

**Zeitschrift:** Annual report / International Committee of the Red Cross  
**Herausgeber:** International Committee of the Red Cross  
**Band:** - (1969)  
  
**Rubrik:** Special Services

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

**Download PDF:** 27.04.2025

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

On 22 October, they were able to arrange for 47 Iranian nationals to be transferred to Iraq. A similar operation, involving 47 other persons, took place on 25 December.

## **6. SPECIAL SERVICES**

### **Central Tracing Agency (Geneva)**

In 1969 the Central Tracing Agency received 55,032 queries and communications of various kinds (54,783 in 1968) and despatched a total of 54,747 letters (54,227 in 1969). During the same year it transmitted 15,010 messages and instituted 10,715 enquiries through National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, ICRC Delegations and various official bodies. The Agency was able to close 11,301 of its files; 4,970 of them with a positive result.

These figures clearly indicate that the ICRC's work in this sector had not declined by comparison with the volume of work in the previous year. Nevertheless, the number of family messages forwarded through the Agency was lower than that which, in order to save time, ICRC Delegations on the spot transmitted direct, i.e. not through Geneva.

The Agency co-operated in the setting up in the field of registration and tracing offices organized in keeping with its own methods. At the beginning of November 1969 one of the Agency's staff went to Athens to start a card index system at the ICRC Delegation, for registration of political detainees whom delegates visit periodically, and needy families in need of assistance.

At the same time another member of the Agency staff was delegated to the Nigerian Red Cross in Lagos, which desired to develop and reorganize its Tracing Service.

Needless to say, during the year under review, the Central Tracing Agency was called upon to discharge the many tasks arising from current conflicts, particularly the recording of military prisoners taken in Nigeria by the federal or secessionist troops, and of members of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam taken prisoner by the South Vietnamese and American forces.

However, the Central Tracing Agency does not merely record the names of captives. It carries out investigations with a view to tracing military and civilian persons reported missing during hostilities and it endeavours to establish and maintain a link between prisoners, interned civilians, political detainees and their families.

The tracing of civilians who have been separated from their families by war or internal disorders is often only the first step towards the reuniting of families, to which the Central Agency also directs its efforts.

The Agency again received many enquiries concerning victims and former prisoners of the Second World War. This is a field in which it works in close co-operation with the International Tracing Service at Arolsen.

### **International Tracing Service (Arolsen)**

Nearly a quarter of a century after the end of the Second World War, the International Tracing Service (ITS) managed by the ICRC, has still a considerable role to fulfil. In 1969 its work was clearly on the increase, the number of enquiries reaching 174,473, that is to say 31,746 more than in 1968. Since 1951, when statistical records were begun, that figure of 174,473 was exceeded only twice, namely in 1957 (203,801) and in 1964 (197,805). The annual average over the last 15 years is about 150,000 (2,240,727 in total).

As in the past, the greater part of applications were for certificates of imprisonment and residence, in connection with the German Compensation Law and various other compensation programmes. There were 155,029 (118,251 in 1968), i.e. 88.9 per cent of enquiries.

Other enquiries were, on the whole, rather less than in 1968. There were 7,318 requests for photocopies (4.2%), 5,685 individual tracing requests (3.2%), 4,891 requests for death certificates (2.8%) and 1,550 requests for historical information (0.9%).

In 1969 the ITS issued 218,867 certificates of captivity, death and residence, reports, positive and negative replies, explanatory letters and photocopies.

On the basis of various documents, old and new, the making out of index cards was at about the same level as in the previous year. (1969: 632,006; 1968: 624,531). The same applied to the number of index cards filed in the central system (1969: 627,882; 1968: 602,836).

As in previous years, copious new documents from concentration camps, the Gestapo, prisons and other places of detention, as well as documents of a general nature referring to the last war, were acquired. Most came from Poland and the Auschwitz State Museum which for a long time has been closely co-operating with the ITS. Particularly useful were the registers of the Birkenau Tzigane camp and of the Auschwitz camp surgical unit (where pseudo-medical experiments were carried out). Mr. Roman Olszyna, a former detainee in the Gross-Rosen concentration camp, once again supplied the ITS with valuable documents (registers of detainees in that camp). The card index of the *Berlin Oberfinanzdirektion*, including the names of the Jews deported east in the first seven convoys, was also very important. Finally we would mention the documents provided by the Stutthof State Museum, the Dachau and the Mauthausen museums and the Austrian Red Cross.

