

**Zeitschrift:** Annual report / International Committee of the Red Cross  
**Herausgeber:** International Committee of the Red Cross  
**Band:** - (1981)  
  
**Rubrik:** Africa

### **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>**

# I. ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

## AFRICA

Africa was the main area of ICRC activity in 1981, in terms not only of the situations of conflict, tension and unrest which necessitated its intervention, but also of the number of delegates deployed in the field. With more than 80 delegates divided among ten delegations and four sub-delegations, plus ad hoc missions to several countries, the ICRC intervened in one way or another in a score of African countries. Its tasks consisted primarily of visiting prisoners of war and "political"\* detainees, passing on family messages and providing assistance for civilian victims of the conflicts, especially displaced persons; in this latter domain the ICRC is often the only international organization authorized to take action, and consequently developed considerable activity in Angola, Uganda and the countries of the Horn of Africa.

To finance its activities in Africa for the whole year the ICRC made an appeal in mid-February for 52.2 million Swiss francs. This appeal was sent out at the same time as an appeal by the League of Red Cross Societies, which needed 41 million Swiss francs for its aid to refugees and victims of drought, and the planned development of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the African continent. By 31 December the ICRC had received, in response to this appeal, contributions or promises of contributions in cash, goods and services valuing 52.3 million Swiss francs.

\*  
\*   \*   \*

Due to the extent of its commitments in other parts of the African continent, which had mobilized all its human and material resources, the ICRC had been compelled since 1978 to suspend the activities of its regional delegation for West Africa, based in Lomé (Togo). In 1981, to reactivate this sector the ICRC set up the Office for Central and West Africa in Geneva headquarters.

\* In this Report the term "political detainees" is used for simplicity, and does not imply recognition by the ICRC of the status attributed by the detaining powers to the prisoners it visits in the course of internal tension or disturbances.

## Southern Africa

### South Africa

The ICRC regional delegation for Southern Africa, based in Pretoria, continued its activities in aid of convicted security prisoners and persons detained in preventive custody under Section 10 of the Internal Security Amendment Act, the two categories of prisoners whom the authorities of the Republic of South Africa have allowed the ICRC to visit. At the same time the ICRC continued its efforts to gain access to the other categories of political or security detainees.

The Pretoria delegation also took part in protection work on behalf of prisoners detained in Namibia and in South Africa as a result of clashes between South African forces and FAPLA (Angolan army) and SWAPO (South West African People's Organization) combatants.

At the request of the South African authorities in late August, the ICRC approached the parties concerned to arrange for the repatriation of the mortal remains of a South African soldier killed in Angola, and of several Soviet soldiers also killed in Angola. Negotiations were still continuing at the end of the year.

### Protection

**PERSONS IMPRISONED BECAUSE OF THE INTERNAL SITUATION.** – The ICRC again carried out a series of visits to persons imprisoned because of the internal situation, as it has done every year since 1963: between 31 August and 18 December a team led by the delegate-general for Africa and including one doctor visited six places of detention holding 505 convicted security prisoners. At the time of these visits there were no persons detained under Section 10 of the Internal Security Amendment Act.

Furthermore the Pretoria delegation in 1981 renewed the attempts it has made over the past few years to gain access as well to unconvicted security detainees, whom the ICRC is not authorized to visit, but again to no avail: prisoners held, for example, under Section 6 of the Terrorism Act still cannot be visited. Similarly, all efforts made to visit six prisoners sentenced to death remained unsuccessful, since the ICRC failed to obtain the right to speak to them in private.

The Pretoria delegation likewise inquired into the fate of possible political detainees imprisoned in the "homelands", and an ICRC mission went to Transkei for this purpose in May. The ICRC took this opportunity of offering its services to the authorities there, who had not replied by the end of the year.

**VISITS TO ANGOLAN PRISONERS OF WAR AND ONE SOVIET PRISONER.** – In 1981, ICRC delegates on three occasions visited the Soviet prisoner captured in southern Angola by South African soldiers in late August, each time in a different place of detention. A doctor and a Russian-speaking interpreter participated in turn in these visits.

An account of the visits made to Angolan prisoners of war is given in the chapter on Namibia in this Report.

### Assistance

In addition to its protective activities, the ICRC continued its programme of assistance for distressed families of detainees or for previous detainees who had been visited by its delegates. The number of recipients of such assistance increased in 1981 from 40 to about 400 a month. The cost of this assistance rose to 404,362 Swiss francs. As in the past, the aid supplied took the form of food parcels (3,332 parcels estimated at 218,839 Swiss francs), blankets or the payment of travel costs for people visiting their detained relatives (752 transport vouchers for a total amount of 172,714 Swiss francs). The ICRC also financed simple medical treatment in 49 cases.

In May the South African Government informed the ICRC that the permission granted several years ago to give assistance to convicted prisoners during the annual visits would henceforth no longer apply. The prisons department was approached in an attempt to have this decision rescinded. The assistance distributed regularly until 1980 consisted largely of sports equipment and educational and recreational material. Following the series of visits carried out in September 1981, the ICRC was authorized to supply prisoners with aid equivalent to 17,000 Swiss francs.

