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## MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

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For its operations in the Middle East, the ICRC had, as in previous years, seven delegations in that area: in Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel and the occupied territories, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. It also maintained a regional delegation, based in Geneva, for the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa. This part of the world continued to be of concern for the ICRC, in view of the magnitude of the problems encountered, not only because of the war between Iraq and Iran, where the difficulties it had met with had led the ICRC, on 9 May, to appeal to all the States party to the Geneva Conventions, but also because of the problems raised by the Israeli Armed Forces' intervention in Lebanon, by the Lebanese internal conflict and by the Israeli-Arab conflict. The ICRC also continued its protection work in Jordan and the Yemen Arab Republic and sought—for the present, unsuccessfully—to provide protection for people affected by the conflict in the Western Sahara.

The President of the ICRC, Mr. Hay, visited Bahrain from 23 to 25 January, where he attended the Fourteenth Annual Conference of the Arab National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. In March, he undertook a mission to Saudi Arabia, in the company of the Head of the Financing Division and of the regional delegate for the Arabian Peninsula. In Jiddah, the ICRC President had talks with the President of the Islamic Development Bank, Dr. Ahmed Mohammed Ali, and with the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Mr. Habib Chatti, and in Riyadh he met the Secretary-General of the Gulf Co-operation Council, Mr. Abdallah Bishara.

On 19 January, the ICRC President received, at the Geneva headquarters, the Minister for Health of Kuwait, Dr. Abdel-Rahman Abdullah Al-Awadi.

For the year under review, the total value of material assistance and medical relief supplied or despatched to the Middle East amounted to 18.1 million Swiss francs, including 14.5 million Swiss francs for the Lebanon operation alone (see table on page 71).

### **Conflict between Iraq and Iran**

In order to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it by the Geneva Conventions and to try to put an end to the difficulties it had encountered in its activities in connection with this conflict, the ICRC made several important representations during 1983, including the issue on 9 May of an appeal to the States party to the Geneva Conventions.

The situation of the Iranian prisoners of war in Iraq and of the Iraqi prisoners of war in Iran continued to give cause for concern, although very different in degree. Despite the continuance of certain genuine difficulties, the Iraqi authorities persevered in their endeavours to implement the Geneva Conventions. The leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran, however, repeatedly committed breaches of those same Conventions, and the ICRC was consequently obliged to suspend its visits to the prisoner-of-war camps.

### **ICRC representations and missions from Geneva**

As numerous questions relating to the Geneva Conventions, and particularly the protection of prisoners of war, had remained unresolved in both countries, the delegate-general for the Middle East went in February to Baghdad and Teheran to discuss with the authorities the various problems which had been raised in October 1982 by the Director for Operational Activities (see 1982 *Annual Report*, p. 64).

In Teheran, the ICRC representative was received by the President of the Islamic Parliament, Hodjatolislam Hachemi Rafsandjani, the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, General Zahir Nejad, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Velayati, and his Deputy-Minister, Mr. Ardebili.

In Baghdad, the delegate-general for the Middle East had talks with Mr. Izzat Ibrahim, Deputy Prime Minister, and Mr. Tariq Aziz, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

### **Appeal - memorandum**

As grave breaches of international humanitarian law, witnessed by ICRC delegates, continued to be repeatedly committed in both belligerent countries, even though such violations were of a different nature, the ICRC, unable to obtain the cessation of those violations through confidential approaches, felt it was necessary to issue an appeal on 9 May to all the States party to the Geneva Conventions. In its appeal, the ICRC referred to Article 1 of the Conventions, which places States under the obligation not only to respect but also to *ensure respect* for the Conventions, and urged that every means provided for to ensure respect for international humanitarian law should be put into effect, in particular the designation of protecting powers to represent the belligerents' interests in the enemy country. In a memorandum annexed to the appeal, the ICRC reported on the situation of the prisoners of war in the power of each of the belligerents and cited a

number of grave breaches committed by both parties, such as summary executions of captured soldiers, the abandoning of enemy wounded on the battlefield and the indiscriminate bombardment of towns and villages.

### Missions by the President

In view of the unceasing difficulties encountered in the discharge of its mandate (see the sections headed "Prisoners of war" for each of the countries concerned), the ICRC undertook steps at the highest level by sending its President on missions to both countries. So as to pave the way for the President's mission to Teheran, an *aide-mémoire* was transmitted, at the beginning of September, to the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the President of the Islamic Parliament and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, containing a description of the situation with reference to the Third Convention relative to the treatment of prisoners of war, and requesting the authorities to take the necessary measures to ensure the full respect of international humanitarian law. The ICRC President, who was accompanied by the Director for Operational Activities and the delegate-general for the Middle East, stayed in Iran from 24 to 27 September. Mr. Hay met Mr. Ali Khamenei, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mr. Velayati and Mr. Ardebili, the Minister and Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs respectively, and Mr. Dastjerdi, President of the Iranian Red Crescent. The discussions centred mainly on the treatment of the prisoners of war and the conditions required to allow the ICRC to resume its activities on their behalf.

Prior to the ICRC President's mission to Iraq, an *aide-mémoire*, summarizing the main problems encountered in Iraq, was likewise transmitted at the end of September to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. These problems were discussed by the delegate-general for the Middle East with Mr. Tariq Aziz in Baghdad on 2 November. The ICRC President, accompanied by the Director for Operational Activities, flew to Iraq at the end of November; on this occasion, the ICRC representatives had talks with Mr. Izzat Ibrahim Ad-Douri, Vice-Chairman of the Revolutionary Council, and Mr. Tariq Aziz, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs.

### Contacts with the States party to the Conventions

Immediately after issuing its appeal at the beginning of May, the ICRC got in touch with representatives of many States party to the Geneva Conventions to draw their attention to the breaches committed by the two belligerents, who were not only imperilling the lives and dignity of many thousand victims of the conflict but also slighting the very essence and fundamental principles of international humanitarian law. The possible appointment of protecting powers was discussed with the diplomatic representatives of the States on various occasions, and also with the authorities whom the ICRC President or members of the International Committee

had the opportunity to meet in the course of their missions in a number of capitals.

### Appeal for funds

To obtain the funds required for its activities in Iran and Iraq, the ICRC launched an appeal to donors at the beginning of the year for the sum of 11,307,000 Swiss francs which it estimated it would need to implement its programmes in 1983. As the Iran/Iraq operation had shown a deficit of nearly 6 million francs at 31 December 1982—a totally abnormal situation in an operation governed by the Geneva Conventions, and unprecedented in the entire history of the ICRC—the sum requested in the appeal came to 17,300,000 francs.

The ICRC received, in response to its appeal, a total of only 11,800,000 francs. But, because of the difficulties encountered, it was unable to carry out all the activities planned and in fact spent only 7,439,000 Swiss francs, with the result that the deficit at 31 December 1983 had been reduced to 1,627,000 francs.

### Tracing Agency

In the two belligerent countries, the Tracing Agency's work consisted mainly in registering prisoners of war whom the ICRC was able to visit (16,751 Iraqi prisoners of war in the Islamic Republic of Iran and 1,992 Iranian prisoners of war in Iraq), filling in capture cards and exchanging family messages. In 1983, this latter activity increased considerably; no less than 1,147,319 family messages were transmitted through the Tracing Agency between the prisoners of war and their families. In addition, 7,500 inquiries concerning civilians or military personnel reported missing were transmitted to the appropriate authorities.

### Repatriations

In 1983, two repatriation operations involving seriously wounded and sick prisoners of war were carried out, the previous repatriation having been completed on 15 December 1981. On 30 April, the ICRC, in its capacity as a neutral intermediary between the parties, took charge of 32 Iraqi prisoners of war handed over by the Iranian authorities to be transferred to Iraq. A second operation took place on 1 May, when 32 Iranian prisoners of war, held by Iraq, were handed over by the ICRC to Iranian representatives. Both operations took place at Ankara Airport (Turkey); all facilities and personnel were made available by the Turkish Red Crescent Society, which also, together with the ICRC, provided the necessary medical care for the prisoners.

