which had been set up with assistance from the ICRC in 1994, was kept supplied with medical requisites. Up to 80 percent of consultations given were for displaced people. A waiting room and latrine were constructed with ICRC support.

The ICRC and the Federation contributed to the refurbishment of the National Society's health clinic in Dolo. The clinic reopened in April as many people who had fled their homes during hostilities in the area started to return to the town.

* UNOMIL: United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia

Assistance was also given to the JFK hospital in Monrovia, run by the Ministry of Health. The ICRC nurse regularly visited the cholera unit and emergency ward and distributed intravenous fluids when necessary.

The delegation continued its water and sanitation programme, rehabilitating wells which had dried out and maintaining handpumps.

With the onset of heavy rains in July, there was an increase in the number of people suffering from severe diarrhoea and a few cholera cases appeared. At the instigation of MSF-Belgium and in cooperation with the ICRC all hospitals opened cholera wards.

## Dissemination

The ICRC's dissemination work targeted the ECOMOG contingents in the field and at headquarters. Furthermore, the ICRC was able to extend this programme to the AFL and the Liberian National Police and also to start sessions with ULIMO-Krahn fighters in Bomi, Grand Cape Mount and Margibi counties and with NPFL fighters in Bong county. Ad hoc sessions were held at various security checkpoints to explain the ICRC's mandate and activities, spread awareness of basic humanitarian principles and rules of humanitarian law and promote respect for the red cross emblem.

The delegation continued to support the National Society's dissemination activities and during the month of May, declared "Month of the Red Cross" by the transitional government, Radio Monrovia broadcast a special programme devoted to Red Cross work.

# ABIDJAN
# Regional delegation
# (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Togo)

From the beginning of 1995 the regional delegation in Abidjan took over responsibility for Benin, Ghana and Togo, which had previously been covered from Lagos. Matters concerning Burkina Faso and Niger were handled by the regional delegation in Dakar. Activities in Liberia continued to be run by an ad hoc delegation in Monrovia, which worked closely throughout the year with the regional delegation in Abidjan given the repercussions of the Liberian situation on the surrounding countries. Abidjan provided logistical back-up for the whole of the coastal region.

Under its programme of cooperation with the Red Cross Societies of the region, the ICRC financed a number of projects including information activities, dissemination work and improvements to National Society structures.

## CÔTE D'IVOIRE

From April on troubles arose in the west of the country, where hundreds of thousands of Liberian refugees had settled. Liberian factions had crossed the border into Côte d'Ivoire and the ensuing clashes claimed dozens of victims, including refugees, local residents and members of the Ivorian security forces. At the onset of these incidents, the ICRC sent a mission to the area to prepare for the event that ICRC action might be needed, while maintaining regular contact with both the civil and military authorities of Côte d'Ivoire, as well as with the main embassies and non-governmental organizations in the region. The disturbances grew to alarming proportions when a particularly violent incursion into the Ivorian border town of Tai, aimed at the Liberian refugee population, caused the displacement of some 30,000 people, mainly Liberians. In conjunction with the National Society, the ICRC transported 800 of them from Tai to Man, where they were subsequently taken care of by UNHCR. The ICRC also provided the Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire with the necessary logistical support. In September, delegates carried out a mission to evaluate how soon the 300,000 Liberian refugees might be repatriated and there were general signs of willingness to return in time for elections in 1996. According to different sources, some 12,000 refugees had already returned voluntarily by the end of the year.

In August, the National Society of Côte d'Ivoire received ICRC instruction in emergency preparedness, in anticipation of the presidential and general elections in October and November, which took place without major troubles.

As part of its dissemination programme, the regional delegation financed and led a number of courses and seminars organized by the National Society and/or security forces.

## GHANA

Northern Ghana was again the scene of violence as inter-ethnic clashes erupted in March. The ICRC assisted some 15,000 displaced civilians and others affected by the hostilities, in cooperation with local branches of the Ghana Red Cross Society, whose participation in this operation demonstrated their usefulness to local communities, convincing even those in opposition for ethnic reasons. The non-food rehabilitation operation helped people to resettle in their home villages. The ICRC also distributed supplies to rural medical structures that had been affected by the disturbances.

## GUINEA

In 1995 the ICRC established regular contact with the Guinean authorities and RUF* representatives thanks to its permanent presence in the country. This enabled the institution to play a direct role in the release of 18 hostages held by the RUF. Cooperation and dialogue with the National Society progressed; there was also greater awareness of the Red Cross, as evidenced by the presidential decree recognizing the emblem in May. Dissemination activities continued for the armed forces and the police.

During the year a network of tracing offices was set up in conjunction with the Red Cross Society of Guinea in various refugee camps along the borders with Liberia and Sierra Leone. This enabled refugees to write Red Cross messages to their relatives back home.

The 23rd Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference was held from 9 to 13 December in Conakry. It brought together 52 Muslim countries, with 900 diplomats representing a population of 935 million people in Africa, Asia and Europe. The conference unanimously adopted a resolution on the ICRC's proposal for the elimination of anti-personnel mines and the mine-clearing process. This was a major breakthrough for the ICRC in that it was the first time that an organization so highly respected by the Islamic world, and whose membership included mine-manufacturing countries, adopted a resolution in favour of the prohibition of mines.

## SIERRA LEONE

For the greater part of 1995, Sierra Leone remained a country devastated by the armed conflict and anarchy. Armed attacks were commonplace and people were taken hostage without it being clear whether those responsible were rebels or army factions. Towards the end of May, it seemed as though RUF forces were gaining strength, almost reaching Freetown. Later, the government forces, supported by Nigerian and Guinean troops as well as a private foreign security company, took back certain diamond-producing areas from the opposition. This continuing turmoil resulted in the displacement of thousands of civilians.

In this dangerous environment involving cross-border dealing in arms, drugs and diamonds, it was very difficult to obtain security guarantees for humanitarian activities. Nevertheless, the ICRC actively pursued its dialogue with both sides and was requested to help with the repatriation of a number of hostages taken during the RUF offensive in early 1995. Two sailors arrested in April 1994, a Russian and a Sierra Leonean, were released and handed over to the

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* RUF: Revolutionary United Front (see *Sierra Leone*)

ICRC at the Guinean border in January. Seven nuns (one Brazilian and six Italians) were freed in March. In April, the remaining 10 foreigners (six British, one German and three Swiss) and six Sierra Leoneans were released under ICRC auspices. They were handed over at the Guinean border and transported by the ICRC to Conakry, where they were handed over to the representatives of their respective countries.

Increasingly constructive contact with the RUF and intensive negotiations with the Sierra Leonean government in Freetown enabled the ICRC to obtain the necessary security guarantees to initiate meetings in June with the rebel leadership, to whom it explained its mandate and plans for fulfilling its humanitarian mission in eastern Sierra Leone. The ICRC was able to carry out an assessment of the living conditions and nutritional status of civilians in and around Kailahun, which revealed glaring deficiencies among a population of around 30,000. As many civilians in this conflict area had been unable to work their land because of the hazardous security situation, food reserves were running short. Close to 30 percent of children under five were found to be suffering from severe malnutrition.

The ICRC continued to seek government approval to launch an emergency relief operation for the civilian population. Mid-July the country's President gave his verbal agreement, though this was not confirmed, and was later opposed by military leaders. Late September the President formally accepted the ICRC's proposal but could not authorize action for security reasons. End October, the President reiterated his acceptance of emergency aid for the rebel stronghold of Kailahun on condition that distributions were overseen by the United Nations, but only days later the government launched a major offensive on that area. The National Society stood by to evacuate the wounded and guide displaced people to safer areas, but its assistance was not needed as shortly afterwards the army was weakened by the withdrawal of the foreign security forces and fighting calmed down.

Overall, approximately 40 percent of the population remained displaced at the end of the year; 1.5 million people were displaced within Sierra Leone and 350,000 people had sought refuge in neighbouring Liberia and Guinea. Most of the internally displaced people were grouped in government-controlled areas in the east of the country around Kenema, Koidu and Bo, and the ICRC sent a team including a doctor, a nutritionist and a relief delegate to assess their needs. However, lack of security made it impossible to launch a relief programme before the end of the year. Although few humanitarian organizations were able to operate, MSF did manage to open two nutritional centres for 1,100 children, airlifting food and medical supplies, and the National Society was also active in this region, distributing food to tens of thousands of displaced people.

The major problem was that villages remained inaccessible by road because of continual ambushes.

In September the ICRC visited detainees held in Freetown central prison. The institution also pursued its dialogue with the authorities to gain access to people arrested in connection with an attempted coup in October 1995.

## TOGO

A climate of instability continued to reign in Togo, although there were no major outbreaks of violence. The situation was improved by the return home of 131,000 refugees from Ghana and Benin. However, a further 6,000 Ghanaian refugees remained in northern Togo.

The national armed forces began to include instruction in humanitarian law in their training programmes and the Togolese Red Cross held first-aid courses and dissemination sessions in Togo's three largest military barracks.

In 1995 Togo ratified the 1980 UN Weapons Convention.

## DAKAR
## Regional delegation
## (Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger and Senegal)

In addition to its specific activities in Mali and the Casamance region of Senegal, the regional delegation continued its cooperation with the National Societies of the region, conducting dissemination sessions for various target groups, encouraging instruction in humanitarian law, and on a practical level, helping to fight epidemics of cholera, promote public health and give first-aid training to local volunteers.

## CAPE VERDE

Following an ICRC mission to Cape Verde, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs deposited the instruments of accession to Additional Protocols I and II withmthe Swiss government on 16 March 1995. The government of Cape Verde also made a declaration recognizing the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission.

## GAMBIA

A new attempted counter-coup on 27 January resulted in the imprisonment of a number of people accused of being involved, including the Vice-President

and the Minister of the Interior. The ICRC visited 24 individuals arrested in this connection and a further 80 security detainees held at Mile 2 prison and in hospitals and barracks for reasons related to events in 1994.

## GUINEA BISSAU

The regional delegate went on mission to Guinea-Bissau in mid-September in order to establish contact with the government and the National Society, particularly with the aim of reactivating the latter and enhancing its management structure.

A confidential report concerning the ICRC's visit to 14 security detainees in December 1994 was presented to the relevant authorities in February 1995.

## MALI

The violence among Tuareg and Arab rebel movements, which had widely affected the civilian population throughout 1994, abated in 1995 and the tension eased thanks to reconciliation efforts instigated by the affected communities. However, peace remained tenuous. On 8 March the ICRC reopened an office in Bamako with a permanent expatriate on staff, so that it could follow events in the north of the country more closely and monitor developments in Niger and Burkina Faso. It also set up an office in Timbuktu and this increased presence enabled the ICRC to establish contacts with the government and rebel movements, organize public health and clean-up campaigns in Timbuktu, give material assistance to health services to help fight cholera epidemics and conduct dissemination sessions for a variety of target groups.

In May, 13 security detainees were visited in Bamako in accordance with the ICRC's standard procedures. The institution acted as a neutral intermediary in the release of one detainee held by one of the rebel movements.

In July, the delegate based in Bamako visited the population in areas most affected by food shortages and lack of sanitation and shelter. The ICRC informed the authorities and other humanitarian organizations of the gravity of the situation and requested them to take action. In August, the ICRC carried out seed distributions and improved water supply systems, assisting over 10,000 beneficiaries.

Dissemination sessions were held in Gao for members of the National Society's regional committee, first-aid workers, armed forces of the Gao military zone and members of the commission set up to follow the implementation of the national peace agreement of April 1992.

## NIGER

The Niger government and the Tuareg rebellion movement signed a peace agreement on 24 April, which should have brought an end to four years of fighting and provided, among other things, for a general amnesty, the integration of rebels into the army and emergency assistance for the Tuareg community in the north. The last two provisions of the accord were not implemented, however, as a rift developed in May between the President and the Prime Minister, causing political turmoil in parliament. Also, new troubles were reported between the Toubous and the local population in the eastern region of Diffa. The delegate based in Bamako carried out missions to Niamey in May and again in August, meeting a number of government and rebel representatives. Dialogue was initiated with the Arab militia of Niger with a view to obtaining access to any detainees they might be holding.

## SENEGAL

In late May, the ICRC cooperated with the Senegalese Red Cross Society in providing assistance for more than 2,800 people displaced as a result of fighting between the Senegalese army and rebels from the MFDC* in the border region with Guinea-Bissau. Fighting resumed in Casamance in January and several missions were carried out to assess the situation of the thousands of displaced people there. Over 130 individuals were arrested as a result of the disturbances. The ICRC made repeated efforts to obtain access to detainees and the authorities declared that they were open to ICRC visits in principle. At year's end discussions were still under way regarding access to detainees from Casamance.

# LAGOS
# Regional delegation
# (Nigeria)

The situation in Nigeria remained unstable in 1995. The ICRC continued to monitor developments so as to maintain a clear and independent view of a context of such geostrategic importance. Indeed, by virtue of Nigeria's size and influence, turmoil in the country could have serious repercussions on a large part of the African continent.

Although one could not talk of a conflict in Nigeria in 1995, some of the political events that marked the year did involve limited violence. In the Bakassi

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* MFDC: *Mouvement des forces démocratiques de Casamance*

peninsula, the scene of fierce clashes in 1994 between Nigerian and Cameroonian troops, renewed fighting was reported to have claimed 20 more lives. However, some progress was made in this region after the ICRC intervened to obtain the release of several detainees. In January, a Cameroonian soldier taken prisoner by Nigerian armed forces in the peninsula and visited twice by the ICRC was freed and repatriated to Cameroon. In February, the Nigerian authorities handed over two policemen captured in the border dispute to the Cameroonian embassy.