### Tracing Agency

The Pretoria delegation handled more than 100 requests for inquiries and family messages, in collaboration with the South African Red Cross.

It likewise took over the transmission of messages between the Soviet detainee and his family.

## Namibia/South-West Africa

For the first half of the year the ICRC's activities in Namibia were conducted from its base in Pretoria. The

intensification of military operations between the South African forces and FAPLA and SWAPO, combined with the increasing number of victims, induced the ICRC to seek permission to open a permanent office in Windhoek. After receiving the consent of the competent authorities in May, the new ICRC office was immediately established in the Namibian capital and became operational from July on.

### Protection

Although they were not entitled in principle to have access to detainees imprisoned under the Administrator-General's Proclamation No. 9 (AG 9), the ICRC delegates were authorized to continue their visits to the 117 persons detained under this legislation at the Mariental Camp. These visits were made twice in 1981, from 28–30 January and from 4–12 November.

On 6 August a delegate visited three convicted detainees (including one sentenced to capital punishment) at the central prison in Windhoek. It was subsequently possible on 26 November to visit seven other convicted security prisoners for the first time at Gobabis prison. In December, three prisoners awaiting trial were visited for the first time in the north of Namibia; they were SWAPO combatants, a category of prisoners to whom the ICRC had never been able to gain access before, despite repeated requests. The ICRC consequently continued its efforts throughout the year to gain access to all captured armed SWAPO combatants, though without any success apart from the aforesaid three prisoners.

Conversely the ICRC obtained the consent of the South African authorities, following interventions in the field and from Geneva headquarters, to visit Angolan prisoners of war captured during the clashes in southern Angola and detained in Namibia. On 9 October the delegates began by visiting ten wounded prisoners of war receiving treatment at a hospital in the north of the territory. On 10 October the same team visited 69 slightly wounded or uninjured prisoners of war in an internment camp in the south of the territory. Further visits took place from 4–12 November, and six new Angolan prisoners of war were duly registered on that occasion.

Finally the 85 Angolan prisoners of war, the 117 security prisoners and the 10 convicted security prisoners were again visited between 15 and 17 December by the delegates, who took the opportunity to hand out Christmas parcels to them.

### Assistance

The ICRC has set up an assistance programme for detainees' families and recently released detainees similar to the one in operation in South Africa. Implementation of this programme was initially slowed down, however, by the problems involved in contacting these families, located in areas sometimes difficult to reach. But it gained momentum steadily.

ly in the second half of the year. In 1981, 14,650 Swiss francs was devoted to assistance for the families of detainees and for detainees and prisoners of war.

### **Tracing Agency**

The Tracing Agency office attached to the delegation in Windhoek has stepped up its activities since November, due mainly to the registration of Angolan prisoners of war. About a hundred family messages were transmitted to the ICRC delegation in Angola after the visits. The Windhoek Tracing Agency office gave about fifty families of detainees transport vouchers to enable them to visit relatives detained on Robben Island.

## **Angola**

The main emphasis of ICRC activities in Angola in 1981 was centred on continuing the assistance programme on behalf of the displaced civilian population, which was begun in April 1980 (see Annual Report 1980) as a direct outcome of the conflict between South African forces and FAPLA and SWAPO in southern Angola and Namibia, and of the aftermath of the Angolan conflict in 1975-1976 with armed opposition movements operating in the centre and south-east of the country.

The ICRC's relief campaign in Angola was the institution's largest operation on the African continent in 1981, in response to the widespread need for food and medicine observed among the displaced persons who had fled from the hostilities to the highlands of the Huambo and Bié provinces and to the province of Kunene.

Although the ICRC already had a sub-delegation at Huambo and an office at Kuito, besides the main delegation with its headquarters at Luanda, it was nevertheless impelled by the development in August of the military situation in the south to open an office at Lubango in September, then to install a correspondent at N'Giva in December. By the end of 1981 the basic structure had been set up for a relief campaign to help the displaced persons in the region between the Kunene River and the Namibian border. The accent was placed on medical and tracing activities.

### **Problems relating to the delegates' safety and their movements in the field**

Implementation of the assistance programme had already been slowed down in 1980 by danger and logistic difficulties encountered in the field. In spite of the considerable efforts and material resources deployed, the assistance programme on the Planalto was again hampered in 1981. For safety delegates were compelled on several occasions to suspend

their activities and stop all movement. After being blocked in early December 1980, activities were resumed on 8 January 1981, but came to an almost complete standstill again for three months from the beginning of May. It was decided that from then on delegates and relief supplies would be transported solely by air to the assisted areas. Regular contact has been maintained with the "external" representatives of UNITA, the main opposition movement against the Angola Government, primarily to obtain adequate guarantees for the safety of delegates travelling in the provinces.

### **Development of ICRC activities in the south of the country**

In view of the renewed outbreak of hostilities between the armed forces of Angola and South Africa on 23 August, the ICRC offered its services on 30 August to the Angolan Ministry of Health and the president of the National Society to help the wounded and displaced persons. On 2 September, this offer was officially accepted by the Angolan authorities. The South African authorities, who were approached by the Pretoria delegation, likewise gave the delegates all guarantees required for movement in the areas under their control.

