

Indonesia

Objekttyp: **Group**

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

Band (Jahr): **- (1950)**

PDF erstellt am: **03.05.2024**

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In May, however, M. Aeschliman, Delegate in South-East Asia, succeeded in having the radio station broadcast messages, twice a week, from French civil internees and prisoners of war. These messages were then sent on to the addressees by the responsible authorities.

In November, after unremitting effort, the French Red Cross obtained a first list of prisoners, and of NCOs and privates who had been wounded and released ; it also secured certain facilities for sending prisoners news of their next of kin. The French Press ¹ mentioned in this connection that, after the engagements at Tatkhé, the French Red Cross had been able to collect 250 wounded and to hand over twenty tons of food, clothing, and medical supplies for French prisoners. On its side, the French forces released groups of prisoners. The decisions, both French and Vietmin, were without specific reference to the Geneva Conventions.

As far as the Delegates personally were concerned, M. Aeschliman several times visited French prisoner camps, and obtained certain improvements in conditions.

At the request of the French High Commissioner in Indo-China, he also visited 27,000 Chinese nationalists, almost all military, who had crossed the frontier and been interned.

VI. — INDONESIA

The disturbances which had subsided after the creation, by agreement, of the United States of Indonesia, broke out afresh in the Southern Moluccas.²

In April, 1950, the Island of Amboina proclaimed its independence and announced the constitution of an autonomous Republic of the Southern Moluccas. The Indonesian Government at Djakarta thereupon blockaded these islands.

As there was risk of open hostilities, the Committee, on May 20, invited both parties to undertake to apply the essential

¹ *Le Monde*, March 22, 1951, reporting the declaration to the *Conseil de la République* of M. Letourneau, Minister for Relations with the Associated States.

² See *Report* for 1949, p. 89.

principles of the Geneva Conventions of 1929 and 1949. Djakarta accepted on June 10, and Amboina on August 4.

The Delegate in Indonesia sought permission to send relief, through the Indonesian blockade, to the Southern Moluccas. At the same time, the representative in Europe of these islands informed the Committee that fighting had begun, and urgently requested its intervention.

In July, the Indonesian Government informed the Committee that it could not permit any relief scheme distinct from that of the Indonesian Red Cross, and added that if the Delegate wished to go to Amboina, he would have to do so at his own risk.

After agreement with the Indonesian Red Cross, the Committee tried to obtain an aircraft from the Australian Red Cross, but this idea was abandoned after Indonesian forces had landed on Amboina. The Delegate, however, with an Indonesian Red Cross team, visited the islands of Ceram and Buru, and several others occupied meanwhile by the Indonesians.

The Committee thereupon decided to accept an offer made by a welfare organization to supply an aircraft which would convey a Delegate and a quantity of medical supplies from Geneva to Amboina. "Air France" agreed to provide a crew and deal with the technical side.

Meanwhile, the representative in Europe of the Southern Moluccas informed the Committee that fighting in Amboina had ceased ; he asked that a Delegate be sent to the spot at once. A few days later, Dr. O. Lehner, Delegate in Djakarta, was allowed by the Indonesian Government to leave for the island. His first message stated that fighting had stopped ; the civilian population had sustained heavy losses ; there were about 30,000 homeless, and the food and health situation was serious. He visited the hospitals, prisoner of war camps (including those at Halong, Latery and Tulehu), made contact with foreigners living in Amboina, and prepared for the arrival of the Committee's relief plane.

This aircraft, bearing Red Cross markings, left Geneva at the end of November ; it had a Delegate in charge, and brought 1,200 kilos of medical supplies. After numerous—and perilous—misadventures, it reached Amboina at the beginning of

December, just after the airstrip had been occupied by Indonesian forces. It proved impossible to make contact with the Southern Molucca forces, although the Delegates penetrated far forward into the fighting zone. A distribution committee was accordingly set up under their control, to issue supplies according to plans they had approved.

On December 16, the aircraft was back in Geneva, after covering over 25,000 miles in 28 days—a feat which, given the bad weather, landing difficulties and the small size of the machine, could scarcely have been thought possible when it set out. A tribute must be paid here to the Air France crew, whose services were beyond praise, and who came to make the success of the mission a point of personal honour.

On first going to Amboina, the boat taking the Delegate and several representatives of the Indonesian Red Cross was displaying Red Cross markings. As a commercial cargo was put on board, the Delegate insisted that the Red Cross markings should be removed. The Indonesian authorities showed their respect for the rules governing use of the emblem by ordering the cargo to be at once unloaded.

VII. — KOREA

The Committee addressed itself, as soon as news of the outbreak of hostilities arrived, to the two Governments at Pyongyang and Seoul. A first cable on June 26, 1950, offered the Committee's services for humanitarian purposes, and in accordance with its statutes, on strictly neutral and non-political lines.¹ Referring to the Geneva Conventions of 1929 and 1949, the Committee underlined that, in its view, the fact that Korea was not party to these agreements, was no obstacle to the *de facto* application of their humanitarian principles for the benefit of victims of the war. The Committee declared its readiness to send a Delegate to each Government, to examine

¹ Noting that this offer had been interpreted as an attempt at mediation, the Committee emphasized, in a telegram to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and in a Press communiqué, the real nature of its intervention which, in accordance with the Geneva Conventions, was purely humanitarian.