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## **MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA**

To carry out its activities in the Middle East and North Africa, the ICRC maintained seven permanent delegations in 1988: Tel Aviv, Beirut, Amman, Damascus, Cairo, Tehran and Baghdad. 1988 also witnessed the official opening of the regional delegation for North Africa in Tunis, in charge of coordinating ICRC activities in Tunisia, Libya, Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania and for matters related to the Western Sahara conflict. ICRC headquarters in Geneva continued, however, to handle relations with the countries of the Arabian Peninsula (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen).

Important developments occurred in the Middle East in 1988, some of which significantly changed ICRC activities in this part of the world. The cease-fire that came into effect between Iran and Iraq on 20 August brought the hope that all prisoners of war interned during the conflict that had opposed the two belligerents since 1980 would be repatriated without delay, and led to sustained diplomatic efforts. As part of the peace process begun in the Western Sahara, the ICRC obtained an agreement in principle to visit Moroccans detained by the Polisario Front, although this visit had not yet been carried out by the end of the year. In the territories occupied by Israel, the unrest grew to an extent that had not been anticipated and continued throughout the year, leading the ICRC to increase its staff and operational capacity. Serious incidents forced the institution to withdraw its delegates from Lebanon temporarily, from 20 December 1988 to 8 February 1989, at a time when assistance for victims of the conflict in Lebanon constituted one of the most important ICRC operations in the region. It should be noted that the most expensive ICRC operations in the Middle East (in Lebanon, Iran and Iraq) were still financed this year through separate appeals to donors, under the ICRC's special budgets.

Besides these three major operations, ICRC activities in the Middle East included visits to security detainees in Jordan, in the Yemen Arab Republic and in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.

### **IRAN/IRAQ**

#### **Activities for prisoners of war**

1988 was the year a cease-fire came into effect between Iran and Iraq, on 20 August, following Iran's acceptance

of UN Resolution 598 on 18 July 1988 (Iraq had accepted the resolution in 1987). This important step towards a settlement in the conflict that had opposed the two belligerents since September 1980 raised hopes to a considerable degree. The ICRC submitted concrete proposals to both parties for the comprehensive repatriation of all prisoners of war, as provided for in the Third Geneva Convention, which is mentioned in point three of UN Resolution 598. Some progress had been made towards this goal by year's end, but the process proved to be very complex. In spite of the fact that both countries signed an agreement on 10 and 11 November at ICRC headquarters in Geneva, stipulating that all sick and wounded prisoners would be repatriated as a priority and without delay, only a few isolated repatriations could be carried out.

During the last few months of the year, the ICRC's headquarters in Geneva and its delegations in Tehran, Baghdad and New York were therefore the scene of intensive negotiations with Iranian and Iraqi government representatives and discussions with the United Nations Secretary-General. Mr Perez de Cuellar and the President of the ICRC met twice, on 24 August and 31 October, while negotiations were being held for an overall settlement to the conflict. The Iranian and Iraqi representatives at these peace talks, in particular the Iranian Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Mr Mohajerani, and the two Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Mr Tareq Aziz and Mr Velayati, were received several times at ICRC headquarters for in-depth discussions. Bilateral technical commissions organized by the ICRC reached an agreement, signed by both parties, that sick and wounded prisoners of war would be granted priority and repatriated.

At the end of August, the ICRC handed over to both parties a document entitled "Principles and operational procedures for the release and repatriation of POWs captured during the Iran/Iraq conflict". This document specified the legal foundations for a repatriation of all POWs by the ICRC, the principles that would govern it and the institution's customary procedures. It also proposed a scenario for the smooth running of this complex operation. The difficulties encountered during the negotiations on the application of UN Resolution 598 led the ICRC to send a note verbale to both parties on 4 October, inviting them to take, without further delay, the preliminary measures necessary for the repatriation of all prisoners of war, i.e., to give notification of all POWs held captive

and to proceed with the repatriation, as a priority, of all sick and wounded prisoners.

It should be recalled that since the beginning of the conflict, the ICRC has only been partially able to fulfil its mandate to provide protection for all POWs interned in both countries. The ICRC has never been notified (as stipulated in Article 122 of the Third Geneva Convention and Article 16 of the First Convention) of the identity of soldiers captured or killed on the front. Tens of thousands of prisoners have thus never been registered by the ICRC, whose delegates have not been given access (Article 126 of the Third Convention) to all POWs interned in both countries. In addition, only a small number of sick or wounded prisoners of war have been granted priority repatriation as provided for in the Third Convention (Article 109 *et seq.*). Finally, during its last series of visits in Iran in 1986-87, the ICRC did not have access to some 7,000 POWs registered by its delegates before the end of 1984, and obtained no information about them. To draw the belligerents' attention to these repeated violations of international humanitarian law the ICRC sent them a Memorandum on 15 July taking stock of its protection activities in both countries.

### Repatriations

Several repatriations could nevertheless be organized in 1988 for sick and wounded prisoners of war, one at the beginning of the year and the others after the cease-fire came into effect on 20 August.

On 17 February, 28 wounded or sick Iraqi POWs were repatriated from Iran aboard an aircraft chartered by the ICRC. ICRC delegates accompanied these prisoners, having previously conducted an interview without witness with each of them to ascertain that they were returning home of their own free will. Following a unilateral decision taken by the Iranian government, the ICRC organized, according to its criteria, a second repatriation of sick and wounded POWs on 12 September; this time 72 Iraqis were able to return to their country. On 30 October, a simultaneous repatriation of sick and disabled POWs took place under the auspices of the ICRC, involving 25 Iranian and 25 Iraqis.

The agreement concerning the repatriation of all sick and wounded POWs (signed by both parties after a series of intensive negotiations at the ICRC's Geneva headquarters on 10 and 11 November) provided for the repatriation of all such prisoners before the end of 1988. The first phase was to include 1,158 Iraqis and 411 Iranians, identified by the ICRC during its visits to camps and hospitals in

both countries. During a second phase, sick and wounded POWs not yet registered by the ICRC were to be repatriated. Unfortunately, this operation, begun on 24 November, had to be suspended on the 27th after three flights, with only 56 Iranian prisoners and 155 Iraqis having returned home.