### Representations concerning bombardments

Throughout 1983, the ICRC was deeply concerned about the indiscriminate bombardment of civilians causing loss of

life and the destruction of civilian property. This violation of international humanitarian law was mentioned in the May memorandum. When the ICRC President went to Iran in September, together with the Director for Operational Activities and the delegate-general for the Middle East, he visited affected areas in Khuzistan, and the regions of Ahwaz, Howeizeh, Abadan and Khorramshahr.

In December, the intensity of the bombardments induced the ICRC to issue an appeal to the belligerents stressing that "civilians must not be the object of attack, nor of reprisals", and urging them "to respect these basic humanitarian rules, everywhere and at all times".

From 21 to 27 December, the Chief Medical Officer of the ICRC led a mission to assess humanitarian needs. The ICRC representatives visited war-affected zones in Kurdistan and Khuzistan but, since the authorities did not indicate any specific needs they were unable to meet, the ICRC finally did not take any particular steps to send assistance.

### **Child soldiers**

In 1983, the ICRC found with consternation that a large number of Iranian children had been killed or captured while taking part in the fighting. Article 77 of the 1977 Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions forbids the recruitment of children who have not attained the age of fifteen years and stipulates that they shall not take part in hostilities. Young persons above the age of 15 but who have not attained the age of 18 years must benefit from special measures of protection. These provisions were adopted by consensus by the Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law applicable in Armed Conflicts, in 1977, in order to lay down clearly in international humanitarian law a universal moral rule of extraordinary importance.

### **Personnel**

In Iraq, the number of delegation personnel remained stable: about 13 non-local staff and 3 locally recruited employees. In Iran, however, the number varied according to the involuntary fluctuation in its activities: between 12 and 14 non-local staff when work was possible, reduced to three or four persons during months of waiting. Some 35 locally recruited personnel helped throughout the year with the ICRC's work in Iran.

## **Iraq**

### **Prisoners of war**

As in the two previous years, ICRC delegates visited, in 1983, Iranian prisoners of war once a month, in military

hospitals, Anbar camp, Ramadi camp and the three Mosul camps. When a fourth camp was opened at Mosul at the beginning of December, it was immediately visited by the ICRC delegates, and a second visit was carried out in the same month. The ICRC chief medical officer took part in the visits to the Mosul camps in December to assess the situation. Prisoners newly captured in the fighting were regularly registered within a reasonable time by ICRC delegates. The number of Iranian prisoners of war seen by the ICRC by the end of the year had risen to 7,592, including 1,992 newly registered prisoners.

While its delegates were able to see most of the new prisoners shortly after their capture, the ICRC continued to feel concern about the fate of captured persons to whom it had not yet been allowed access (for example the Iranian Minister of Petroleum), most of whom had been taken prisoner at the beginning of the conflict. The ICRC regularly transmitted to the Iraqi authorities lists of several hundred prisoners whose names were known to it but who were kept concealed from it; however, it was finally able to register and visit only a few dozen of them in the camps. This grave problem was raised in the memorandum of 9 May (see above) and by the delegate-general for the Middle East and the ICRC President in the course of their missions.

Within the context of its protection activities, the ICRC felt considerable concern about detention conditions and regularly approached the authorities concerned with requests to ensure full conformity with the provisions of the Geneva Conventions. Specific steps were required in particular to counter occasionally brutal disciplinary measures, besides their condemnation in the May memorandum.

The ICRC also drew the attention of the Iraqi Government to the situation of Iranian civilians, including children and old people, large numbers of whom were detained in prisoner-of-war camps.

### **Displaced persons**

During 1983, improved facilities were granted to the ICRC to fulfil its mandate under the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the protection of the civilian population.

At the beginning of the year, ICRC delegates on three occasions went to see Iranian Kurd civilians, who had at first sought refuge on Iraqi territory and had later been moved in 1982 by the Iraqi authorities to a camp near Ramadi. The only result of those three visits was a limited exchange of Red Cross messages.

However, the Iraqi authorities later authorized the ICRC to visit these civilians in accordance with full ICRC criteria for such visits, in conformity with the Fourth Convention. The first complete visit was carried out in July, allowing an assessment to be made of the living conditions of these displaced persons; the ICRC delegates transmitted a detailed report, containing suggestions for improvements, to the Iraqi authorities concerned. Two more comprehensive visits, conducted in November and December, allowed the delegates



to review their assessment of the situation, which in the meantime had distinctly improved. The Tracing Agency, of course, continued its activities during the visits in the second half of the year.

In 1983, ICRC delegates also obtained access to civilians of Iranian nationality from Arabistan, who had been moved to Iraqi territory in 1982 following the retreat of Iraqi troops back behind the border. (These civilians had been visited by the ICRC in 1982 in Iranian Khuzistan, then occupied by the Iraqi Army.) Two full visits in accordance with ICRC procedure were carried out in July and October to the villages of Al-Sweib and Al-Bubseiri, enabling the ICRC delegates to assess the situation of these protected persons under the terms of the Fourth Convention and to undertake the Tracing Agency's customary activities (transmission of Red Cross messages, inquiries, etc.).

## Iran

### Prisoners of war

While prison visits proper had been discontinued since 1982 (see 1982 *Annual Report*, p. 65), ICRC delegates, at the beginning of 1983, continued the registration (resumed in October 1982 but progressing far too slowly) of newly captured prisoners of war and the distribution of 40,000 individual parcels, each containing one pair of pyjamas, a towel and a bar of soap. But certain difficulties arose at the end of January and constrained the ICRC delegates to discontinue this activity, too. At the end of February, the mission by the delegate-general for the Middle East culminated in the resumption of activities provided for by the Third Convention. Two teams of delegates were then able to work simultaneously from 23 February to 20 March; the registration of 2,400 new prisoners was thus completed and a complete visit of Karaj camp carried out. The Mixed Medical Commission, which had been set up in 1982 but whose work had been prematurely suspended, also resumed its task and examined 178 cases, 104 of which were recommended for repatriation and submitted to the Iranian authorities.

After the Iranian New Year (end of March), it was not found possible to agree with the authorities on any further work programme and all activities in the camps were once again discontinued. The difficulties encountered were described in the May memorandum and, for the first time, the ICRC publicly drew attention to the ideological and political pressures brought to bear upon the prisoners of war, in violation of the Third Convention.

The ICRC delegation in Teheran was able to resume its activities in June. Its delegates began on 11 June to register the names of prisoners of war who had not yet been seen, and by the end of the month over 12,000 names had been registered. The ICRC, however, was not authorized access to certain categories of prisoners, for example, officers and other prisoners not of Iraqi nationality. Visits to prisoner-of-war

camps, and in particular interviews without witness with prisoners, began towards the end of June; four camps were visited in accordance with ICRC criteria until further grave incidents, in the camps of Mehrabad and Bandar-e-Anzali, put a stop to visits. At the end of July, protection work could no longer be carried out satisfactorily and visits were consequently postponed *sine die*. When, following the Mehrabad camp incidents, an ICRC delegate was expelled by the Iranian authorities, the ICRC issued an official protest.

The ICRC then entered into a discussion with the detaining authorities on a fundamental issue, namely the ideological and political pressures to which the prisoners were being subjected and the incompatibility of these pressures with the Third Convention. Negotiations were undertaken at different levels all through the second half of 1983, in particular during the ICRC President's mission to Teheran in September (see above).

From the end of July to 31 December, the activities of the delegation, whose personnel had been reduced, consisted primarily in forwarding messages from the Iraqi prisoners of war to their families.

In 1983, the ICRC therefore visited, in accordance with its criteria, only some 5,000 prisoners of war, out of a total of 41,052 prisoners registered since the beginning of the conflict (of whom 16,751 were registered in 1983), or the total of 50,000 prisoners of war announced by the Iranian authorities.