By 3 December a team of three delegates, including one doctor, were already on their way from Luanda to Lubango to assess the situation and determine the medical and other needs of victims of the conflict. As a result of this mission, a sub-delegation was quickly set up at Lubango. At the same time the hospital there was supplied with medicaments.

In November, after finally obtaining the consent of the Angolan authorities, delegates duly effected the planned survey mission in the extreme south of Kunene province, the centre of hostilities between Angola and the Republic of South Africa.

On 22 November the delegates arrived in the N'Giva region, only to find that the hospital had been practically destroyed and that most of the population were still in hiding in the surrounding bush. In view of the lack of medical facilities and to provide for the evident requirements, the ICRC installed two delegates and one nurse at N'Giva.

### **Material assistance to displaced persons**

The assistance programme for the displaced population of the Planalto, which was launched in April 1980, continued throughout 1981 apart from the interruptions for safety reasons mentioned above. The assistance schedule set by the ICRC was, however, held up to some extent by other factors as well, such as the absence of regular, safe and reliable means of transport within the country, the vast distances to be covered and the rainy season.

In early 1981 serious problems encountered in the transport of relief supplies to Angola resulted in delays in their distribution to their intended recipients. It was realized that reserve stocks of essential supplies must be accumulated on the spot in order to avoid the recurrence of such a situation.



In order to do so, the ICRC shipped a quantity of maize to the port of Lobito (two emergency consignments of 400 tons each), which was then transported by rail – as far as possible – from the Atlantic coast to the Planalto region. The 800 tons finally reached Huambo. An airlift was also organized from Botswana between 9–26 March. Twelve flights between Francistown and Huambo and one flight between Francistown and Luanda brought in almost 300 tons of relief supplies (194 tons of food, 30 tons of soap and the vehicles needed for the assistance campaign). This operation cost about 600,000 Swiss francs.

By the beginning of May it was obvious that the ICRC's intervention was serving its purpose in the villages of the Huambo province, having already lessened the effects of malnutrition. Unfortunately the danger to the ICRC delegates had increased, and their movements again had to be suspended, reducing the impact and effectiveness of the efforts made.

The whole programme was consequently reorganized as from the second half of May. It was decided that from then on only air transport would be used for delegates and relief supplies to the assisted regions.

In September a renewed deterioration was observed in the nutritional condition of the displaced population, and the amount of aid had to be increased. The volume of assistance was doubled within a period of three months: in December, 320 tons of relief supplies were distributed to approximately 55,000 displaced persons, compared with 57 tons in January of the same year. The distribution of such substantial amounts was made possible by safer conditions, the repair of the railway linking Lobito with the Planalto and the resumption of public road transport facilities.

In the province of Bié, the suspension of activities in May, when the ICRC set up an office in Kuito, meant that the planned survey missions and assistance programme could only be carried out to a limited extent. The ICRC was only able to provide restricted assistance to the local hospital and a leprosarium there, affecting some 650 people. Technical assistance was given to Kuito, the capital of the province, in order to sustain the programme of food aid organized by the Angolan Red Cross on behalf of over a thousand displaced persons.

At the end of 1981, 2,031 tons of relief supplies consisting mainly of food and estimated at a value of 3,124,131 Swiss francs had been distributed on the Planalto.

The principal donors in this assistance operation were the EEC (European Economic Community), the Government and National Society of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Swiss Government.

## Medical assistance

### *AID FOR DISPLACED PERSONS ON THE PLANALTO.*

– The ICRC medical teams (two doctors and five nurses) visited the nine public health stations set up in the assisted villages of the Bailundo and Katchiungo regions.

Treatment for minor ailments such as sores, scabies, diarrhoea etc. was given at these health stations by specially trained local personnel, whereas more serious cases of general medicine were attended to by the ICRC doctor during his visits. Thanks to the local personnel, these public health stations were able to continue dispensing treatment without interruption despite the danger. It was moreover possible to keep them supplied throughout the year.

An ICRC medical team likewise grappled with the problem of restoring the Bailundo municipal hospital to working order, after three years without adequate facilities. This hospital of about forty beds was intended to serve a population of approximately 220,000 people. After it was taken over in August by the ICRC (one doctor and two nurses), its efficiency increased considerably. Apart from substantial improvements made in general hygiene and organization by the local personnel, the ICRC team reopened a small operating theatre. In October alone 130 patients were admitted to hospital and 4,387 out-patient consultations were given. The ICRC supplied the necessary medicaments and material throughout the year to keep the hospital going.

The ICRC also kept the Katchiungo hospital and the Bailundo Protestant Mission hospital supplied with material and medicaments.

In addition the ICRC set up a camp of 22 tents at Bailundo in mid-March to take care of some two hundred people from the surrounding villages, who had come to the hospital there for treatment. Devoid of any means of subsistence and living in unhygienic conditions, these people were given assistance during the time needed for their full recovery.

In September 1980 a new type of assistance intended to save children suffering from severe malnutrition had been set up in the form of a special feeding centre at Katchiungo. This experiment was continued in 1981. A second centre was opened at Bailundo in January, and the nutritional condition of several thousand children was kept under close supervision by one doctor and two nurses throughout the year. Several hundred children were housed in these two centres, which, since they had sufficient stocks of food, were able to continue without any interruption even when the ICRC delegates were unable to get through, thanks to the local employees, nurses and assistants.