### Activities for civilians in both countries

The plight of civilians who fell victim to the conflict and to its repercussions was a matter of serious concern for the ICRC. On 28 February, the ICRC made vigorous representations to the governments of Iran and Iraq when bombing in "the war of the cities" killed hundreds of civilians in several cities in both countries. Then, on 10 March, the ICRC issued a press release condemning the bombing of civilian areas as a very grave violation of the fundamental rules of international humanitarian law. When chemical weapons were used in attacks in the Iraqi province of Sulaymaniyah, it again intervened publicly: in a press release issued on 23 March, the ICRC condemned the use of chemical weapons.

### Appeal for funds

At the beginning of the year, the ICRC appealed to donors for 16,691,800 Swiss francs to finance all of its activities related to the conflict during 1988 (for civilians as well as prisoners of war).

### IRAQ

In February the ICRC's Director of Operations and the Delegate General for the Middle East were received by the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs; they gave him an account of protection activities conducted by the ICRC in 1987 during visits to Iraqi POWs interned in Iran.

The ICRC delegation in Baghdad had a permanent staff of 21, who were backed by 16 local employees at year's end.

### Activities for Iranian prisoners of war

The ICRC continued its regular visits to the eleven camps for Iranian prisoners of war in Iraq. ICRC delegates and doctors carried out six series of visits in 1988. Whereas the Iraqi authorities had not allowed the ICRC to register POWs captured since the beginning of 1987, the delegation was able in April 1988 to register a group of 21 recently captured prisoners and, in July, it obtained an agreement in principle to register all POWs captured in 1987 and 1988: 5,364 new prisoners were registered before authorization

was again withdrawn by the Iraqi authorities.

During their visits to POW camps, ICRC delegates distributed educational material, sports and leisure articles for a total value of some 228,000 Swiss francs. Progress was also made on programmes to help set up workshops where POWs could produce clothing, shoes and carpets.

#### **Activities for the civilian population**

In Iraq the ICRC also works on behalf of various groups of civilians protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention. Delegates continued to visit Iranian Kurdish civilians interned in Al-Tash camp. Regular visits enabled the delegation to monitor living conditions in the camp and to collect and deliver Red Cross messages. An ICRC team also conducted a complete survey of medical and sanitary conditions at Al-Tash in January. The results of the survey were presented to the authorities, who responded immediately, setting up projects to provide the necessary installations and instruction to promote hygiene and prevent disease. The ICRC also distributed books, educational material and sports articles valued at around 42,000 Swiss francs. In November, construction work began on buildings to house workshops where clothing, shoes and carpets will be produced.

As in previous years, ICRC delegates visited other Iranian civilians who have sought refuge in Iraq and are interned in Shomeli camp. At the request of the Iraqi authorities and in co-operation with UNHCR, the ICRC continued to seek host countries willing to receive these refugees. As a result of these efforts, 172 of them were able to leave Iraq during the year (this figure includes refugees from Al-Tash camp who have been resettled in a third country).

For the first time since 1986, the ICRC conducted a mission to evaluate needs in the Meisan region, in south-east Iraq, where several tens of thousands of displaced Khuzistani civilians (Arabic-speaking Iranians) sought refuge in 1982.

#### **Tracing Agency**

Tracing activities still accounted for much of the ICRC's work in Iraq. The ICRC transmitted 116,424 Red Cross messages written by Iranian prisoners of war to their families and 384,922 messages from these families to the POWs. This brings the number of Red Cross messages sent or received by Iranian POWs since the beginning of the conflict in 1980 to 4.5 million. Eleven million messages in all have been transmitted between Iran and Iraq since

that date. Red Cross messages written by Iranian Kurdish civilians interned at Al-Tash camp were also entrusted to ICRC delegates, whose visits to the camp included the distribution of family messages sent by Iranian POWs interned in Iraq.

#### **Dissemination**

A dissemination seminar on the Third Geneva Convention took place in Baghdad from 18 to 23 June, attended by commanders of POW camps, high-ranking military police officers and military judges. This seminar, the first of its kind there, was organized jointly by the ICRC, the Iraqi Red Crescent Society and the Iraqi government's Permanent Committee for War Victims.

### **IRAN**

#### **Activities for Iraqi prisoners of war**

Visits to Iraqi prisoners of war held in Iran, which were resumed in December 1986 after a two-year interruption, could not continue in 1988 because approaches made by the ICRC met with a negative response: the institution was not able to obtain terms and conditions allowing its delegates to act in conformity with the provisions of Article 126 of the Third Geneva Convention. The delegation in Tehran therefore reduced the number of delegates on its staff from ten to four. Several times during the year, the ICRC reminded the Iranian government that thousands of Iraqi prisoners had never been visited by ICRC delegates, who had not even been notified of their identity. These are serious instances of non-respect by the Detaining Power for the provisions of the Third Convention.

#### **Activities for the civilian population**

On 8 April, the ICRC launched an additional urgent appeal to its National Society donors for relief goods valued at 3.28 million Swiss francs and destined for civilian victims (mostly Kurds) of the use of chemical weapons in the Halabja region of Iraqi Kurdistan, who had resettled in the Iranian province of Bakhtaran. On 9 May, after a second comprehensive survey, an additional appeal was sent out to all donor governments and National Societies, requesting relief supplies with a total value of 2,392 million Swiss francs for displaced Iraqi civilians living in the Iranian provinces of Bakhtaran and Kurdistan, who had fled there as a result of military offensives.

