

# External relations and information

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# EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND INFORMATION

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## **Relations with international organizations**

The delegate to international organizations, with the assistance of other ICRC staff, attended the deliberations of the following bodies in 1980:

- from 4 February to 14 March, the thirty-sixth session of the Commission on Human Rights, in Geneva, at which reference was made to a number of matters of particular interest to the ICRC, such as the problem of missing persons; the convention banning torture; and the situation in Afghanistan, Kampuchea, Chile, Uruguay, Cyprus and the occupied territories;
- from 8 April to 2 May in New York, and from 3 to 25 July in Geneva, the two annual sessions of the Economic and Social Council; one of the questions discussed was that of co-ordinating humanitarian action;
- from 16 September to 17 December, in New York, the thirty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly; the deliberations in which the ICRC was particularly interested included those relating to questions of disarmament; human rights (torture, covenants on human rights, etc.); legal questions, such as the elaboration of an international convention against the recruitment, use, financing and training of mercenaries; the re-examination of the procedure for the establishment of multilateral treaties, and various other matters, discussed at the plenary meeting and in various Committees, relating to certain areas where the ICRC is conducting its humanitarian activities.

The ICRC also attended as an observer the deliberations of the United Nations Conference on the Prohibitions or Restrictions of Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects, which was held from 15 September to 10 October in Geneva and ended with the adoption of a Convention and three Protocols.

The ICRC's views were heard at the thirty-first session of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, held in Geneva from 6 to 14 October.

Relations between the ICRC and the World Health Organization (WHO) being of a consultative nature, the ICRC delegate to international organizations and its chief medical officer attended in Geneva the sixty-fifth and sixty-sixth sessions of the WHO Executive Board in January and May and the thirty-third World Health Assembly from 5 to 23 May.

The ICRC representatives continued to work in co-operation with various United Nations specialized agencies

and subsidiary bodies, more particularly with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO).

In addition to the relations mentioned above, which the ICRC and the organizations of the United Nations system have customarily kept up, they worked particularly closely together in 1980, in carrying out the joint ICRC-UNICEF programme in Kampuchea and Thailand, with the principal organizations concerned and with the permanent missions of various countries to the United Nations, both in New York and Geneva. In this connection, the ICRC was represented at the meetings of donors in New York, the inter-agency sessions attended by UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP and FAO, the sessions of the UNICEF Executive Board, and the International Conference in aid of the Kampuchean people, convened in Geneva by the United Nations Secretary-General on 26 and 27 May.

The ICRC maintained its contacts with various regional organizations, including the European Economic Community (EEC); the Council of Europe, which has invited the ICRC to attend each one of its Parliamentary Assemblies; the Organization of African Unity (OAU); and the Organization of American States (OAS), at whose General Assembly held in Washington from 20 to 28 November the ICRC was present as an observer.

The delegate to international organizations also took part in the eleventh study session of the International Institute of Human Rights, held in Strasbourg from 15 to 18 July.

## **Information and public relations**

The keen interest shown by international public opinion in the joint action conducted by the ICRC and UNICEF in aid of Kampuchea's civilian population led to extensive calls on the services of the Press and Information Division (PID) in Geneva and in the field, particularly in Thailand. Apart from that, the PID began, towards the end of 1980, to prepare the ground for two information campaigns, the purpose of which was to allow the inhabitants of Angola and El Salvador, both combatants and non-combatants, to obtain a fuller and better idea of the ICRC's activities and the principles on which its action is based in the operational zones in those two countries. The information and dissemination campaign in southern Africa, begun in September 1978, was brought to an end with the termination of the Rhodesia conflict in April 1980.

In addition to the expansion of its activities in the field, the PID has, as in the past, endeavoured to satisfy the very numerous requests for information put to it in Geneva by the representatives of the press, and by the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

### Information produced in the field

**CAMBODIA-THAILAND.** — The information section in the ICRC's Bangkok delegation maintained contact with the correspondents of news agencies and periodicals, with representatives of television and radio corporations stationed in Thailand, and with news reporters temporarily in the country, supplying them with information on the humanitarian work in progress in the area. The section received an average of sixty visitors a month, some of them being news media representatives and others belonging to various bodies taking an interest in the ICRC's activities (National Societies, benevolent associations, United Nations specialized agencies, universities, foundations, and so forth).