In early March, the defence headquarters announced that an attempted coup had been foiled and 29 officers and civilians, as well as two former generals, arrested.

Clashes that broke out in May between Christian and Muslim communities caused some 30 deaths in the northern city of Kano. Order was restored when police reinforcements were brought in and the State authorities imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew. Nonetheless, tension remained high, particularly after a previously unknown group called *Jammatu Tajdidi Islamya* began to circulate pamphlets urging non-Muslims to leave the city. The Nigerian Red Cross Society stepped up the capacity of its Kano branch, but it was unable to intervene because of the religious nature of the troubles, highlighting the problem of acceptability of the red cross emblem in this largely Muslim area.

End June, political activities were officially authorized again. This led to the establishment of some 60 new parties, thus weakening any attempts at forming a coherent opposition party.

On 1 October, the Head of State announced that the transition from military to civilian rule would span three years, with the final disengagement of the military from power scheduled for 1 October 1998.

In November, just as Nigeria was being publicly complimented for its continued participation in the Liberian peace process, nine members of the Movement for the Survival of the People of Ogoni (MOSOP), including the writer Ken Saro-Wiva, were hanged, shocking the international community and eliciting harsh criticism from the United Nations Security Council.

## Cooperation with the National Society

At an extraordinary session of the Annual General Meeting of the Nigerian Red Cross Society (NRCS) in March, the structural reforms proposed by the NRCS, the ICRC and the Federation in May 1994 were approved.

The Lagos State branch opened several new emergency posts in metropolitan Lagos, which were on stand-by in the run-up to the 12 June anniversary of the annulled 1993 presidential elections. However, the country remained surprisingly calm.

A joint NRCS/ICRC dissemination seminar for Red Cross personnel and local media representatives was held in Benin City (Edo State) and emergency preparedness programmes were developed in this area.

In June the National Society began to publish its newsletter again for the first time in three years. This was partially subsidized by the ICRC.

## Dissemination

The regional delegation continued its dissemination courses for senior officers of the armed forces at the National War College, covering issues relevant to the forthcoming Review Conference of the 1980 UN Weapons Convention, the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, and follow-up to the 1993 International Conference for the Protection of War Victims. It also organized follow-up sessions to the 1994 training courses held for officers at the Command and Staff College, during which documents on humanitarian law were prepared for the 1996 curriculum.

Regular contact was maintained with the Nigerian media and several programmes on radio and television, including on newly established independent stations, were devoted to the Red Cross and its activities worldwide.

# Central Africa

## BURUNDI

A succession of political changes studded the first three months of the year in Burundi, bringing with them a marked deterioration in security. By mid-February the president of the National Assembly and the Prime Minister had both resigned and it was not until 1 March that a new government was formed. In the weeks that followed there emerged a palpable lack of confidence in the new authorities, and on 24 March mayhem broke loose in Bujumbura, as the army clashed with gangs of armed extremists and thousands of civilians fled the capital to Zaire or to the surrounding countryside.

Meanwhile, in the provinces, attacks on military targets resulted in retaliation mainly against civilians, causing a high number of deaths. In addition, reports abounded on violent confrontations between displaced people and local residents.

In May the proliferation of armed Hutu gangs on the one side and Tutsi militia groups on the other led to a further deterioration in security. Attacks from both sides became increasingly frequent, more and more civilian families were displaced or dispersed, and threats and attacks directed at humanitarian organizations made many NGOs and UN agencies reluctant to continue with their work in trouble-stricken parts of the country. The ICRC therefore extended its zone of operations to include areas no longer assisted by these organizations.

As the year progressed, so too did the intensity of the conflict. In July and August the situation in and around the capital and in the north-west (Bubanza, Cibitoke and Kayanza provinces) took a serious turn for the worse. At the beginning of July the more radical members of the FRODEBU* party walked out of parliament and fled the country to Uvira, across the Zairian border,

IN 1995 THE ICRC:

- registered 1,673 new detainees and regularly visited 2,143;
- reunited 491 families split up by the conflict;
- collected 115,544 Red Cross messages and distributed 100,367;
- provided 345,000 displaced people with non-food assistance;
- provided some 175,000 people affected by the conflict with seed and tools;
- distributed water on a daily basis to over 100,000 people.

* FRODEBU: *Front pour la démocratie au Burundi*

where the core of the opposition had already set up base. This weakening of the government by political strife, continuing attacks by rebel groups taking refuge in urban areas and vast purging operations by militias and sections of the army all contributed to both social and economic degradation.

Other parts of the country did not escape the violence, though flare-ups tended to be more isolated, at least until the end of the year, when fighting spread to different provinces, including the Karuzi area, causing the displacement of over 20,000 people. Even the south, which had been relatively free of violence, was affected by a major military operation around the beginning of November, when the army clashed with Hutu rebels of the FROLINA*, accusing them of launching attacks from bases in Tanzania.

## Activities for the civilian population

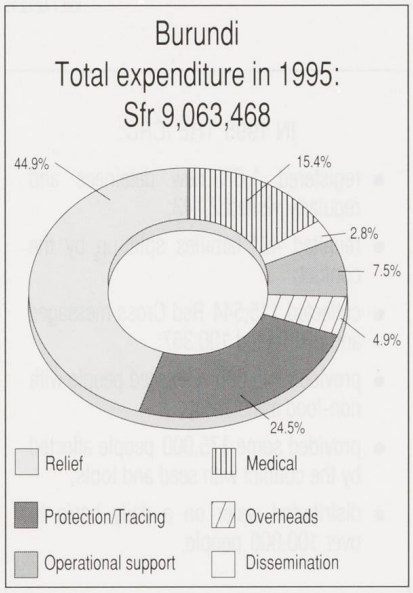
ICRC delegates in Burundi visited trouble-stricken areas throughout the year, attempting to assuage the ill feeling which pervaded rival communities. They did this indirectly through their physical presence and more directly by giving displaced people news about the situation in their home communes, and by talking to local authorities and leaders, clarifying rumours and suggesting ways of reducing tension. When local violence had left casualties the ICRC evacuated the wounded to medical facilities, providing protection until such time as the patients could return to their homes.

Delegates also maintained regular contact with all military, political and civilian authorities to inform them of ICRC activities around the country, to report on observations made and to remind them of their responsibilities regarding the protection of civilians and their duty to abide by international humanitarian law and respect the red cross emblem.

Over the year there were hundreds of thousands of civilian victims in Burundi: apart from those killed (over 200 every week) thousands were wounded and tens of thousands more displaced or dispersed, living in camps in and outside the country. Many of the survivors lost everything during the fighting: as they left their homes, these were systematically looted and destroyed; their fields and harvests were burnt.

In several areas, hydraulic and electric installations were sabotaged, depriving the population of drinking water and electricity and hampering many forms of business, particularly in the capital.

The general instability, coupled with the pressure induced by widespread rumours, forced humanitarian organizations to abandon certain provinces, thus leaving them without any form of basic assistance, medical or otherwise.




* FROLINA: *Front pour la libération nationale*

The ICRC endeavoured to continue its activities all over the country, but had to restrict its movements in certain areas where fighting occurred, and in the hills, which had been intentionally made inaccessible. The institution was therefore unable to reach the majority of the people living in the provinces of Cibitoke and Bubanza from mid-August on.

Activities in Cibitoke picked up again towards the end of October, but were soon brought to a halt in view of major security incidents on 28 October, during which an ICRC water-tanker went over a landmine, and on 6 November, when an ICRC convoy was ambushed and a Burundian staff member killed. The delegation in Bujumbura immediately launched a far-reaching information campaign to spread awareness of the ICRC's role in Burundi and promote respect for basic humanitarian principles.

In November the Delegate General for Africa met the President of Burundi, the Ministers of the Interior and Foreign Affairs, the leadership of the army and the *gendarmerie*, all of whom expressed the wish that the ICRC recommence its humanitarian work in regions affected by the conflict. He also met representatives from the FDD* and the Palipehutu* opposition, both of whom were in favour of the ICRC returning to those regions.

Yet despite the overwhelming acceptance of the ICRC by all parties, events in December forced the institution temporarily to suspend all of its activities in Burundi. On 6 December heavy fighting broke out between the Burundian army and armed Hutu groups in and around Bujumbura and continued for three days. During the hostilities the ICRC evacuated over 50 casualties to hospital. In the night of 8 December a grenade attack was launched against one of the hospitals which had taken in some of the casualties, injuring 20 patients and killing two nurses. The ICRC appealed to the parties to respect the wounded and the red cross emblem.

The following day a Belgian Red Cross vehicle evacuating a wounded soldier and two of his comrades, who were not carrying weapons, was stopped by armed elements. During the ensuing discussion between the Belgian Red Cross nurse travelling on board the vehicle and the armed men, the three passengers attempted to flee. Although one of them managed to escape the ICRC learned later on that the other two had been killed. The nurse and the driver were not harmed and were allowed to continue. On 13 December the soldier who had escaped gave an interview on national radio, in which he claimed that the ICRC had handed his companions over to the armed elements. Within the next few hours an ICRC vehicle was stolen at gunpoint in Bujumbura, and an Oxfam residence adjacent to the ICRC's office in Gitega came under gunfire and was

* FDD: *Forces pour la défense de la démocratie*

* Palipehutu: *Parti pour la libération du peuple hutu*

hit by two grenades. A third grenade exploded in the AICF compound in Gitega. The ICRC consequently curtailed all movement of its expatriates in the country until adequate clarification and rectification of the facts could be obtained from the highest authorities.

By the end of the year the ICRC was still unable to work in Burundi. This had serious repercussions on the health and safety of a significant part of the population, as the ICRC had been the only humanitarian organization with access to several provinces, including those most affected by the conflict.

## Activities for detainees

During 1995 the ICRC registered detainees, monitored their conditions of detention and kept track of their whereabouts to prevent ill-treatment and disappearances. At the same time it encouraged prison authorities to improve living conditions for inmates and bring them up to acceptable standards. Delegates had unrestricted access to detainees in prisons, police stations, and places of detention run by the *gendarmerie*. Reports on the delegates' findings and suggestions for improvement were regularly submitted to the authorities concerned, and material assistance, such as cleaning materials, blankets, soap and water containers, was provided in all places visited.

ICRC doctors visited places of detention to arrange for the hospitalization of serious cases and follow their progress, and distributed medical supplies to prison health services.

The number of security detainees visited by the ICRC in Burundi rose constantly throughout the year. By the end of 1995 over 1,670 new detainees had been registered, bringing the total to 2,143.

## Tracing activities

The delegation in Bujumbura collected 115,544 and distributed 100,367 Red Cross messages in connection with the Rwandan crisis, mainly through six offices located in refugee camps in the north of Burundi. The ICRC in Burundi also registered 12,342 unaccompanied Rwandan minors and reunited 491 with their families.

Other tracing work involved collecting and distributing Red Cross messages sent between detainees and their families.

## Medical activities

The ICRC medical team assessed health requirements in trouble-stricken areas and provided 95 health centres and 17 hospitals, some of them on a regular basis, with medical supplies. Over 475 wounded people were evacuated

to health facilities by ICRC delegates, who registered them and subsequently kept track of them.

The team also monitored health conditions in camps for displaced people receiving material assistance from the ICRC, and frequent soap distributions were carried out to improve hygiene.

In September and October the ICRC ran a mobile clinic for people in areas where medical care was unavailable.

## Water and sanitation

ICRC specialists carried out a broad survey of water and sanitary facilities between April and June, during which a number of installations were restored to working order on the spot. A more comprehensive rehabilitation programme was planned for early August, to restore the gravity feed systems of three provinces, build latrines and set up water distribution points in 25 camps for displaced people. However, the programme was considerably slowed down by an emergency that occurred in mid-August: on the Imbo plain to the north-west of Bujumbura some 100,000 residents and displaced people were deprived of water as a result of violence in the surrounding hills. An emergency plan of action was swiftly put into place, just as epidemics of diarrhoea and cholera were beginning to spread among the population. By the end of September 10 reservoirs had been installed, supplied by water tankers transporting up to 100,000 litres a day, and a mobile water purification unit furnishing 5,000 litres of drinking water per hour had been set up. This emergency programme was carried out from August through to the end of October, when it had to be suspended because of a number of security incidents.

The ICRC also explored alternative water supply methods and implemented a number of projects which included digging new wells, repairing existing ones and setting up systems for rainwater harvesting.

A large-scale programme to provide local water authorities with the equipment needed to maintain existing water supply facilities began in October in the provinces of Gitega, Ruyigi and Muramvya.

Other projects, such as the construction of latrines, were undertaken to improve sanitation in 15 camps for displaced people around the country.

## Relief activities

From the start of the year the ICRC assisted vulnerable groups in 10 provinces affected by violence. Some 345,000 people displaced in camps or dispersed around the provinces received cooking pots, jerricans, blankets, soap and plastic sheeting to help them build shelters. In order to help the displaced

population regain a measure of self-sufficiency and dignity, and to stave off a potential famine, the ICRC also distributed seed and tools to about 175,000 people.

## Dissemination/information

The delegation issued armed forces instructors with a manual designed to show them the need to train their soldiers in the basic rules of war. The manual was presented at a two-day seminar for 32 instructors.

Delegates were also invited to participate in various seminars organized locally for the staff of penitentiary administrations, social workers and police officers. The ICRC took advantage of this opportunity to present its mandate and activities and to draw attention to the distinction between international humanitarian law and human rights law.

In anticipation of the return of Rwandan refugees, delegates went to the seven UNHCR camps in northern Burundi to explain the need to observe at least minimum standards of humanitarian behaviour.