**BOMBA ALTA ORTHOPEDIC CENTRE.** – The programme of assistance for war amputees at the Bomba Alta centre (Huambo), which began in August 1979 for a planned period of two years by agreement with the Angolan Red Cross, was extended for a further year.

Since the arrival of the first ICRC technicians, 527 amputees have been fitted with prostheses. About thirty employees, members of the Angolan Red Cross, are working at the centre as assistant technicians and producing prostheses from metal, wood, leather, plastic and plaster.

The ICRC team, consisting of three orthopedic technicians and two physiotherapists, has started to manufacture the

separate parts needed to assemble the prostheses, thus achieving the set target of making maximum use of local resources and rendering the centre as self-sufficient as possible.

## Protection

As part of its protective activities, the ICRC repeatedly approached all parties concerned in order to gain access to people detained in connection with the international conflict or with internal events.

### *SOUTH AFRICAN PRISONER DETAINED BY SWAPO.*

– On 9 November 1981 the ICRC made its fifth visit to a South African prisoner of war detained by SWAPO in Angola since February 1978 (see previous Annual Reports). Two visits without witness were possible in 1981, though not at the actual place of detention. Family messages and parcels were, however, handed over to the prisoner with the help of the Angolan Red Cross.

### *APPROACHES TO THE ANGOLAN AUTHORITIES.*

– Following the regular visits by delegates to the Angolan prisoners of war held in Namibia (see page 8), reports on these visits and capture cards were handed over to the authorities in Luanda. The family messages prepared during these visits were passed on to the prisoners' relatives with the collaboration of the National Society.

The efforts made in 1980 at the request of the authorities in Pretoria to arrange for the return of the mortal remains of a South African soldier were continued in 1981 (see also Annual Report 1980). After being notified in August 1981 of a new South African request for the return of the mortal remains of another soldier killed in Angola, the ICRC conveyed to the Angolan Government the practical proposals made by the South African authorities for their repatriation. These proposals were still being examined at the end of 1981.

The ICRC had already felt impelled in 1980 to request the Angolan authorities for permission to visit all UNITA detainees in government hands, including those sentenced to death. These approaches were continued, without effect, in 1981.

*SWAPO DECLARATION OF INTENT.* – On 25 August, SWAPO officially presented the ICRC with a declaration of intent to respect the principles of international humanitarian law applicable in armed conflicts, as contained in the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their 1977 Protocol I relating to the protection of victims of international armed conflicts.

During contacts with SWAPO representatives in Geneva, other questions of concern to the ICRC were also raised, in particular the problem of visits to the South African prisoner of war (see above).

*RELATIONS WITH UNITA.* – The dangerous conditions encountered by its delegates in the field have induced the ICRC to maintain regular contact with UNITA representatives in Europe. In the course of these meetings, the subject of prisoners detained by this movement was again raised in 1981. The ICRC made a particular point of repeating its offer to act as a neutral intermediary between the parties concerned, with a view to the release and possible repatriation of certain prisoners. None of the steps taken had produced tangible results, however, by the end of 1981.

## Tracing Agency

In January an expert from the Central Tracing Agency went on mission to Luanda to evaluate tracing activities in Angola and set up the necessary facilities to deal with cases already recorded and future cases.

By the end of 1981 the volume of work of the ICRC Tracing Agency office in Angola had shown a marked increase, due mainly to intensified military activities in the south of the country (transmission of messages from Angolan prisoners of war visited in Namibia to their families and the obtaining of replies). A second mission by a delegate from the Central Tracing Agency consequently took place in early December. His assessment confirmed the need to organize the Tracing Agency attached to the delegation in Luanda and the essential network of correspondents.

All year the Angolan Red Cross collaborated with the ICRC delegation, in particular by forwarding messages from Angolan prisoners of war detained in Namibia to families in the provinces where there is no ICRC sub-delegation.

## Personnel

The number of ICRC staff in Angola totalled 25 people at the beginning of 1981. Due to the increase in the number of assisted persons, the total staff had been substantially expanded by the end of the year and consisted of some forty people.

## Mozambique

### Medical assistance

A technical co-operation agreement in connection with the project to help Mozambique war-disabled was signed between the Ministry of Health and the ICRC on 7 February 1981. An ICRC team, composed of two prosthetists and one

physiotherapist, arrived in Maputo on 1 April. Their first task was to equip the orthopedic workshop at Maputo's central hospital. Six Mozambique employees – including three war amputees – were recruited and trained by the ICRC team. The fitting of amputees was begun in mid-June, starting with a group which had been initially provided with provisional prostheses. By the end of the year about sixty disabled persons had been fitted with artificial limbs and were at last able to move around again. As in the centres set up by the ICRC in Ethiopia and Angola, the technique applied provides mainly for the use of local raw materials to produce essential items of equipment.