### Displaced persons

In 1983, the ICRC was unable to provide any assistance for persons displaced because of the conflict or for the groups of Iraqi Kurds who had sought refuge on Iranian territory, all of whom should be considered as protected persons under the Fourth Convention. Although a relief consignment had been forwarded at the end of 1982 to a camp of refugee Iraqi Kurds near Ziveh in Western Azerbaijan (see 1982 *Annual Report*, p. 65), the delegates had not obtained authorization during 1983 to visit the camp to monitor the use of the relief supplies sent and to re-assess these refugees' situation.

### Persons detained as a result of the internal situation

In 1983, the ICRC was unable to resume its activities, which had been discontinued in September 1981, in favour of persons detained by the authorities because of the internal situation. No places of detention were visited, either in Teheran or in the provinces.

The ICRC would have been able to visit prisoners held by the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) and to take part in the release and repatriation of a certain number of them, but the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran rejected the offer of services made to them by the ICRC, on the grounds that the latter had no right to concern itself with questions considered to have no relation to the international conflict.



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*Evacuation of wounded Palestinians from Tripoli (Lebanon) to Larnaca (Cyprus) (Photo ICRC)*

## Lebanon

Lebanon remained one of the ICRC's principal spheres of action in 1983, in the importance of its activities to protect the civilian population, and in the sheer scale of its material assistance and medical programmes.

In this section, mention will be made not only of activities on Lebanese territory but also those carried out in Syria and Israel in connection with the conflict.

In its attempts to accomplish its mission in the midst of intense combat, the ICRC was obliged on several occasions to issue appeals to the parties to the conflict reminding them of their humanitarian obligations, so that the civilian population might be protected and the emblems of the red cross and of the red crescent be respected, especially to allow the evacuation of the wounded. For instance, while fierce fighting was raging at the beginning of September around Beirut and in the Chouf area, ICRC and Lebanese Red Cross convoys were several times prevented from crossing, even though temporary truces had been duly agreed upon. On 5 September, the first appeal was transmitted to all belligerents requesting them to observe the cease-fire which had just been concluded. Nevertheless, on that same day, a convoy bound from Beirut to the Chouf, with the purpose of declaring hospitals there to be neutral zones and evacuating the seriously injured, had to turn back after nearly being hit by shell fire. A second appeal was made on 7 September, simultaneously from ICRC headquarters at Geneva and in Lebanon, calling for a general, immediate and effective cease-fire and stressing the imperative need to respect the emblems of the red cross and red crescent, ambulances and hospitals, and above all to spare the civilian population.

In Tripoli, violent clashes between several armed factions in November caused numerous victims among civilians, necessitating rapid intervention by the ICRC. On 4 November, the ICRC vehemently appealed to the combatants to respect civilian lives and to cease all bombardments of Palestinian refugee camps and certain sectors of Tripoli.

The ICRC itself suffered from certain problems, in 1983, with regard to the safety of its personnel and equipment. Two ICRC vehicles were blown up in the night from 11 to 12 June; fortunately only material damage was caused. On 23 December, however, an ICRC vehicle carrying a doctor, a nurse and a local employee was damaged by a landmine, the three occupants were wounded and immediately taken to a Beirut hospital.

The delegate-general for the Middle East went to Lebanon in April, to review the general situation and assess the protection activities. Continuing his mission, he went on later to Syria, Jordan and Israel.

The assistant delegate-general spent some time in Lebanon in September in charge of the delegation during the period when the tension was greatest.

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On 4 November Mr. Amin Gemayel, President of the Republic of Lebanon, visited the President of the ICRC in Geneva.

### Appeals for funds

At the beginning of 1983, the ICRC launched an appeal for the funds needed to finance its activities during the year. The budget estimates amounted to 26,370,000 Swiss francs but, thanks to a credit balance of about 8.4 million carried forward from 1982, the ICRC's request to the international community finally came to 18 million francs. But the deterioration of the situation at the end of August, and the resultant acute increase in needs, obliged the ICRC to establish an emergency assistance programme and to appeal, on 16 September, for a further sum of 12 million francs to a number of governments and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The two appeals met with an excellent response from donors and at the end of the year the ICRC had a credit balance of over 6 million francs, which was carried forward to 1984.

### Protection

*CIVILIAN POPULATION.* — In 1983, the ICRC was particularly concerned with the situation of the civilians, who were seriously affected by the events throughout the year and in all parts of the country. On many occasions, it had to issue appeals for cease-fires, in order to be able to evacuate the wounded and provide some relief supplies.

The Palestinian civilians in southern Lebanon were constantly the object of the ICRC's solicitude. It did not fail to remind the occupying power of its obligations under the Fourth Convention, particularly with regard to the maintenance of law and order and to the safety of the civilians in the territories under its control. The ICRC delegates visited at regular intervals—every day during periods of increased tension—the Palestinian camps on the outskirts of Sidon and Tyre, in order to verify that appropriate measures had been taken to ensure the safety of the inhabitants.

In the course of the year, the Israeli occupation progressed, bringing with it its part of arrests, destruction of houses and crops, etc. The ICRC therefore approached the Israeli authorities in southern Lebanon and in Israel to express its concern about this non-observance of the Geneva Conventions which had not ceased, despite the fact that on 13 July Israel's High Court of Justice had issued a judgment implying that the Fourth Convention was applicable in Lebanon. As regards practical activities, the ICRC delegates took steps from time to time to ask for curfews and blockades to be lifted, so that they might enter villages to assess the food and medical situation, bring relief supplies and evacuate sick or wounded persons.

In the autumn, clashes in the Chouf caused massive movements of the civilian population, in particular of Christian civilians who took refuge in the encircled village of Deir-el-Kamar. Besides its assistance activities (see below), the



ICRC had to organize the evacuation of large numbers of civilians, carried out in two stages. In the first phase, 1,004 children and old people and several dozen sick persons were transferred in five convoys towards Beirut between 1 and 8 November (a few sick people and non-Lebanese nationals had previously been evacuated from Deir-el-Kamar at the end of September, when the ICRC had come to make assessments and forward relief supplies). In a second phase, the ICRC organized the departure from Deir-el-Kamar of all non-combatants who wished to leave the village, after consent had been given by all the parties to the conflict. Accordingly, between 15 and 22 December, eight convoys reached Sidon and Beirut, enabling 5,130 persons to be transferred. There were seven convoys of twelve buses each, while the final convoy consisted of 485 private vehicles. The persons transferred to Beirut were taken charge of by their families or by a reception committee.

In Tripoli, the intensive combats which broke out in November led the ICRC to issue an appeal to all the parties engaged in the fighting to respect hospital building and ambulances and to avoid causing casualties to civilians. At the same time, on 5 November, the Islamic Hospital in Tripoli was declared by the ICRC to be under its protection, together with the neighbouring Franco-Lebanese School converted by the ICRC into a post-operative centre.

**PERSONS UNDER ARREST.**—Throughout the year, ICRC delegates registered and visited various categories of persons arrested in connection with the Lebanese conflict, in Lebanon, Israel and Syria.

The *Syrian prisoners of war* in Israeli hands were visited 16 times during 1983; the findings of eight visits were included in a report transmitted to the detaining authorities and to the power of origin. The number of these prisoners was 293 at the beginning of the year and 291 at 31 December 1983, after the capture of a further prisoner and the repatriation of three on medical grounds (Article 110 of the Third Convention). The ICRC requested the release of ten other wounded or sick Syrian prisoners of war. The ICRC also forwarded to those prisoners family messages, parcels sent them from Syria and some recreational items.