No fewer than 25,000 people came to see a theatrical performance staged around the country, illustrating the basic standards of humanitarian behaviour that must be maintained in times of turmoil such as those of present-day Burundi. The play was also broadcast twice on national television and on national radio.

In three provinces over 2,000 people of mixed backgrounds (including local authorities, displaced people and secondary school pupils) were shown a film portraying the principles of humanitarian behaviour. Alongside this information campaign, dissemination staff prepared special work files, tailor-made for each level of the country's education system.

As the local press was dominated by extremist groups spreading rumours about humanitarian organizations, a seminar was held in July in Nairobi by "Synergies Africa" for journalists from Burundi and other countries of the region. The ICRC participated in the seminar, enabling some 15 representatives of the local press to familiarize themselves with the workings of the institution.

Towards the end of the year, as threats and attacks directed against the ICRC increased, an enormous effort was made to inform the Burundian press of the ICRC's specific mandate. Radio and TV spots were produced and interviews given to the media to help raise awareness of the institution's neutrality and promote respect for the red cross emblem.

Further, ad hoc presentations of the ICRC's work and mandate were organized for the general public, mainly for educational establishments and various social groups.

# RWANDA

One year on from the 1994 genocide, the humanitarian problems in Rwanda were still manifold. The people remained deeply marked by the genocide, and reconstruction of the ravaged nation had only just begun. Despite the international community's initial pledges to help the Rwandan authorities with reconstruction and development, the financial assistance required was not forthcoming and by year's end the country's judicial system was by no means ready to assume the responsibility of bringing the culprits of the massacres to justice and to ensure the establishment of the rule of law. In August a change of government brought a change of attitude, as a harder line was adopted in terms of internal security and towards the international community. In the meantime, UNAMIR*, whose mandate had been renewed in June for a six-month period, saw its mission adjusted in December to a final mandate lasting until March 1996, as requested by the Rwandan government.

Though these internal issues were indeed crucial, the scope of humanitarian problems plaguing Rwanda was considerably broader. With over 1.8 million refugees still encamped in Zaire, Tanzania and Burundi, stability in the region undoubtedly rested on the return of these people to their home areas. Nonetheless, conditions in Rwanda were not propitious to such a return *en masse* and, in any case, the vast majority of refugees were seriously deterred from going back by the *Interahamwe* leaders and officials from the previous government.

The few thousand refugees who did make their way back home were confronted with two major problems. First, many of them faced accusations, often arbitrary, of involvement in the 1994 genocide and, as the legal system was not yet equipped to deal with the thousands of cases pending, the accused were placed in detention (see section below). Second, many returned to find

* UNAMIR: United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda

others occupying their land, often claiming that it had originally belonged to them before they were forced to flee in the 1959 massacres or later.

As the year progressed, initial calls from Tanzania and Zaire in particular for the refugees to return quickly were silenced by the logical conclusion that until the country's legal system was functioning and these matters could be settled, there would be no guarantee of security in the communes and a sudden and massive return could be disastrous for the whole Great Lakes region.

Inside Rwanda, as more and more people were arrested in connection with the 1994 genocide, the problem of overcrowding in the prisons and other places of detention reached alarming proportions. This was one of the main humanitarian challenges facing the ICRC in 1995, along with the need for effective water supply and medical care systems around the country, a system to enable families to keep in contact and the imperative need for unaccompanied children to be registered, monitored as they moved from place to place and ultimately reunited with their families. In addition, the ICRC ensured that vulnerable families were able to start anew, by providing them with seed and tools.

Throughout the year the ICRC maintained close and regular contact with the Rwandan government and with the authorities of the other countries of the region. In order to examine possible solutions to the Rwandan crisis a number of international meetings were organized, bringing together the governments concerned, the donor community and humanitarian organizations. For example, in February the OAU* and UNHCR held a regional conference in Bujumbura on assistance for refugees and the displaced in the Great Lakes region. At the conference the ICRC's Director of Operations underlined the imperative need for the country's judicial system to be restored and disputes over land and property rights to be settled before the refugees were repatriated.

On 31 March the ICRC President invited the permanent representatives of the group "*Amis du Rwanda*", including 12 Western governments, the OAU and Tunisia, to the ICRC's headquarters in Geneva, where he voiced the institution's grave concern with regard to conditions in Rwanda. A solemn appeal was subsequently sent to all diplomatic representatives in Geneva, New York and Addis Ababa, calling for the Rwandan government to ensure humane conditions of detention for those deprived of their freedom and for the international community's support not only in restoring an effective judicial system in Rwanda and the swift administration of justice, but also in providing practical assistance for the rapid construction of temporary places of detention to reduce the overcrowding in the prisons.

IN 1995 THE ICRC:

- registered and regularly visited 70,891 detainees in 250 places of detention;
- improved access to medical care and water and regularly provided food and other supplies for 42,000 inmates in the country's 14 prisons, thereby greatly reducing the high mortality rate among detainees;
- centralized data concerning 87,158 unaccompanied children and reunited 2,700 of them with their families;
- collected 1,525,782 Red Cross messages and distributed 1,305,197 in the Great Lakes region;
- provided food and other aid to displaced people within Rwanda, returnees and residents of areas where large numbers of returnees had arrived (560,000 beneficiaries in January, 360,000 per month in the second half of the year);
- supplied residents and returnees with seed, tools and back-up food rations (75,000 families in January/February and 65,000 families in September);
- delegated projects to participating National Red Cross Societies (Australia, France, Germany, Sweden and the United States) to rehabilitate 14 health centres in the Gitarama, Kigali and Byumba areas and renovate the water supply systems in the prefectures of Kibuye, Gisenyi and Ruhengeri.

* OAU: Organization of African Unity

Soon afterwards, in April, an emergency arose when the camps for approximately 200,000 displaced people in the Gikongoro area were emptied by the authorities. Thousands were killed or wounded, notably in Kibeho, and hundreds on the roads required urgent medical care. An ICRC surgical unit was set up and running within 48 hours, with the help of staff from the French and German National Red Cross Societies already in the country, and ICRC relief teams worked around the clock to supply displaced people with emergency food and water along the way. Further, in cooperation with other organizations, a relief plan was quickly drawn up to provide people returning to their home communes with food rations and other necessities such as blankets, jerricans, plastic sheeting and hoes.

From 25 to 28 October the ICRC President was on mission in Rwanda, where he met the Prime Minister and four other Ministers. He reiterated that ICRC was anxious to see the creation of conditions propitious to a return of the refugees still encamped in Zaire, Tanzania and Burundi, though the discussions centred on the restoration of a working judicial system and the reduction in overcrowding in the country's prisons.

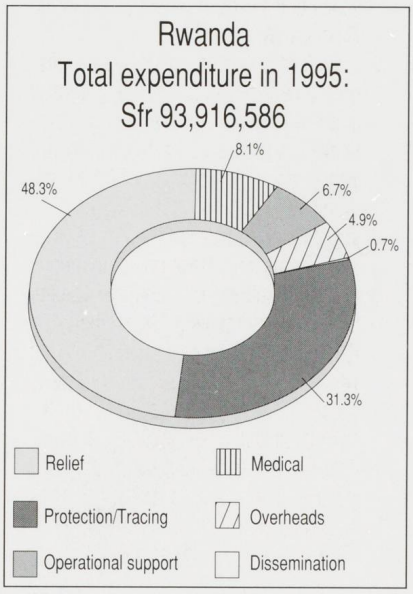
As the year progressed the ICRC appealed once again to the international community and the Rwandan government to set up new places of detention. It was only towards the end of the year that detainees were finally transferred in any significant number, but even then, overcrowding remained a very serious problem.

During the year the entire western border was the scene of frequent armed incursions from Zaire, causing regular security problems. One of the most serious incidents occurred in late September, when an ICRC vehicle hit a landmine in the Gikongoro area, seriously injuring one expatriate nurse.

## Activities for detainees

At the end of December there were 63,547 people detained by the Rwandan authorities on the accusation of having participated in the 1994 genocide. They were being held in the country's 14 prisons (45,517) and in over 230 transitional places of detention (18,030). Severe overcrowding, with sometimes up to five people per square metre, gave rise to major health problems (dysentery, oedemas, respiratory problems, etc.), though the outbreak of epidemics was miraculously avoided.

To try and improve conditions of detention in Rwanda, the ICRC launched a large-scale programme for detainees in the country's prisons, providing them with water, food, sanitary facilities and medical care. Most medical supplies in the prison dispensaries came from the ICRC and, from April on, transitional places of detention also received some medical assistance, wherever there were



no local health facilities. The ICRC expanded the water storage capacity in the prisons to increase the inmates' water rations. Rehabilitation of entire water supply systems was also carried out where required. Toilets were built in all the prisons, sewage systems were restored and septic tanks were installed in several places. In some prisons, notably Gitarama and Kibungo, the overcrowding was so severe that only the bare minimum could be done to improve access to sanitary facilities (350 people for every toilet). For most of the year the ICRC met all food needs in the jails, i.e., 80 percent of the total requirements of all places of detention in Rwanda, but by November the authorities had begun to assume their responsibilities, and were providing some of the food and firewood.

The exceptionally inhumane conditions in Rwandan prisons were directly linked to the severe overcrowding. This prompted the ICRC to participate in the construction of seven new temporary detention sites. Starting with a facility at Nsinda with a capacity of 5,000, the ICRC's involvement was restricted to providing tents and cooking equipment and setting up water supply and sanitary facilities. The ICRC at all times impressed upon the authorities that the purpose of such aid was exclusively to save lives and that ultimately it was their responsibility to guarantee acceptable conditions of detention for the inmates. By the end of the year some 6,000 detainees had been transferred to the temporary detention site at Nsinda and to the extension of Nyanza prison. Second courtyards at Gitarama and Rilima prisons were completed and detainees were also transferred there.

Another six temporary detention sites were under construction at the end of 1995. Nevertheless, there were still more than 45,500 detainees crammed in the 14 prisons (including Nsinda), some 30,000 more than the maximum capacity, and the new facilities would only be able to take in about half of the excess. Furthermore, between 600 and 800 new detainees were still being registered every week.

The ICRC's programme to protect and assist detainees had had an obvious impact by the end of the year. The mortality rate in the prisons had been brought down to a level comparable to that of the rest of the population, and all detainees in the 14 prisons assisted had regular access to water and food.

## Tracing activities

In 1995 the ICRC's tracing operation in Rwanda and the surrounding area was the institution's largest after the former Yugoslavia. This operation was quite exceptional, as Rwanda is a nation with a low literacy rate and a culture which relies on oral rather than written communication. The tracing statistics (see box p. 58) are all the more remarkable when one considers the atmosphere

of distrust which pervaded the country and led to recurring disruptions in the Red Cross message service. This service was the only way for people in Rwanda to communicate with their relatives across the borders.

The ICRC also coordinated a major programme to register unaccompanied minors, setting up a computerized database in Nairobi and implementing large-scale tracing programmes, with the ultimate aim of reuniting children with their families. The operation was run in conjunction with UNICEF, UNHCR, Save the Children-UK and other non-governmental organizations involved in children's centres. By the end of 1995 over 87,000 children had been registered and 2,700 had been reunited with their families by the ICRC. A further 10,000 had rejoined their relatives by their own means or with the help of other organizations.

## Assistance for the civilian population

The ICRC's vast relief operation, which had assisted over one million people in 1994 and was still aiding some 560,000 civilians in January 1995, was gradually reduced over the year as those displaced within Rwanda returned to their home areas, whether voluntarily or otherwise, and the nutritional situation in the country improved. In the second half of 1995 some 360,000 people received regular food distributions to counter shortages in the Bugesera, Butare and Gikongoro areas, which saw a large influx of returnees. Distributions in the Bugesera area ended in September, while in the other two they continued until December, in preparation for the harvest in January 1996. Blankets, cooking pots, jerricans, plastic sheeting and soap were provided to around 350,000 people in areas where returnees were arriving in large numbers. As regards agricultural rehabilitation, the ICRC's 1995 objective was surpassed, with seed and tools handed out to 75,000 families in January/February and to 65,000 families in September. Back-up food rations were distributed to all those who received seed, to prevent them from eating the seeds instead of planting them.

At the end of 1995, given the favourable results of an agricultural survey carried out in November, the ICRC was able to terminate its food distributions for displaced civilians and returnees and devote its resources to covering the food needs of detainees. Nevertheless, although over 140 humanitarian organizations were working in Rwanda, the ICRC kept a close watch over the food situation and stood ready to intervene in an emergency.

## Medical activities

During the year the ICRC rehabilitated 14 health centres through projects delegated to the French and German Red Cross Societies. Three expatriates from the French Red Cross worked in eight health centres in the Gitarama

region, while three German Red Cross expatriates worked in the regions of Kigali (four health centres) and Byumba (two centres). The buildings themselves had to be renovated, medical equipment replaced and local personnel trained. Health activities resumed in the centres, bringing access to medical care to some 450,000 people. The ICRC also participated in a polio vaccination campaign, immunizing over 33,000 children, and supported Rwanda's only psychiatric hospital at Ndera, providing food and drugs and paying incentives to the staff.

On 24 April, following the forced evacuation of Kibeho camp, the authorities of Butare University Hospital gave the ICRC permission to open an emergency surgical wing at the hospital there, to treat the wounded arriving from Kibeho. Within 48 hours two ICRC surgical teams were at work. In one month they performed 376 operations on 200 patients. In early June the unit was closed and the equipment stored for future emergency use.

