

External relations and information

Objekttyp: **Group**

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

Band (Jahr): **- (1979)**

PDF erstellt am: **23.05.2024**

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EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND INFORMATION

Relations with international organizations

In the context of the ICRC's relations with the United Nations and some of its specialized agencies, the delegate to international organizations, with the assistance of other staff members of the ICRC, followed the deliberations of the following bodies in 1979:

- from 12 February to 16 March, the thirty-fifth session of the Commission on Human Rights, at which ICRC activities in the Middle East, Africa and Kampuchea were referred to;
- from 10 April to 11 May in New York, and from 4 July to 3 August in Geneva, the two annual sessions of the Economic and Social Council;
- from 17 September to December, the thirty-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. At this session, the deliberations concerning the ICRC were those relating to disarmament questions discussed in the First Committee; human rights, in the Third Committee; legal questions, in the Sixth Committee, including the state of signatures and ratifications of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the International Convention against the Taking of Hostages in which the ICRC is mentioned; and various other matters, discussed in other Committees, relating to areas where the ICRC was conducting its humanitarian activities (Southern Africa, Western Sahara, Middle East, Cyprus, Nicaragua, East Timor, Kampuchea).

The ICRC was also represented at the thirtieth session of the Executive Council for the programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, from 8 to 16 October in Geneva.

Because of the consultative nature of the relations between the ICRC and WHO, the ICRC delegate to international organizations and the head of the ICRC Medical Division attended the sixty-third and sixty-fourth sessions of the WHO Executive Board in January and May 1979 in Geneva, and the thirty-second World Health Assembly from 7 to 25 May.

In general, the ICRC representatives continued to work in co-operation with various United Nations specialized agencies, 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 Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO).

Apart from the customary relations that have just been mentioned, the ICRC and the organizations of the United Nations system worked together particularly closely for the establishment of humanitarian aid programmes in south-east Asia. The delegate to international organizations was requested, in addition to the steps taken by the ICRC President in Geneva and the delegates in the field, to present the ICRC's appeal of 19 March 1979 on the situation in Rhodesia to the States Members of the Security Council and to the United Nations Secretariat.

On 3 July 1979, the United Nations Secretary General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, paid an official visit to the ICRC and was received by the ICRC President and Assembly.

Contacts were pursued with various regional organizations, including the European Economic Community (EEC), the Council of Europe, the Organization of American States (OAS), the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Arab League.

The delegate to international organizations also took part in various special meetings:

- the Conference on Human Rights, held in January during the celebrations for the 150th anniversary of the founding of Cape Town University (South Africa), where he spoke on ICRC activities in aid of political detainees;
- the United Nations Institute for Namibia, where he spoke, also in January, on international humanitarian law and ICRC activities in Southern Africa;
- the Symposium on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in the Arab World, organized by the Union of Arab Jurists in Baghdad, from 18 to 20 May 1979;
- the tenth study session of the International Institute of Human Rights, held in Strasbourg from 16 to 20 July.

In connection with the Sixth Summit Conference of Heads of States and of Governments of Non-Aligned Countries, who met in Havana from 3 to 7 September 1980, the ICRC delegate to international organizations conferred on matters relating to ICRC humanitarian work with the Swedish Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister of State in charge of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, the President of Democratic Kampuchea and the Director of the Africa Department of the Algerian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Information and public relations

The tragedy which has stricken civilian victims of the events in south-east Asia, in Africa, in Latin America and in the Middle East has focused world opinion on the protection and assistance operations of the ICRC, particularly in the context of the conflicts in Kampuchea and Nicaragua. The considerable coverage given by the international press, radio and television has led the Press and Information Division (PID) to expand its activities in the field as well as at headquarters. At the end of 1979 PID staff numbered 35 (as against 23 at the end of 1978), 15 of them outside Geneva.

