

# Africa

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## I. PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. AFRICA

#### NORTH AFRICA

##### Algeria

Following on the Evian Agreements (March 1962) and the establishment of independence, the humanitarian action, which the ICRC had undertaken for seven years in Algeria, was continued in order as far as possible to relieve the suffering, subsisting as a result of the conflict, in spite of the cessation of hostilities.

This relief action of the ICRC concerned prisoners of the two adverse forces, regrouped populations, missing persons and former "harkis", or Algerian military having served as auxiliary forces in the French army.

In the first two cases the ICRC was able to complete its work of aid before the end of the year.

This was not so as regards the last two cases. By the end of 1962, enquiries opened concerning 594 French, of whom 330 military and 264 civilians, presumed to have been captured by the FLN had not yet been resolved. Furthermore, ICRC delegates, in spite of repeated requests, were never able to visit "harkis" detained in Algeria.

In February 1963, the ICRC charged one of its Vice-Presidents, Mr. S. Gonard, former Corps Commander in the Swiss Federal Army, with proceeding to Algiers with a view to coming to an understanding with the Algerian Government regarding the possibility of the ICRC searching for persons missing since March 19, 1962 and

coming to the aid of private individuals imprisoned as a result of the events and still detained in Algeria.

The ICRC representative had several talks with Mr. Ben Bella, President of the Algerian Republic and with various members of its Council of Ministers. On the conclusion of these talks, an agreement was signed between the ICRC and the Algerian Government, according to which the latter undertook to give all facilities to the delegates of the International Committee for any humanitarian aid it might wish to effect. This agreement was substantially strengthened by the conclusion of negotiations between the French and Algerian Governments on the subject.

Before leaving Algiers, Mr. Gonard visited the prison of Maison Carrée where he spoke freely with a number of detainees. On his proposal, the Algerian Government ordered the release of 111 detained persons.

Since the middle of March, a special ICRC mission, headed by Mr. Claude Pilloud, Deputy Director for General Affairs, started work in Algeria on the basis of the agreement negotiated by Mr. Gonard. This mission consisted of some twenty members, including Mr. Roger Vust, permanent delegate in Algeria, and Mr. Jacques de Heller, ICRC delegate, both of whom had been associated with the negotiations agreement.

Searches for missing persons were extremely difficult, especially as they were only started nearly one year after the events during which disappearances had taken place. Although operating personally in those areas in which the missing persons had been reported for the last time, the delegates of the ICRC were unable, in about half the cases, to collect any conclusive information as regards the fate of the persons being sought, in spite of repeated approaches to all civil and military authorities and of the facilities which had been given them by the government.

As regards "harkis", the ICRC mission had no difficulty in obtaining permission to visit those detained in prisons. On the other hand, the ICRC delegates were not able, generally speaking, to visit former "harkis" held in military camps.

Mr. Gonard returned to Algiers in June to make contact once more with Mr. Ben Bella and obtain confirmation of government support of the ICRC special mission.

After Mr. Pilloud's departure, this mission was directed by Mr. Bertrand de Haller, then temporarily by Mr. Georg Hoffmann, general delegate of the ICRC in Sub-Equatorial Africa, detached to Algiers in July, and finally by Mr. G. Marti.

The ICRC delegates continued their investigations throughout the country, questioning local authorities, police officials, parents, neighbours and witnesses of the events during which persons being sought had disappeared. They also made systematic visits to penal establishments and other places of detention. Information thus received was checked in Algiers by a bureau of the International Committee's Central Tracing Agency, from which individual reports were then made and sent to the appropriate French authorities for transmission to the families concerned.

In the majority of cases, an enquiry was usually concluded by death or in a strong presumption of death. Only a small number of the missing were actually found alive. This applied to persons whose trace had been lost after the hurried repatriation of large numbers of French established in Algeria or to those who had temporarily left their homes during the troubles.

As regards aid to the harkis, the ICRC delegation succeeded in obtaining some releases. In addition, it lent its good offices for the negotiation of an agreement between the Algerian and French Governments concerning the admission to France of all former harkis who wished to leave Algeria.

Harkis detained in civil prisons were all visited by the delegates of the ICRC, who were able to talk with each of them without witnesses. Out of a total of 2,500 harkis visited, about 1,300 expressed the desire to be transferred to France.

The ICRC terminated its mission in September leaving it to the Algerian Red Crescent to settle outstanding questions concerning missing persons.

As part of the assistance programme to the Algerian population carried out by the League of Red Cross Societies and the Algerian Red Crescent, the ICRC delegation in Algiers handed ten tons of full-cream powdered milk to the Algerian Red Crescent. This relief consignment had been placed at the disposal of the ICRC by the Swiss Government from surplus dairy stock.

## **Morocco**

A dispute having arisen between Morocco and Algeria over the demarcation of their common frontier in the Sahara, there resulted a period of acute tension which, without degenerating into a general conflict, nevertheless led to the outbreak of fighting along the frontier. During the months which followed, the ICRC concerned itself with aiding prisoners of both sides.

Thus in December, Mr. Jean-Jacques Muralti, delegate, went to Morocco and visited more than 300 Algerian military captured by Moroccan troops. He distributed relief parcels to them containing underclothes, toilet articles, games and cigarettes to a value of about 9,000 Sw.frs. The prisoners were able to write to their families through the intermediary of the ICRC which transmitted to the Algerian Red Crescent messages the delegate had collected during his visits.

On October 31, the crew of the cargo vessel "Hasiblal", flying the Moroccan flag, was halted and impounded in the port of Nemours in Algeria. The ICRC immediately approached the Algerian Red Crescent in order to be in a position to communicate news of these men to their families.