In the course of the summer, after several years work, the provisional catalogue of concentration camps, entitled "*Vorläufiges Verzeichnis der Konzentrationslager und deren Aussenkommandos sowie andere Haftstätten unter dem Reichsführer SS in Deutschland und den deutsch besetzten Gebieten 33-45*", was published.

## Medical Personnel Section

In 1969 the Medical Personnel Section continued instructing delegates before their departure for tropical countries, particularly on personal hygiene in the tropics, certain diseases and prophylactic measures. Each delegate was issued with a kit containing medicaments, insecticides and a water-purifying product. They were also provided with a handbook entitled "Extracts of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene for ICRC delegates".

*Missions.* — In May 1969, Miss A. Pfirter, Head of the Medical Personnel Section, represented the ICRC at the XIXth Meeting of the Nursing Advisory Committee of the League.

She also took part in the XIVth International Congress of Nurses in Montreal from 22 to 29 June. At the request of the International Council of Nurses, she delivered to the Special Session of the congress a paper on nursing care in the event of disaster entitled "Emergency Health Preparedness: Individual Preparedness—the Citizen's Role". Some 10,000 nurses from 74 countries attended the congress.

Before and after the congress, Miss Pfirter was the guest of the Canadian Red Cross which had organized for her a programme of very interesting discussions. She went to Ottawa at the invitation of the Canadian Public Health Department. Her contacts gave her an insight into the many Red Cross activities in Canada and the organization of the country's civilian and military health services.

At the beginning of July, Miss Pfirter represented the ICRC at the XXII World Health Assembly in Boston.

In response to an invitation from the American Red Cross, she visited the Society's headquarters in Washington, the Eastern Area Chapter, the Alexandria Chapter and the Greater New York Chapter. The programmes arranged for these visits introduced her to the many activities of the American Red Cross and its branches. Her contacts with the Armed Forces Medical Services gave her the opportunity to discuss various problems of common interest.

*Publications.*—In order to step up dissemination of knowledge of the Geneva Conventions among nursing personnel, the Medical Personnel Section published a pocketbook entitled "Rights and Duties of Nurses under the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949". This handbook, which is available in French, English, Spanish and German, and is bound with a waterproof cover, was a success from the start. Some 10,000 copies were sold within a few months and a new edition is at present being printed to satisfy demand.

*Visits.*—As in the past, the ICRC received many visits from nurses, either in groups—a score of nursing schools from various

countries—or individually. Each visitor was provided with documentary material.

## **War Disablement Section**

A number of serious problems arose in 1969 for the War Disablement Section. These related to the fitting of artificial limbs to war casualties and the supply of aids to amputees, particularly in the secessionist provinces of Biafra, Yemen and the Republic of Vietnam.

In the secessionist province of Biafra, a small temporary artificial limb workshop was set up under a Dutch technician. He was assigned the production of artificial limbs and the training of local apprentices. Machines and tools were despatched to the secessionist territory and the fitting centre was strengthened by a physiotherapist.

To the Yemen the ICRC sent 40 wheel-chairs, maintenance material and 100 pairs of crutches. It also continued its study into the financing and setting up of an artificial limb workshop and into the training of Yemeni technicians to take over operation of the workshops.

The British Red Cross and the Order of St. John remitted the ICRC a donation of £1,500 (about 14,500 Sw. Frs.) for the benefit of the disabled in the People's Republic of Southern Yemen. Part of that sum was used to despatch wheel-chairs and crutches; the balance will be used for the setting up of the workshop.

One casualty of the war in the People's Republic of Southern Yemen, blind and with both hands amputated, was treated and fitted in Berlin thanks to the generosity of the German Red Cross in the German Democratic Republic and the East-Berlin Ministry of Health.

At the request of its Amman delegation, the ICRC provided the Jordan Red Crescent with equipment to a value of 10,000 Sw. Frs. for the production of artificial limbs in the workshop at Amman.