ICRC delegates visited almost continuously some 5,000 *persons held at Ansar camp* (southern Lebanon) by the Israeli armed forces. Until 24 November, when practically all the prisoners at Ansar were released (see below), this camp was used as a place of detention not only for Palestinians, Lebanese and other nationals captured during the first few days of the intervention of the Israeli armed forces in Lebanon in June 1982: it also held most of the persons arrested by the occupying forces during the months that followed. Ansar was also the place where the ICRC was able to register the names of persons arrested and detained under interrogation in other places of detention in southern Lebanon to which the ICRC was denied access. At Ansar, eleven ICRC delegates, two of whom were doctors, registered the new prisoners, carried out interviews without witness, examined those cases who might be eligible for release, monitored the material and psycho-

logical conditions of detention and drew up monthly reports which were transmitted to the detaining power. The medical delegates more particularly drew up lists of sick or wounded prisoners, which they submitted to the Israeli authorities, verified that these prisoners received adequate medical care and recommended the release of serious cases or their transfer to hospital.

It should be noted that the detaining authorities do not grant prisoner-of-war status to the prisoners there, while the ICRC considers that the combatants captured in Israel's intervention in June 1982 should enjoy that status and that the other persons taken captive should be placed under the protection of the Fourth Convention and treated as civilian internees.

At the beginning of 1983, there were over 5,000 prisoners in Ansar camp. During the year, their number varied, 2,015 detainees being released while, between 1 January and 23 November, the ICRC delegates registered 991 new prisoners. The ICRC continued to organize the release and repatriation of foreign detainees: 232 such detainees were transferred abroad in 1983 through the ICRC's good offices; they were either accompanied by ICRC delegates to Beirut Airport, where they were handed over to representatives of the foreign diplomatic missions concerned, or else taken to Syria, via Kuneitra. The ICRC also, with the help of the Tracing Agency (reuniting of families, etc.), assisted those detainees who, when released, stayed on in Lebanon, and visited them after their release to make sure that they were able to resume a normal existence. During the first eleven months of 1983, nearly one million Red Cross messages were exchanged, through the ICRC, between prisoners and their families.

Throughout the whole of this period, the ICRC repeatedly approached the Israeli authorities, in Israel and at Ansar camp, to request improvements in detention conditions, particularly with regard to the often brutal methods employed to maintain order. Between January and November, several incidents occurred; some of them were extremely grave, causing 38 wounded (mostly bullet wounds) and 6 killed. The ICRC called for an inquiry into the circumstances of the incidents leading to deaths.

During that same period, the ICRC also brought some material relief supplies to the Ansar prisoners: clothing, sports and leisure items (including 2,600 books), Korans and traditional food and sweetmeats (on certain Islamic feast-days).

In September, the Israeli authorities began to transfer certain prisoners from Ansar camp to Atlit Prison on Israel territory. The ICRC protested to the Ministry of Defence against this violation of the Fourth Convention (Article 49). These detainees were visited on three occasions in September and October, but then the ICRC was no longer authorized to continue its protection activities in their favour.

*Release of practically all prisoners held at Ansar.* — On 24 November, following months of negotiations conducted by the ICRC with Israel, on the one hand, and with the PLO on the other, a large-scale operation was successfully concluded, resulting in the release of some 4,400 prisoners held by Israel

(the majority of the detainees at Ansar, all the women detained at Nabatiyeh—see below, some detainees arrested in Lebanon and incarcerated in Israel and in interrogation centres in southern Lebanon, and 63 detainees in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967) and of six Israeli soldiers held by the PLO. This operation was carried out in stages and had the full support of the parties concerned and of the Algerian, Egyptian and French Governments.

During the night of 23 to 24 November, over 1,100 prisoners detained in southern Lebanon (mainly in the Ansar camp) and in various other places of detention were released and conveyed from Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion Airport to Algiers, via Cairo, aboard three Boeing 747's made available to the ICRC by the French Government. The aircraft carried, too, the archives of the Palestine Research Centre, seized in Beirut by the Israeli army in 1982.

At the same time, some 3,300 other prisoners detained at Ansar were also released and transferred by the Israeli authorities to various parts of southern Lebanon where they were reunited with their families, in the presence of ICRC representatives.

In the meantime, the six Israeli prisoners, after a final visit by ICRC delegates at Tripoli, were escorted on board a French vessel and thence transferred, under ICRC supervision, to an Israeli vessel which took them home to Israel.

This operation required very careful preparation and meticulous co-ordination. In spite of all the precautions it had taken, the ICRC found, at the end of the operation, that at least 218 prisoners who should have been released by the Israeli authorities had not been freed (some had been secretly removed from Ansar camp in the weeks prior to the operation; others were not released on 24 November from the interrogation centres at Sidon and Nabatiyeh, while a few other prisoners were removed from Ansar and Tel Aviv airport at the time of the operation). The ICRC President sent a personal message to Israeli Prime Minister Shamir, with an appeal to the Israeli Government that it should free those prisoners and observe the terms of the agreement that had been concluded.

At the end of the year, notwithstanding the ICRC's repeated requests, ICRC delegates had still not obtained authorization to visit the prisoners who had thus been removed to other places of detention in Israel and Lebanon.

*Reopening of Ansar.* — Ansar camp was temporarily closed after the release operation. It was reopened in December to receive persons arrested in southern Lebanon and held under a form of administrative detention. The ICRC resumed its visits on 26 December and saw 83 detainees that day. On 24 December, they visited another place of detention at Nabatiyeh, where there were 54 detainees.

ICRC delegates also visited *women detainees arrested in Lebanon*. When taken prisoner in 1982, they had first been held in a place on Israeli territory and had been visited at regular intervals by the ICRC. In March 1983, they were transferred to southern Lebanon, where ICRC delegates visited them twice a month until their release on 24 November.

*Other persons arrested in Lebanon but detained in Israel*, comprising 50 persons, crew members or passengers of vessels

captured by Israeli naval craft, were visited by ICRC delegates in the places of detention where they were held. In this connection, the ICRC drew the attention of the Israeli authorities to the fact that the tardy notification of these persons' arrest and their transfer to Israel was contrary to the Fourth Convention.

Throughout the year, the ICRC made representations to the Israeli Government concerning the fate of persons arrested in southern Lebanon. The ICRC demanded, but without success, that the Israeli army should notify it of the identity of those persons and of the places where they were detained and interrogated. The ICRC demanded further, also unsuccessfully, that the arrested persons should be offered judicial guarantees, such as the right of appeal with the assistance of a lawyer, the right to be informed of the charges against them and the right to be heard by a court of justice.

Since there were no notifications of arrests, the ICRC was obliged to fall back on information provided by the families of the persons under arrest to discover their identity. With this information the ICRC was sometimes able to prevail upon the Israeli authorities to present to it, during a temporary transfer to Ansar camp, detainees who had been under interrogation for more than thirty days. The ICRC did not, however, obtain access to the interrogation centres at Sidon, Tyre, Nabatiyeh and Aley where those persons were detained.

The *three Israeli prisoners of war in Syrian hands* were visited at regular intervals—about once a month—by ICRC delegates in accordance with the ICRC's customary criteria.

An *American pilot*, who was captured by the Syrian armed forces on 4 December 1983 after his aircraft had been shot down, was visited twice by ICRC delegates, in accordance with standard criteria, before being released on 4 January 1984.

In the case of *Israeli soldiers held prisoner by the Palestinians*, a distinction should be made between the six detainees in the hands of the Al Fatah and the two in the hands of the "Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command" (PFLP-GC). The first group were visited at regular monthly intervals, in accordance with customary criteria, until they were released on 24 November (see above). The two others, whom the ICRC did not manage to see in 1982, were seen for the first time on 3 March, eight months after their capture, but not in their place of detention, and it was not possible to interview them without witness, despite the ICRC's very numerous attempts to be authorized to do so. However, Red Cross messages were exchanged. Two further visits were carried out in September and November.

The ICRC did not obtain any news of several Israeli soldiers reported missing in 1982 and 1983, despite its very frequent inquiries addressed to various Palestinian organizations.

In the autumn of 1982, the ICRC had expressed its concern about *persons arrested by the Lebanese army*. On 17 February, the ICRC made an offer of services to the authorities concerned. The latter's agreement having been obtained, the visits began on 15 March. Some 700 detainees were visited from then on throughout the year, in accordance with usual ICRC procedures. In the course of the visits, parcels and Red Cross messages were handed to detainees. As from the end of



October, ICRC delegates began to visit civilian prisons and hospitals as well.

