

Indochina

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III. Indochina

The ICRC has followed the development of the Vietnam Red Cross recently established in the territory under the control of the Franco-Vietnamese Forces. The new Society, whose President visited Geneva in August 1952, could not so far be given official recognition. The International Committee's regular policy, which was approved by the XVIIth International Red Cross Conference consists on the one hand in postponing all recognition of National Societies for the duration of hostilities and until a return to normal conditions, and on the other hand in maintaining during this period the *de facto* relations necessary for the accomplishment of humanitarian tasks with all Red Cross Societies or associations, whether recognised or not ¹.

The ICRC has resumed its appeals to the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam for the renewal of the contacts which its Delegate in Indochina had been able to make on the North Vietnam fighting lines in July and October 1951. It was planned to hand over to this Red Cross medical supplies intended for war victims, regardless of their nationality. It also announced its intention of delivering correspondence for prisoners of war and messages from prisoners and internees in French hands. With a view to the co-ordination of its efforts with those of the French Red Cross (which had been successful in handing over to the Red Cross representative of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on 15 May 1952 the accumulated correspondence for French prisoners of war) the ICRC postponed the broadcast of its appeal until June 21. No reply having been received to this broadcast, the ICRC renewed its offer on September 1 and 2, but to no effect.

¹ See *Resolutions of the XVIIth International Red Cross Conference*, Stockholm, August 1948, Resolutions 11 and 12, page 6.

In addition the Delegate of the ICRC broadcast enquiries received by the Central Prisoners of War Agency concerning members of the French Forces in Indochina reported missing after action. Similar requests were sent from Geneva to the authorities of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam through the latter's representative in Burma ; but the Central Prisoners of War Agency has received no information concerning the missing persons. All enquiries transmitted by the Agency and the Delegate of the ICRC in Indochina were checked by the POW Bureau in Saïgon.

The ICRC Delegate in Indochina has continued visiting camps, where prisoners of war belonging to the forces of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam are interned. Thirty-one visits were thus made between February and December 1952 ; and these were followed by the distribution of relief supplies.

In the matter of assistance for the civilian population affected by the war the ICRC transmitted cash donations from French trade unions, which were used for purchasing condensed milk for Hanoï orphanages.