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AFRICA

Algeria

Assistance to detained persons in French hands. — The prolongation of the Algerian conflict has, year by year, laid a heavy burden on the ICRC. In 1959 it was busily engaged in assisting the various categories of victims of the events in continuation of the work done in this connection since the outbreak of the conflict.

(a) *Algeria.* — As stated in our previous report ¹, in December 1958 the ICRC sent a sixth mission to Algeria (composed of Mr. P. Gaillard and Mr. R. Vust) who visited sixteen places of detention. The official report on these visits was sent to the French Government on January 15, 1959.

In addition, meetings took place in Paris, in February, between the delegates of the ICRC who carried out the mission and the representatives of the French authorities, which enabled a close study to be made of the principal points raised in the report.

In view of various points noted during this mission, the ICRC placed the sum of 15,000 Swiss francs at the disposal of its delegation in Algeria to enable it to send relief supplies to Algerian prisoners. During their mission the delegates had already distributed games, books and Christmas parcels. Dentures were also supplied for inmates of the Arcole assembly centre.

In June the ICRC sent clothing for a value of 55,000 Swiss francs to its delegate in Algeria (Mr. R. Vust) for distribution to internees in the assembly centres.

The ICRC also sent 15,000 packets of cigarettes to Mr. Vust in behalf of military wounded on both sides. The cigarettes, gifts from various Swiss manufacturers, were distributed in hospitals in Algeria.

In connection with the general assistance to prisoners in French hands, mention should be made of special representations on the part of the ICRC in behalf of some doctors, under prosecution or serving sentences, as well as numerous enquiries and individual approaches concerning missing Algerians. Unfortunately it was not

¹ See pp. 7-8.

possible, at least up to the end of 1959, to obtain any precise information on these missing persons.

From October 15 to November 27, 1959, the ICRC sent a *seventh mission* to Algeria (composed of Mr. P. Gaillard, Mr. R. Vust, Dr. J. L. de Chastonay and Mr. L. Vust) one of the most important since the outbreak of the conflict. The delegates visited 82 places of detention, i.e.

- 44 screening and transit centres ;
- 13 internment camps ;
- 12 prisons where persons under prosecution as a result of the events were held ;
- 10 military internment centres ;
- 3 hospitals where wounded prisoners were receiving treatment.

These visits enabled the delegates to speak without witnesses with about one thousand detained persons ; they also distributed clothing, underclothing and cigarettes valued at 30,000 Swiss francs.

Following their visits the delegates approached civil and military authorities in Algeria to inform them of the points noted and their suggestions.

A detailed report on their mission was also submitted to the French Government on December 15, 1959 ¹. At the end of the year the delegates of the ICRC discussed this mission with the French authorities in Paris.

(b) *France*. — As a result of the conflict, numerous Algerians had been arrested in France and imprisoned or interned (assigned residence). From the winter of 1958-1959 the ICRC carried out in their behalf similar activities to those undertaken in Algeria for the past few years. After obtaining the necessary authority from the French Government the ICRC visited four internment camps for Algerians.

The first visit was to the internment centre at Vadenay (Seine-et-Marne) in December 1958. It was followed in March 1959 by visits to camps in Neuville-sur-Ain and St. Maurice l'Ardoise (Gard). As customary, reports were made by the delegates (Mr. W. Michel and

¹ The publication of this report in the Press, early in January 1960, without the knowledge of and without referring to the ICRC, created a great stir.

Mr. P. Gaillard) and the points noted were discussed with the French authorities in Paris.

Further visits were made in July when the delegates visited, for the first time, a camp recently opened at Larzac (Dordogne). They again went to Vadenay, St. Maurice-l'Ardoise and Neuville-sur-Ain ; they distributed 5,000 packets of cigarettes to these camps to which games, books, educational supplies and clothing were also sent.

The approaches made by the ICRC to obtain authority to visit prisons in France came to a successful conclusion early in the summer of 1959. From that time delegates were able to visit Algerians under prosecution or serving sentences and to converse freely with them.