Further surveys were conducted jointly with UNHCR



from 6 to 9 September and from 24 October to 4 November in Iranian West Azerbaijan, where thousands of Iraqi Kurds had taken refuge from a new series of military operations. The ICRC organized a convoy from Turkey to bring relief supplies for these displaced civilians; the supplies were handed over to Iranian Red Crescent personnel, who took charge of local distributions. Another ICRC team visited Turkey from 19 September to 4 October to evaluate living conditions among Iraqis who had taken refuge in camps located in the Diyarbakir region. The ICRC informed the authorities and the Turkish Red Crescent of the survey results, the needs observed, and its willingness to organize a relief operation in co-operation with the National Society. However, the Turkish authorities did not wish to follow up the ICRC's proposal.

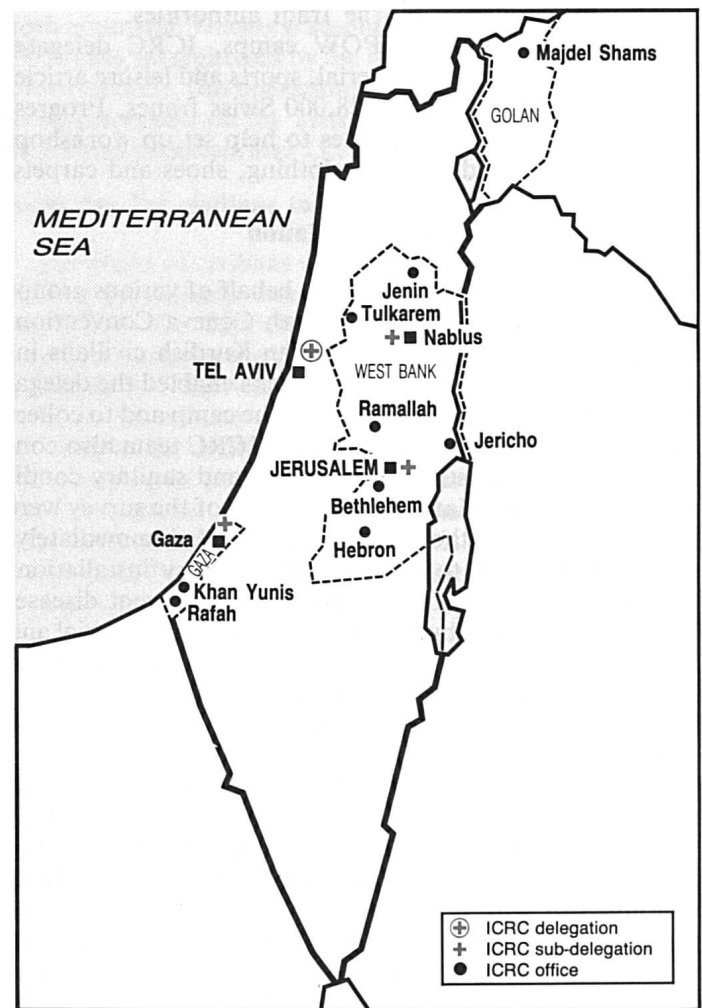
### Tracing Agency

Although not a single visit could be made to Iraqi prisoner-of-war camps in Iran in 1988, the Central Tracing Agency transmitted 460,980 Red Cross messages written by Iraqi POWs to their families in Iran and 453,594 messages from these families to the POWs. This brought the total number of Red Cross messages sent or received by Iraqi prisoners since the beginning of the conflict in 1980 to 6.5 million.

## ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

The continuing unrest in the Israeli-occupied territories since 9 December 1987, the dimension it assumed and the means adopted by the Israeli authorities to repress it left their mark on the year 1988. The ICRC delegation found itself compelled to adapt its operational capacity accordingly, for the changed situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip rendered the question as to the Fourth Geneva Convention's applicability even more acute and called for the delegation's presence to be much more sustained both in the field and in the places of detention, where the number of people in custody increased considerably over the year.

The Israeli authorities maintain that "in view of the *sui generis* status of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District, the *de jure* applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to these areas is doubtful, Israel prefers to leave aside the legal question of the status of these areas and has decided, since 1967, to act *de facto* in accordance with the humanitarian provisions of that Convention". The ICRC, however, considers that the conditions for application of the Fourth Convention are fulfilled in all of the occupied



territories, namely the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Golan and East Jerusalem. In 1988 the ICRC intervened many times to remind the civilian and military authorities of the obligations this Convention entails for the protection of the civilian population.

The ICRC was in regular contact with the Israeli authorities throughout the year, in particular with those responsible for the places of detention. Discussions were also held with the authorities concerning protected persons in the "security zone" in southern Lebanon (see the section on *Lebanon* below). On 19 May the delegation sent a report to the Israeli Minister of Defence about the behaviour of the Israeli army (IDF) towards the civilian population in the occupied territories. This report included a series of recommendations designed to end the viola-

tions of international humanitarian law observed by ICRC delegates.

Several ICRC representatives visited Israel and the occupied territories for high-level meetings to back up approaches, both oral and written, made by ICRC headquarters and by its delegation in Tel Aviv to express the institution's concern over the prevailing situation in the occupied territories and in places of detention. The Director of Operations and the Delegate General for the Middle East went to Israel three times during 1988. These missions allowed the ICRC to take up questions linked to the *intifada*, along with matters related to detention that had been left pending for some time but had now become more acute due to the sudden increase in the prison population.

The turn of events in the occupied territories, with violent demonstrations continuing to break out almost every day, required a sustained ICRC presence: the delegation had to act rapidly, taking all necessary measures to face increased needs. As a result, the number of delegates more than doubled, from 18 to 37 (including one doctor and two nurses), and the number of local employees rose from 46 to 77. The ICRC furthermore decided to base three delegates in Nablus as from June to handle its activities in the northern districts of the West Bank. Sub-delegations were maintained in Jerusalem and in Gaza, and offices in Bethlehem, Hebron, Jericho, Ramallah, Jenin, Tulkarem, Rafah and Khan Yunis.