## Water and sanitation

Besides improving water distribution and sanitation in the prisons (see above), the ICRC restored the water supply to the country's principal towns. This involved renovating the main water stations, providing over 800 tonnes of chemicals for water treatment, supplying spare parts, generators and fuel, and repairing the electricity lines between Ruhengeri and Gisenyi. While the camps for displaced people near Gikongoro were still occupied, the ICRC covered the water needs there too.

The ICRC also rehabilitated rural water supply systems in the prefectures of Kibuye, Gisenyi and Ruhengeri, benefiting over 360,000 people. Part of the work was done under individual projects delegated to the American, Australian and Swedish Red Cross Societies, respectively.

## Dissemination

Courses on the law of war were held for military instructors in Kigali and in other parts of the country. One such session was attended by officers from the former Rwandan army who had been integrated into the new armed forces.

Meetings were held throughout the year with local authorities in the prefectures and communes to explain specific activities of the ICRC, such as visits to detainees, the tracing of unaccompanied minors and the handling of Red Cross messages. These last two activities were still a source of frequent misunderstanding, owing to the lack of trust among Rwandans within and outside the country.

The ICRC also held sessions on humanitarian law for 150 judicial police officers and organized a seminar for 40 prison directors.

# ZAIRE

## (Delegation also covers the Congo)

The general outlook for the Zairian population remained bleak throughout the year. The democratic elections promised for July 1995 were once again postponed, with the five-year-old transitional government putting off change to 1997. Virtually all commercial activity was at a standstill, barter having become an important form of trade, as the currency underwent constant devaluation. Popular discontent manifested itself at the end of July, when Kinshasa was the scene of violence during a demonstration by the PALU*, in which 10 people reportedly died and 47 were injured. The ICRC and the Red Cross of Zaire evacuated the wounded and registered 25 people arrested for security reasons.

The inadequacy of the country's infrastructure was highlighted in Kikwit, where an outbreak of Ebola fever required large-scale international intervention. A catastrophe was avoided, partly thanks to the National Society's volunteers, but the poor state of the nation's medical services was clearly revealed. Leprosy, cholera, rabies, meningitis and polio afflicted other towns in the country.

By the end of July practically all of the displaced Kasaians in Shaba had returned to the Kasai. The ICRC's office in Likasi was then closed after two years of relief operations.

Zaire's internal troubles were exacerbated by the large refugee population in Kivu, which showed little sign of diminishing. Refugees competed with local people on the job market and the protracted existence of the camps had a destructive effect on the environment. The crime rate soared and a feeling of insecurity shrouded the Kivu region, where there was growing fear of renewed military operations along the Rwandan border. A certain degree of security was

* PALU: Unified Lumumbist Party

nevertheless provided by a Zairian contingent financed by UNHCR to patrol the refugee camps. In August the Zairian authorities set the deadline for the repatriation of refugees at 31 December, thus heightening uncertainty in the region.

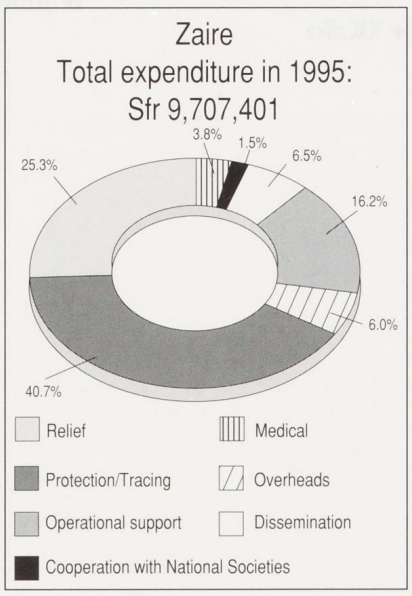
## Activities for the civilian population

The greatest area of instability remained the Kivu region, where the presence of over a million Rwandan and Burundian refugees created problems and was used to fuel political disputes in Kinshasa. Several thousand refugees returned home in January and February, but the tensions inside Rwanda and the control exerted over the refugees by some of their leaders in the camps prevented any voluntary repatriations from taking place from March onwards. Furthermore, massacres in Bujumbura at the end of March and tension in the border province of Cibitoke prompted some 7,000 Burundians and 15,000 Zairians to flee the Burundian capital to the Uvira area.

In August, the forced expulsion of more than 15,000 refugees — mainly women and children, of whom over 13,000 were forcibly repatriated to Rwanda and about 2,000 to Burundi — made the headlines. Tens of thousands of other refugees fled their camps in order to avoid being expelled; many children lost contact with their parents. This surprise operation took place three days after the UN Security Council's decision to lift the arms embargo on Rwanda on 16 August 1995. During this period, the ICRC had access to the camps to monitor the situation and prevent families from being separated. The ICRC appealed to the Zairian civil and military authorities to treat all returning refugees humanely.

After these forced repatriations, UNHCR tried to encourage the refugees' voluntary return, but no significant progress was made. The killing of over 100 people in a village near Gisenyi by Rwandan Patriotic Army soldiers, and the dismissal of four moderate ministers did not help to boost general confidence.

Security deteriorated considerably after these events and six Italians working for a non-governmental organization were assassinated in Rwindi Park in August. Mine explosions along the roads used by humanitarian organizations near the Rwandan and Ugandan borders killed two people in September and seriously injured an American nurse in October. At the end of September, a lorry belonging to the Federation hit a mine near Goma and 23 people were injured. On 6 November the ICRC had to suspend its activities in the Masisi area for several weeks, when a convoy bringing assistance to the displaced was hijacked by a contingent of the Zairian army and forced at gunpoint to transport some of the troops and their wives to Goma. Around the same time



the Zairian authorities closed the borders, enforced a 10-day curfew in Goma and attempted to ensure security for humanitarian organizations by having their passage preceded by troops with demining equipment.

In the Masisi area armed clashes and disturbances continued between the indigenous population and the people of Banyarwanda origin living there. Most of the Banyarwanda of Tutsi origin had returned home, but those of Hutu origin remained. More limited disturbances broke out in the Kalehe/Bunyakiri area of South Kivu and around Rutshuru in North Kivu, as the indigenous population took to arms. The ICRC began an assistance programme in September for some 30,000 families, distributing mainly non-food aid to those displaced by the troubles.

The ethnic conflict in Kivu reached a climax in September with hundreds of killings on both sides, including many civilians. The Zairian military sent to restore order only aggravated the situation. Civilians continued to flee their homes. In September UNHCR repatriated 5,900 refugees from the Masisi area. These were people of mainly Tutsi origin, who had escaped the 1959 massacres in Rwanda and felt threatened by the growing violence in the region.

Following events in the Masisi area, ICRC medical teams evacuated the wounded who were otherwise unable to get to the hospital in Goma for treatment. The ICRC also supported various health centres inundated with casualties by providing them with drugs and other medical supplies.

## Activities for detainees

The pilot project initiated in mid-1994[1] was pursued and extended to cover 21 prisons in six regions of Zaire. Levels of severe malnutrition, which had affected up to 80 percent of the detainee population, plummeted in the prisons assisted by the ICRC, where the institution had stepped beyond its usual activities of registering, holding private interviews with and keeping track of security detainees, by supplying all prisoners with food and water and covering other basic needs, such as sanitation, in conjunction with local religious and non-governmental organizations. The ICRC urged prison authorities to assume greater responsibility for the inmates and facilitated direct contact between potential donors and local non-governmental organizations.

The ICRC investigated substituting food aid with agricultural assistance in prisons where the soil could be cultivated, in order to encourage steps towards self-sufficiency. Efforts were also made to find donors who could work

[1] See the ICRC's *1994 Annual Report*, p. 64.

together with the NGOs, thus enabling the ICRC to gradually reduce its involvement in the project.

Other activities for detainees included the registration of Rwandan refugees detained in Kivu, to keep track of them in the event of their forced repatriation to Rwanda.

## Tracing activities

The ICRC's tracing work in Kivu increased drastically. Unaccompanied children were registered and the Goma sub-delegation concentrated on re-uniting these children with their families inside Rwanda or in refugee camps. Red Cross messages were exchanged between family members split up by the crisis in Rwanda (for global figures see *Rwanda*).

Other tracing work in Zaire concerned Sudanese refugees in Haut-Zaire and Angolan refugees in the south-west.

## Dissemination

It was essential for the ICRC to continue to spread awareness of its activities and of its impartiality, independence and complete neutrality if its delegates were to have better access to vulnerable civilians in the Kivu region and protect people from renewed violence. The ICRC used a variety of methods to achieve this goal, including plays, enacted by Red Cross volunteers and refugees in 20 camps, which explained the creation and spirit of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Local radio broadcast information on the ICRC's work, as well as lists of missing people and lists of those for whom Red Cross messages were destined.

The main target groups for dissemination were the armed forces and the police, the purpose being to instil respect for civilians. Ten sessions were conducted in four of the main garrison towns of Shaba for some 490 officers and non-commissioned officers and 120 soldiers. Forty-three dissemination workshops were organized for refugee camp authorities in Kivu. Also in the refugee camps, sessions were held for officers and soldiers of the Zairian contingent responsible for security.

In the Masisi area dissemination programmes were run for fighters of all ethnic backgrounds and 10,000 posters were put up to explain the basic rules of the law of war to the population and to village chiefs in particular. In this way, the ICRC hoped to reach gun-carriers who killed indiscriminately. Young people under twenty, constituting over half the country's population, were also targeted in educational programmes to teach basic humanitarian principles and the purpose of the Red Cross of Zaire.

## Cooperation with the National Societies

The ICRC continued its cooperation programmes with the National Societies of Zaire and the Congo, with particular emphasis on the training of first-aiders. Pilot public health promotion campaigns were tested in Kinshasa and in Brazzaville in a bid to clean up local market places and hospitals.

## CONGO

In 1995 the situation in the Congo was generally calm, although there was still some fear of renewed violence and armed militiamen of all parties remained present in the capital.

In this atmosphere of potential tension, it was important to maintain awareness of the role of the ICRC and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The task was handled by the Kinshasa delegation's office in Brazzaville, which organized press conferences for the national and international media. In order to be ready for any new outbreaks of violence, the ICRC continued to train first-aid teams, in cooperation with the Congolese Red Cross.

## YAOUNDÉ
## Regional delegation
## (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and São Tomé and Príncipe)

In addition to its specific activities in Chad, the regional delegation concentrated on furthering cooperation with the Red Cross Societies of the region and provided expertise and financial assistance to the National Societies of Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon for their emergency preparedness, hygiene and sanitation, tracing and dissemination programmes. Tracing activities for Chadian and Sudanese refugees were carried out with the assistance of the National Societies of Cameroon, the Central African Republic and Chad.

As regards medical activities, the ICRC continued to fit war amputees with artificial limbs, while training programmes to convert to polypropylene technology were successfully completed at the prosthetic/orthotic centres in N'Djamena and Yaoundé.

## CHAD

After several decades of armed conflict, Chad's political and economic problems did not improve in 1995. The government attempted to assert its authority by once again rescheduling democratic elections, while militarized political opposition movements consolidated their position. Violent confrontations between the government and the opposition occurred throughout the year, making negotiation impossible. At the same time, large quantities of arms flooding through the country made widespread banditry a serious problem. In view of the prevailing instability, the ICRC maintained its emergency medical stocks in N'Djamena.

Violent clashes regularly broke out between government forces and opposition groups in the Lake Chad area and in the east of the country, though the government remained resolutely silent with regard to the fate of the wounded and those captured, maintaining that no prisoners had been taken.

A series of visits was carried out in 1995 to security detainees around the country. The ICRC provided food and medical assistance to inmates in some problem places of detention, and it pursued its dialogue with the government in order to improve conditions of detention and obtain access to military zones. An agreement was reached and a further series of visits was planned for 1996, including 41 places of detention.

A sanitation programme to improve water supply and hygiene in detention centres was carried out, concentrating particularly on places of detention in N'Djamena.

As the ICRC became more widely accepted by the Chadian authorities it was able to hold sessions on humanitarian law for all military units but the FIR* special forces.

As regards cooperation with the National Society, priority was given to training in emergency preparedness. A number of courses were given jointly by the Red Cross of Chad, the Swiss Red Cross and the ICRC.

## EQUATORIAL GUINEA

The Equatorial Guinea Red Cross Society, recognized at the end of 1994, demonstrated its enhanced operational capacity by informing the public about basic hygiene and sanitation, assisting returnees from the neighbouring Republic of Gabon and improving its emergency preparedness in anticipation of the election campaign and election day on 25 February.

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* FIR: *Forces d'intervention rapide*

On 12 May the regional delegate met the President of Equatorial Guinea to discuss Red Cross matters and the ICRC's wish to visit places of detention. This resulted in the government giving the ICRC permission to visit people detained in prisons and police stations, and a programme of visits was proposed to the authorities.

The ICRC pursued its dissemination activities in 1995, by providing further training in the law of war to instructors selected from high-ranking staff officers of the armed forces, security forces and police.

An epidemic of severe diarrhoea swept the country in July in the continental part of Rio Muni and also on the island of Bioko, affecting thousands and killing some 300 people. Local branches of the National Society, aided by the ICRC and the Swiss Red Cross, dealt with the crisis, providing assistance to dispensaries, hospitals, patients and their families. Furthermore, as a preventive measure, local Red Cross branches initiated training programmes in first aid and hygiene for the public to stop further spreading of the disease.

## GABON

The situation was relatively calm in Gabon throughout the year, although there was a certain amount of political upheaval. The only significant problem in humanitarian terms was the forced expulsion of illegal immigrants from other African nations, including Equatorial Guinea, at the beginning of the year. The ICRC, together with the National Society of Equatorial Guinea, responded by providing food aid and transport to take returnees back to their home villages.