News from the field

KAMPUCHEA. — The flood of newspaper reporters and filming crews into Thailand to cover the joint ICRC-UNICEF action made it necessary for the Bangkok delegation to set up a news organization for a twofold purpose:

- to maintain contact with international press correspondents and envoys, supplying them with news on humanitarian operations and to reply to their questions;
- to prepare articles, photos and films for National Societies, to help them in their public relations and fund-raising campaigns.

This press office, comprising a co-ordinator, three information delegates (two provided by National Societies), a photographer and three assistants, has produced radio programmes, articles, features and thousands of photographs for dispatch to National Societies or use in ICRC periodicals and radio broadcasts.

In November three video tapes showed various aspects of relief operations for the benefit of Kampuchean refugees in Thailand. They were made for National Societies and distributed to some international television corporations.

In addition, a 16-mm film was produced on refugee camps along the Thai border and even inside Kampuchea. A filming crew, accompanied by an information delegate and a photographer, had been authorized by the authorities in Phnom Penh to go to the People's Republic of Kampuchea at the beginning of December and for 15 days they were able to cover humanitarian activities for the benefit of Cambodian civilians.

NICARAGUA. — At the request of the American Red Cross, which had received many appeals from national media interested in humanitarian operations in connection with the civil war in Nicaragua, the deputy chief of the PID, in July, went to the United States and Nicaragua. A number of interviews to the press and major television corporations gave opportunities to explain the organization and extent of ICRC activities carried out in close co-operation with the Nicaraguan Red Cross Society. After that mission, an information delegate was assigned to Managua from where he sent a series of reports which were widely reproduced by press agencies and newspapers.

SOUTHERN AFRICA. — The information campaign launched in Southern Africa towards the end of 1978 developed in 1979 and gave satisfactory results. Its aim was to make the Red Cross, particularly the ICRC, known and understood to all people and organizations—government circles, combatants, refugees and rural populations—directly or indirectly involved in the conflict in Rhodesia. Copies of information material produced locally and in Geneva were distributed by the tens of thousands in combat zones, schools and refugee camps in Rhodesia, Zambia and Botswana.

This material consisted of:

- seven cartoon strips explaining the various activities of the Red Cross; the number printed was increased from 120,000 to 240,000 copies of each in English, Ndebele and Shona (they were also printed in French for use in other African countries);
- an illustrated bulletin in English entitled "Red Cross in Action" of which five issues were published in 1979;
- four colour posters, each illustrating a different subject (10,000 copies);
- 13,500 copies of a calendar issued in three versions, namely English, Ndebele and Shona; English and Swahili; English, French and Portuguese.

The impact of these publications has been growing, probably promoted by the wide distribution of articles marked with the red cross, such as school exercise books, pencils, T-shirts and bowls which contributed by drawing public attention to the Red Cross.

The information team based at Lusaka produced some fifty radio programmes in English and four vernacular languages. These were broadcast weekly by Radio Zambia. From Salisbury Red Cross advertisements were broadcast by television and radio in English, Shona and Ndebele. In addition, the film "Challenge in Africa" was shown in many places in Rhodesia, Zambia and Botswana, and was often followed by a lecture on the Red Cross.

Another information campaign method was the itinerant ICRC-League exhibition of some 40 panels illustrating by photo and text the aims and activities of the Red Cross. The exhibition was inaugurated on 8 May, World Red Cross Day, in Luanda (Angola). It then went to Swaziland, Zambia and Kenya and aroused keen interest everywhere.

All the participants in a round table meeting in Lusaka on 19 July, some of whom were not members of the Red Cross, underlined the usefulness of the information campaign and the need to continue it. At that meeting three main problems were discussed:

- methods to bring home the Red Cross message to African rural populations with a view, inter alia, to promoting voluntary service;
- the possibilities of increased National Society participation in the campaign, with a view to their gradually taking it over;
- methods of developing active public participation with a view to more widely disseminating the Red Cross message.