## Protection

**REPATRIATION OF THE BODY OF A SOUTH AFRICAN SOLDIER.** – The ICRC played its part as a neutral intermediary by participating – at the request of the Mozambique authorities – in the repatriation of the body of a South African soldier killed in Mozambique. The transport took place by air on 30 March under the auspices of the ICRC. The operation, to which the regional delegation of Pretoria also lent its support, was the first of its kind between Mozambique and South Africa.

**MISSIONS TO LESOTHO AND SWAZILAND.** – Since these two countries are covered by the ICRC delegation in Mozambique, the delegate in Maputo went once to Swaziland and twice to Lesotho in 1981, to resume contact with the authorities and representatives of the National Society there.

In Lesotho, the ICRC delegate offered his services to the government in order to obtain access to political detainees. A memorandum to this effect was handed over to the competent authorities. The government's reply had not yet reached the ICRC by the end of 1981.

## Zimbabwe

The delegation in Salisbury became regional at the beginning of 1981, and has since then also covered Botswana, Zambia and Malawi. In Zimbabwe, the regional delegate has kept up regular contact with the authorities and continued his efforts to promote the dissemination of knowledge of international humanitarian law. In addition the Salisbury delegation acted as a logistics base in the early months of the year for the assistance programme in Angola, in particular by organizing an airlift of relief supplies from Francistown (Botswana).

## Tracing Agency

The activities of the Tracing Agency office in Salisbury declined progressively from the beginning of the year. By June 1981, most of the regional delegation's tracing activities had been passed on to the National Red Cross Society.

Despite all endeavours by the delegations concerned in the adjoining countries and by the Central Tracing Agency in Geneva, a number of inquiries have remained unresolved. A list of 659 people who disappeared during the conflict was consequently handed over in October to the ministries concerned, so that they could take charge of the inquiries into the whereabouts of these missing persons. The families have been informed of this step.

## Other countries

**In Botswana,** where the ICRC had closed its offices in May 1980, the regional delegate based in Salisbury carried out a mission in August 1981 to maintain contact with the authorities and the National Society. This visit served as an opportunity to raise questions relating to protection (no detainees belonging to the categories of concern to the ICRC, according to the authorities) and to promote the development of dissemination activities.

**In Malawi,** where the regional delegate based in Salisbury carried out a mission in February, his visit likewise had the purpose of offering the ICRC's protective services and promoting the development of dissemination activities. Requests for permission to visit security detainees were without avail in 1981.

**In Zambia,** the ICRC began to phase out its activities from the beginning of the year, when the last refugees from Zimbabwe were repatriated. The headquarters of the regional delegation were transferred from Lusaka to Salisbury in January, and by the end of the first half of the year the delegation in Lusaka had closed down completely.

In February two delegates, accompanied by a member of the Zambian Red Cross, made a survey mission to the eastern province of the country (the Mungo, Senanga and Sesheke regions at the extreme south of the Zambezi), information having been received of large numbers of displaced persons in acute distress. The relief programme prepared to meet this contingency could not, however, be put into effect owing to the lack of adequate means of transport and the failure to obtain the necessary authorizations.

The regional delegate went to Lusaka in August and again in November to follow up requests to the Zambian Government for permission to visit the places of detention (similar approaches had already been made in 1980). There was still no response by the end of the year.



*In the Arua district (West Nile), displaced Ugandan civilians surround an ICRC lorry before a distribution of food*



## East Africa

### Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, the ICRC continued to help the victims of the armed conflicts in Eritrea and Ogaden, and the population in the Tigre and Gondar regions, which had also been affected by disturbances.

The ICRC was prevented from carrying out its protective activities (also see below), and numerous representations were made both by the ICRC delegates on the spot and by headquarters in Geneva. This was also the reason for the visit by Mr. Jean-Marc Bornet, delegate-general for Africa, to Addis Ababa at the end of the year, when he discussed the problem with the Ethiopian authorities and in particular with Mr. Feleke G. Georgis, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

During his mission Mr. Bornet also broached the question of the ICRC delegates' status. The institution has been authorized to establish a permanent delegation in Ethiopia, and an agreement to that effect was signed between the Ethiopian Government and the ICRC on 24 December.

#### Protection

*VISIT TO SOMALI PRISONERS OF WAR.* – On 10 February the ICRC again visited Somali prisoners of war in Ethiopian captivity: it had access to a military camp and the military hospital of Harar, where there were 60 prisoners, including 22 new ones. A small amount of relief supplies was distributed to them via the Ethiopian Red Cross. The ICRC had been visiting Somali prisoners of war at Harar since 1978.

No further visit was possible in 1981, the ICRC being officially informed on 6 July that its visits to Somali prisoners of war had been suspended. The ICRC's numerous approaches to remind the Ethiopian authorities of their treaty obligations, and thus to demand that the visits be resumed, had not shown any progress by the end of the year.

*VISITS TO ETHIOPIAN PLACES OF DETENTION.* – In December 1980 the Ethiopian authorities had agreed to allow the ICRC to visit all places of detention. Several steps have been taken since then to arrange for this agreement to be put into practical effect, but although it has never been questioned, no progress was made in 1981.