During the year the ICRC helped set up the "Gabonese Red Cross". A comprehensive campaign was launched to promote the Red Cross principles throughout Gabon and stimulate the reactivation or creation of local structures. The "Gabonese Red Cross" convened in Libreville in June and approved its new provisional statutes.

# Southern Africa

ICRC delegation  ICRC sub-delegation  ICRC office  Prosthetic/orthotic centre/workshop

## ANGOLA

The signing on 20 November 1994 of the Lusaka Peace Agreement between the Angolan government and UNITA* paved the way for a slow move towards normality. Active hostilities abated and the parties declared themselves committed to the peace process. This meant that people were again able to move relatively freely around the country and encouraged domestic trade to pick up slowly. Security for humanitarian organizations improved — a crucial development, as in 1994 hazardous conditions had severely hampered the effective distribution of relief and medical assistance. UN staff and other humanitarian agencies that had been forced to evacuate premises were able to return and operate more safely in many areas and to begin the rehabilitation of a country and people ravaged by over 30 years of almost continual warfare. By the end of the year over 6,000 peacekeeping forces and military observers from UNAVEM III* had been deployed in Angola, as stipulated in the Lusaka Peace Protocol.

In March, in accordance with the Protocol, the government and UNITA forces submitted to the Joint Commission lists of detainees who were ready for release under ICRC supervision. Upon receipt of these lists, the ICRC began the process of prison visits to confirm identities and make logistical arrangements for the detainees' return home.

The Protocol also stated that all soldiers were to be quartered in barracks, that UNITA combatants and armed civilians were to be demobilized and a new national army formed. Preparations to accommodate demobilized UNITA troops in camps were under way, when in June and July over 160 civilians and

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* UNITA: National Union for the Total Independence of Angola

* UNAVEM III: United Nations Angola Verification Mission (III)

soldiers were reported killed during skirmishes in the diamond-rich province of Lunda Norte, which slowed down the procedure. The process of creating a new national army was temporarily interrupted in October, during meetings in Luanda between the government and UNITA, when an attempt was made on the life of the UNITA Chief of Staff.

On the political front, a positive impetus was given to the peace process in May, when the leaders of the government and UNITA met in Lusaka, and in July, when the Angolan President proposed constitutional amendments providing for two posts of vice-president, one to be filled by the leader of UNITA, and the other by a member of the MPLA*. Peace talks continued in August in a meeting in Gabon between the Angolan President and the UNITA leader and in late September in Brussels, during a round-table conference organized by the UNDP*. Nevertheless, events in the second half of the year and the rise in tension which accompanied them placed the peace process in a sort of stalemate.

## Activities for detainees

During the year 331 detainees were released by the government and 20 were released by UNITA under ICRC auspices. The institution arranged for the safe return of those freed to the places they had indicated during private interviews with delegates.

Meanwhile, the ICRC continued to visit detainees held in connection with the conflict who were not on the lists submitted to the Joint Commission by the parties, in order to register them and if possible integrate them into the release procedure.

## Tracing activities

Tracing work resumed in early 1995 in the areas controlled by UNITA on the outskirts of Huambo, and Red Cross messages were able to pass between UNITA- and government-controlled zones. The ICRC transported two Portuguese families from Huambo to Luanda so that their embassy could arrange for their repatriation to Portugal, and six other people were taken to the capital to be reunited with their relatives. In order to carry out tracing activities in UNITA-controlled areas in Uige province, an additional tracing office was opened in Negage, and another was set up in Jamba to cover the south-east of the country. Three new sub-offices were opened in Benguela

IN 1995 THE ICRC:

- visited and assisted 620 detainees in 20 places of detention;
- supervised the release of 351 detainees;
- collected 106,600 Red Cross messages and distributed 111,260;
- reunited 60 people with their families;
- switched in mid-year from large-scale food distributions to a major non-food relief programme for 400,000 civilians affected by the conflict;
- distributed seed and tools to 150,000 families for both the Nacas (dry) and the Lavras (rainy) planting seasons;
- supported 25 health posts in government and UNITA zones;
- completely renovated the prosthetic/orthotic centres in Huambo and Kuito and set up a component production unit in Luanda;
- rehabilitated water supply systems in Huambo (city and province).

* MPLA: *Movimento popular de libertação de Angola*

* UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

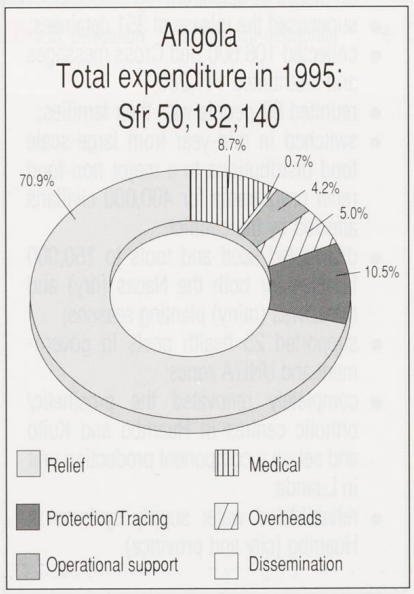
province, bringing the tracing network in Angola to 28 offices and sub-offices in an effort to cope with the ever-rising number of Red Cross messages. As the year progressed and the nation's road network was slowly opened up to traffic, making communication easier, the number of messages collected and distributed decreased.

In December, after months of endeavour, the ICRC carried out the first family reunification between UNITA- and government-controlled areas.

## Assistance for the civilian population

The nutritional situation greatly improved in the first half of the year on the Planalto, thanks to the ICRC's food distributions and agricultural programme conducted in 1994. Delegates nevertheless continued to monitor the situation closely, as an ICRC agronomic study had demonstrated that a new disaster could quickly overwhelm the region. In September the arrival of products such as salt, dried fish and oil from the coast enhanced the nutritional value of food for the population in government territory.

In other areas, such as the villages between Ganda and Huambo, despite the efforts made by the ICRC and various other humanitarian organizations throughout 1994, people remained largely dependent on external food aid for their survival, especially during the first months of 1995. Relief operations proceeded relatively smoothly, with only one two-week standstill for all air-cargo and ground movements in February, as a result of four security incidents targeted at the ICRC.




By April a good harvest largely obviated the need for general food distributions, enabling the ICRC to concentrate on providing other urgently needed assistance, including blankets, clothes and soap. Later in the year 150,000 families on the Planalto received seed, farming tools and a food ration to prevent them from eating the seed instead of planting it. In some areas assistance was supplemented by vegetable oil and salt, where these were not locally available.

Until the end of September the ICRC used mainly air transport for all supplies delivered to the Planalto. As of October, when the northern roads linking the cities of Lobito and Huambo were opened, road convoys were able to resume in this area, though elsewhere ground transport continued to be limited, mainly owing to the widespread presence of landmines and the occurrence of sporadic attacks and banditry.

As people began to return to their places of origin, the ICRC distributed food in some communities receiving large numbers of returnees, for example in Alto Catumbela, Tchindjenje and Ukuma, thus facilitating their reintegration.

In July the ICRC organized a week-long pilot workshop in Huambo, with the participation of international agencies such as the FAO* and the WFP*, and non-governmental organizations, on the preservation of Angola's phytogenetic resources and traditional crop varieties, which are crucial for long-term food security in rural areas. The project included gathering local seed varieties at markets, in farmers' fields and in granaries to make an inventory of the country's phytogenetic resources and set up community seed banks.

## Medical activities

The cease-fire enabled the ICRC to visit many health facilities that it had not seen for months or even years and to reactivate outpatient consultations in many health posts and hospitals in Huambo and Benguela provinces. Medical programmes were coordinated with other agencies so that no community was further than 30 km away from a health facility in these provinces.

In the course of the year the ICRC carried out a vaccination campaign, inoculating thousands of children under five against measles, polio, diphtheria, tetanus and tuberculosis, and supported the immunization programmes of other organizations such as UNICEF in the field. Assistance was also given to the Angola Red Cross programme to reactivate blood donations in Benguela, Lobito and Catumbela hospitals. A health post was set up and monitored at Huambo central prison to give detainees access to medical care, and sanitary conditions in the prison were improved.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the ICRC relaunched its programme for the war-disabled in Huambo and Kuito, which had been interrupted in January 1993. The reconstruction of the prosthetic/orthotic centre at Bomba Alta (Huambo) was completed by the end of October. The ICRC, jointly with the Angola Red Cross, drew up lists of amputees requiring artificial limbs in Huambo and Bie provinces and in the Jamba area. Their number was estimated at more than 20,000. The ICRC also installed a component production unit at the Neves Bendinha prosthetic/orthotic centre in Luanda, administered by the Swedish Red Cross. An agreement was signed between the Ministry of Health and the ICRC, stipulating that the same production techniques should be applied nationwide. Thereafter the ICRC also began producing polypropylene components for other organizations working in this specialist field.

In July, an ICRC surgeon surveyed local surgical teams in various hospitals in Andulo, Bailundo, Benguela, Caluquembe and Huambo. Having established

* FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization

* WFP: World Food Programme

that the major problem was not insufficient surgical expertise but a chronic lack of proper surgical instruments, the ICRC supplied the teams with the equipment they needed.

A new community health programme was set up in August to improve the health of the rural population. Local health workers attended workshops on first aid and primary health care.

## Water and sanitation

Over the year the ICRC carried out a number of water and sanitation projects: Huambo's main water pumping station was restored to proper working order and maintenance teams were trained; a well rehabilitation programme in the city's health posts and in the Bailundo area was completed; two boreholes supplying Huambo central hospital's main building and surgical wards were reactivated; and 18 traditional water sources in Huambo were restored near ICRC health centres or in parts of the town that were in most urgent need of water. In Huambo province 10 wells were dug and equipped with hand-pumps.

Cooperation with OXFAM continued throughout 1995, with the ICRC providing logistical support for their water and sanitation programme on the outskirts of Ganda.

## Dissemination

A project aimed at introducing a permanent programme to raise awareness of international humanitarian law in the training academies of the Angolan armed forces started with 11 seminars on the law of war for government army officers.

The ICRC also gave briefings to arriving UNAVEM III military and police observers and held dissemination sessions for each of the six UN peace-keeping battalions.

Press trips were organized for Angolan and foreign journalists and TV crews to cover ICRC and Angola Red Cross/Federation activities. Special programmes were broadcast all year round on national radio and television and on commercial radio stations, and numerous articles appeared in the press. A special effort was made to publicize the anti-personnel mines issue and the ICRC's efforts to have them banned.

Various types of dissemination activity were organized for the general population. Four cultural groups in Huambo province, consisting of up to 25 traditional dancers and singers, performed in both Portuguese and the local Umbundu language. They were present during relief distributions to help explain the role of the ICRC and the importance of solidarity and self-sufficiency in agriculture.

## HARARE
## Regional delegation (Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe)

Peace prevailed in 1995 in the countries covered by the regional delegation in Harare. Relative stability in South Africa had a positive influence on the social and political climate in neighbouring countries. By the end of the year all six States had become party to the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. The regional delegation concentrated its efforts on dissemination activities and on strengthening emergency preparedness and response programmes with the National Societies. It completed its detention-related activities in Malawi.

From 23 to 27 January, the ICRC was invited to participate in a workshop in Harare on the subject of peace-keeping, organized by Zimbabwe and the United Kingdom and sponsored by the UN and the OAU. The workshop was attended by representatives from 17 African countries and gave the ICRC the opportunity to underline its role as a neutral and impartial humanitarian institution.

In cooperation with the OAU, on 2 and 3 March the ICRC held a two-day international seminar on anti-personnel landmines and the 1980 UN Weapons Convention in Harare, which was attended by over 60 people, including government representatives from 13 southern African and Portuguese-speaking West African countries, national and international NGOs and representatives from National Red Cross Societies. It was one of three regional seminars organized by the ICRC to foster awareness in Africa of the problem of landmines and their devastating effects. The seminar also dealt with the problem of blinding laser weapons.

The ICRC's Harare office served as a logistics centre for the region, forwarding relief stocks for operations in Angola and Zaire.

## BOTSWANA

To encourage the Botswana Red Cross to take advantage of sponsorship offered by the ICRC, a five-day workshop on emergency preparedness and response was organized for staff members in late September. Representatives of WHO*, UNDP, UNHCR, the Council for Refugees and the National

* WHO: World Health Organization

Disaster Committee participated in the workshop, giving the Society information on the resources proposed by the various institutions for improving disaster preparedness and response to emergencies.

## MALAWI

The ICRC completed its programme of visits to Malawi's prisons, the purpose of which was to examine the inmates' material and psychological conditions of detention and to establish whether the improvements it had made to water and sanitation facilities from 1992 to 1994 had been properly maintained. The ICRC reported its findings to the highest authorities and also provided blankets, soap and other hygiene articles to 25 prisons throughout the country. Construction work began on the hospital ward at Zomba prison to enable detainees to receive the medical treatment they needed.

## MOZAMBIQUE

The peace process remained on course in Mozambique in 1995.

Under a cooperation agreement between the ICRC and the Mozambique Red Cross Society, a national seminar was held from 5 to 12 March for all dissemination officers, including participants from all provinces.

The ICRC's programme for the war-disabled in Mozambique was handed over in October to the Ministry of Health and a British NGO called "Power". Since it started its programme in 1981 the ICRC registered 5,324 amputees, and produced around 8,190 prostheses, 350 orthoses and 26,000 pairs of crutches. The total number of amputees in Mozambique is estimated to be around 7,000.