The information delegates in Thailand produced articles and news features for National Societies' information services and for the ICRC's publications and broadcasting programmes. They also published "Red Cross Times", an English language journal, 19 issues of which came out in 1980. This periodical was distributed primarily to the several hundred voluntary workers helping in Thailand, with the ICRC, and to the National Societies which had made personnel available.

A filming crew from Geneva made five video tapes, showing scenes along the border between Kampuchea and Thailand, and an information delegate went to Kampuchea and brought back a series of news features and photographs for distribution to National Societies.

**EL SALVADOR.** — As a complementary action to the dissemination of the humanitarian principles by the ICRC delegates in El Salvador among members of the security forces, the army and the police, an information campaign was launched on 6 November, aimed at reaching all sectors of the population and the guerrilla movements in particular. Plans for the campaign were laid down in September 1980 by a PID press attaché. The aim was to remind all combatants of their humanitarian obligations and, also, to spread and explain the principles of the Red Cross, in particular the principles of neutrality and impartiality.

The information programme, organized with the active co-operation of the El Salvador Red Cross, consisted at first in broadcasting short messages describing various aspects of the Red Cross movement, the fundamental rules of humanitarian law and the ICRC's specific role in situations of conflicts and internal tension. In November and December, about a dozen such messages were broadcast by 28 radio stations, six giving national coverage, the others being local regional transmitters.

In addition, 2,500 copies of a set of colour posters and Red Cross calendars were distributed. In the capital, the distribution was carried out by the ICRC information bureau, and in the rest of the country by the National Society's local branches. For insertion in newspapers, a number of texts,

incorporating the same themes as those used for the radio, were edited. Films on the Red Cross and ICRC were shown on television and in cinemas at the time of the "Fiera internacional". They were shown, too, at periodical intervals to groups of first-aiders and to members of the Junior Red Cross.

**SOUTHERN AFRICA.** — With the end of the Rhodesia conflict, it was natural that the information campaign in southern Africa, launched in October 1978, should be brought to a close. It was in the context of this conflict and after three of its staff had died in Zimbabwe, killed in the course of their mission, that the ICRC had decided that some action was necessary in the field of information, concomitantly with its delegates' tasks of protection and assistance (see Annual Reports for 1978 and 1979).

This could truly be called a pilot scheme, as it was the first time that an ICRC information campaign was conducted by the persons stationed in the area for which the information was intended, namely, Rhodesia, Zambia and Botswana. The main aim was to create a favourable climate for the pursuit of the work performed by the ICRC's medical and relief teams, by informing and explaining to combatants, political leaders and inhabitants affected by the conflict the goals of the Red Cross and its principles of neutrality and impartiality.

Various methods were employed to spread the message of the Red Cross: visual publications (strip cartoons, calendars, posters), radio broadcasts, exhibitions, children's drawing competitions on a Red Cross subject, articles marked with the Red Cross (T-shirts, bowls, first aid kerchiefs, exercise-books, pencils). In twenty months, some 4 million strip cartoons, 23,000 calendars, 11,000 posters, 18,000 kerchiefs, 50,000 bowls, 15,000 T-shirts, 123,000 pencils and 100,000 exercise-books were given away, not only in the schools and camps for the refugees who had fled from areas directly affected by the Rhodesia conflict, but also in other parts of the African continent. Radio broadcasts were carried out by the information delegates in Lusaka, who worked closely with the Zambia Red Cross and Zambia radio's broadcasting staff. They prepared nearly 90 programmes, in English and in several vernacular languages, which were on the air 90 minutes every week.

Although not strictly speaking part of the southern Africa information campaign, the itinerant League-ICRC exhibition of some forty panels illustrating the activities of the Red Cross, inaugurated on 8 May 1979 at Luanda (Angola), was displayed in Swaziland, Zambia, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Uganda and attracted everywhere considerable interest.

**ANGOLA.** — The ICRC's purpose, in its information campaign in Angola, is the same as in southern Africa and El Salvador: to secure the safety of its delegates and so enable them to bring their help more efficiently to the greatest possible number of victims. In December 1980, a member of the PID staff was sent to Angola to make plans for launching the information campaign. In the meantime, 10,000 copies of a small poster calling upon people to respect the Red Cross emblem were printed for distribution throughout the country.

In August 1980, an information delegate spent four weeks in Angola and brought back for National Societies and for the press a set of texts and photographs illustrating ICRC relief operations and medical aid.