#### Medical assistance

*ASSISTANCE IN THE REGIONS AFFECTED BY THE WAR.* – In March and April the deputy head of the ICRC

Medical Division went to four Ethiopian provinces (Bale, Harar, Eritrea and Tigre) to assess the living conditions of displaced persons on the spot and re-examine the medical assistance programmes in the light of new developments. As a result of this mission it was decided to terminate at the end of June the programme of local mobile medical units, financed by the ICRC, since it seemed preferable to support a fixed medical infrastructure. After the first half of the year the ICRC therefore only continued its aid to hospital establishments, keeping them supplied with the medicaments required either directly or via the Ethiopian Red Cross and the Ministry of Health.

*DEBRE ZEIT CENTRE.* – After a survey mission in August 1980, the ICRC decided to extend its assistance for the war disabled (amputees and paraplegics) at the Debre Zeit rehabilitation centre for a further year until the end of 1981; it had already been agreed that the operational and financial responsibility for the centre would be progressively handed over to the Ethiopians in the course of the year (see Annual Report 1980, p. 17). A new agreement settling the terms of this transfer of responsibility was signed between the Ethiopian Government and the ICRC on 21 January 1981.

So the Debre Zeit centre, which had been started by the ICRC in 1979 began to become autonomous in 1981. By February the responsibility for the operation of the centre had been handed over to the Ethiopians.

In January, the ICRC's Chief Medical Officer and several physiotherapy specialists went out from Geneva to hold examinations for some thirty Ethiopian candidates – including several invalids – trained by the ICRC paramedical and technical teams to take over their duties. Another series of examinations was held in June, and on 6 October, in the presence of the Ethiopian authorities, 36 orthopedic technicians and physiotherapists were awarded diplomas or certificates qualifying them to work as assistants with the possibility of perfecting their knowledge at a later date.

The ICRC medical team has been progressively reduced from eight specialists at the beginning of January to one orthopedist and one physiotherapist by the end of the year. These two specialists will probably stay on for a certain time in 1982 in an advisory capacity, in response to the Ethiopians' request.

Since it was brought into operation by the ICRC in January 1979, the Debre Zeit centre had treated some 900 disabled by 31 December 1981. The workshop there had produced 240 supports for paraplegics, 1,000 artificial legs, 150 wheelchairs, 1,100 pairs of crutches and the equipment necessary for the rehabilitation of the disabled.

*CENTRES FOR THE CIVILIAN DISABLED.* – In 1981, the ICRC entered into negotiations with the Ethiopian authorities concerning the possible establishment of two rehabilitation centres for disabled civilian victims of the conflict, in view of the need for such facilities.



## Relief

As in previous years, the ICRC gave assistance to displaced persons in the war-stricken areas. Food, blankets and fabrics were distributed in 6 provinces: Eritrea (Asmara region), Harar, Gondar, Tigre (Mekele region), Bale and Sidamo. Several missions to these provinces served to confirm that the needs did exist and that the relief programme was proceeding as planned. Missions and hospital establishments also received ICRC aid, though to a lesser extent.

The assistance programme for displaced persons was conducted in conjunction with the Ethiopian Red Cross on the basis of a bilateral agreement settling its technicalities. The ICRC constantly sought to improve the implementation of the assistance programme (in particular its assessment and verification), in accordance with the principles governing this type of activity, and thereby consolidate its collaboration with the National Society by helping it to develop the operational capacities of its local branches. For this purpose an ICRC relief delegate was seconded to the delegation in Addis Ababa to supervise the assistance programme and simultaneously train Ethiopian Red Cross workers in techniques for the assessment of needs, the distribution of relief supplies and the supervision of their distribution. He also took part in two training courses organized by the Ethiopian Red Cross for its senior members. Throughout the year the ICRC tried to increase the staff of its delegation in order to be able to meet the requirements of the assistance programme more satisfactorily. Permission to do so was granted in December, and two more relief delegates arrived in Addis Ababa at the end of the month. Mr. Bornet and the new president of the Ethiopian Red Cross agreed in the same month to maintain and develop their collaboration in relief activities.

The ICRC likewise collaborated with local organizations such as the Eritrean Regional Affairs Special Commission (in particular before the National Red Cross had opened a local office in Eritrea), the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission and the Social Welfare Centre, which it helped by providing relief supplies.

## Somalia

The ICRC has tried since 1977 to develop its protective activities in Somalia in response to the needs arising from the Ogaden conflict. At the end of 1980 it was able to visit prisoners captured in the conflict; it also went to inspect three areas on the Somali-Ethiopian border where military operations had just taken place, in order to make an initial assessment of the humanitarian needs.

This resulted in another mission from 23 January – 22 February, in which a medical delegate also took part. Its purpose was to negotiate the establishment of a delegation in Mogadishu, to obtain permission from the government to visit all prisoners of war detained on Somali territory, and lastly to make an appraisal of the medical needs in the

aforsaid border regions. Since the ICRC delegates were not given any opportunity to discuss these questions with the Somali authorities, as they had hoped, the first two objectives remained unaccomplished. The ICRC representatives did, however, reaffirm the Somali Government's responsibilities towards the prisoners of war detained on its territory, and stressed the ICRC's willingness to perform its protective duties.

