

Indo-China

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by an ICRC psychiatrist and the ICRC delegate general for Africa, was to collect information on the number of psychiatric hospitals and the legislation in force relating to governmental and private establishments, and to confer with the Ministry of Health, with those working in the field of psychiatry and with other persons concerned with mental health. The information thus acquired would enable the ICRC to decide whether or not to visit psychiatric hospitals, a decision that had not been taken at the end of 1976.

Rhodesia/Zimbabwe

Visits to places of detention. — In Rhodesia, it is administrative detainees, held without trial under the *Emergency Regulations*, to whom the ICRC has access. Nevertheless, it has continued to press for permission to visit also detainees under interrogation and those already sentenced, i.e., to see any person detained because of the conflict.

Two series of visits were made to detainees under the *Emergency Regulations*; the first from 13 to 25 May and the second from 11 to 25 November. The centres of detention, eight altogether, were as follows:

Chikurubi, Salisbury Remand, Gwelo, Wha Wha, Gatooma, Connemara, Que Que, Buffalo Range. At the time of the second series of visits, the total number of detainees was 792.

In South Africa and in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, the ICRC delegates spoke without witnesses to detainees of their choice. In both countries, the Committee gave material aid to the detainees to a total value of 35,000 Swiss francs.

Application of humanitarian law. — The delegate general for Africa and the regional delegate took the opportunity of their missions in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe to draw the attention of the authorities and in particular of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Internal affairs, Justice and Defence to the question of application of the Geneva Conventions and of the principles of humanitarian law in the Rhodesian conflict.

In addition, during the Conference in Geneva on Rhodesia/Zimbabwe in November and December 1976, the President of the ICRC met the heads of the delegations attending the Conference, as well as its Chairman. With them he studied means of increasing the ICRC's protection and assistance to victims on both sides. He stressed how important it was that humanitarian principles should be observed in the Rhodesian conflict, and hoped that the different parties would give a public undertaking to respect these principles.

Assistance. — In the areas affected by the fighting, the ICRC supplied material assistance to the civilians who had been relocated by the Salisbury authorities into "protected villages". The value of local purchases of supplies amounted to 65,000 Swiss francs in 1976.

At the end of the year, the ICRC asked the Salisbury delegation to carry out a fresh assessment, as thorough as possible, of the humanitarian problems and needs, in particular with regard to medical treatment for civilian victims.

Liberation movements

The ICRC delegates maintained contacts with the representatives of nationalist movements in southern Africa, especially those of ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People's Union), ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union), ANC (African National Council), and SWAPO (South-West Africa People's Organization).

The purpose of the meetings was to develop co-operation between the movements and the ICRC concerning protection (prisoners) and assistance, and in spreading knowledge of humanitarian law and Red Cross principles.

Several consignments of medicines were handed to representatives of these movements in Angola, Mozambique and Zambia.

Indo-China

The relief operation carried out jointly by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies to assist victims of the conflict in Indo-China continued throughout 1976, through the administrative body set up on 1 April 1975 and known as the Indo-China Secretariat (INDSEC). This bureau was responsible for co-ordinating and directing the international relief operation mounted by the Red Cross.

The total value of relief supplied in 1976 through INDSEC was over 15 million Swiss francs, the main beneficiary being Viet Nam. INDSEC sent regular reports to donors (governments, Red Cross Societies and other organizations) on how their gifts had been used and describing what current needs were. The financial statement on INDSEC is shown in Tables IX and X, pp. 64 and 65).

Viet Nam

Delegation in Ho Chi Minh City

During the first half of 1976, the International Red Cross (IRC) delegation in Ho Chi Minh City, composed of four ICRC delegates, performed various activities in close collaboration with the Red Cross Society and the authorities of the Republic of South Viet Nam.

In June, two delegates left, this first step towards disengagement coinciding with the reunification of the country, thenceforward to be called the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (SRVN).



After that date, the IRC, at the request of the authorities of the SRVN, made preparations to transfer the rest of its delegation to Hanoi, capital of the reunified country, where an ICRC delegation had been based since April 1975. On 14 September, therefore, the IRC delegation in Ho Chi Minh City was closed.