### Medical assistance

ICRC activities in the medical field continued to be on a large scale and took different forms depending on the events that occurred during 1983: assessments of situations, distributions of medical relief supplies, evacuations of wounded. All these customary tasks were undertaken by the medical co-ordinator, doctors and nurses of the ICRC, working in close co-operation with the Lebanese Red Cross and the "Palestinian Red Crescent", and with the benefit of the many gifts received from donor National Societies.

During the first half of 1983, the ICRC, taking advantage of the relative calm prevailing in Lebanon, carried out systematic assessments of all the hospitals and dispensaries in potential conflict zones. These contacts were useful in that, on the one hand, they allowed the various hospital centres to prepare for emergency situations, and, on the other hand, they enabled the ICRC to organize, with the persons in charge of those centres, work methods adapted to war situations. The ICRC also kept up emergency stocks in its delegations at Beirut, Sidon, Tripoli, and the Bekaa.

Towards the end of August, mounting tension led the ICRC to increase its medical personnel, and an extra doctor and a nurse were dispatched from Geneva.

Right from the start of the battle of the **Chouf**, on 4 September, the delegates undertook medical activities in the area of hostilities, under extremely dangerous circumstances: about a hundred wounded were evacuated to Sidon and Beirut, medical stocks of hospitals and dispensaries were replenished, and in the days that followed the cease-fire proclamation, dozens of bodies left lying between the enemy lines were collected. All these operations were performed with the close co-operation of the Lebanese Red Cross. In **Beirut**, the medical co-ordinator and a nurse made daily rounds of the hospitals in the capital and in its southern suburbs to assess needs there, supplying medical assistance to the hospitals (medicaments, dressings, X-ray films, blood units) and restocking several dispensaries with emergency supplies. When **Deir el-Kamar** was encircled, the ICRC obtained authorization to evacuate the wounded and sick as soon as its delegates entered the village at the end of September.

The combats which broke out in **Tripoli** on 3 November led the ICRC to step up considerably its medical staff in the town. On 5 November, the Tripoli Islamic Hospital was declared to be a neutral zone and was placed under ICRC control. Its capacity was doubled (from 80 to 160 beds), an additional surgical unit was set up and a clearing centre established there for the wounded. The Franco-Lebanese School next to the hospital was also declared by the ICRC to be a neutral zone and was converted into a post-operative centre. The ICRC medical staff at the Islamic Hospital was considerably reinforced with the arrival of two doctors, two nurses and a surgical team, made available by the German Red Cross in the

Federal Republic of Germany and composed of a surgeon-anaesthetist, a theatre assistant and a nurse. Within a week, some 120 wounded were admitted to the Islamic Hospital and sixty patients received care at the Franco-Lebanese School. Short-lived cease-fire agreements allowed the ICRC delegates to keep track of the general situation and the needs of Tripoli's hospitals and dispensaries, to issue perfusion equipment and various medical supplies, and to provide blood. Several private hospitals and the "Palestinian Red Crescent" Hospital also received aid from the ICRC. At the same time, surveys and assistance missions were carried out throughout the region around Tripoli, where many people had been wounded (Halba, Amioun, Deir Amar, the Palestinian camp at Nahr el Bared, Zghorta, etc.).

The ICRC, in co-operation with the Lebanese Red Cross, organized on 17 December the evacuation of 94 wounded Palestinians from Tripoli to Larnaka (Cyprus). The wounded, who had been previously examined by ICRC doctors, were embarked aboard the vessel "Appia", which was provided by the Italian Government and marked for the crossing with the protective emblem of the red cross. The ship carried two Italian doctors, four doctors and a nurse from the "Palestinian Red Crescent", seven first-aid workers from the Lebanese Red Cross, and two doctors, three nurses and a delegate from the ICRC. On arriving at Larnaka, the wounded were conveyed to the airport by first-aid workers from the "Cyprus Red Cross" and then flown to Egypt, Jordan and Yugoslavia, where they were hospitalized.

With the departure of the wounded Palestinians, the Tripoli Islamic Hospital and the neighbouring Franco-Lebanese School—which had been both declared neutral zones by the ICRC on 5 November—were restored to their normal functions, and the Red Cross flags were removed from the buildings. But ICRC delegates continued to supply Tripoli's hospitals and dispensaries with medical and paramedical items.

In the **Bekaa**, surgical teams for the government hospital at Baalbek provided by the National Red Cross Societies of Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Norway and the United Kingdom worked in turn at the government hospital in Baalbek. In addition to performing operations, the members of those teams gave consultations at the Hermel Hospital. After September, when the situation had become relatively calmer, the surgical teams' presence was no longer considered to be necessary, but two field hospitals were left ready for use at Zahle and at Baalbek.

In the period from 1 September to 15 November, the ICRC distributed throughout Lebanon medical material ("dispensary", "hospital" and "front" kits, wheelchairs, crutches, etc.) and medicaments, worth approximately 1,600,000 Swiss francs. These relief supplies also included 700 blood units, valued at 250,000 Swiss francs, provided by the Red Cross Societies of Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Norway and Switzerland. Three ambulances were sent by the Finnish Red Cross, while the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany supplied 14 ambulances, seven of which were financed by the ICRC. In addition, the Norwegian Red Cross

sent a field hospital, which arrived in Lebanon on 14 November and was made available to the "Palestinian Red Crescent" at Tripoli.

Besides these emergency activities, the ICRC, in 1983, continued its first-aid courses given in Tripoli and in the Bekaa in co-operation with the Lebanese Red Cross. The training given to the first-aid workers enabled them to carry out their duties most efficiently when helping medical teams to evacuate the wounded to the hospitals in those two areas during the fierce fighting in the summer and autumn.

Thanks to the co-operation of the National Red Cross Societies of Belgium, Finland, France, Norway and Switzerland, the ICRC maintained regular deliveries of fresh blood: every week, 150 units were supplied to the Lebanese Red Cross and distributed to conflict victims. When the situation deteriorated at the beginning of September, over 2,500 units of blood and 240 kg of albumin were urgently dispatched to Beirut.

Throughout the year, ICRC doctors accompanied the delegates performing their protection tasks in aid of detained persons and regularly took part in visits. ICRC doctors were attached on a standing basis to the team visiting the Ansar camp; they made sure that the wounded and sick received the care appropriate to their condition, supervised the sanitary conditions in the camp and made recommendations to the detaining authorities for releases on medical grounds.

Three orthopaedic centres for war casualties needing prostheses were in operation under ICRC auspices in 1983: at Beit Chebab (Mount Lebanon), Sidon (which was opened in February) and Damascus (work in this centre, managed in co-operation with the Swedish Red Cross and the "Palestinian Red Crescent", began in June 1983). In 1983, the three centres produced a total of 260 prostheses, with the aid of technical equipment worth 337,440 Swiss francs.

The total value of medical relief supplied to Lebanon in 1983 amounted to 5,508,500 Swiss francs.

## Relief

Throughout the year, the ICRC distributed relief supplies to persons displaced as a result of the combats: in Beirut and in the Chouf from the beginning of September and in November in southern Lebanon and in the Bekaa, where tens of thousands of persons had fled to escape the fighting, and in and around Tripoli.

In the Chouf, the ICRC brought aid to about 80,000 displaced persons. To do so, it had to negotiate cease-fires to enable its convoys to take in the relief supplies without running too many risks. During the siege of Deir el-Kamar, the ICRC made a first assessment on 7 September of the needs in this village. Then, on 12 September, when the siege was lifted, it organized 21 convoys which reached this locality carrying in all 1,106 tonnes of relief supplies (food, fuel, blankets, kitchen utensils, toilet articles) for the people who had sought refuge there.