The ICRC doctor undertook a brief mission to the Somali-Ethiopian border, accompanied by representatives of the National Red Crescent. A large-scale ICRC medical assistance programme was evidently not necessary, but medical material unobtainable on the spot and several medications were passed on to the Somali Red Crescent for two hospitals treating war casualties.

The ICRC continued to approach the Somali Government with a view to opening a delegation at Mogadishu and carrying out its protective activities. A memorandum reviewing the various phases of the negotiations between the ICRC and the Somali Government since 1977 was handed to the authorities and the Somali Red Crescent in September, together with a request for audience with President Siad Barre and a renewed offer to establish an ICRC delegation in the country. No results were forthcoming by the end of the year.

## Sudan

The ICRC delegation in Khartoum provided assistance and engaged in tracing activities for various groups of refugees on Sudanese territory (victims of the conflicts in Eritrea, Uganda and Chad), and sent relief supplies to Eritrea and Tigre through the intermediary of various organizations. It also launched a campaign to disseminate knowledge of international humanitarian law among the Sudanese armed forces.

The delegate-general for Africa, Mr. Jean-Marc Bornet, went to Sudan at the end of the year to assess the ICRC's activities in the country.

## Medical aid

The Swiss Red Cross medical and surgical team of four people, working under the responsibility of the ICRC, continued to care for both military and civilian victims of the Eritrean conflict at Kassala Hospital, as in 1979 and 1980. The Sudanese population were also able to benefit – to a lesser extent and according to their needs – from this medical work. The Swiss Red Cross kept Kassala Hospital supplied with medicaments and medical material.

A Swiss Red Cross doctor and nurse were in addition assigned to the Eritrean refugee camps of Khashm-el-Girba

and "Km 26". They provided medical care there in close collaboration with the Sudanese authorities concerned and other organizations on the spot, helped to train local personnel and supervised the distribution of medical relief supplies sent by the Swiss Red Cross.

Furthermore, the ICRC gave medicaments and medical material to the hospitals and dispensaries of the Eritrean and Tigre movements via their assistance organizations.

Lastly some medical assistance was given to Chad refugees on Sudanese soil (see the chapter "Chad").

## Relief

The ICRC gave to the prisoners detained by the Eritrean movements and to displaced persons in Eritrea material assistance consisting of food sent by the EEC and the Swiss Confederation, blankets, tents, cooking utensils, textiles and soap. This aid was distributed by the Eritrean Relief Association (ERA), which is the body responsible for aid to the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), and by the "Eritrean Red Cross and Red Crescent Society" (ERCCS), which acts in the same capacity on behalf of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF).

After the withdrawal of part of the Eritrean population (almost 10,000 people) in August to seek refuge in the Kassala region, on Sudanese territory, the ICRC distributed relief supplies – in view of the large number of women and children involved – in close conjunction with the ERCCS.

## Tracing Agency

By liaison with correspondents established in the refugee camps, the Khartoum tracing office intervened on behalf of Ethiopian refugees in the Port Sudan, Kassala and Gedaref regions, and Ugandan refugees in southern Sudan. Chad refugees in the north-west of Sudan likewise benefitted, to a lesser extent, by its services.

The Khartoum tracing office, in response to requests from refugees or people abroad, tried to find members of families separated within and outside Sudan, in particular in Uganda. It arranged for families to be re-united abroad, working in close collaboration with the UNHCR, forwarded family messages, mainly between detainees in Uganda and their refugee relatives on Sudanese territory, and dealt with requests for school certificates. The work of the Khartoum tracing office on behalf of Ugandan refugees increased substantially in 1981, following the events in the West Nile District of Uganda (see the chapter "Uganda"), and accounted for 75 % of the office's entire activities by the end of the year.

By 31 December 1981, the Khartoum tracing office had registered 743 new enquiries concerning a total of 1,412 names (of which 451 were successfully concluded), exchanged 237 family messages and re-united 53 families.

## Uganda

In Uganda, the ICRC mainly intervened to bring protection and assistance to detainees, but also to help the civilian population of the West Nile District, where the situation had deteriorated since autumn 1980, and the victims of the disturbances which had occurred near the capital.

To increase the efficacy of its protection, assistance and tracing activities, the ICRC opened a sub-delegation in the West Nile District in early January to supplement its Kampala delegation; in addition one delegate took up his duties at the mission of the Verona Fathers in Ombachi and opened an office at Arua. He was joined by a second delegate in March, then by a third delegate, a doctor and a nurse at the beginning of September. After the events in Ombachi (see below), the ICRC withdrew its delegates from the West Nile District for about a month until sufficient guarantees had been obtained for their safety.

Due to the general deterioration of the situation in the country and the resultant threat to the delegates' safety, the ICRC tried to launch an active campaign to disseminate knowledge of international humanitarian law and information about the Red Cross among the armed forces, the police, prison officials, the authorities, the universities and the local sections of the Ugandan Red Cross, working in close collaboration with the latter. In July the ICRC was authorized to begin a specific programme for the dissemination of knowledge of international humanitarian law among the army units deployed in the West Nile District, in co-operation with the commanding officers on the spot; emphasis had to be placed upon basic principles to be observed by the armed forces. Two thousand five hundred copies of the *Soldier's Manual* and summaries of the Geneva Conventions for officers were distributed by delegates in the field. A number of lectures on the Geneva Conventions were also given to members of the Ugandan Red Cross.