Information from headquarters

PRESS — About 50 press releases, some jointly with the League or UNICEF; five press conferences at the institution's headquarters (Southern Africa appeal, Kampuchea and Lebanon operations) or in the United Nations Building (simultaneous release of civilian Arab prisoners and an Israeli prisoner of war); numerous interviews given to visiting journalists, to radio and television crews; lectures to groups of visitors: whatever the information methods employed, ICRC activities were given considerable coverage in international media. The televised report on 14 March at Cointrin Airport, when Arab prisoners and one Israeli prisoner were released, was broadcast by some thirty television channels in Europe, America, the Middle East and North Africa. Photographs of this exchange at Cointrin were provided for the major press associations (AP, UPI, Keystone, etc.).

The periodical *ICRC Bulletin* continued to be issued each month, giving news and articles which were reproduced and commented on by the press. *International Review of the Red Cross* continued to appear every two months (see below).

Like "The Times" of London in 1978, the French national daily "Le Monde", in its issue for 25-26 November, carried a six-page supplement on the International Red Cross with special reference to the ICRC, which supplied the journalists writing the articles with the basic material. Three thousand copies of this supplement were reserved for distribution to National Societies.

Sixteen thousand copies of a new brochure on the ICRC were printed in 1979. It is entitled "*Presenting the ICRC*" and is available in French, English, German, Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic.

AUDIO VISUAL CENTRE. — With the approval of the Twenty-third International Red Cross Conference (Resolution XX) the ICRC and the League pooled their audio-visual resources and installed a joint audio-visual studio in ICRC headquarters. This initial stage enabled the two institutions to produce a programme of five documentary films in seven countries. The films have been sent to more than a dozen National Societies and some have been broadcast by television corporations in Europe, Asia and Oceania. At the same time, recordings were made during a number of events and a library of documentaries on video cassettes has been steadily developed. A second stage will consist in the transfer of all League and ICRC audio-visual equipment on the fourth floor now being added to the League building.

RADIO — The extensive humanitarian activities undertaken during the year influenced the production of radio programmes. The number of interviews directly related to current events and intended for the mass media was 93. In addition, 145 other interviews were necessary for the production of 42 regular broadcasts by the Red Cross Broadcasting Service (RCBS) in five languages each month. The subjects most frequently discussed were the situations in south-east Asia, Africa and Nicaragua. Several on-the-spot reports were

included in these programmes. Twelve programmes were produced especially for the Portuguese radio and for Portuguese-speaking countries or regions in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

EXHIBITIONS — At the World Telecommunication Exhibition (TELECOM 79) in Geneva from 20 to 26 September, the ICRC stand illustrated its radio communication network with texts and photographs explaining the role and importance of radio in relief operations. A transmitter-receiver station enabled a large public to follow "live" the radio-communications exchanged with delegations and to see that even with unsophisticated equipment notable efficiency could be obtained. The continuous projection of an ICRC video film on three television screens showed how important was radio communication for the whole international Red Cross movement and how necessary it was for the Red Cross to retain the radio frequencies allocated to it.

At the request of the Barcelona branch of the Spanish Red Cross the ICRC displayed in that town from 4 to 11 May a photo exhibition and a twelve-minute multivision show illustrating the various aspects of Red Cross activities.

Public relations efforts in Switzerland included an itinerant exhibition which was shown at Bellinzona, Lugano, Locarno, Emmen, Winthertur and Chiasso.

VISITORS TO THE ICRC — In addition, 6,251 visitors came to ICRC headquarters in 1979, including a large group of Belgian journalists and a party of Danish journalists to whom lectures were given on the Red Cross. For visitors in general, films were shown on 168 occasions and video films on 293.

MISSIONS. — The head of the division went on missions to the United Kingdom, Angola, Bulgaria, Brazil, France, Canada, the USA, Thailand and several times to Southern Africa, to take part in Red Cross conferences, to assess information problems and develop co-operation with National Societies, and to direct the information campaign in Southern Africa.