From June to November three delegates (Mr. W. Michel, Mr. P. Gaillard and Mr. M. Martin) visited twenty-four prisons in Paris and the provinces, in particular Fort Liédot (Ile d'Aix) where Mr. Ben Bella, Mr. Khider and Mr. Ait, former leaders of the FLN, were held.

Assistance to prisoners in the hands of the ALN. — Throughout the year the ICRC continued to make approaches to the " Gouvernement provisoire de la République algérienne " with a view to assisting French prisoners held by the " Armée de libération nationale ". It will be recalled that its approaches resulted in the release in 1958 of twelve French combatants held by the ALN.

On February 20, 1959, at Oujda (in Moroccan territory near the Algerian frontier) the release of six French prisoners took place, through the representatives of the " Algerian Red Crescent ". During a ceremony held at the local branch of the Moroccan Red Crescent the prisoners released were handed over to the delegates of the ICRC (Mr. P. Gaillard and Mr. C. Vautier), by whom they were taken at once to Oujda Airport and placed in the care of the French Consul for their repatriation. The prisoners' families had already been informed of their release by the Central Prisoners of War Agency in Geneva.

Following the points noted during the sixth mission to Algeria (December 1958) the ICRC made suggestions to the " Algerian Red Crescent " for the release on the spot of eleven French military prisoners held by the ALN in the Kabylia mountain area.

These approaches resulted in the release on May 15 and 18, 1959 in the Yakouren district, of a Swiss civilian and fifteen French prisoners (9 military personnel and 6 civilians) who had been held for several months in the Kabylia mountain area. No representative of the ICRC was present on this occasion as the operation required to be carried out with the greatest discretion and without any premature publicity which might have delayed or compromised the successful issue of this undertaking. The ICRC, which had been informed of the matter several days in advance, had insisted that the detained persons should be released without any formalities and as rapidly as possible, as in the case of the three Cesaro brothers in April, following the representations made by the ICRC (these unconditional releases responded to its untiring efforts towards the humanisation of the Algerian conflict).

During the summer, 1959, the ICRC was successful in obtaining the release of other persons captured by the ALN, in particular a young girl, Maria-José Serio, from Constantine, Miss Yvonne Genestoux, a nurse captured in December 1958, and also a civilian, Mr. Roger Tobias. Furthermore, the ALN released at Ghardimaou, Tunisia, the French military prisoner Durivault, who was placed in charge of a delegate of the ICRC to be repatriated.

Since the summer, 1959, the ICRC has unfortunately obtained very little information on French civilians or military personnel captured or still held by the ALN. Nevertheless it obtained the release of one person in November and two in December. On December 30, 1959, two French prisoners captured in the Ain-Seffra area in July were released and placed in charge of a delegate of the ICRC at the headquarters of the Moroccan Red Crescent in Rabat.

Thus, 45 French civilians and military personnel had been released under the auspices of the ICRC by the end of 1959.

Besides making repeated and pressing approaches for the release of prisoners held by the ALN, the ICRC endeavoured to make Algerian combatants more familiar with the fundamental rules and main provisions of the Geneva Conventions. For this purpose it sent to the ALN, for distribution to the combatants, one thousand copies in French and the same number in Arabic of the Brief Summary of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and two hundred copies of an illustrated booklet on the subject.

Early in December 1959, the ICRC also made another approach by letter to the President of the GPRA, Mr. Ferhat Abbas, asking for a reply to the proposals submitted by it in May, and again in October, 1958. These proposals referred to the humanitarian rules which the International Committee considers should be observed in the Algerian conflict, in particular Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949. A reply from the GPRA was still awaited at the end of 1959.

Assistance to persons displaced and resettled in Algeria. — Since 1957, delegates of the ICRC have made limited distributions of emergency relief supplies in Algeria in behalf of persons displaced as a result of military operations and resettled in other areas. These relief supplies, valued at about 4 million (old) French francs, consisted in particular of clothing and foodstuffs (condensed milk).