Other villages in the Chouf, in particular where thousands of Druzes had sought refuge, also received relief supplies from

the ICRC: in the last few months of 1983, Kfar Nabrah received 584 tonnes, and other villages, for example Moukhtara and Mechref, were assisted by the ICRC. In all, no less than 57 convoys were organized in the Chouf. The Haut-Metn and the region of Aley were also affected by the fighting and assessments and distributions were likewise made there at regular intervals. Thus some 30,000 Druzes received frequent ICRC assistance, while about 20,000 Sunnites, most of whom had gathered in the villages of Chhim and Barja, were given only occasional aid for specific requirements, because other organizations were able to meet part of their needs. In this way, 1,756 tonnes of foodstuffs and 145,000 blankets were distributed during three months. To ensure the successful implementation of this entire operation, the ICRC logistics base in Cyprus, set up in 1982 and later managed from Beirut, was reopened by sending out a delegate to Larnaka. This step became necessary when Beirut Airport was closed.

When fighting broke out in Tripoli, the majority of the people who fled went to stay with members of their family elsewhere in the country and therefore were not in need of ICRC assistance. On the other hand, over 20,000 Palestinians, who had fled their refugee camps and had gone to the town of Tripoli or the vicinity, were virtually destitute. The ICRC therefore immediately began to distribute foodstuffs and blankets for 15,000 persons. In 1983, the ICRC distributed 631 tonnes of relief in the Tripoli area alone. Displaced persons beyond the lines of combat were provided with relief supplies by the sub-delegation in the Bekaa, through an advanced field station set up by the ICRC at Halba.

Prisoners and detainees likewise received some extra items of aid, such as clothing, games, handicraft material, musical instruments, and so on. On Islamic feast-days, supplementary food was distributed so as to improve the prisoners daily fare and lower tension, which always tends to be greater on such occasions.

The ICRC distributed in Lebanon a total of 3,262 tonnes of relief supplies to a value of 9,070,190 Swiss francs.

## Tracing Agency

In 1983, the ICRC kept up its network of Tracing Agency offices established in 1982: in all, four ICRC delegates and 32 local employees worked in the offices set up in Beirut, Tyre (for Ansar), Sidon (southern Lebanon), Ksara and Baalbek (Bekaa), in the Chouf (Deir el-Kamar) and Tripoli (northern Lebanon).

The Tracing Agency registered and drew up lists of the prisoners visited in the various places of detention and monitored releases (in some cases further inquiries had to be pursued to find the families). It also took a very active part in the organization of the convoys that evacuated the approximately 6,000 persons who left Deir el-Kamar in November and December.

Almost one million Red Cross messages were exchanged through the ICRC; the largest number were for detainees captured and held in southern Lebanon (14,824 messages were forwarded to Syrian prisoners of war, and 38,205 to their

families in Syria; 543,665 messages were transmitted to the detainees held in southern Lebanon, and 489,048 to their families).

In addition, 780 inquiries concerning missing persons were processed.

The Tracing Agency also issued 6,319 capture certificates for prisoners or for their families (thus enabling families to draw allowances).

### **Dissemination and information**

In 1983, the ICRC set up a programme for the dissemination of international humanitarian law, in co-operation with the Lebanese Red Cross, to put over the idea of respect for the Red Cross emblem to various sections of the population and thus develop the people's awareness of the safety problems encountered by Red Cross personnel. The Head of the ICRC Information Department went in April to Beirut, to prepare this programme with the National Society. The information and dissemination campaign included brief daily broadcasts on radio and television. The press, too, gave news space to information about the Red Cross and its work.

Furthermore, between 24 July and 5 August, ICRC delegates established contacts with the Lebanese armed forces and organized a series of lectures, for officers, on the fundamental principles of the Red Cross and the essential rules of humanitarian law. (See also the chapter on "Dissemination to the armed forces".)

As from the end of August, dissemination activities had to be discontinued, owing to the resumption of hostilities.

### **Personnel**

Owing to the constant tension, the ICRC had to deploy numerous personnel in Lebanon throughout the year: 70 delegates, assisted by some 120 locally recruited employees, were at work there, most frequently in close co-operation with Lebanese Red Cross voluntary workers and often under dangerous conditions. In September, when the tension was most acute, five additional delegates were sent to Lebanon to reinforce the ICRC delegation. It should be pointed out here that ICRC activities in southern Lebanon are the responsibility of the delegation at Tel Aviv.

## **Israel and the occupied territories**

In Israel and the territories occupied since 1967, the ICRC continued its activities, which were based principally on the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons. In this connection it should be noted that the ICRC considers that the conditions specified for the applicability of the Fourth Convention are met with in the conflict between Israel and the Arab countries, whereas the Israeli

authorities maintain that the Fourth Convention is not applicable.

In 1983, great tension continued to prevail, as in 1982, in the West Bank and to a lesser extent the Gaza Strip, following the establishment in November 1981 of a civil administration in the occupied territories. There were frequent demonstrations, which were repressed, at times with brutality and the use of firearms, and which led to various measures such as curfews and collective punishments (for example, the destruction and walling-up of houses, and restrictions on the freedom of movement in whole towns and villages).

With regard to Jerusalem and the occupied territory of the Golan, the ICRC endeavoured to ensure that the inhabitants of those areas were not deprived of the benefits of the Fourth Convention and that the inviolability of their rights under Article 47 was respected.

Throughout the year, in addition to their activities relating to the Lebanon conflict, the fifteen members of the delegation in Tel Aviv and the sub-delegations in Jerusalem and Gaza regularly visited security detainees under interrogation, persons awaiting trial and convicted prisoners. Their duties also included organizing repatriations and transfers across the demarcation lines, making representations in the event of the destruction and walling up of houses and other breaches of the Fourth Convention, forwarding family messages and generally assisting protected persons.

On several occasions, the ICRC voiced its concern to the Israeli authorities with regard to the prevailing situation in the territories occupied since 1967 and in Lebanon. In April, the delegate-general for the Middle East carried out a mission in Israel and had the opportunity during the visit to review these various problems with the new Defence Minister, Mr. Moshe Arens.

### **Protection of the civilian population**

Throughout the year, the ICRC was extremely active in assisting the civilian population in the occupied territories whenever the need arose, in particular after demonstrations and their repression. For instance, it requested curfews to be lifted, so that it could bring in supplies to the inhabitants. In 1983, too, ICRC delegates visited the civilian population more frequently, even in periods of calm, to keep better informed about living conditions in the occupied territories. This was possible thanks to the ICRC local offices maintained at Hebron, Bethlehem, Ramallah, Nablus, Jenin, Jericho, Tulkarim and East Jerusalem, in the West Bank, and at Khan Yunes, Rafah and Gaza. In addition, the establishment of a new system of visits to places of detention (see below) enabled ICRC delegates to be more frequently present on the spot and to understand better the problems encountered by the civilian population.

In March, the situation became highly tense when about a thousand Palestinians, most of them young girls, had to be taken to hospital following a sudden outbreak of a mysterious disease. The ICRC despatched a medical delegate who was well acquainted with the region to carry out an assessment of

the situation (not an inquiry, which would have been outside the ICRC's terms of reference). The medical delegate's mission lasted from 31 March to 4 April, in the course of which he discussed the matter with the Israeli doctors who had treated the earliest cases; he then went to several West Bank hospitals to examine patients and speak with the Palestinian doctors in charge of the cases; he also met a number of West Bank dignitaries and the director-general of the Israeli Ministry of Health. On the basis of the medical delegate's findings and taking into account the number of persons hospitalized and the doubts and worries expressed by the latter and by the inhabitants of the region, the ICRC suggested to the Israeli authorities that a body whose authority and competence were accepted by all sides should perform within the shortest possible time a thorough and extended examination of the patients, so as to determine the cause of the ailment and an appropriate treatment. In this connection, the ICRC noted with satisfaction that the United Nations had decided to send a group of experts there.

