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Cyprus

During 1976, i.e. two years after the cessation of hostilities on the island, the ICRC still maintained a delegation (three delegates) in Cyprus.

Since August 1974 the island has been divided into two sectors, one in the south, under Greek-Cypriot control, the other in the north, controlled by the Turkish-Cypriot authorities. The two zones are separated by what is known as the Green Line.

The ICRC delegates have provided aid for some thousands of Greek-Cypriots living in the north and for this reason has maintained regular contact with them and with the Turkish and Turkish-Cypriot authorities. They also arranged for the exchange, across the Green Line, of family messages between Greek-Cypriot villagers in the north and their relatives in the south, and have remained in regular contact with the Greek-Cypriot authorities.

Moreover, in order to reinforce representations made in Cyprus itself, the delegate-general for Europe and the head of the Cyprus delegation went to Ankara in June to see members of the Turkish Government in order to inform them of the ICRC's concern regarding the difficulties encountered by the Greek-Cypriot population in Karpasia.

Relief supplies were provided again in 1976 by the ICRC, as follows:

- supply to Turkish-Cypriot authorities of medicine difficult to obtain in northern Cyprus;
- financing of aid sent by the Cyprus Red Cross to Greek-Cypriots living in the north;
- help in purchasing household goods and bedding for displaced persons in the south;

The ICRC also gave financial support to the tracing operations of the Cyprus Red Cross.

ACTIVITIES OF THE REGIONAL DELEGATIONS

The ICRC has established regional delegations in Africa (Lomé, Nairobi), in Latin America (Caracas, Buenos Aires), and in Asia (New Delhi, Kuala Lumpur). There are also regional delegates, based on Geneva, who cover the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq and Iran, North Africa, Europe, and North America.

Through their regular contacts with governments and National Red Cross Societies in the countries visited, and even with liberation movements, the regional delegates carry on many types of activity.

In the first place, they perform much work for the protection and assistance of prisoners, especially those detained for political reasons. In 1976, the regional delegates visited 146 places of

detention in nineteen countries, the total number of detainees being more than 67,000; about 4,600 of these were "political" detainees. In fact, in many countries the authorities do not separate penal law prisoners from political detainees.

In the present Report, the term "political detainee" is used for simplification, not because the ICRC intends to judge the prisoners' status according to the detaining authorities' criteria.

The visits had a purely humanitarian aim: to inspect the conditions of detention; to provide aid for the prisoners if required (see p. 31); and, where necessary, to suggest to the authorities measures for the improvement of detention conditions. To ensure a balanced survey, the regional delegates are usually accompanied by doctor-delegates, and they talk to the prisoners without witnesses.

After the visit has been made, the delegates report their observations to the person in charge of the place of detention, then to his superiors. Lastly, an official report, confidential in nature, is sent by the ICRC only to the government concerned.

The regional delegates are also interested in the activities of the National Societies, which the ICRC supports as much as it can afford (see p. 31).

Finally, they take part in the efforts being made by the ICRC to spread knowledge of fundamental Red Cross principles and of the Geneva Conventions. To accomplish this, they establish contacts with the Ministries of Defence, Education and Health, and with the country's universities, in order to distribute the ICRC publications produced for the armed forces and for schools, and to organize courses or give lectures on international humanitarian law. The regional delegates are often called on to participate in seminars on the subject of the Red Cross, especially those organized by the League or by National Societies.

In the event of conflict, this preparatory work, in collaboration with the National Societies, makes it possible for the ICRC to launch without delay and with maximum effectiveness its operations of protection and assistance.

Africa

As part of the regular missions of the ICRC as described above, the regional delegates based on Lomé (Togo) and Nairobi (Kenya), and the delegate general for Africa, paid visits to the following countries (apart from Togo and Kenya) in the course of 1976: Benin, Burundi, Cape Verde Islands, Congo, Ethiopia, Mauritius, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, French territory of the Afars and the Issas (TFAI), Uganda, Upper Volta and Zaire.

Aid to the value of 22,000 Swiss francs was given by the ICRC to support the operations of various National Societies in West and East Africa. The Somali Red Crescent also received 10 tons of milk and 50 tons of flour donated by the Swiss Confederation and valued at 127,000 Swiss francs (see tables on p. 30).