According to information received in the summer of 1959, the number of persons displaced and resettled inland in Algeria is one million. In order to help these persons the French Red Cross gives assistance to children by means of mobile nursing units. In support of this work the ICRC made a gift of medicaments (poly-vitamin tablets and eye-drops) valued at 10 million (old) French francs. These relief supplies were distributed in August and September 1959 by the French Red Cross in the presence of a delegate of the ICRC.

Other gifts sent by the ICRC (concentrated cod-liver oil, eye-drops and a load of blankets valued at about 9,500,000 (old) French francs) were again distributed in October by the French Red Cross in our delegate's presence.

Morocco

In 1959 the ICRC took part in the happy ending to serious events dating back to December 1957. Disturbances had then broken out in the Ifni area—a Spanish enclave on the Moroccan coast of the Atlantic—and Cape Bojador in Rio de Oro. Several battles took place between the rebel troops of the “ Armée de libération marocaine ” and the garrison troops (which were rapidly

reinforced) at the Spanish frontier posts ; numerous prisoners were taken on both sides.

With a view to helping these prisoners the ICRC made approaches, through its delegates in Spain and Morocco, to the two governments concerned.

The Spanish authorities sent to Geneva a list of the Moroccan prisoners in their hands. Shortly after the suspension of hostilities they released most of the prisoners.

The ICRC then made further approaches to obtain the release of all the persons held. On the Moroccan side its delegates (Mr. C. Vautier and Mr. J.-P. Maunoir) had interviews with some leading figures, in particular Mr. Ahmed Balafrej, then President of the Council. In April 1959 another delegate (Mr. P. Gaillard) was sent to Rabat where he submitted the matter to H.R.H. Princess Lalla Aïcha, Honorary President, and Mr. Mohamed Sebti, President, of the Moroccan Red Crescent Society, to whom he handed a list of forty Spanish persons reported missing.

A little later the ICRC had the pleasure of hearing that its efforts had reached a successful conclusion ; on May 6, the 32 combatants and 8 civilians held by the " Armée de libération marocaine " were released at Rabat, in the presence of H.M. King Mohammed V. This news arrived just before the notification of the forthcoming release, by the Spanish authorities, of the remaining Moroccan prisoners held by them.

Kenya

In June and July 1959, a delegation of the ICRC (Rev. H. Ph. Junod and Dr. J. M. Rubli) visited convicts and Mau-Mau in places of detention in Kenya. This mission followed that undertaken in the country in the spring, 1957, during which over 35,000 detained persons in 70 camps and prisons were visited.

With the full agreement and the co-operation of the British authorities, the delegates examined the conditions of detention of all the persons arrested on account of the state of emergency. They made eight visits to prisons, internment camps and assigned residence areas where some 1,800 persons were detained or interned.

On July 4, the delegates were received by the Governor of Kenya, The Hon. Sir Evelyn Baring, whom they informed of the points noted during their visits. A detailed report on this mission was, as customary, sent to the British authorities.

Rhodesia and Nyasaland

Following the internal disturbances which broke out in February 1959, in the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, a number of persons were deprived of their liberty and interned. In pursuance of the efforts made by the International Committee of the Red Cross for some years past to lend its assistance to this category of detained persons, it asked its delegate in Southern Rhodesia (Mr. G. C. Senn) to approach the Federation authorities and to request permission to visit the camps and prisons where persons detained as a result of the events were held.

The request met with favourable response on the part of the Federation authorities and from May to December the delegate made seventeen visits to prisons, camps and assigned residence areas where a total of about 1,400 detained and interned persons were held. During each visit he was able to speak freely, without witnesses, with detained persons of his choice. He informed the authorities concerned of the points noted and his suggestions met with favourable consideration and were soon given effect.

Reports on the visits were sent to the authorities in Salisbury.

NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST

United Arab Republic

The ICRC Delegation, headed by Mr. E. Muller, continued in 1959 its work in behalf of stateless persons wishing to emigrate¹. About 1,500 persons were thus able to emigrate to various countries, mainly Brazil, Australia, France and the United States.

¹ See *Annual Report 1957*, pp. 25-26, do. 1958, p. 16.