#### Information produced at headquarters

Besides the tasks it carried out in the field, the PID was very active, too, at headquarters, and produced information for the press, radio and television.

**PRESS.**— Through their Geneva correspondents, the international press agencies, newspapers, and television and radio networks were regularly kept informed of developments in the ICRC's major actions throughout the world by means of press releases, news features and photos despatched by PID staff in the field. Replies were also given to enquiries over the telephone. The *ICRC Bulletin* continued every month to print news and articles which were extensively quoted by the media. Furthermore, on 14 March 1980, the ICRC President, on his return from a visit to Viet Nam, Kampuchea and Thailand, gave a press conference which was attended by over forty journalists representing the various media (press, radio and television).

Besides the monthly *ICRC Bulletin*, the ICRC's other periodical, *International Review of the Red Cross*, continued to appear every two months (see below). In addition, in 1980 the *Annual Report* was published for the first time in Arabic. Five issues of a monthly publication in English, "Africa Newsletter", intended mainly for English-speaking National Societies, also appeared during the year.

Forty thousand copies of a new ICRC publication were printed in 1980. This was entitled "*The ICRC and its Activities in the World*", and contained both black-and-white and colour illustrations. The bilingual text (English and French) gave an account of the ICRC's history, role and activities, of the means at its disposal in human and material resources and of the evolution of international humanitarian law, and touched upon the choices open to the Red Cross for its activities in the years ahead. A second edition of the brochure, "*Presenting the ICRC*", brought up to date with new illustrations and recent statistical data, came out in 1980 in English, French, German and Spanish. In all, 29,500 copies were printed. The first edition, published in September 1979, has been reprinted several times, with a total of 25,000 copies.

**AUDIO-VISUAL CENTRE.**— In conformity with the statements they had made at the Twenty-third International Red Cross Conference (Bucharest, 1977), the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies advanced in 1980 a further stage in their co-operation in audio-visual activities. On 8 October 1980, an agreement signed by the ICRC President and the League Secretary General provided for the joint utilization of the "International Red Cross Audio-Visual Centre", by pooling the two institutions' staff, equipment and resources. All the various audio-visual means available (video, films and photos) were to be grouped in one single place (fourth floor of

the League) and were expected to become operational in the second half of 1981.

In 1980, the joint League-ICRC video studio, set up provisionally in the ICRC building, produced twelve films which were distributed in several countries and sent to a number of National Societies. The 16 mm. colour film on the Cambodia-Thailand action ("A Question of Relief"), shot in the field towards the end of 1979, was completed at the beginning of 1980. It is now available in twelve versions (Arabic, Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swedish and Thai). This film has already been shown on television in several countries, and many National Societies have purchased it.

Approximately 4,000 photos, both in black-and-white and in colour, were added to the ICRC photographic library in 1980. Some 20,000 pictures were lent or given to National Societies and various media.

**RADIO BROADCASTS.**— The Red Cross Broadcasting Service (RCBS) celebrated in 1980 fifteen years of broadcasting activities in its own studios at the ICRC Geneva headquarters. Until 1964, the ICRC had used the facilities offered by the Radio-Genève studios to transmit Red Cross news. Then, in 1965, it began to record its programmes on its own premises and to broadcast them periodically from the Swiss short-wave transmitter in Berne, thanks to the Swiss PTT Administration, which authorized the ICRC to use the omnidirectional frequency of 7210 kHz.

In 1980, RCBS continued its monthly broadcasts in five languages (Arabic, English, French, German and Spanish), its programmes taking up a total of 81 hours during the year. In addition, twelve programmes were prepared in Portuguese for broadcasts by the stations of Portuguese-speaking countries. Listeners' reports from Europe, North and South America, Africa, the Middle East and the Far East showed that a very large number of people listened in to RCBS programmes, mainly on ICRC operations in Cambodia-Thailand, East Timor, Afghanistan, Chad, Angola, El Salvador, and elsewhere. Reports by journalists in the field were also a feature of these broadcasts.

**EXHIBITIONS AND LECTURES.**— In September, an exhibition of photographs on the work of the ICRC in Africa was shown in Lausanne and Geneva, the two largest towns in French-speaking Switzerland. Mr. Luc Chessex, a renowned Swiss photographer, who had been engaged by the ICRC to cover its activities in Africa, brought back some 7,200 photos taken in Uganda, Chad, Zambia, Botswana and Zimbabwe, of which 140 were selected for the exhibition.