During the year further efforts were made to trace the families of unaccompanied children registered by the ICRC in 1994. Thirteen children, out of a total of 138 still unresolved cases, were reunited with their relatives in 1995.

## NAMIBIA

In August, the regional delegate went to Namibia to meet the authorities and the National Society's leadership in order to discuss the landmines issue, with regard to the revision of the 1980 UN Weapons Convention. The authorities intimated that Namibia was considering adhering to the Convention. They announced that an interministerial committee on human and humanitarian rights had been set up, and the regional delegate agreed to organize a workshop for the committee members to inform them of the specific measures to be applied.

## ZAMBIA

In 1995 Zambia underwent an economic crisis which threatened the country's political and social stability. Inflation stood at 60 percent, individual spending power was greatly diminished and sharp cuts in civil service posts dramatically increased unemployment, placing a large part of the population below the poverty line. This prompted the Zambia Red Cross Society to step up its emergency preparedness and response programme under the guidance of the ICRC.

The regional delegate was in Zambia at the end of July, when he congratulated the authorities on the country's accession to the 1977 Additional Protocols. It was agreed that the newly created interministerial committee on human rights would be extended to include international humanitarian law.

## ZIMBABWE

In preparation for the April parliamentary elections, the National Society organized three one-day workshops on emergency preparedness in the three provincial headquarters, to discuss the setting-up and management of first-aid posts and action teams. Many first-aid posts were installed and around 4,900 people were given first aid by voluntary teams in the areas surrounding the polling stations. The general elections confirmed overwhelming support for the ZANU-PF* party in power since independence.

# PRETORIA
# Regional delegation
# (Comoros, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa and Swaziland)

The transfer of regional responsibilities to the Pretoria-based ICRC delegation on 1 January 1995 reflected the new-found political stability in southern Africa. In February the South African government and the ICRC signed a new Status Agreement, defining the ICRC's position as a regional delegation for southern Africa and the Indian Ocean. Despite the generally peaceful climate, however, insecurity still reigned in some areas.

The South African province of KwaZulu/Natal and certain townships of Gauteng province were still plagued by politicized violence. Political unrest in

* ZANU-PF: Zimbabwe African National Union — Patriotic Front

Lesotho and Swaziland demonstrated that there too stability was not to be taken for granted. In the strife-ridden areas of South Africa the ICRC ran relief operations in conjunction with the National Society, distributing food parcels, kitchen sets, jerricans, plastic sheeting and blankets to thousands of victims.

Beyond this, the main activities developed by the ICRC in the region involved promoting the role of the Red Cross, teaching international humanitarian law to defence forces and providing protection for detainees. Delegates made unannounced visits to police stations in KwaZulu/Natal to check the conditions of detention of people arrested in connection with political violence.

The regional delegation meanwhile stepped up its efforts to raise both government and public awareness of the need to adhere to and review the 1980 UN Weapons Convention. The ICRC also pursued its dialogue with the governments of South Africa and Swaziland to convince them to adhere to the 1977 Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions. In the course of the year these two countries deposited their instruments of accession to the two Protocols with the Swiss government.

## COMOROS

In late September 1995, all detainees in the capital were released during a coup attempt mounted by a French mercenary. The leaders of the coup announced the establishment of a transitional military committee, while the deposed government took refuge in the French embassy. On 3 October the military committee surrendered power to two civilian leaders of the opposition parties. Some people having been arrested during the coup, the regional delegate visited the Comoros on 11 October to ascertain whether they had all been released. The former President having fled to the island of Réunion, the Prime Minister subsequently became interim President of a government of national unity, in which all parties were represented.

## LESOTHO

The turbulence that had beset Lesotho in 1994 only partially abated in 1995, as political instability continued to affect the country. A number of people were arrested in May on suspicion of laying up arms caches in preparation for a campaign to destabilize the government, but they were later released.

## MADAGASCAR

Following an overall survey conducted by ICRC delegates in Malagasy prisons at the end of 1994 to assess the detention conditions of all categories

of inmates, in 1995 the ICRC started a prison assistance programme covering major prisons around the country, including limited material assistance from the ICRC and the provision of food through local non-governmental organizations.

The ICRC presented its findings in the prisons to the Malagasy authorities and met them to discuss ways of improving material conditions and treatment.

In the course of the year the ICRC also made its annual visit to 32 people detained for security reasons.

## MAURITIUS

Peace prevailed on the island in 1995, and in December the political opposition was democratically elected to office. The ICRC's activities revolved around reinforcing the general operational capacity of the National Society.

## SOUTH AFRICA

Although 1994 had seen the dismantling of apartheid and the successful installation of a democratically elected government, many challenges and a certain measure of instability remained. In 1995 tension among parts of the black community continued to rise, claiming many lives especially in KwaZulu/Natal and on the East Rand, while crime still plagued the whole of South Africa, causing insecurity for most of the population.

While the new Government of National Unity had released many detainees in 1994, a large number still remained incarcerated and the old system was especially slow to change among prison and police authorities. In this context, it proved essential to maintain the presence of a neutral and independent organization such as the ICRC, as the country underwent further change from a system of oppression to one that conferred the right to human dignity on all citizens. A particularly noteworthy development was the unanimous abolition of the death penalty by the South African Parliament on 6 June.

During the year the Pretoria regional delegation visited detainees in eight South African provinces (Eastern Transvaal, Western Cape, Northern and Eastern Cape, Orange Free State, Gauteng, North-West and KwaZulu/Natal) and focused on places of detention in KwaZulu/Natal and in the former homelands, where violence persisted. Reports detailing delegates' findings were submitted to the highest authorities, and the ICRC met the Minister and Commissioner of Correctional Services to discuss recommendations. Visits were made to police stations on the basis of a new agreement signed by the Minister for Safety and Security and the ICRC on 27 February, confirming the ICRC's access to all categories of detainees held by the South African Police, including those arrested in the context of a state of emergency.

The ICRC's detention work in South Africa, spanning more than 30 years, was publicly acknowledged during a commemorative reunion on Robben Island of former political prisoners on 11 and 12 February. Under the auspices of a recently created South African organization called "Peace Visions", some 1,200 ex-prisoners gathered in Cape Town for a visit to Robben Island, where many had been detained. There they were addressed by President Nelson Mandela and other leaders of the anti-apartheid struggle. Furthermore, in the President's autobiography "Long walk to freedom", published in early 1995, the ICRC's detention work was acclaimed as follows: "In those early years, the International Red Cross was the only organization that both listened to our complaints and responded to them. This was vital, because the authorities ignored us."

Throughout the year, the ICRC/South African Red Cross Society joint relief operation for victims of political violence provided material assistance for thousands of people mainly in KwaZulu/Natal province.

A formal instruction programme on international humanitarian law was initiated for the South African National Defence Force, and a ten-week training programme run by an expert from the ICRC was held in August for senior officers and non-commissioned officers.

In February, the new regional "*Bulletin*" covering the ICRC's own activities and its cooperation programmes with the National Societies of southern Africa was launched and distributed through the regional delegations in Pretoria and Harare to 13 southern African countries. During the year, dissemination sessions for the public, the police and Red Cross personnel in KwaZulu/Natal province concentrated on raising the profile and improving the acceptability of the Red Cross, so that Red Cross volunteers would gain easier access to victims of politically motivated violence in places where insecurity was rife.

Other highlights of the ICRC's dissemination work included a two-day workshop held jointly with the Human Rights Institute of South Africa in May and a week-long National Society information officers workshop in June, including participants from a number of countries covered by the Pretoria and Harare regional delegations.

## SWAZILAND

The ICRC and the Baphalali Swaziland Red Cross Society organized a one-day seminar in March for the national media on the role and activities of the Red Cross.

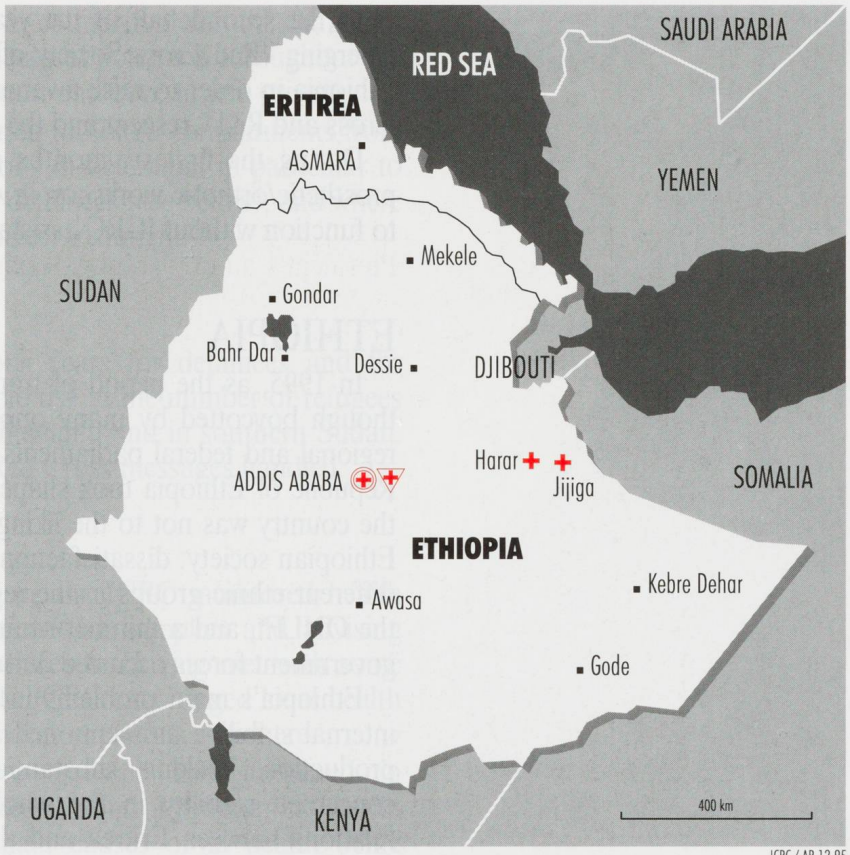
# East Africa

## ERITREA

Eritrea celebrated its second anniversary of independence in circumstances marked by a slow pace of economic development, despite a very good harvest in 1994/95.

Eritrea broke off diplomatic links with the Sudan in December 1994 and from then on relations between the two States steadily worsened. The rift deepened still further after a meeting in Asmara in June which brought together all the Sudanese opposition movements. In addition, clashes were reported to have broken out along the Sudanese border between the Eritrean army and fighters allegedly infiltrating from the Sudan.

During the year the ICRC kept up its attempts to encourage the Eritrean government to accede to the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. By year's end, it had still not agreed to do so, meaning that Eritrea was not represented at the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in Geneva in December.




ICRC / AR 12.95

In December an international armed conflict broke out between Eritrea and Yemen over the Hanish Islands, during which Yemeni soldiers and civilians were taken prisoner by Eritrean forces. The ICRC expressed its readiness to carry out its humanitarian mandate and reminded the parties that the rules of the Geneva Conventions and those related to the conduct of hostilities enshrined in Additional Protocol I belonged to customary law and therefore had to be respected, even if Eritrea was not a party thereto. It was subsequently asked to act as neutral intermediary between the two sides and on 30 December repatriated 196 Yemeni servicemen and 17 Yemeni civilians from Asmara to Sana'a, on a chartered plane bearing the red cross emblem. On 28 and 29 December delegates had visited and interviewed each of the civilians and prisoners of war in private; throughout the operation they enjoyed the full cooperation of the Eritrean and Yemeni governments.[1]

IN 1995 THE ICRC:

- visited 213 Yemenis held by the Eritrean authorities and subsequently repatriated them;
- fitted 230 new patients with orthopaedic appliances at three prosthetic/orthotic centres.

[1] See also *Yemen* pp. 249-251.

In the second half of the year the ICRC reached an agreement with the emerging "Red Cross Society of Eritrea" to set up a project similar to Circus Ethiopia in order to raise awareness of the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and the ICRC's activities.

During the first six months of 1995 the ICRC continued to support the prosthetic/orthotic workshop in Asmara. From then on the workshop was able to function without ICRC assistance.

# ETHIOPIA

In 1995, as the period of transition came to an end and general elections, though boycotted by many opposition parties, were held nationwide for the regional and federal parliaments, the new structure of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia took shape. Nevertheless, the new regional set-up within the country was not to the liking of several of the ethnic groups that make up Ethiopian society: dissatisfaction was shown by opposition parties representing different ethnic groups in the regions, in particular the OLF*, the IFLO* and the ONLF*, and a number of armed clashes between opposition fighters and government forces occurred during the year.

Ethiopia's main problems in1995 were threefold. First of all, the threat to internal stability, as mentioned above. Secondly, an insufficient level of food production, making substantial imports necessary. The third problem concerned stability in the whole region, which appeared to be at risk as relations between Eritrea and the Sudan reached rock bottom and relations between Ethiopia and the Sudan deteriorated seriously.

IN 1995 THE ICRC:

- visited 4,261 people held in connection with the change of government in 1991 or for reasons related to State security, registering 2,404 new detainees;
- collected 2,036 Red Cross messages and distributed 2,427;
- provided medical support for the treatment of about 450 detainees with tuberculosis;
- distributed 32 tonnes of relief supplies to about 10,000 people, mainly detainees.

## Activities for detainees

Some 1,900 detainees held in connection with the change of regime in 1991, and registered by the ICRC, remained behind bars at the end of 1995. The trials of some of them, though started at the end of 1994, progressed but very slowly. By virtue of its status of special observer, the ICRC sent a representative to follow the court sessions of the trials, in order to ensure that the fundamental judicial guarantees provided for by international humanitarian law were respected. Some of the defendants were charged with grave violations of humanitarian law.

