

# Indo-China

Objekttyp: **Group**

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

Band (Jahr): **- (1973)**

PDF erstellt am: **23.05.2024**

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who wanted to go to Pakistan and met the requirements agreed on by the Governments of Pakistan and Bangladesh. By 31 December, there were 469,145 registrations but as there was some duplication the exact number of persons concerned is not known. The same procedure as described above was applied for entry visas for Pakistan, the issuing of ICRC ad hoc identity documents and the filling in of repatriation cards.

The ICRC delegates also helped the local authorities in the transport and assembly of non-locals in the Dacca and Chittagong departure camps. By the end of 1973, 33,849 non-locals had been transferred from Bangladesh to Pakistan by the airlift organized by UNHCR.

While repatriation operations proceeded, the ICRC continued its aid to non-locals.

## **Indo-China**

As mentioned in the Annual Report for 1972 (page 46), the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies decided in December 1972, in view of the impending cease-fire in Vietnam, to establish an integrated general staff, which was to be called Indo-China Operational Group (IOG) and to which the two institutions entrusted the formulation and execution of International Red Cross Assistance to Indo-China (IRCA).

In 1973, therefore, IRCA delegations were established in the capitals of the Republic of Vietnam, the Khmer Republic and the Kingdom of Laos. While in the latter two countries all functions were assumed by the IRCA delegation, the ICRC delegation was maintained in the Republic of Vietnam, as well as an IRCA delegation.

As IOG issues its own periodic reports, only an outline of IOG's chief activities is given here.

### **Republic of Vietnam**

*Prisoners of war:* While the greater part of the prisoners of war were exchanged in 1973, a small number did not benefit under the provisions of the Paris Agreements of 27 January 1973. They were

mainly wounded men considered unfit for transport at the time of the repatriation operations, prisoners sentenced for offences committed during captivity, and prisoners captured after the cease-fire. The ICRC delegation at Saigon therefore pursued its treaty activities on behalf of the prisoners, of whom there were around 670. It made them twenty visits and provided them with relief items.

*Civilian detainees:* Despite the Paris Agreements very few civilian detainees were released. It was understood that two or more National Red Cross Societies would be invited to send representatives to visit those prisoners in their places of detention, but that was not done.

In view of the situation, the ICRC informed the two South Vietnamese parties, on 2 April 1973, that it was willing to resume its visits to all places of civil detention provided such visits were free from any restrictions, in other words, that its delegates would be able to move about freely in places of detention and talk with detainees of their choice without witnesses. It will be recalled that it was owing to such restrictions that the ICRC decided, in March 1972, to suspend its visits to civilian detainees in the Republic of Vietnam.

*Medico-social action:* The ICRC continued its medico-social action and sent out qualified personnel to provide care for 2,000 orphans, particularly for retarded, handicapped or disabled children. The ICRC assigned approximately 170,000 Swiss francs to the action out of its own funds in 1973.

*IRCA:* IRCA, for its part, established delegates in the four military regions, to lend the provincial committees of the Red Cross of the Republic of Vietnam support in assessing requirements and distributing relief. IRCA also installed several medical teams recruited by various National Red Cross Societies.

### **Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam**

In 1973, the ICRC maintained contact with representatives of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam (PRG) in Paris.

Following the typhoons which ravaged Vietnam in October, the PRG asked the ICRC to provide relief for the civilian population, and IOG undertook to comply with that request.

In a broader context, IOG assumed the task of providing the Provisional Revolutionary Government with the requisite equipment for a 250-bed hospital.

### **Democratic Republic of Vietnam**

The ICRC also maintained contact with the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, to whom it relayed several inquiries regarding missing servicemen or persons separated from their family, but by the end of the year no reply had been received.

The IOG Director and technicians went to Hanoi several times to make arrangements for the supply of prefabricated houses for air raid victims.

### **Khmer Republic**

During 1973 the ICRC delegates did not have access to prisoners of war, despite the assurances received the year before (cf. Annual Report 1972, page 47) and the many approaches made to the authorities.

A major IRCA relief action was conducted and developed, particularly for displaced persons in Phnom Penh and the countryside. Several medical teams with which IOG was provided by National Societies were installed in Phnom Penh, Kompong Cham, Kompong Thom and Svay Rieng hospitals.

### **Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia**

The ICRC wrote several letters to the Mission of the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia in France, particularly with regard to the neutralization of the aforementioned hospitals. It also transmitted various requests for information about missing journalists and servicemen. By the end of 1973 no reply had been received.

### **Laos**

The two parties involved in the Kingdom of Laos concluded an agreement to cease hostilities and to form a coalition government.

In 1973, ICRC delegates in Vientiane made four visits to prisoners of war and political detainees, and provided them with relief items.

Under the IRCA programme, relief supplies were distributed to displaced persons. Three medico-surgical teams, which had been provided by National Societies at IOG's request, were installed at Luang Prabang, Paklay and Muongnane.

### **Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat)**

The ICRC delegation in Vientiane maintained contact with the representative of the Lao Patriotic Front (LPF).

In its capacity as IRCA delegation, it sent the LPF relief in the form of medicaments, medical equipment, etc.

## **Southern Africa**

In 1973, the ICRC visited a number of persons detained in southern Africa for offences or reasons of a political nature. The visits were usually made by three delegates together, including one doctor-delegate.

The categories of prisoners whom the ICRC is authorized to visit vary from one country to another. In *Rhodesia*, the ICRC is allowed to see persons detained under the emergency regulations, that is, in preventive custody without judgement, but not prisoners undergoing interrogation, awaiting trial, or sentenced. In *South Africa*, on the other hand, it has access to sentenced political prisoners alone. In the *Portuguese territories*, it may visit all those who at the time of the visit come under the General Directorate of Security, whatever their legal status.

Once they are authorized to visit prisoners, ICRC delegates can talk to them freely and without witnesses.

In these countries as in others,<sup>1</sup> not only does the ICRC make recommendations to the competent authorities regarding specific improvements in the detention conditions observed, but it endeav-

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<sup>1</sup> See page 43.