## **EQUATORIAL AND SOUTHERN AFRICA**

### **General delegation of the ICRC in Equatorial and Southern Africa**

At the beginning of the year, the ICRC decided to establish a general delegation in that area, whose sphere of activity would comprise the Congo-Leopoldville (including Katanga), Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Kenya, Zanzibar, Tanganyika, Angola, Mozambique, Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Madagascar, the Republic of South Africa (including S.W. Africa), Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland, Réunion, Mauritius, Archipelago of Comoro, and Seychelles. It entrusted its direction to Mr. Georg Hoffmann who set up his headquarters in Salisbury (Southern Rhodesia) on January 11.

In broad outline, the object of Mr. Hoffmann's mission was to establish and maintain direct contact with government authorities

and the National Red Cross Societies of those different countries with a view to assisting in the dissemination of the Geneva Conventions and, if necessary, to see to their application and to facilitate the eventual formation and development of National Red Cross Societies.

The general delegate of the ICRC also found himself entrusted with the task of carrying out, with the help of the regional delegates, all humanitarian action in accordance with the principles of the Red Cross and especially that of protecting and assisting military and civilian victims in armed conflicts or internal disturbances.

## **Congo**

Fresh troubles having broken out in Katanga in December 1962, Mr. G. C. Senn, regional delegate, went to Elisabethville in order to assure, in agreement with the United Nations forces, the action of the Katanga Red Cross and to avoid a repetition of the tragedy which in the previous year had caused the death of G. Olivet, delegate of the ICRC, and of two associate members of the local Red Cross organization. Passes were issued to the ambulance drivers and the necessary instructions given to the commanders of road-blocks.

On January 3, Mr. Senn again approached the authorities responsible for the maintenance of order with a view to facilitating the return home of refugees who were on the roads leading to Rhodesia. The ICRC had in fact obtained the Rhodesian Red Cross' contribution to the supplying of the civilian population on the Rhodesian frontier.

Mr. Senn also attempted to maintain, as far as this was possible, co-operation between UN forces, the Katanga Red Cross and the Southern Rhodesia branch of the British Red Cross, in order to assist and supply refugees in that frontier area. Under the auspices of the ICRC, convoys were able to ensure the return of refugees to their homes.

At the end of January, the general delegate of the ICRC obtained permission to visit in the prisons of Kolwezi and Kasapa, prisoners taken by the Katanga forces during their withdrawal. He succeeded in securing the release of 24 detainees, of whom 15 were military and 9 civilians.



In February, Mr. Hoffmann made contact with the Congolese authorities and the directors of the Red Cross, as a result of which, Mrs. J. Egger, regional delegate, received authorization to visit N'Dolo prison, near the capital, in which notably several former members of the South Kasai Government were detained. On a visit to the same prison two months later, Mrs. Egger was able to observe that, following her repeated representations, all Katanga military and civilians, as well as two leading political personalities of South Kasai, had been released. She also secured the release of six European military personnel in the service of Katanga who had been detained by UN forces.

At the end of April, Mr. Senn visited the central prison of Lulua-bourg in which about 200 prisoners were in detention. He also saw the prisons in the area and discovered the needs of the populations stricken by the events.

In Stanleyville, Mr. Senn visited the central prison and also that of Kongo. On May 14, he secured the release of 102 Katanga gendarmes who had been incarcerated in the latter prison.

## **Burundi**

In September, Mr. Senn went to Burundi in order to become acquainted with the general situation, and to visit detainees in the three prisons of Usumbura, Kitega and Rumonge.

He was everywhere given permission to talk without witnesses with the prisoners and at the end of these visits, he intervened with the authorities in order to improve the conditions of detention.

## **Angola**

During his tour in Angola from July 10 to 15, the general delegate of the ICRC, Mr. Hoffmann, visited local branches of the Portuguese Red Cross at Luanda, Lobito and Mocimodès, Sa Da' Bandeira, Nova Lisboa, Carmona, Maquela da Zombo and Benguela. At Luso he paid a visit to the camp of former interned Katanga military personnel, where his appearance was not of an official character. This tour enabled him to appreciate the activity being deployed by the Portuguese Red Cross, both in the training of

first-aiders, as well as in aiding military wounded who receive assistance from the "Nucleo Auxiliar Feminino", a woman's organization all of whose members are volunteers.

## **South Africa**

Mr. Hoffmann has stayed in South Africa on five separate occasions. He has established there most useful contacts with the South African Red Cross and Government and has obtained permission to visit certain persons detained by reason of the political situation.

He covered more than 36,000 miles by air, visiting not only South Africa, Angola, Burundi and the Congo (Léopoldville), but also Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Uganda, Northern Rhodesia, South-West Africa, Swaziland, Réunion, Tanganyika, Nyasaland and Bechuanaland. In the main centres of these last-mentioned countries, he visited Red Cross Committees which assist young mothers and infants and distribute food relief to children. These committees are all multi-racial and the interest taken in them by the African members is manifest.

In all the countries through which he passed, Mr. Hoffmann made contact with the authorities and existing Red Cross Societies, or those in the process of formation. The meetings he had bore chiefly on the dissemination of the Geneva Conventions, the development of the new National Red Cross Societies and the possibility of visiting persons detained as a result of events.

## **2. NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST**

### **Yemen**

**An action of far-reaching significance.**—The previous ICRC Annual Report mentioned the sending, at the end of the year, of a mission to the Yemen on account of the conflict which had just broken out in that country. This mission, consisting of Dr. Jean Maurice Rubli and Dr. Guido Piderman went to Saudi Arabia and to the Imam El Badr, Chief of the Royalist forces in the Yemen.

During 1963, the ICRC was to considerably intensify its action both in the Arab Republic of the Yemen, of which Sanaa is the