#### Activities for detainees

As several thousand residents of the occupied territories were arrested in connection with the *intifada*, the Israeli authorities enlarged the three existing **military detention centres** (Fara'a, Tulkarem and Katiba) and opened new temporary or permanent centres (Atlit, Meggido, Dahariye, Hebron II, Ofer, Anatot, Qziot). The sudden increase in the number of detainees created problems: even more often than in the past, notifications took too long and were incomplete, whether they concerned people newly imprisoned, transferred from one place of detention to another, from one section to another, or subject to a change of legal status. Some progress as regards notifications was recorded, however, in the course of the year. ICRC delegates rapidly obtained access to all military detention centres and were able to register all detainees held in general sections, most of whom were awaiting trial, sentenced, or under administrative detention. The delegation was able to inform the families concerned and above all to monitor the material, medical and psychological conditions of deten-

tion. The delegates' observations were passed on to the relevant authorities either in official written reports or during the final interview that followed each visit. According to the figures compiled by the ICRC, there were 6,333 people held in military detention centres at the end of 1988.

On the basis of the existing agreement between the ICRC and the Israeli authorities, delegates continued to visit persons arrested and placed **under interrogation**: 239 of these detainees were seen by an ICRC delegate during the year. Major problems arose concerning notification and thus access to this category of detainees as well. In addition, many people remained under interrogation far longer than the maximum length of time, in principle not more than four weeks, except where imperative or absolute military security or necessity so requires. The 1979 agreement (confirmed in 1986) between the Israeli government and the ICRC stipulates that the ICRC must be informed of arrests within twelve days and have access, within 14 days of their arrest, to security detainees under interrogation.

Among persons detained in connection with the *intifada*, besides those who have been sentenced or are awaiting trial, particular mention must be made of those held in **administrative detention**. The Israeli authorities resorted to this form of preventive detention, which is based on administrative warrants generally issued for a renewable period of six months, much more systematically than in the past. There were 1,356 detainees of this category at the end of 1988, compared with 50 at the end of the previous year. Most of them were being held in Qziot camp, situated in the Negev desert on Israeli soil and therefore outside the occupied territories, contrary to the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which also stipulates that these detainees should benefit from special conditions of detention.

Alongside these visits to military detention centres, ICRC delegates continued to make regular visits to the thirteen **police stations** and seventeen **prisons under the jurisdiction of the Israeli Prison Service**. The annual series of visits to these places of detention will end with the presentation of complete reports to the authorities concerned, covering visits to some 4,400 detainees.

The ICRC also visited 87 **people arrested in southern Lebanon or on the high seas**, who had been transferred to Israel contrary to the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and repatriated 17 people released from Israeli prisons.

Throughout the year, the ICRC carried on with its **assistance programmes** for persons detained in prisons, police stations and military detention centres, as well as for their families. The ICRC delegation continued to organize and finance **family visits** for detainees. Problems

arose concerning family visits for detainees in Qziot prison, because Qziot is situated near the Egyptian border, on Israeli territory, inside a closed military zone. Consequently, the ICRC approached the relevant authorities several times in this connection.

### **Protection for the civilian population**

ICRC activities to protect the civilian population also had to be completely readjusted. From the outset, the Israeli authorities have given their agreement in principle for ICRC delegates to have access to all areas in the occupied territories placed under curfew or declared closed military areas. The consistent presence of ICRC delegates in the territories was meant to contribute to the passive protection of civilians living in the camps, districts and villages concerned. Delegates were able to observe the effects of measures taken by the Israeli authorities such as prolonged curfews, the use of force that led to brutality, collective punishment carried out more and more frequently (destruction of houses and crops, confiscation of identity cards), the consequences of the excessive use of firearms, expulsions from the occupied territories. Systematic representations were made in writing to the relevant authorities about these violations of international humanitarian law. The ICRC also appealed publicly to the State of Israel to put an end to violations of the Fourth Convention.

### **Material assistance**

The delegation regularly evaluated living conditions among the civilian population in the occupied territories. No urgent needs were observed during 1988, as other organizations were at work on the spot. The ICRC nevertheless provided tents and relief supplies for families whose houses were demolished, in particular after several dozen houses were demolished in the village of Jiftlik in November, leaving over 700 people homeless.

### **Medical assistance**

Tension in the occupied territories and frequent clashes between residents and the Israeli army made it necessary to conduct regular evaluations of existing medical facilities. These proved satisfactory and no urgent needs were observed. ICRC nurses made numerous visits to injured people taken to hospital after demonstrations or repressive measures, to monitor their state of health and enquire about the circumstances that had led to their hospitalization. Finally, very frequent interventions were made at all levels to ensure that casualties were quickly evacuated during clashes

and that ambulances could enter camps, villages and areas placed under curfew and leave again without hindrance. Unfortunately several incidents were noted in this connection, and armed soldiers entered hospitals in the occupied territories more than once during the year.

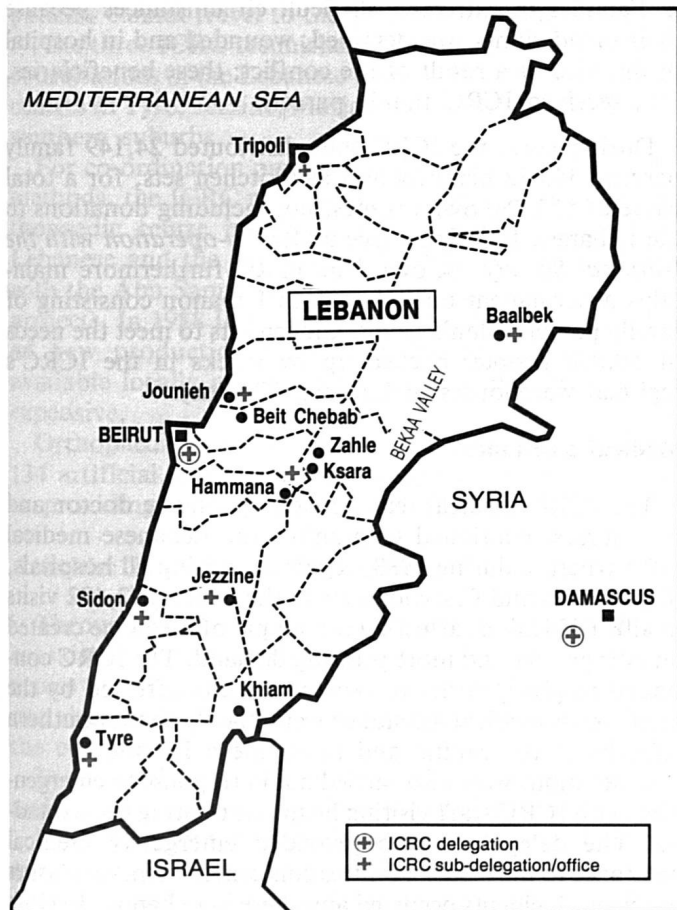
Considerable efforts were made to assist local "Red Crescent" societies in the occupied territories; in particular, the ICRC provided them with seven ambulances. For the first time and with the participation of the "Magen David Adom", a training course was organized for ambulance attendants working for these local Red Crescent branches. The ICRC also financed the fitting out of a dispensary and a blood bank for the West Bank "Red Crescent" Society.