The ICRC also sent ten Braille watches to the Vung-Tau reception centre in the Republic of Vietnam.

## Relief Section

### SUMMARY OF RELIEF SUPPLIES FORWARDED OR DISTRIBUTED BY THE ICRC IN 1969

<i>Countries</i>		<i>Sw. Frs.<sup>1</sup></i>
<i>Algeria</i>	Despatch from Geneva of 5 tons of powdered milk for victims	22,500.—
<i>Cambodia</i>	Remittance to Cambodian Red Cross . . . . .	10,000.—
	Despatch from Geneva of antimalarial drugs . . . . .	9,500.—
	Local assistance for prisoners of war, refugees and internees	12,000.—
<i>Colombia</i>	Despatch of medicaments to Colombian Red Cross . . . .	18,910.—
<i>Greece</i>	Distribution of underclothes and food to persons under detention . . . . .	34,500.—
	Despatch from Geneva of 5 tons of powdered milk . . . .	20,000.—
<i>Guatemala</i>	Despatch of medicaments to Guatemalan Red Cross . . .	9,950.—
<i>Haiti</i>	Despatch of dressings and vaccines to Haiti Red Cross . .	17,360.—
<i>Honduras</i>	Despatch of vaccines, dressings, surgical kits, plasma and medicaments . . . . .	24,850.—
<i>Hungary</i>	Despatch from Geneva of medicaments to Hungarian Red Cross . . . . .	23,700.—
<i>Indonesia</i>	Forwarding of a gift of medicaments and dressings to Indo- nesian Red Cross for Kalimantan refugees . . . . .	8,200.—
<i>Laos</i>	Despatch from Geneva of vaccines and plasma . . . . .	13,420.—
	Supplies purchased locally and distributions to Meos refugees, in co-operation with Laos Red Cross . . . . .	27,320.—
<i>Malagasy Republic</i>	Despatch of medical samples to missions . . . . .	6,000.—
<i>Panama</i>	Despatch of medicaments to Panamanian Red Cross . . .	4,700.—
<i>Peru</i>	Despatch of medicaments to Peruvian Red Cross . . . . .	18,700.—
<i>Poland</i>	Despatch from Geneva of medicaments to Polish Red Cross	17,700.—
<i>Southern Yemen (People's Rep. of)</i>	Assistance to detainees and to their families . . . . .	13,000.—
	Despatch from Geneva of 40 tons of powdered milk and 2.5 tons of cheese for Aden Red Cross Society . . . . .	190,000.—
	Delivery of medicaments and dressings (donated by Bulga- rian Red Cross). . . . .	18,500.—
	Despatch from Geneva of medicaments, perfusion kits, medical instruments and wheel-chairs . . . . .	22,350.—
	carry forward . . .	543,160.—

<sup>1</sup> Exclusive of freight



<i>Countries</i>		<i>Sw. Frs.<sup>1</sup></i>
	brought forward . . .	543,160.—
<i>Syria</i>	Despatch from Geneva of 69 tons of powdered milk, 3 tons of cheese and 4,000 blankets for refugees at Deraa and Damascus . . . . .	310,000.—
	Delivery of various donations (1,000 blankets, 20,000 tins of food, 61 tons of powdered milk, 100 tons of flour, 20 tons of sugar, 2 tons of rice, and clothes) sent by the Red Cross Societies of Switzerland, Lebanon and the German Democratic Republic, the Red Crescent Societies of Turkey and of the United Arab Republic, and by the Iranian Red Lion and Sun Society . . . . .	382,000.—
<i>Tunisia</i>	Despatch from Geneva of 5 tons of powdered milk for victims	22,500.—
<i>United Arab Republic</i>	Despatch from Geneva of 31 tons of powdered milk and 10 tons of dried pears for evacuees from the Suez Canal .	151,000.—
<i>Democratic Rep. of Vietnam</i>	Despatch from Geneva of Laboratory material and surgical kits to the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam . . . . .	53,000.—
<i>Republic of Vietnam</i>	Despatch from Geneva of surgical instruments for hospitals	16,500.—
	Despatch from Geneva of 4,200 toothbrushes for prisoners of war . . . . .	9,035.—
	Despatch from Geneva of a mobile relief unit for Dr. Béguin	35,000.—
	Distributions to prisons and orphanages (sundry donations)	106,935.—
<i>West Bank of the Jordan</i>	Despatch from Geneva of 70 tons powdered milk, 11 tons of cheese and 50 tons of detergents . . . . .	409,000.—
	Supplies purchased locally: parcels, tents, medicaments and transport vouchers . . . . .	42,500.—
	Forwarding of food and blankets (gifts from Tunisian and United Arab Republic Red Crescent) for needy inhabitants and detainees . . . . .	800,000.—
<i>Yemen Arab Republic</i>	Despatch from Geneva of medicaments, vaccines, medical instruments and dressings for teams operating in royalist-held zone . . . . .	16,225.—
	Despatch of vaccines and medicaments for ICRC surgical team operating in Sa'ada . . . . .	18,165.—
	Despatch from Geneva to Sana'a, by ship and by plane, of 46 tons of powdered milk and 15.5 tons of cheese for the civilian population . . . . .	207,000.—
	Delivery of medicaments, medical supplies, clothes and soap to hospitals at Sana'a and Taiz (gifts from the German Red Cross in the German Democratic Republic and the Bulgarian, Romanian and Swiss Red Cross Societies)	224,200.—
	carry forward . . .	3,346,220.—