### Destruction of houses

The ICRC found that 54 houses had been partially or completely destroyed or walled up, for security reasons according to the authorities, and that a further fifty dwellings had been destroyed (for administrative reasons, according to the same authorities: lack of a building permit, or encroachment on publicly owned land). Many protected persons were affected by these destructions. The ICRC repeatedly protested against such acts, which were in violation of Article 53 of the Fourth Convention.

### Settlements

In 1983, ICRC delegates reviewed once again in detail the consequences, at a humanitarian level, of the settlement of a rapidly increasing number of Israelis in the occupied territories of the West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem and the Golan area.

By the end of 1983, about 30,000 Israeli citizens had been settled in some 80 towns and villages specially built for them in the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan. In East Jerusalem, the number of Israeli continued to increase sharply, to such an extent that it had almost reached that of the city's Arab population.

The ICRC viewed with concern the conditions under which the land needed for the settlements and the road network for them was being expropriated or purchased. The ICRC also studied the effects of this colonization on the system of cultivation, water supply and employment in the occupied territories. This colonization was the cause of numerous violent incidents in 1983 between the Arab population and the Israeli inhabitants in the occupied territories.

The ICRC's view is that this colonization, carried out with the Israeli authorities' support, constitutes a violation of the Fourth Convention, in particular of Articles 27, 47 and 49. It

considers that in 1983 such breaches of the Convention have assumed proportions of hitherto unprecedented gravity, both in number and in importance.

### Protection of arrested persons

During 1983, the ICRC continued its protection activities in favour of arrested persons not of Israeli nationality, by paying visits without witness to detainees under interrogation to whom the ICRC has had access since 1978, and to the other categories of detainees visited since 1967 (convicted persons, persons awaiting trial).

Visits to detainees arrested for security reasons were carried out according to a new system, which the ICRC had been obliged to introduce in the second half of 1982 to enable the delegates to cope with the substantial increase in their work following the Israeli armed forces' intervention in Lebanon. Since the new rate of visits had certain advantages, it was continued in 1983: instead of one visit every three months, ICRC delegates carry out a full visit of every prison once a year (resulting in a report transmitted to the detaining power and, when applicable, to the powers of origin). In addition, special one-day visits are organized when any particular events are brought to the ICRC's knowledge or when detainees or their families especially request the ICRC's presence. Thus, the fifteen largest prisons in Israel and the occupied territories, containing more than 3,000 inmates, were visited 94 times (one full visit in each prison and 79 special visits). In addition, ICRC delegates, accompanied by an ICRC doctor, visited Ramleh Hospital at regular intervals.

This new approach enabled the ICRC delegates to make a more selective, and therefore a more thorough, examination of the difficulties which protected persons had to contend with in their daily life in the occupied territories.

In 1983, ICRC delegates spoke without witness with 780 *detainees under interrogation* in the course of 1,308 visits (494 in the West Bank and 814 in the Gaza sector). In comparison with previous years there was a marked decline, for two reasons, in this activity: on one hand the visits for this category, too, were conducted more selectively, with priority given to first visits, whilst on the other hand, the notifications system did not work satisfactorily. It was stated in the agreements concluded earlier between the Israeli authorities and the ICRC that the latter was entitled to receive notification of arrests, within twelve days thereafter, and to have access not later than fourteen days after the arrest, and subsequently once every fourteen days during the period of interrogation, to the detainees under interrogation arrested for security reasons. But in practice this system hardly ever worked properly in the West Bank in 1983 (according to information provided by the prisoners and their families, the ICRC apparently was notified by the authorities of only 16.6 per cent of the total number of detainees under interrogation). Conversely in the Gaza sector the situation was relatively satisfactory, as it would seem that the ICRC had received notification, within the prescribed period, of 75 per cent of the detainees under interrogation. Because



of the inconsistency with which this system was applied—even though it had been worked out with the authorities' agreement—many visits could not be carried out within the agreed time limit and a certain number of prisoners were not even seen during their detention. The ICRC intervened on many occasions to ask the authorities concerned to improve the situation, but its requests were still without avail at the end of the year.

In contrast to the activities relating to detention in civilian prisons, those relating to military detention showed a marked increase. The army continued to use its own places of detention, mainly for the imprisonment of demonstrators. They contained at the same time detainees under interrogation, persons awaiting trial and convicted persons. There were wide fluctuations in the number of people imprisoned there, depending on the intensity of the disturbances in the occupied territories. The ICRC delegates adapted the rate of their visits to the needs of the situation, going to the two military prisons, Far'a Military Prison and the Ramallah Governorate barracks, sometimes once a week and at other times only once a month.

ICRC delegates also regularly visited various police stations in the West Bank and in the Gaza sector.

As in each of the previous years since 1967, the ICRC regularly approached the Israeli authorities with a view to obtaining improvements in detention conditions; overcrowding remained a primary source of concern for the ICRC, particularly in the places of detention in the occupied territories as compared with those in Israel.

**LEGAL SAFEGUARDS.**—The ICRC continued to help protected persons against whom legal proceedings had been instituted. Since 1973, the Israeli authorities have notified the ICRC of cases brought before the military courts. As in previous years, the ICRC delegation continued its efforts to obtain notification of all trials in good time. In 1983, the ICRC legal delegate attended 36 hearings by tribunals in the West Bank, Gaza, Lod and Tel Aviv and by the High Court of Justice in Jerusalem.

The ICRC legal delegate also expressed his concern about the practice of "quick trials" increasingly adopted by the military tribunals in the West Bank, a procedure which is too hasty to be in conformity with the provisions of the Fourth Convention.

Furthermore, throughout 1983, as in previous years, the ICRC continued to draw the attention of the competent authorities to the question of confessions written in Hebrew (which detainees were obliged to sign even though most of them did not know Hebrew) and to the fact that detainees under interrogation were not allowed to contact a lawyer. The length of the proceedings (other than the "quick trials") was also the subject of discussions with the authorities concerned. At the end of the year, no solution had been found to any of those questions.

**ASSISTANCE TO DETAINEES AND THEIR FAMILIES.**—As in the past, the ICRC continued its programme of material assistance to detainees and their families. The

detainees received books, periodicals, recreation items and 280 parcels containing winter clothing. The neediest among them were also given money to buy a few items in the prison canteens. In addition, the ICRC provided funds for the purchase of dentures, medical trusses and spectacles for a certain number of detainees.

Transport facilities continued to be provided by the ICRC for families, who were thus able each month to visit their relatives in prison. In 1983, a total of 33,057 persons benefited from this form of assistance. The assistance provided for the detainees and their families throughout the year amounted to a total of 616,980 Swiss francs.

### Transfers and travel across the demarcation lines

With the agreement of the authorities concerned in the occupied territories and neighbouring countries, ICRC delegates arranged for certain categories of persons to travel across the demarcation lines. These consisted mainly of detainees who had been released and repatriated or expelled and persons who had entered the occupied territories without authorization. In 1983, there were, in addition, the operations carried out by the ICRC for the release and repatriation of Syrian prisoners of war and of persons captured in Lebanon in 1982 and 1983.

In 1983, the following operations took place under ICRC auspices:

— At **Roshanikra**, 5 persons were transferred to Lebanon (one of them, a woman captured in southern Lebanon and released from an Israeli prison).

— At **Kuneitra**, between the occupied territory of the Golan and Damascus, the transfer operations enabled 169 persons to return to Syria (namely 161 persons arrested in southern Lebanon, 3 Syrian prisoners of war repatriated on medical grounds, 2 released detainees and 3 Golan women reunited with their families). The mortal remains of three persons were also transferred to Syria.

— At the **Allenby Bridge**, 28 persons were transferred, of whom 25 went to Jordan and 3 to the West Bank. Of the 28 persons, 5 had been arrested in southern Lebanon; the mortal remains of one person were also transferred.

In addition, 11 students from the Golan who had completed their studies in Syria were authorized to return to their country via Cyprus. The ICRC undertook to take charge of them at Larnaka and to accompany them on their journey home. The "Cyprus Red Cross" and the ICRC delegate stationed at Larnaka co-operated in this operation, which took place from 2 to 4 October.