### **Tracing Agency**

In order to keep track of developments as regards detention (the considerable increase in the number of people in custody and the state of flux created by frequent transfers and sentences for short terms of imprisonment), the ICRC delegation had additional staff assigned to it who were specially trained in taking a census of detainees. At the same time, tracing delegates continued to search for persons missing in connection with the Arab-Israeli conflict and to forward Red Cross messages (over 20,000 in 1988). The ICRC also organized a family reunification and a number of repatriations across demarcation lines and issued 26,600 certificates of detention. Activities carried out by the Tracing Agency in the Golan are covered below, in the section on *Syria* in this report.

## **LEBANON**

The temporary suspension of ICRC activities in Lebanon after more than twenty years of constant presence there, the abduction of an ICRC delegate on 17 November and his thirty days' captivity must not eclipse the fact that 1988 was a year of intense activity for the ICRC delegation in Lebanon, and that the volume of assistance distributed to civilians affected by the conflict was higher than in previous years. Heavy fighting continued between Lebanese factions and the general state of insecurity was heightened in the south, particularly in the "security zone" controlled by the "South Lebanon Army" (SLA) with the support of Israeli forces. The process of internal destabilization went on, with the formation of two governments when the Parliament failed to elect a new President at the end of Amin Gemayel's term in September 1988. The economic situation, with purchasing power dropping steadily, accentuated



the feeling of insecurity and precarious living conditions for much of the population.

Until the aforesaid suspension of operations, the ICRC had some 30 delegates in Lebanon to carry out its various activities there. Staff included five nurses, three orthopaedic technicians and a medical co-ordinator; its delegates of Swiss nationality were assisted by nearly 100 local employees. In addition to its main delegation in Beirut, the ICRC had a sub-delegation in Tyre and offices in Tripoli, Baalbek, Jounieh, Ksara, Jezzine and Sidon.

The ICRC delegation kept in close contact throughout the year with the different parties to the Lebanese conflict and with SLA officials. The Director of Operations and the Acting Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa carried out several missions at the end of the year, to back up the delegation's efforts to obtain the abducted delegate's release and to make it possible for ICRC delegates to return to the country. Activities were resumed on 8 February 1989.

At the same time, dozens of National Societies the world over firmly condemned any assault against the ICRC's humanitarian mission in Lebanon.

### Appeal for funds

To finance its activities in Lebanon, the ICRC appealed to donors at the beginning of 1988 for cash contributions totalling 15,537,800 Swiss francs.

### Dissemination

The abduction of delegate Peter Winkler on 17 November in Sidon, the fact that he was held in captivity for 30 days, the grave threats made against all ICRC delegates in Lebanon, which led to their abrupt departure on 20 December: these constitute serious violations of the respect that the ICRC must have in all circumstances in order to act. A press release issued on 2 December stressed that the ICRC is independent of any local, regional or international power. Another press release issued on 20 December condemned the threat "that negates the very essence of [the ICRC's] humanitarian mission". Other very serious breaches of respect for the Red Cross emblem must unfortunately also be noted, in particular the assassination of three wounded people inside a Lebanese Red Cross ambulance on 8 April, the hijacking of ambulances for non-humanitarian purposes and several attacks on Lebanese Red Cross first-aid workers.

In an attempt to avoid such incidents the ICRC launched a major media campaign in April, on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, to publicize the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law through the press, radio and television. In September, the ICRC delegation also distributed a report entitled "Emblèmes de respect de l'homme" (emblems of respect for man) to the Lebanese media.

Dissemination efforts during the year included a mission to address Lebanese staff officers and officers of the Military Academy, and the distribution of a brochure entitled "Rules of behaviour in combat", translated into Fijian for UNIFIL's Fijian troops.

### Representations on behalf of the civilian population

Throughout the year, the ICRC was present in all parts of the country and in regular contact with all parties to the conflict in order to ensure respect for the Red Cross, maintain a constant awareness of its principles and work, and intervene on behalf of civilian victims of the conflict whenever necessary. Its presence was particularly impor-



tant during outbreaks of fighting in southern Lebanon and in Beirut's southern suburbs.

The ICRC frequently had to approach the parties to the conflict, calling for civilians, the wounded and prisoners to be treated with due respect. It made general or *ad hoc* interventions when non-combatants were killed or wounded, when civilians from the "security zone" were displaced or deported, or when their houses and crops were looted, damaged or destroyed. The ICRC specifically intervened on behalf of civilians living inside the "security zone" or in villages and camps in nearby regions who fell victim to clashes between opposing forces or to Israeli air force attacks. In the field, delegates repeatedly took steps to obtain, as quickly as possible, the authorizations and security guarantees required to visit localities affected by the conflict. The increasing use of mines in southern Lebanon created serious security problems for the delegation, forcing it at times to limit its activities there.