<sup>1</sup> Exclusive of freight



<i>Countries</i>		<i>Sw. Frs.</i> <sup>1</sup>
<i>Sundries</i>	ICRC also worked for the benefit of civilian populations, detainees and internees, who were victims of internal disorders. This relief amounted to . . . . .	3,346,220.—
		<u>65,200.—</u>
	Total Sw. Frs. . . . .	<u>3,411,420.—</u>

---

<sup>1</sup> Exclusive of freight.

# ICRC RELIEF ACTION FOR VICTIMS OF THE NIGERIA CONFLICT <sup>1</sup>

## List of Donors

<i>National Societies and Governments</i>		<i>Sw. Frs.</i>
<i>Bulgaria</i>	Medicaments . . . . .	40,000.—
<i>Canada</i>	Stockfish, potato meal, medicaments and medical supplies .	7,200,000.—
<i>Czecho-slovakia</i>	Milk, sugar . . . . .	100,000.—
<i>Denmark</i>	Medicaments, medical supplies and soap . . . . .	2,100,000.—
<i>Finland</i>	Medicaments . . . . .	90,330.—
<i>German Dem. Rep.</i>	Medicaments, dressings, blankets and soap . . . . .	700,000.—
<i>German Fed. Rep.</i>	Medicaments, plasma, stockfish, biscuits (rusks) and detergents . . . . .	2,560,000.—
<i>Hungary</i>	Tents, blankets, soap and medicaments . . . . .	50,000.—
<i>Iceland</i>	Stockfish . . . . .	145,000.—
<i>India</i>	Medicaments . . . . .	4,000.—
<i>Ireland</i>	Medicaments, medical supplies and babyfood . . . . .	71,000.—
<i>Israel</i>	Medicaments . . . . .	not specified
<i>Italy</i>	Medicaments . . . . .	2,000.—
<i>Japan</i>	Powdered milk . . . . .	26,400.—
<i>Malagasy Rep.</i>	Rice . . . . .	15,500.—
<i>Netherlands</i>	Powdered milk . . . . .	480,000.—
<i>Norway</i>	Stockfish . . . . .	7,200,000.—
	Surgical equipment . . . . .	not specified
<i>Spain</i>	Medicaments . . . . .	15,000.—
<i>Sweden</i>	Clothes, blankets, soap, foodstuffs and medical supplies . .	373,670.—
<i>Switzerland</i>	Medicaments and medical supplies . . . . .	450,000.—
<i>Turkey</i>	Surgical instruments . . . . .	3,000.—
<i>United Kingdom</i>	Medicaments, vaccines and blankets . . . . .	17,500.—
<i>United States</i>	Medicaments, protein foods, blood transfusion kits, dextran, fibrinogen, etc. (for Blood Bank) . . . . .	407,000.—
Total Sw. Frs. . . . .		22,050,400.—

<sup>1</sup> The list of gifts in cash will appear in the special report mentioned on page 105.