In connection more particularly with the ICRC's public relations in Switzerland, a number of exhibitions and lectures on its work were organized in several parts of the country.

**VISITORS TO THE ICRC.**— In 1980, the Visitors' Service greeted at ICRC headquarters some 6,200 persons, about one-third of whom belonged to the Red Cross movement. Visitors came from all parts of the world, in groups or individually. The programme arranged for them included usually a short talk



and a film on ICRC activities, after which the visitors were shown round the Central Tracing Agency.

In November, members of the European Confederation of Public Relations (CERP), who were in Geneva for their November assembly, visited the ICRC and listened to an account, by the head of the PID, of the information campaign in southern Africa.

**MISSIONS.** — The head of the division went on missions on several occasions in 1980, including visits to southern Africa and South East Asia to assess on the spot the information programmes organized by his staff. At the end of February, at Manila, he represented the ICRC at the Red Cross Seminar on information and fund-raising, organized jointly by the League and the Philippine National Red Cross.

Information delegates and photographers were also dispatched to Thailand, Kampuchea, Angola, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Malaysia and Indonesia. They brought back news reports and photographs for the ICRC's publications and for National Societies.

### International Review of the Red Cross

In 1980, *International Review of the Red Cross*, the official organ of the International Red Cross and the only review dealing with Red Cross fundamentals, continued to be issued every two months. The main edition of about 60 pages appeared in English, French and Spanish, while a shorter German edition, of about 16 to 20 pages, contained abridged versions of the articles in the main edition.

Besides contributions by various authors on subjects relating to international humanitarian law ("Human Rights relating to Spiritual Assistance as Embodied in the Geneva Conventions", "Protocol I and Neutral States", "New Code for the Protection of Civilian Population and Property during Armed Conflicts"), *International Review* printed the five concluding instalments of Mr. Jean Pictet's "Commentary to the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross", which is of particular interest for the Red Cross. Publication of this work in the *Review* had begun in 1979. Several of these articles were also issued as offprints or were reprinted in other publications.

Among the texts which appeared in *International Review* were a United Nations resolution on the 1977 Protocols and a resolution of the World Administrative Radio Conference on Red Cross emergency radiocommunications. Every issue of the *Review* carried articles of topical interest, such as summarized accounts of the activities of the ICRC and its delegations throughout the world and of the work accomplished by the ICRC, League and National Societies for the dissemination of international humanitarian law. It also noted ratifications of the 1977 Protocols and the accessions by various States to those same Protocols, reported the adoption of the red crescent emblem by Iran, mentioned the centenary of the establishment of National Red Cross Societies in Argentina and Austria, and published reviews of several recent books on international humanitarian law and on the Red Cross.

In all this, *International Review* has endeavoured at all times to continue its function as the organ linking the members of the International Red Cross and providing them with general information.

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## PERSONNEL

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### Staff strength

In 1980, the larger number of operations conducted by the ICRC throughout the world was reflected in the heavier workload of all its various departments and led to more personnel being required, at headquarters and in the field.

At ICRC headquarters, the staff strength varied between 342 (in January) and 431 (in December), with a monthly average of 386.5 (as compared with 312.5 in 1979). Included in this average were about 180 persons whose work was directly related in one way or another to field operations. The rest of the staff were employed in work related to the activities of the Central Tracing Agency, to the development and dissemination of international humanitarian law, to relations with National Red Cross Societies, to information and public relations, to fund-raising, administration and so on.

The number of persons employed in the field (delegates and specialized staff sent from Geneva) rose from 256 in January to

261 in December; the monthly average for 1980 was 258.5 (150.5 in 1979). These figures do not include the very large number of medical and paramedical personnel made available to the ICRC by National Red Cross Societies, mainly for its work in Thailand (between 442 persons in January 1980 and 209 in December).

In addition, the ICRC delegations were assisted by locally engaged personnel, whose number rose from 474 in January to 518 in December.

During the year under review, 333 missions were performed by personnel sent from the Geneva headquarters.

### Training

A delegate's first year in the field being as a general rule a training period, the aim of the introductory courses given each year at the Cartigny Centre near Geneva since 1970 is to give budding delegates a grounding on a variety of subjects related