### Food and material assistance

During the first three months of the year, the ICRC delegation completely re-evaluated its food and material assistance programmes in Lebanon. Procedures were adjusted according to the evolution of the conflict and deteriorating economic conditions. The ICRC also took care to avoid creating dependence on its assistance among people capable of providing, either wholly or partly, for their own needs. The following categories of beneficiaries received ICRC assistance in 1988:

- Civilians, sometimes but not necessarily displaced, who were directly affected by sporadic clashes but could rapidly be reintegrated into the local community; such persons generally received a single distribution of goods consisting of family parcels, blankets and/or sets of kitchen utensils, as needed. In 1988 the ICRC assisted some 7,600 families in this category, who were affected by clashes between Lebanese factions in the southern suburbs of Beirut in May, and some 500 families displaced or otherwise in distress because of the fighting between Palestinian factions in the Chatila and Borj el Brajneh camps;

- Civilians who were long-term victims of continuing clashes in the area where they lived, usually near an active front line, who could not move around freely and who had lost most of their economic resources. Such people were given regular food distributions (family parcels) until their situation improved. In 1988 there were more than 80,000 such beneficiaries, most of them living in regions bordering the "security zone" in southern Lebanon;

- Families in extremely difficult circumstances because their breadwinner was detained, wounded and in hospital or disabled as a result of the conflict; these beneficiaries, too, received ICRC family parcels.

During 1988, the ICRC thus distributed 24,149 family parcels, 34,872 blankets and 692 kitchen sets, for a total value of 853,480 Swiss francs, not including donations to the Lebanese Red Cross (see under *Co-operation with the National Society*, below). The ICRC furthermore maintains a permanent buffer stock in Lebanon consisting of family parcels, blankets and kitchen sets to meet the needs of 50,000 people, backed up by stocks in the ICRC's regional warehouses in Larnaca (Cyprus).

### Medical assistance

The ICRC medical team, made up of one doctor and five nurses, continued to monitor the Lebanese medical infrastructure during 1988, regularly visiting all hospitals, dispensaries and first-aid posts in the country (2,492 visits in all). Difficulties affecting the supply of medicine created an ever greater and more pressing demand. The ICRC continued to give priority to regions directly affected by the conflict; its medical assistance went mainly to the southern suburbs of the capital and to southern Lebanon.

Evaluations were also carried out in response to emergencies, with ICRC staff visiting hospitals treating the wounded. The delegation also provided emergency medical assistance to the medical centres concerned whenever clashes or serious incidents occurred anywhere in Lebanon. In close co-operation with the first-aid teams of the Lebanese Red Cross, the ICRC arranged for the transfer of the wounded across front lines to proper medical care.

Finally, the ICRC continued to support the mobile clinics programme run by the Lebanese Red Cross. This programme serves sixteen villages with no medical facilities, often difficult to reach, located along the demarcation line with the "security zone" in southern Lebanon. ICRC material support also went to Lebanese Red Cross dispensaries throughout the country.

The total value of medical assistance provided by the ICRC in Lebanon in 1988 (including orthopaedic assistance but not including support given to the National Society) amounted to nearly one million Swiss francs.

### Orthopaedic assistance

The ICRC maintained its material and technical support for the orthopaedic centres in Sidon and Beit Chebab; in Sidon it also helped train orthopaedic technicians. As some



patients cannot travel to the centres for reasons of security, the three ICRC technicians regularly gave orthopaedic consultations in the Lebanese Red Cross medical and social centres in Tyre, Jezzine, Marjayoun and Mreije, in Beirut's southern suburbs.

For co-ordination purposes and to standardize working methods, the ICRC maintained close contact with the orthopaedic centre in Hammana (a joint project of the Lebanese and the Netherlands Red Cross Societies) and with the Abu Samra centre in Tripoli (a Swiss Red Cross project). In 1988 ICRC orthopaedic technicians introduced new production methods using materials that are available locally and are thus easier to procure and less expensive.

Orthopaedic centres run with ICRC support produced 134 artificial limbs and 146 orthopaedic devices, as well as providing repairs.

### Activities for detained persons

Throughout the year, the ICRC continued to visit persons detained because of the conflict and sought to negotiate access to all detainees. Unfortunately its delegates still cannot visit all those captured or arrested in connection with the conflict.

In all, the delegation registered 313 new detainees in 1988 and saw several hundred others who had been seen before.

Visits thus continued to detainees held by the Lebanese government (Internal Security Forces) and by various parties to the conflict (Amal, Lebanese Forces, Popular Liberation Army, Progressive Socialist Party and others). These visits were also an opportunity for detainees to fill in family message forms for their relatives and to receive material assistance consisting of blankets, medicine and leisure articles.

Khiam prison, located in the "security zone", remained closed to the ICRC, along with the other places of detention situated in this region, despite repeated requests made to the "South Lebanon Army" and the Israeli authorities. In addition, family visits for detainees at Khiam prison, authorized until February, were suspended in May. Only some thirty Red Cross messages could be exchanged after that date.

During 1988 the Israeli authorities notified the ICRC of the arrest of 41 people in southern Lebanon and their transfer to Israeli prisons. ICRC delegates were able to visit in Israel 87 people arrested in southern Lebanon or on the high seas, and organized seven family visits.

It was once again without success this year that the ICRC approached the parties concerned to obtain access to cap-

tured members of the "South Lebanon Army", or to obtain information about the seven members of the Israeli armed forces taken prisoner or reported as missing in Lebanon, some of them since 1982. The ICRC nevertheless renewed its representations to all parties to the conflict, hoping to clarify the fate and whereabouts of people missing in Lebanon.

### Tracing Agency

The exchange of Red Cross messages between detainees and their families or between family members separated because of the conflict, and the urgent transmission of news between Lebanon and abroad, continue to be key ICRC activities in Lebanon. In 1988 a total of 14,510 Red Cross messages were forwarded between Lebanon and other countries, between various regions of the country, between detainees in Lebanon and their families or between persons detained in Israel or in the occupied territories and their relatives.