* OLF: Oromo Liberation Front
* IFLO: Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia
* ONLF: Ogaden National Liberation Front

In 1995 delegates visited all detainees held in connection with the change of regime or for State security reasons in 119 places of detention throughout the country, including military camps, police stations, and government prisons.

During and after visits the ICRC endeavoured to obtain commitments from the authorities concerned to improve conditions of detention, in particular to assume greater responsibility for the health of detainees (see below), and where necessary to ensure that they were afforded correct treatment.

## Tracing activities

Tracing activities continued as in previous years for detainees and for refugees. During 1995 there was a considerable rise in the number of refugees in Ethiopia, mainly due to the fighting in Somaliland and in southern Sudan. There was a slight increase in the number of Red Cross messages handled.

## Health activities

As part of its programme of detention visits the ICRC monitored health conditions in places of detention, providing medical supplies and advising prison, police or military authorities on health needs. Having met with some success in Jimma, Addis Ababa and Harar, the ICRC encouraged local health authorities to completely overhaul medical services in prisons elsewhere.

Water and sanitation requirements were assessed and improved in 11 detention centres to help bolster a tuberculosis control programme run in conjunction with the prison services, the main causes of ill health being inadequate access to clean water, and underdeveloped or nonexistent sewage systems. During the year prison laboratory technicians were given theoretical and practical training on TB screening by the ICRC, using the Pasteur Institute's facilities in Addis Ababa.

The ICRC maintained its support for prosthetic/orthotic workshops in Addis Ababa, Debre Zeit and Harar. ICRC technicians based at the Prosthetic-Orthotic Centre in Addis Ababa also assisted in the training of 29 prosthetic/orthotic technicians from Angola, Cambodia, Cameroon, Eritrea, Ghana, India, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda in the use of polypropylene techniques for the production of orthopaedic appliances.

## Activities for civilians

Besides its protection, medical and tracing activities for detainees, the ICRC continued to follow developments in problem regions and, when necessary, gave emergency assistance to civilians who had been affected by violence related to armed confrontation between the army and opposition movements.

In these regions the ICRC provided its assistance in conjunction with local branches of the Ethiopian Red Cross Society.

## Cooperation with the National Society

On the basis of new letters of understanding signed with the Ethiopian Red Cross, the ICRC continued to cooperate with the National Society in the domains of branch development, tracing, first aid and dissemination. Small-scale income generation projects were started in several of the branches.

## Dissemination

Highlights of the ICRC's dissemination work in Ethiopia in 1995 included a regional seminar organized jointly with the OAU in Addis Ababa in February, bringing together representatives of 13 English-speaking African countries to discuss landmines and the 1980 UN Weapons Convention; a symposium entitled "Dignity for All", from 9 to 10 June, which was attended by representatives of government ministries as well as most of the NGOs in Addis Ababa; and a dissemination course held in Addis Ababa in June for future instructors of the Ethiopian Armed Forces. Later in the year the ICRC obtained permission to disseminate the basic rules of international humanitarian law among soldiers stationed in the newly named "Somali National Regional State", formerly Ogaden. Delegates were able to give lectures in all brigades in the region and approximately 2,000 military, more than 20 percent of government troops based in Ogaden, attended the different three-hour sessions.

A letter of understanding was signed with the "Circus of Ethiopia", a local non-governmental organization composed of street children, which advocates the prevention of child beating and whose performances inform the public about a number of topics, including health issues such as AIDS and personal hygiene. From February on, the circus began spreading the message that the red cross emblem should be protected and telling people what the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement does to benefit the population. In addition to travelling around the country, the show was recorded and broadcast on television. New sketches on landmines and TB awareness were prepared for the 1996 show.

A series of 28 ICRC dissemination spots was broadcast during the year on national radio, via the Educational Mass Media Agency.

# SOMALIA

At the start of 1995, there was widespread anticipation of another apocalyptic situation in Somalia, with fears of renewed conflict and very little confidence that stability would be maintained in the country after the UNOSOM II* withdrawal in March. However, once it became clear that the UN troops' withdrawal had not, as expected, led to chaos, hopes of reaching a broad-based political settlement ran high.

Unfortunately these hopes were short-lived, because in April already the Hawadle recaptured Belet Huen, taken by General Aidid's SNA* movement in July 1994. In May, the animosity between Aidid and his former financier Osman Atto came to a head when Atto was elected chairman of the USC*/SNA, and the split between the two main players in the SNA became decisive. This prompted Aidid to declare himself President of Somalia and to set up a self-styled national government. The threat of renewed fighting became a reality in September, when General Aidid's army seized Baidoa, the capital of the nation's most productive agricultural region, thus altering the balance of power between the factions. There was little bloodshed, as local clans were not united, but resistance soon built up and new clashes were reported up to the end of the year.

After the capture of Baidoa it was thought that Aidid would try to gain control of other areas of the rich central/western part of Somalia, while rival clans would form alliances to hinder such developments. Indeed, the forever-shifting alliances that characterize Somalia continued to be key in determining the country's future. Meanwhile, the ongoing feud between Aidid in South Mogadishu and Ali Mahdi in the North gave rise to frequent armed clashes. In October fighting intensified between the two rivals, and the port in South Mogadishu was closed. Fighting also flared up in the Galgudud region between the Murusade and Abgal sub-clans, displacing an estimated 8,000 people.

* UNOSOM II: United Nations Operations in Somalia
* SNA: Somali National Alliance
* USC: United Somali Congress

In 1995 Sharia law was increasingly viewed as a viable option in different parts of the country. In North Mogadishu, for example, Ali Mahdi no longer talked of democracy, but of setting up a system of fundamentalist governors. Fundamentalism rose in popularity in 1995 as its radical punishments had proved to be at least partially effective in reducing armed banditry. Fundamentalist groups also gained support on account of their useful relief work. A major attraction of Sharia law was that it cut across clan loyalties.

### *Somaliland*

Heavy fighting had erupted in Somaliland at the end of 1994, mainly between the Habr Gerhaji and the government. The conflict had initially broken out over control of Hargeisa airport, but soon degenerated into a major clan dispute over the question of federalism versus independence for north-western Somalia. More than 150,000 people were displaced by the fighting in late 1994 and in January 1995 around Hargeisa, and a further 150,000 were displaced in late March in the Burao area. The ICRC quickly moved in to assist these people with medical and other relief. Delegates also visited people detained by both parties in connection with the conflict.

The ICRC closely monitored developments in the north-west of the country up to the end of the year, as weapons had still not been laid down. It provided medical supplies and other assistance to hospitals in Beer and Odweyne, and to health posts in locations affected by the conflict.

IN 1995 THE ICRC:

- collected 60,690 Red Cross messages and distributed 48,870;
- located 885 members of separated families;
- admitted about 4,700 patients to the Somali Red Crescent/ICRC hospital in North Mogadishu (Keysaney) and carried out approximately 2,500 surgical operations;
- rehabilitated or set up health posts in different locations around the country, according to needs;
- provided two hospitals in South Mogadishu with medical and surgical supplies to treat the wounded;
- supported primary health care in two regions (Juba Valley and Hiran), training local staff and providing medicines;
- distributed 2,620 tonnes of food and 1,430 tonnes of other assistance, including seed, plastic sheeting, tarpaulins, blankets, mosquito netting, fishing hooks and twine, to 175,000 civilians displaced by the different conflicts around the country;
- rehabilitated five boreholes and 25 hand-dug wells, installed 20 hand-pumps and maintained water supply systems in six hospitals.

## Activities for the civilian population

Although the conflict in Somalia was extremely localized in 1995 and reached nowhere near the levels seen in 1991/92, mainly because the vast arsenals of heavy weapons left over from the Siyad Barre government had been more or less depleted, it had serious consequences for the civilian population. The fighting was geographically restricted, but since it had a direct and immediate effect on trade (for example, cutting off access to ports) it affected a much wider area. This signalled a need for immediate action, properly targeted and as far as possible preventive, to avoid widespread disaster and the inevitable return to large-scale assistance programmes.

Prospects for Somali agriculture had looked quite favourable following a bumper harvest in 1994 in the Juba Valley and the Bay and Shebelle regions, which are the traditional breadbasket of the country. Unfortunately, the fighting and low rainfall in certain areas were such that the 1995 harvest was not even half that of 1994. Surveys carried out by the ICRC in May in the Juba

Valley revealed a disastrous nutritional situation. Lack of food, unsafe drinking water and the long-term effects of monotonous diets were the major causes, and the ICRC had to carry out food distributions in Lower Juba. Furthermore, Somali refugees returning from Kenya and arriving in this area also needed assistance, since they had used up their departure rations from UNHCR.

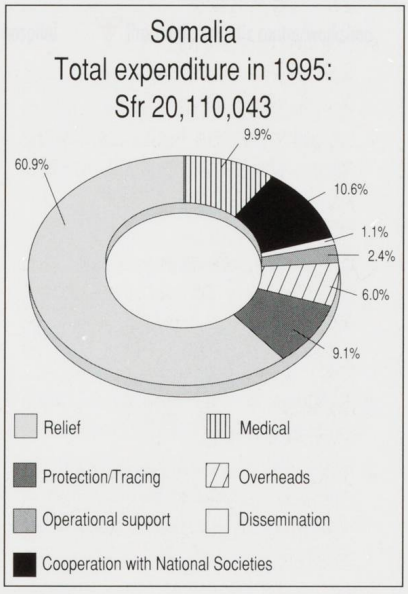
Further ICRC surveys in October showed a very high incidence of severe malnutrition, painting a more alarming picture than surveys carried out by other humanitarian organizations. The ICRC accordingly decided to step up its food aid programme in Lower Juba for both returnees and the resident population. By the end of the year some 55,000 people in Lower Juba had received food or other assistance. Two major food distributions were also carried out in the Kismayo area.

The ICRC's newly expanded relief programme was directed at specific groups affected by the conflict in Somalia, particularly displaced people and returnees. It was designed not just to supply limited emergency food rations to vulnerable groups, but also to provide assistance in rehabilitating agriculture, livestock rearing and fishing, so as to enable these groups to regain self-sufficiency and forestall the need for more substantial and long-term food distributions in the future.

The ICRC also started closely monitoring the precarious food situation in certain areas, in order to anticipate needs, and it undertook to share its findings with other humanitarian organizations.

## Agricultural assistance

Every year the food situation in Somalia is highly unstable. Even in times of peace a successful harvest is never guaranteed, and the population frequently has to rely on food stocks from previous harvests. For the increasing numbers of people who returned to their home regions in 1995 and obviously did not have such stocks to fall back on, the first harvest was crucial. Unfortunately this harvest was dismal in many areas. As livestock numbers had also been depleted, because of the needs engendered by an increased population in certain areas, the ICRC saw that assistance was vital in this sphere as well. It therefore began preparations to facilitate transportation of veterinary drugs to isolated areas inland.




## Health activities

Throughout the year the ICRC continued its medical programme aimed at restoring and maintaining health care for communities affected by the conflict. Existing hospitals and health posts received basic drugs and other medical supplies, and expertise was passed on to local doctors and nurses. Substantial

support was given to the Somali Red Crescent hospital at Keysaney in North Mogadishu and to Benadir and Digfer hospitals in South Mogadishu, which regularly admitted people wounded in the fighting and lacked basic supplies.

Water supply and sanitation projects were carried out around the country, including the rehabilitation and equipping of existing boreholes and hand-dug wells, particularly in Mogadishu, the Juba Valley and Somaliland, and in hospitals in Dusa Mareb and Galcaio.

## Protection activities for civilians and detainees

The ICRC continued to play its role of neutral intermediary between the various parties. It appealed to them to respect international humanitarian law and spare the lives of civilians during clashes. Working in accordance with standard ICRC procedures, delegates visited detainees held by the warring parties in Somalia and particularly in Somaliland (over 400). Repeat visits were carried out at regular intervals to monitor the detainees' treatment and nutritional and medical condition. Basic medicines and personal hygiene items were provided by the ICRC where needed.

## Tracing activities

Yet again the ICRC's Red Cross message service continued to be Somalia's only regular and reliable means of communication, both within the country and abroad. The volume of messages collected and distributed remained high, though lower than in 1994, as many refugees returned home.

## Dissemination and information

Throughout the year the delegation endeavoured to spread awareness of the ICRC's neutrality and specific mandate and of the basic rules of international humanitarian law, by conducting a widespread and multi-faceted dissemination programme specially tailored for Somali culture and targeted primarily at opinion-makers, militias and young people. This included a project whereby four Somali historians began researching traditional Somali values in warfare which might correspond to those of humanitarian law. Special efforts were made to reinforce the dissemination programmes run by the Somali Red Crescent Society. Local drama productions to promote its activities and those of the ICRC were launched in all local Red Crescent branches.

At the same time the delegation kept the media, donors and other humanitarian organizations abreast of ICRC activities in Somalia both through direct contact and by regularly releasing updated written information.

# SUDAN

The armed conflict in the Sudan grew even more complex in 1995. In addition to the ongoing conflict between the government in Khartoum and the opposition in the south, a second type of armed confrontation gained in intensity and complexity in the form of inter-opposition fighting between the many splintered factions in the south, where alliances shifted and dissolved almost from one day to the next, and individual units often appeared to act in a completely independent way. This battle for power between ever-dividing and merging factions inevitably inflicted additional suffering on the civilians of southern Sudan and had a serious impact on their livelihood. The picture was further clouded by cross-border incursions, especially on either side of the Ugandan border.