As mentioned above, information delegates were dispatched to Nicaragua, Southern Africa, Thailand and the United Kingdom, both to meet journalists and give them an account of humanitarian activities, and to gather material for the ICRC and for donors. Photographers went on assignments to Zambia, Botswana, Swaziland, Angola, Mozambique, Rhodesia, Uganda, Chad, Thailand and Kampuchea.

The PID participated in the Eleventh Inter-American Red Cross Conference at Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 8 June, and in the First French-speaking African Seminar on the Dissemination of International Humanitarian Law, in Tunis from 9 to 19 October. It was represented also at the Seventh International Festival of Red Cross and Health Films at Varna from 9 to 18 June. The ICRC film "Challenge in Africa" was awarded the gold medal. At the end of 1979, 130 copies of this film, in twelve languages, were in circulation throughout the world.

In 1979 *International Review of the Red Cross* was issued every two months in three main editions—French, English and Spanish—of about 60 pages each. An abridged version in German, numbering from 16 to 20 pages, contained a selection of articles in the main editions.

The *Review* continued its essential functions as the official organ of the International Red Cross and as the leading Red

Cross journal specializing in international humanitarian law. It is the only publication of its kind in the world. In 1979 it published several appeals by the ICRC, contributions from a number of authors on topical problems: "The ICRC and human rights", "European plans for perpetual peace and their impact upon the law of war"; articles of a more technical nature of interest to the Red Cross: "Modernization of protective markings and signalling", "Red Cross emergency radiocommunications", and a study presenting three aspects of voluntary service.

PERSONNEL

In 1979, the Personnel Department was considerably reorganized to cope with the substantial increase in personnel, the immediate consequence of the ICRC's expanding activities in the field. The reorganization called for the creation of two divisions: Recruitment and Training, and Administration.

At ICRC headquarters, the staff strength rose from 288 (in January) to 339 (in December), with a monthly average of 312.5. Included in this average—which was 75.5 more than in 1978—there were about 120 persons whose work was directly related in one way or another with 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 technicians sent from Geneva) rose from 102 in January to 223 in December; the monthly average for 1979 was 150.5 (97 in 1978). 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. In addition, the ICRC delegations were assisted by locally employed personnel, whose number rose from 202 in January to 287 in December.

During the year under review, 999 missions were performed by personnel sent from the ICRC's Geneva headquarters.

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In 1979, the efforts of the Personnel Department were principally directed to recruitment and training.

Recruitment

The Recruitment and Training Division had to meet the constant need for additions to our operational staff strength, but at the same time it endeavoured to maintain and improve

the standard of the delegates representing the ICRC. A recruiting campaign conducted on television and in the press showed that there were in Switzerland quite a number of men and women who were prepared to work for the ICRC, some for a short term and others on a permanent basis. In fact, the Applications Service received in 1979 no less than 1665 enquiries from persons who were interested in ICRC employment. A preliminary list was drawn up and 321 candidates were invited for an interview at the Geneva headquarters. Of these, a short list containing 151 names was selected, and the candidates took part in seven introductory courses at Cartigny (near Geneva). Finally, 124 persons were offered a contract.

Training

As a general rule, a delegate's first year in the field constitutes a training period, while the aim of the introductory courses at Cartigny is to give budding delegates a grounding on a variety of subjects connected with the ICRC and Red Cross (history of the Red Cross; structure; distribution of tasks; financing; role of the National Societies and League; the Geneva Conventions and the 1977 Protocols; extra-conventional activities and "political" detainees; procedure of visits to places of detention; assessment of a given situation; role and tasks of the Central Tracing Agency; material relief; the ICRC and disclosure of information; medical aid programmes, etc).

With the purpose of giving staff at Geneva headquarters the opportunity to improve their qualifications, courses were given in the following subjects:

Number of persons:

75: language courses
10: specialized courses in their particular field of work
10: conduct of meetings
20: administration

In addition, 75 persons took the three courses organized jointly by the League and ICRC for newly engaged staff.