Relief

In mid-December 1975, the Red Cross of the Republic of South Viet Nam sent the IRC a plan for an assistance programme providing for:

- help in returning displaced persons to their own villages;
- aid to Vietnamese who had returned to their own country from neighbouring countries at the end of hostilities;
- aid for persons settled in the new economic zones;
- aid to orphans;
- medical aid for the dispensaries of the National Red Cross Society;
- construction of medical centres;
- development programme for the Junior Red Cross.

The relief supplies requested consisted mainly of raw materials for making medicines, and of basic foodstuffs, some of which would be processed by local industry.

In Ho Chi Minh City, a delegate of the IRC, a relief expert, remained in regular contact with the heads of the National Red Cross Society in order to inform the Indo-China Secretariat, in detail, of the specific needs of the Society. In this way the initial plan for aid in 1976 was adapted as the months went by to meet current priorities.

Chief among the relief supplies sent out in 1976 were raw materials for making medicines, special drugs (total value, almost 5 million Swiss francs), and 500 tons of milk, 3,311 tons of flour and 1,937 tons of rice (gifts of the European Economic Community), and 500 tons of milk from the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany. All consignments were sent either to Ho Chi Minh City or to Danang, by vessels of shipping companies authorized to carry cargoes to Viet Nam.

The IRC delegates were present only infrequently at the distributions of relief organized by the National Society, the reason given being that of security.

Medical operations

The doctor attached to the delegation in Ho Chi Minh City made regular visits, in the first six months of the year, to several orphanages to provide treatment. When his mission came to an end, in June 1976, he presented to the Red Cross Society of the SRVN and to the Ministry of Health a detailed report, plus statistics concerning all the diseases encountered in the orphanage at Go Vap. Most of the analyses which had enabled the statistics to be compiled had been carried out in the delegation's own laboratory.

Over the same period, the dispensary at the delegation's headquarters functioned as before, the doctor providing treatment without charge every afternoon. By the end of June 2,460 patients had received treatment, most of them destitute foreigners.

The same doctor also helped to draw up, with the National Red Cross Society, several medical aid projects which were submitted to the Indo-China Secretariat. In March, he took part in a survey organized by the National Society in the province of Tây Ninh, as a result of which a campaign was launched to combat malaria. For this purpose, the IRC supplied a large quantity of anti-malarial drugs, to permit the authorities and the National Society to combat the disease.

In addition to the anti-malarial drugs, mosquito nets were also asked for, to help prevent malaria. In response to this request, 850,000 metres of cotton, enough for some 50,000 mosquito nets to be made locally, were sent to Ho Chi Minh City.

Help for Foreigners

After 30 April 1975 a great many foreigners who had been deprived of diplomatic representation in Viet Nam turned to the IRC delegation in Ho Chi Minh City, in an effort to return to their

own countries. In 1976, these persons kept in touch with the delegation, which provided medical treatment, a small amount of relief supplies and, in particular, help to return to their home countries.

Among the foreigners were numerous destitute Cambodians, who had left Cambodia for Viet Nam in the spring of 1975, and who came to ask the help of the ICRC in finding a country to accept them. Once they had received an entry visa for the host country, they then asked the ICRC to provide them with means of transport. More than 3,000 letters were sent to the delegation in Ho Chi Minh City on the subject. The ICRC took note of all these requests and presented to the authorities of Viet Nam a list of these foreigners in Viet Nam wishing to join their spouses or children in other countries. Many cases were also submitted to the ICEM (Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration), requesting payment of the air fares.

At the end of 1976, about 800 Cambodians held entry visas for countries willing to accept them, but had not obtained an exit visa from the Viet Nam authorities.

Despite several representations to the authorities, in Hanoi as well as in Ho Chi Minh City, the ICRC delegates were not able to visit the small number of foreigners without diplomatic representation imprisoned in Ho Chi Minh City or elsewhere in South Viet Nam.

Repatriation

Close collaboration had been established between the Red Cross of the Republic of South Viet Nam, the Committee for Foreign Affairs of Ho Chi Minh City, the ICRC and the governments of the persons concerned, so that repatriation operations could be arranged. The first two of these had taken place on 28 and 30 December 1975 and benefited 444 Pakistanis.

On 1 and 8 January 1976 two more flights took 111 Pakistanis and 367 Indians home on board a DC-8/63 specially chartered by the ICRC.

The same aircraft, on 26, 27 and 29 February, repatriated 22 Pakistanis, 224 Indians and 489 Yemenis.