A major offensive was launched by the SPLA* on 23 October, affecting a vast region situated between the Ugandan border and Juba. At the end of the month the airport in Juba was closed to all civilian traffic, including humanitarian flights. From 23 November all humanitarian aircraft were prohibited from flying to destinations in southern Sudan. At this point the ICRC evacuated its field staff from all the places they were working in except Juba.

On 30 November the head of delegation was received by the head of State security in Khartoum. The ICRC's flight plan for December was accepted and medical evacuations by air, which had been forbidden up until then, were also authorized. Other humanitarian organizations were able to recommence flights in southern Sudan, with the exception of a "no-fly zone", also applicable to the ICRC, encompassing areas where fighting was still going on. Despite this favourable development, on 5 December, when the ICRC received written

* SPLA: Sudanese People's Liberation Army

confirmation of its flight plan, a dozen additional locations, initially accepted, were marked out of bounds. On 9 December an ICRC plane was hit by gunfire near Waat, in the southern Upper Nile region, where inter-opposition fighting had been going on for several months. As a result the ICRC was obliged to suspend all its flights in the area until the end of the year.

The country's internal troubles were compounded by a deterioration in the Sudan's relations with its neighbours. Following an assassination attempt on the Egyptian President at the OAU summit in Addis Ababa in June, already strained Egyptian-Sudanese relations reached breaking point: warlike rhetoric was exchanged between Cairo and Khartoum, and limited border clashes occurred. Ethiopia subsequently accused the Sudanese government of involvement in the assassination plot and of harbouring three suspects in this connection. Relations between the two countries remained icy from then on. Eritrea had cut off diplomatic ties with the Sudan in December 1994, accusing Khartoum of training Islamic fundamentalists to destabilize the government in Asmara. The Sudanese government continued to maintain that Eritrea and Uganda were supporting the SPLA.

Uganda also severed links with Khartoum in April 1995, accusing it of harbouring and supporting the LRA* (see *Uganda*, under *Nairobi regional delegation*). Tension rose considerably in November, when the leaders of both countries openly accused the other of aggression. Kampala declared that Sudanese aircraft had violated Ugandan airspace and that an attack would be launched on the Sudan if Khartoum did not cease to support the LRA and openly retract its statement that Ugandan soldiers were fighting alongside SPLA troops.

At the end of the year the Sudan therefore found itself increasingly isolated and there was little hope for reconciliation with the opposition or with neighbouring countries.

## Activities for the civilian population

Civilians once again bore the brunt of the conflict in 1995. Many saw their villages razed to the ground, their children taken away, their relatives killed, their crops burned and their cattle stolen. Many more were (often repeatedly) forced to flee to places where they had no means of subsistence, and frequently had to rely on relief organizations to survive.

The ICRC continued to assist Sudanese civilians affected by the conflict. It gave them material aid, including seed, tools and fishing tackle, to help them

IN 1995 THE ICRC:

- collected 61,000 Red Cross messages and distributed 60,000;
- provided a total of 150,000 people with 84,000 farming tools, 400 tonnes of seed, 550,000 fish-hooks, 79,000 spools of twine and 322,000 metres of mosquito netting;
- distributed medical supplies to 70 health-care facilities in the south;
- admitted 1,958 patients and performed 5,259 surgical operations at Lokichokio hospital;
- performed around 2,000 surgical operations at the Juba Teaching Hospital;
- fitted 710 war amputees with artificial limbs and manufactured 1,263 prostheses at the prosthetic/orthotic workshops at Lokichokio and in Khartoum.

* LRA: Lord's Resistance Army

regain a degree of self-sufficiency, thereby improving their chances of survival and preventing them from becoming dependent on external aid. Blankets, soap, cooking equipment and other relief items were handed out to newly displaced civilians who had lost everything and to victims of looting and destruction.

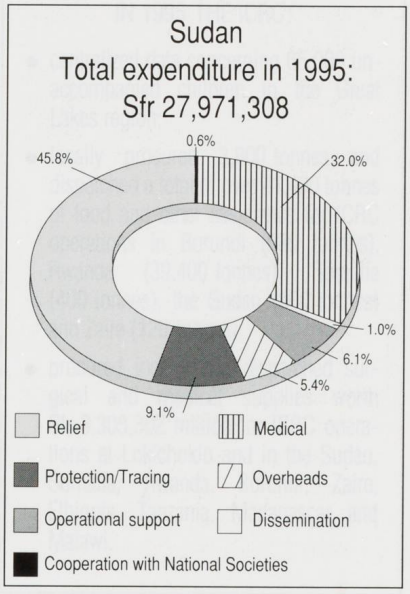
In addition to providing material aid, delegates pursued their efforts to persuade the authorities and rebel movements to respect civilians and the basic rules and principles of international humanitarian law. As in previous years, the ICRC nonetheless had considerable difficulty obtaining access to all areas affected by the conflict. While authorization to fly to some of the localities on the ICRC's monthly flight plans was systematically refused by the Sudanese government, the institution was denied access to other locations by the armed opposition groups. This had an immediate effect on the living conditions of civilians in those areas. Existing assistance programmes were sometimes jeopardized because delegates were unable to return to the area to follow up the work they had begun. Requests to evacuate the wounded by air were often denied. Such disregard for the plight of conflict victims being in direct violation of international humanitarian law, this issue was one of the items at the top of the ICRC's agenda for talks with the relevant authorities in Khartoum and in the field. Repeated representations were made throughout the year to obtain permission to reach all victims of the conflict.

## Health activities

The ICRC surgical hospital at Lokichokio, in north-western Kenya, and the one run by the Sudanese Ministry of Health in Juba, where an ICRC surgical team was posted and which the ICRC provided with medicines and other medical supplies, remained the two main referral hospitals for people wounded in the fighting in southern Sudan, and for serious cases which could not be treated in local health posts. The Lokichokio facility was expanded considerably in 1995, so that it would be able to handle a large-scale emergency. Inpatient capacity was brought up to 540.

The ICRC's prosthetic/orthotic workshop at Lokichokio was likewise expanded during the year to cope with demand and continued to fit amputees with artificial limbs and other orthopaedic appliances. Technical advice was also given to the prosthetic/orthotic centre in Khartoum.

Building up the capacity of health posts in isolated areas to provide primary health care and preventive services was an important part of the ICRC's medical programme in 1995. The ICRC provided the expertise and material assistance required for such activities and also improved the local water supply



and sanitation systems through the construction of wells, rehabilitation of boreholes and installation of hand-pumps.

In Omdurman the ICRC supplied safe drinking water to displaced people living in camps.

## Activities for detainees

The Sudanese government continued to deny the ICRC access to people detained in connection with the conflict, and all the institution's efforts remained in vain. In May the government revoked its approval, given in August 1994, for ICRC visits to people held in connection with the conflict. During a meeting at ICRC headquarters in Geneva between the ICRC President and the Sudanese State Minister for Foreign Affairs on 15 May, the President reiterated the pressing need to carry out such visits. A new memorandum was submitted to the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs on 17 June, requesting immediate access to people detained in connection with the conflict and reiterating the ICRC's offer of services for visits to those incarcerated for reasons linked to State security, whatever their status. By year's end the ICRC had still not received the necessary authorization.

Delegates were unable to repeat visits, suspended since August 1994, to detainees held by the SPLA, as the authorities in question would not allow them to interview detainees in private. Nevertheless, towards the end of the year dialogue on these matters resumed with the SPLA.

## Tracing activities

The ICRC continued to operate its network of tracing offices throughout the Sudan. A large number of messages was sent between people living in Kakuma refugee camp in northern Kenya and their families in villages in southern Sudan, and between displaced people in camps near Khartoum and their families in the south. Messages were also exchanged between Sudanese refugees in the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Uganda and Zaire and their families back home. The National Societies of all these countries were actively involved in this effort.

## Dissemination

Dissemination work focused on programmes directed at the civil and military authorities in Khartoum, and joint programmes were carried out with branches of the Sudanese Red Crescent in the south.

# NAIROBI
## Regional Delegation
## (Djibouti, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda)

The work of the ICRC's regional delegation in Nairobi continued to expand in 1995, not only in connection with growing activities in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, but also because of the regional delegation's role as a coordinating centre for specialist and support services for other ICRC operations in the region, particularly those in Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia, the Sudan and Zaire. Providing services for these operations accounted for over 80 percent of the regional delegation's activity in 1995; it included agricultural and veterinary expertise, water/sanitation work, tracing, logistics/air operations, procurement and management of emergency stocks, the running of a regional technical workshop, transport services, administrative and staff support, and liaison with the media. All of these services proved, as in previous years, to be much more effective and economical when carried out in Nairobi rather than in Geneva, and in the event of an emergency the ICRC's response could be much quicker. Furthermore, some of the services assumed varying degrees of coordination responsibility for certain operational delegations; for example, the tracing staff in Nairobi were in charge of centralizing data on unaccompanied children in the Great Lakes region.

## DJIBOUTI

A peace agreement signed between the government and the FRUD* opposition on 26 December 1994 had put an end to three years of internal armed conflict. Although not completely calm, the situation was relatively stable in 1995.

In June the ICRC visited four security detainees, including two who were seen for the first time, at the central prison.

During the year the ICRC's office in Djibouti served as a logistics base for the operation in Somaliland.

## KENYA

A polarization of political opinion emerged in Kenya in 1995 and opposition to the government became more outspoken than ever before. The February Eighteenth Movement made it known that its aim was to oust the President from office. As a result, Kenya's relations with Uganda became strained, as Nairobi accused Kampala of harbouring the Movement's leader.

* FRUD: Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy

IN 1995 THE ICRC:

- centralized data concerning 65,000 unaccompanied children in the Great Lakes region;
- locally procured 3,800 tonnes and dispatched a total of over 41,400 tonnes of food and other assistance for ICRC operations in Burundi (580 tonnes), Rwanda (39,400 tonnes), Somalia (400 tonnes), the Sudan (900 tonnes) and Zaire (120 tonnes);
- procured locally and dispatched surgical and medical supplies worth Sfr 3,305,302 million for ICRC operations at Lokichokio and in the Sudan, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Madagascar and Malawi.

Interethnic violence and clashes over land appeared to have abated by year's end, although 100,000 people were still displaced in the Rift Valley. These disturbances were connected with the central issues of land allocation and voting rights, which were put on ice by the authorities, leaving the door open to greater tension.

During the year the ICRC's main activities in Kenya included the distribution of assistance through the Kenya Red Cross Society to displaced families in parts of the Rift Valley affected by political violence; hydrogeological studies, carried out at Lokichokio and in the Moi N'Dabi settlement to investigate underground possibilities for water supply for the rising numbers of displaced people; first-aid and disaster preparedness training for local Red Cross volunteers; a campaign to enhance respect for the red cross emblem, conducted with the invaluable support of the National Society; and further tracing work for Somali refugees.

## TANZANIA

The most important concern of the ICRC in Tanzania in 1995 was the fate of some 750,000 Rwandan and Burundian refugees along the western border who were restricted to refugee camps under the guard of Tanzanian soldiers, and denied the possibility to work. The uncertainty facing these people grew in September when the Tanzanian government informed UNHCR that it expected a near-complete repatriation by mid-1996.

The ICRC's main activity in the Ngara region of Tanzania was tracing, though no cross-border operations could be carried out to reunite families as the border remained closed. Nonetheless, in June the ICRC arranged for eight children in refugee camps in Zaire to be flown to Tanzania to rejoin their families, and a similar operation was carried out in the opposite direction. Over the year the volume of Red Cross messages collected and distributed in the Ngara area increased considerably (for tracing statistics, see *Rwanda*).

Also in Ngara the ICRC, together with the Tanzania Red Cross National Society and the Federation, began work on a joint "Red Cross Programme" for a local radio station aimed at refugees and the resident population. A series of dissemination workshops was also organized for some 500 Tanzanian Red Cross volunteers working in the refugee camps.

## UGANDA

On the economic front Uganda fared better than most African nations, but at the same time suffered a resurgence of armed opposition to the government, in the insidious form so common in Uganda in the 1980s with the abduction of children, the terrorizing of civilians and the indiscriminate laying of mines, once

again affecting the West Nile and Northern provinces of the country. The LRA, believed to receive support from the Sudanese government in retaliation for Kampala's support for the SPLA (see *Sudan*), was said to be behind the terror campaign aimed at destabilizing the Ugandan government. Long-standing rumours of armed attacks to be launched from Zairian and Sudanese soil by the West Nile Bank Front were finally confirmed in 1995, though the attacks occurred only on a small scale.

The ICRC posted a delegate to the north of the country in mid-1995 to monitor the humanitarian situation there. Visits were made to people arrested in connection with the conflict and insurgency-related incidents. At the same time the ICRC attempted to establish direct contact with the LRA, but this proved very difficult until October, when delegates finally met representatives of the movement. Their aim was to promote respect for basic rules of humanitarian law and improve security. The ICRC's activities in northern Uganda, including the provision of non-food assistance to civilians affected by clashes, were carried out in close cooperation with the Uganda Red Cross Society.

Disturbances involving anti-government rebel movements in other areas were noted earlier in the year, but these died down following military intervention.

Other ICRC activities in Uganda in 1995 involved tracing work in connection with the Rwandan crisis, including registering and keeping track of unaccompanied children living in camps in southern Uganda. The ICRC's formal requests for access to detainees classified as "NRA* deserters" remained unanswered during the year under review, though visits were allowed to other categories of security detainees and reports were duly handed over to the Minister of the Interior. In June the authorities requested the ICRC to act as facilitator between donor embassies and agencies to try and ensure an optimal use of resources in the prisons.

* NRA: National Resistance Army