The ICRC organized the transfer or repatriation of 33 people across the front lines, including 17 persons who had reached the end of their prison sentence in Israel. The delegation also took care of 35 people expelled by the Israeli authorities from the occupied territories, ensuring their transfer on to Lebanese soil, facilitating their departure elsewhere (several of them were temporarily housed near ICRC premises), and providing for the exchange of Red Cross messages between them and family members who remained in the occupied territories.

A total of 112 people were able to join relatives abroad: the ICRC played an important role in these family reunifications by helping the persons concerned to obtain identity papers, visas and airline tickets.

Detainees visited by the ICRC are registered by the Tracing Agency, which can then issue certificates of detention to the detainees' families, while their relative is still being held, and thereafter certificates of release to the detainees themselves, thus facilitating their rehabilitation. The delegation issued 195 of these certificates during the year.

ICRC delegates kept in close touch with the families of persons detained in Israel and in the occupied territories, providing them with material assistance as needed and the means to exchange news.

The ICRC is still gravely concerned, however, for the many people detained, captured or reported missing in Lebanon of whom it has received no news and to whom it has been unable to obtain access. It has registered hundred of tracing requests and made numerous enquiries of the parties concerned, most of the time without result.

## Co-operation with the National Society

In November 1987 the Lebanese Red Cross decided to set up an Emergency Committee bringing together all sectors dealing with emergencies (first aiders, medical and social, pharmacy, blood bank, information and dissemination) to be able to cope better with deteriorating economic conditions and the worsening conflict. At the request of the National Society, the ICRC agreed to support the Committee and participate in its work: the ICRC head of delegation chaired sessions for the first six months, until a Lebanese Director General and administrator were appointed in April 1988. At the same time, an ICRC nurse helped for the first six months of the year to get the medical and social section started again.

The ICRC also provided the Emergency Committee with logistic and material support, including medical equipment and supplies, medicine, ambulances and other vehicles, blankets and radio equipment for its programmes, along with financial aid.

Taking into account the ICRC's active participation in the Lebanese Red Cross mobile clinics programme, dispensaries and medical social centre at Mreije, plus the medical and material assistance that was distributed in co-operation with the National Society, ICRC financial support for the Lebanese Red Cross totalled 1,724,887 Swiss francs in 1988.

## WESTERN SAHARA CONFLICT

The ICRC repeated its requests to obtain access to all prisoners detained by the parties to the Western Sahara conflict. It has still not been notified of the identity of all Moroccan prisoners held by the Polisario Front, or of Sahrawi prisoners detained by Morocco. It has in fact not been able to visit Sahrawi prisoners in Moroccan hands since 1978. However, during a mission carried out early in October in the Tindouf region, Mr Jäckli, member of the Committee, and the new regional delegate for North Africa met with a high-ranking official of the Polisario Front; the ICRC obtained an agreement in principle for its delegates to visit all Moroccan prisoners held by the Front. The date these visits will begin has not yet been set.

The ICRC transmitted 257 family messages written by Moroccan prisoners to their relatives. It also provided the "Sahrawi Red Crescent" with a vehicle to transport the wounded. Lastly, ICRC President Sommaruga met with the UN Secretary General's special representative, Dr Hector Gros Espiell, on 19 December at ICRC headquarters in Geneva to discuss the prospects for a settlement in the Western Sahara conflict. The President informed the UN

representative that the ICRC was prepared to offer its humanitarian services to the parties concerned as part of the peace process now under way in the Western Sahara.

## OTHER COUNTRIES

**TUNISIA** — The new regional delegation for North Africa, based in Tunis, officially opened on 14 March 1988. In charge of co-ordinating ICRC activities in Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania and Libya and in matters related to the Western Sahara conflict, the regional delegation also helped organize a seminar on the dissemination of international humanitarian law, which was held in the Tunisian capital from 9 to 12 June and was attended by representatives of the regional committees of the Tunisian Red Crescent and officials from the Ministries of Defence, the Interior and Education. This seminar was organized jointly by the National Society and the ICRC, with the latter represented by a dissemination officer.

**MOROCCO** — Two other dissemination seminars took place from 15 to 25 September at the Moroccan Red Crescent conference centre in Mehdra, near Rabat. Organized by the National Society with the participation of an ICRC legal delegate, these seminars completed the series given in 1987 and were attended by members of various Moroccan organizations and by teachers.

**ALGERIA** — The President of the Algerian Red Crescent met with ICRC representatives several times in 1988: in Algiers with Mr Jäckli, member of the Committee, and with the regional delegate, then in Geneva with the Director of Operations and the Acting Delegate General for the Middle East.

**MAURITANIA** — The regional delegate visited Mauritania from 17 to 21 August for discussions with representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Society.

**LIBYA** — Dr Mustafa Mohamed Al Zaidi, Libyan Minister of Health and President of the National Society, was received by President Sommaruga on 18 January; they discussed problems in the Middle East and the ICRC's activities in this region of the world. Visits to Chadian prisoners of war carried out by the ICRC in Libya are covered in the section on AFRICA in this report.

## JORDAN

The ICRC has access to all places of detention in Jordan and to all persons detained for security reasons, including detainees under interrogation. In 1988 its delegates con-

ducted 31 visits to detainees under interrogation in the Jordanian capital: 23 in the GID (General Intelligence Department) prison and eight in the MID (Military Intelligence Department) prison. They also carried out twelve visits to civilian prisons elsewhere and two to the military prison at Zerka, and they were able to visit the new prison in Swaqa for the first time. In all, ICRC delegates saw some 2,500 detainees in Jordan during the year, including 700 newly registered.

The assistance the ICRC continued to provide regularly for detainees (books, medicine, leisure articles) came to a total value of about 28,500 Swiss francs.

Red Cross messages were transmitted by the ICRC for detainees and for civilians from the West Bank separated from their relatives because of the events — a total of 5,701 messages in 1988 (2,546 sent from Jordan to the territories occupied by Israel, to Syria and to Egypt; 3,155 messages distributed in Jordan). ICRC delegates escorted 176 people transferred by the Jordan National Red Crescent Society across the demarcation line between Jordan and the West Bank. Twelve people worked for the ICRC in Jordan this year; eight of them were local employees.