### Tracing Agency

As in previous years, ICRC delegates conducted inquiries to locate missing civilians and military personnel; in 1983, they submitted to the authorities concerned 99 tracing requests, all in connection with the conflict in Lebanon; replies were obtained for 41 of these requests.



The Tel Aviv delegation arranged the exchange of Red Cross messages: between detainees in Israel and the occupied territories and their families; between Syrian and Israeli prisoners of war and their respective families; between detainees captured in southern Lebanon (mainly in Ansar camp) and their families. A total of 874,254 family messages passed through the Tel Aviv Tracing Agency office; the large majority of these concerned southern Lebanon (detailed figures are given under the heading "Lebanon").

In 1983, 4,806 messages were delivered to detainees in prisons in Israel and the occupied territories, and 8,768 to families in 13 Arab countries.

The delegates also arranged transfers of funds between families and detainees.

All these activities were carried out in co-operation with ICRC delegations in neighbouring countries and with the assistance of the National Societies of the countries concerned.

Furthermore, the Tel Aviv Tracing Agency played a part in the operation for the exchange of prisoners carried out on 23 and 24 November 1983, when some 4,000 detainees who had been captured in southern Lebanon and in Israel and the occupied territories were released (see above).

#### **Food assistance**

The ICRC continued to provide food assistance to needy civilians in the occupied territories: 1,520 tonnes of relief supplies provided by the European Economic Community were distributed, under the supervision of ICRC delegates, by the Israeli Ministry of Social Welfare and with the co-operation of various charitable organizations.

#### **Dissemination**

The ICRC delegation continued its activities to disseminate knowledge of the principles of international humanitarian law. The ICRC legal delegate gave a lecture to the legal branch of the Israeli armed forces; the lecture was attended by about 45 officers taking part in a training course (army judge advocates and legal advisers, military court judges). Lectures were also given for prison service personnel attending a training course, and three lectures were given in universities (Bar-Ilan University and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem).

### **Activities of other ICRC delegations in the Middle East**

#### **Egypt**

During 1983, some modifications were introduced in the ICRC delegation's activities: taking advantage of a decrease in

its Tracing Agency activities (fewer exchanges of Red Cross messages, no more visits to foreign detainees), the delegation stepped up its work for the dissemination of knowledge of international humanitarian law and of the principles of the Red Cross and developed its co-operation with the Egyptian Red Crescent Society. The latter co-operated with the ICRC in organizing lectures for students in summer camps, and contacts were arranged with a view to intensifying dissemination among the armed forces.

The delegation continued to perform its customary activities consisting in processing requests for news, issuing travel documents, detention or death certificates, forwarding family messages and transferring money, sent by their families, for foreign detainees (previously seen by the ICRC for that purpose). All these activities were carried out with the co-operation of the Egyptian Red Crescent. In June 1983, the agreement between Egypt and ICRC headquarters to set up an ICRC delegation in Egypt was formally ratified by the People's Assembly, a ratification which strengthens official support for the delegation's activities.

In Geneva, the ICRC received the visit of Mr. Boutros Ghali, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, on 11 May. On 8 June, the ICRC President and members of the International Committee welcomed the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Mr. Hosni Mubarak, who was accompanied by the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Mr. Kamal Hassan Ali. On this occasion, President Mubarak reviewed with Mr. Hay the principal aspects of ICRC activities in the Middle East.

#### **Jordan**

As in previous years, the ICRC delegation at Amman continued to give protection and assistance to detainees in Jordan, though its methods of working with regard to visits to places of detention were somewhat modified. Previously, two series of visits took place each year. But at the end of the series of visits which had begun in September 1982, and had ended at the end of February 1983, during which the delegates had seen 3,501 detainees (including 243 security detainees) in 17 places of detention, the ICRC decided it would concentrate its efforts on the places of detention containing practically all the security detainees and visit them more frequently, and go to the other prisons only once a year (more often if necessary, but at irregular intervals).

ICRC delegates went to the various interrogation centres throughout the country; the two main centres were visited twice a month. In 1983, the delegates saw 858 detainees, including 660 security detainees. Relief supplies (clothing, recreation items, sports equipment, etc.) were handed over to the detainees in the course of those visits.

In connection with the Israeli-Arab conflict, the ICRC delegation at Amman, in co-operation with the delegation based at Tel Aviv, organized 15 crossings to take 28 persons (including three children), and the mortal remains of one

person, across the Jordan River. Most of these persons were detainees released from Israeli prisons and repatriated or expelled to Jordan, or people who had unofficially entered the Jordan Valley on one side or other of the river.

The delegation also forwarded messages between members of dispersed families, some in Jordan and others in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967 or in other Arab countries, and also between visited detainees and their families. Over 13,500 messages were exchanged in this way in 1983.

## **Yemen Arab Republic**

In July 1983, the ICRC regional delegate for the Arabian Peninsula went to the Yemen Arab Republic to carry out a second visit to the security detainees held in Sana'a Central Prison (the first full visit had taken place in November 1982). From 16 to 19 July, the ICRC regional delegate saw and registered 111 security detainees, in accordance with customary ICRC procedures. Medical assistance was also given to the detainees. As some detainees were not seen on this occasion, this second visit cannot be considered as having been completed. Steps taken to obtain authorization to do so had not yet brought about any results at the end of the year.

During that same mission, the regional delegate met the Minister for the Interior, the Minister for Health, the Minister Plenipotentiary and Director of the Consular Section at the

Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and the leaders of the Red Crescent Society of the Yemen Arab Republic.

At Geneva headquarters, the ICRC Vice-President received the Minister for Development of the Yemen Arab Republic on 25 February.

As regards assistance, the ICRC, at the beginning of 1983, made a gift of 900 tents and one tonne of clothing in aid of persons affected by earthquakes at the end of 1982.

## **Western Sahara**

Just as in previous years since 1975, the ICRC continued to follow developments in the conflict in the Western Sahara, endeavouring to discharge its treaty obligations in aid of the victims, mainly prisoners of war, and, in addition, reminding the parties of their obligations under the Geneva Conventions. In spite of repeated attempts, ICRC delegates had not visited prisoners of war in Moroccan hands since 1978 (a visit to 99 Algerian prisoners) and those detained by the Polisario Front since 1976 (a visit to 57 Moroccan and Mauritanian prisoners, out of an unspecified total). With the exception of the work undertaken by the ICRC's Central Tracing Agency (forwarding of 233 parcels and 17 letters from their families to the prisoners in Moroccan hands and 3 letters from their relatives to the prisoners captured by the Polisario Front), 1983 did not bring any new developments, all approaches to the parties to the conflict having been in vain.

**ASSISTANCE PROVIDED OR FORWARDED  
BY THE ICRC IN 1983 \***

*MIDDLE EAST*

Country	Beneficiaries	Relief		Medical Assistance	Total Sw. fr.
		Tonnage	Value in Sw. fr.	Value in Sw. fr.	
Iran. . . . .	Displaced population, prisoners of war	0.2	16,200	1,890	18,090
Iraq. . . . .	Prisoners of war	1.8	82,230	1,220	83,450
Israel and occupied territories . . . .	Detainees and their families, civilians in occupied territories	1,540.0	3,006,160	20,220	3,026,380
Jordan . . . . .	Detainees	1.0	21,460	—	21,460
Lebanon . . . . .	Displaced civilians, detainees, sick persons, National Society, "Palestinian Red Crescent"	3,262.0	9,070,190	5,508,500	14,578,690
Syria . . . . .	Civilian population through National Society	40.0	383,620	—	383,620
Yemen Arab Republic . . . . .	Detainees	—	9,040	—	9,040
TOTAL . . . . .		4,845.0	12,588,900	5,531,830	18,120,730

\* This includes food aid from the EEC and the Swiss Confederation, aid to National Societies, aid provided in specially financed actions, and aid financed by funds for relief operations.