Finally, between 7 and 14 September 1976, six flights by the same plane took home a total of 1,389 persons: 106 Pakistanis, 938 Indians, 130 Yemenis, 48 South Koreans, 12 Indonesians and 115 Taiwanese; in the case of the latter, an ICRC delegate had visited the authorities in Taiwan several times to make preparations for their return.

Hanoi delegation

After the closure of the IRC delegation in Ho Chi Minh City in September 1976, all the problems relating to relief and protection were dealt with by the IRC delegation in Hanoi, containing two ICRC delegates.

With a view to continuing the repatriation flights, one of these delegates went to Ho Chi Minh City in December and met officials in charge of the city's foreign affairs department.

He also discussed with the leaders of the Red Cross of Viet Nam the progress of the aid programme then being carried on.

Thailand

Action to assist refugees¹

The Bangkok delegation of the International Red Cross, numbering four delegates, pursued its activities in aid of Cambodian, Lao and Vietnamese refugees in Thailand.

These refugees, who were housed in camps specially set up by the Thai authorities, continued to pour into the country throughout 1976, and by the end of the year they numbered about 80,000.

The ICRC delegates paid regular visits to the camps, their main task being to record all new arrivals. The particulars thus obtained were sent to the Central Tracing Agency in Geneva and provided the replies to a growing number of search requests (see p. 32).

When making visits, the delegates also distributed occasional emergency relief supplies to the refugees. In fact, under the agreement between the Thai authorities and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, it was the latter which was responsible for material aid to the refugees. However, the Indo-China Secretariat gave a further donation of 300,000 Swiss francs to the Thai Red Cross, to enable it to continue the programme of medical assistance begun the previous year for the refugees.

The ICRC obtained permission to visit the frontier police stations which held refugees detained for illegal entry into Thailand. Once these persons had served their sentence they were transferred to a refugee camp.

Lao

Until May 1976, the International Red Cross delegation in Lao was headed by an ICRC delegate residing in Vientiane. Later, the delegation was placed under the authority of the head of the Hanoi delegation, who travelled regularly to Vientiane in order to maintain contact with the authorities and with the heads of the Lao Red Cross. The Indo-China Secretariat provided various relief supplies—in particular, first-aid kits, bicycles, kitchen utensils and clothing—to the National Society, to enable it to participate in the Ministry of Health aid programme.

¹ The Indo-China Secretariat also assisted Indo-Chinese refugees in Thailand.

Chile

In 1976, the ICRC's delegation in Chile carried on its activities of protection and assistance, begun after the events of September 1973.

The staff consisted of six delegates, one of them a doctor, and seven local employees. The work performed was the same as in 1975, namely, visits to places of detention, aid to detainees and their families, and the services of the Central Tracing Agency.

Visits to places of detention

The ICRC having been granted access to all official places of detention, the delegates continued to make visits to the camps of persons detained under the emergency regulations and to the country's civilian prisons. In addition, they regularly visited a place of detention administered by a state security organization where, from September onwards, visits were under normal conditions, i.e., included talks with detainees without the presence of witnesses. Another centre belonging to the same security organization was also visited once by the delegates, who did not, however, meet any of the detainees. Several visits were made to military detention centres.

In the course of the twelve months under review, the delegates made a total of 223 visits to some 70 places of detention, and met between 3,500 (beginning of 1976) and 500 (end of 1976) detainees. This figure included persons detained under the emergency regulations, indicted prisoners (*procesados*), and convicted prisoners. The considerable reduction in the number of detainees over the year was because many were released within the country after being held under orders from the Justice Ministry, some were exiled, and in November 1976 the majority of those held under the emergency regulations were also released.

As is customary, every visit was the subject of a report to the competent authorities. Regular representations were made, after the visits, in relation to the conditions of detention observed by the delegates, various problems connected with the legal situation of detainees, allegations of ill-treatment, and speeding-up of trials.

Again, as in 1975, the ICRC gave its attention to the two liberation programmes. The delegates recorded the wishes of persons affected by the programme for releasing those held under the emergency regulations on condition that they left the country.

The delegation also played an active part in the programme for the release of convicted prisoners. It maintained contact between the places of detention and the institutions responsible for organizing departures. Delegates also made approaches to the Ministry of Justice concerning its refusal of certain convicted prisoners' requests for expulsion.