## SYRIA

The ICRC delegation in Syria (one delegate and eight local employees), working in co-operation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, continued its tracing activities in connection with the Arab-Israeli conflict and transmitted Red Cross messages, in particular between civilians in the territories occupied by Israel (some of whom were detainees), persons detained in Lebanon, Jordan or elsewhere, and members of their families in Syria. Through the intervention of the ICRC delegation, family visits were organized in Syria for 596 residents of the Golan, along with one family reunification and transfers for people wishing to cross the demarcation line.

The ICRC participated in dissemination courses organized by the National Society for its local branches. These courses included an introduction to the work of the Central Tracing Agency.

The ICRC also continued to support the Syrian Arab Red Crescent's public health programmes, in particular by providing 70 tonnes of WSM (Wheat-Soya-Milk) for babies receiving aid under the programme entitled "Mother and Care". This programme was extended during 1988 to branches in Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, Sweida, Ragga and Dera'a. An ICRC nutritionist visited these branches in July to ensure that the programme was running smoothly.

Throughout the year, ICRC orthopaedic technicians based in Lebanon regularly visited the orthopaedic centre run by the "Palestinian Red Crescent" in Damascus. This centre was opened in 1983 with the co-operation of the Swedish Red Cross. The ICRC orthopaedists gave technical advice and helped with the specialized training given to members of the "Palestinian Red Crescent" who worked at the centre.

## EGYPT

The ICRC delegation in Egypt (one delegate and six local employees) continued to search for missing persons and exchange Red Cross messages for families separated by conflict in the Middle East, including those affected by the conflict between Iran and Iraq. The unrest in the occupied territories brought a marked increase in these activities.

The ongoing programme for the dissemination of international humanitarian law, carried out jointly with the Egyptian Red Crescent Society, reached over 1,000 people in 1988. Several Egyptian universities (Cairo, Asyut, Alexandria, Zagazig and Al Mansoura) have included international humanitarian law in their syllabus. The delegation also maintained close contacts with the Ministry of Defence.

The Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs was received on 18 May by President Sommaruga, the Director of Operations and the Delegate General for the Middle East for discussions that included an overview of the institution's activities and concerns. On 6 November an ICRC representative, Mr Jäckli, member of the Committee, was received in turn in Cairo by the President of Egypt, Mr Mohamed Hosni Mubarak. They discussed various humanitarian issues.

## YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC

The ICRC has been authorized to visit prisons in the Yemen Arab Republic since 1984, and a series of visits has been carried out every year. The 1988 series of visits took place from 1 to 14 September, with the participation of an ICRC doctor: 3,300 detainees were seen in nine places of detention located throughout the country (Dhamar, Ibb, Ta'iz, Hodeidah, Sa'adah and Hajjah, along with several prisons in the capital, Sana'a).

While in the country, the regional delegate for the Arabian Peninsula had talks with the Minister of the Interior, Mr Abdullah Hussain Barakat, the Minister of Health, Dr Mohamed Ali Moqbel, and officials of the National Society.

## PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

In the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, the ICRC visited for the first time 52 people arrested during the events of January 1986 and tried in December 1987. The visit to these security detainees, in Al Mansoura prison in Aden, took place from 8 to 15 February with an ICRC doctor present. A joint mission by the previous and the new regional delegate for the Arabian Peninsula to the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen in August enabled them to meet National Society officials and to obtain assurances from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, Mr Saleh Munasser Al Siyali, that the ICRC would be able to repeat its visits to security detainees in 1989.

## ARABIAN PENINSULA

The head of the ICRC's Financing Division visited five countries on the Arabian Peninsula from 19 March to 2 April to present an overview of ICRC activities, par-

ticularly those carried out in Muslim countries. The mission was also meant to prepare for the opening of a regional delegation for the Arabian Peninsula and to strengthen ties between the ICRC and the National Societies in these countries. After a discussion with the Secretary General of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union in Damascus, the ICRC representative met in particular, in **KUWAIT**, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Suleiman Majid Al Shaheen; in **BAHRAIN**, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of Education, Sheik Mohamed Bin Mubarak Al Khalifa and Dr Ali Fakhro; in **QATAR**, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Sheik Ahmed Bin Saif Al Thani, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheik Hamad Bin Suhaim Al Thani, the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Mr Ali Bin Ahmed Al Ansari, and the Minister of Health, Mr Khalid Bin Mohamed Al Mana; in **SAUDI ARABIA**, the Minister of Finance, Mr Mohamed Abalkhail; in the **UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**, several high ranking government officials. A dissemination specialist furthermore presented ICRC activities at a stand on "Children of the World 88", an exhibition organized by the Red Crescent Society of the United Arab Emirates in Abu Dhabi in October.

### RELIEF SUPPLIES DISTRIBUTED BY THE ICRC IN 1988 *MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA*

Country (in French alphabetical order)	Recipients	Relief		Medical assistance	Total Sw. fr.
		Tonnes	Value in Sw. fr.	Value in Sw. fr.	
Iraq .....	Prisoners of war and refugees	40	459,809	45,780	505,589
Iran .....	Refugees, civilians and prisoners of war	322	3,633,211	394,965	4,028,176
Israel/occupied territories .....	Civilians and detainees	585	1,260,790	31,466	1,292,256
Jordan .....	Detainees	1	28,329	—	28,329
Lebanon .....	Displaced civilians, the disabled, National Society and detainees	1,325	2,745,423	2,031,458	4,776,881
Syria .....	National Society	70	169,338	—	169,338
North Yemen .....	Detainees	—	—	13,264	13,264
<b>TOTAL .....</b>		<b>2,343</b>	<b>8,296,900</b>	<b>2,516,933</b>	<b>10,813,833</b>





(Photo: ICRC/T. Gassmann — ISRA 17/4)

*Israel: visiting a place of detention.*