Two missions – one by Mr. Bornet, delegate-general for Africa, in March, and another by Mr. Rudolf Jäckli, a member of the Committee, in July – were made necessary by the problems encountered by the ICRC in the prisons and the West Nile District. Mr. Jäckli had talks with Mr. Apollo Milton Obote, President of the Republic of Uganda, Mr. Paulo Muwanga, Vice-President and Minister of Defence, Mr. John Luwuliza Kirunda, Minister of the Interior, Mr. Stephen Omoding Ariko, Minister of Justice, and Brigadier David Oyite Ojok, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. Mr. Bornet met the Prime Minister, Mr. Otema Allimadi, and the Ministers of Defence and of the Interior. During a visit to Uganda in November Mr. Victor Umbrecht, a member of the Committee, had talks with several cabinet members about the ICRC's future activities, since the authorities had expressed the opinion that the National Red Cross should take over from the ICRC in providing assistance to detainees and displaced civilians.

## Protection

**PROTECTION FOR DETAINEES.** – The ICRC continued its protection activities for persons detained without defined status (“detainees”) following the conflict between Uganda and Tanzania. A comprehensive visit was made in the early months of the year to the six main prisons of Kampala, Jinja and Mbale; confidential reports were addressed to the Ugandan authorities. These places of detention were subsequently visited regularly – some of them once a month – to keep the conditions of imprisonment under close observation and adapt the assistance programme accordingly. Visits to “detainees” were made also in other prisons in the country.

On 14 December the ICRC was officially informed by the Prison Commissioner that the Ugandan Government was withdrawing its authorization to make such visits. President Hay immediately sent a message to the head of state, whilst a memorandum on the ICRC’s activities on behalf of detainees in non-conflict situations and urging the government to reconsider its decision was presented to several ministers. These steps had not produced any result by the end of the year.

The ICRC was confronted by two main problems with regard to protection, namely the extension of its activities to other categories of detainees and the material conditions prevailing in the prisons visited. It made numerous attempts, through its delegates in Kampala and by high-level missions from Geneva, to gain access to other categories of detainees, such as persons arrested more recently and held for security reasons in military places of detention and police stations. A request for permission to visit was addressed to the Vice-President in February; the subject was broached again by the delegate-general for Africa, who was given oral consent, then by Mr. Jäckli, who presented the Ugandan authorities with a list of persons arrested since the new government had come to power, and a second list of persons who had been reported missing during the same period. No results had been obtained by the end of the year. However, after the transfer of security detainees from military prisons and police stations to places of detention to which it had access, the ICRC was able to visit and register some 400 detainees belonging to this category.

As in 1980, the ICRC was very concerned about the situation in the Ugandan prisons, where the inadequacy of medical care, food and hygienic conditions resulted in deaths. The ICRC drew the authorities’ attention to these problems on several occasions in memoranda and discussions, proposing solutions which were not all adopted. For instance the ICRC asked – in vain – for detainees to be allowed to receive family visits again, these having been suppressed at the end of 1980. Mr. Jäckli’s mission was motivated by the deterioration in prison conditions and the need to discuss it with the highest authorities, to get them to take the appropriate measures to remedy it. At the same time the ICRC considerably stepped up its assistance programme

in the prisons, and the situation had unquestionably improved by the beginning of the last quarter of the year.

In the course of its protective activities the ICRC continued to demand the release of detainees or their transfer to hospital on humanitarian grounds. At the beginning of the year the Ugandan Government released 279 detainees, including a large proportion of old, very young people and disabled persons whose release had been specifically requested by the ICRC. Some of them were transferred with ICRC assistance from the prisons to the Wairaka centre near Jinja, where they were taken over by the Ministry of Rehabilitation and the Salvation Army. After the declaration of a presidential amnesty for some 3,000 “detainees” in May, the ICRC intervened on several occasions to speed up the liberation process, which might help to improve the conditions of detention. In July, a first group of detainees were released in the presence of the ICRC, which registered them accordingly; two other series of releases occurred in the second half of the year.

In 1981, the ICRC had access to 18 places of detention with a total of 5,730 detained persons. The penal law prisoners were separated from the other “detainees” and consequently could not be visited at all by the ICRC, unlike the previous year.

**PROTECTION OF THE CIVILIAN POPULATION.** – The protection of the civilian population was a matter of constant concern for the ICRC, particularly in the West Nile District where civilians were injured on several occasions in the course of military operations. The civilian and military authorities on every level were duly notified of the events known to the ICRC, and several approaches were made to the Minister of Defence; lists of injured persons were handed over to the aforesaid authorities. The ICRC delegates at Arua intervened several times to evacuate civilians trapped in danger zones to areas of greater safety.

The renewed outbreak of violence in the north of Uganda hit the headlines with the occurrence of a particularly serious incident at Ombachi. On 24 June the mission of the Verona Fathers, which served as a base for the ICRC delegation in the West Nile District and where some 10,000 people had sought shelter as the situation steadily deteriorated, was attacked by armed bands, killing sixty people and injuring more than a hundred others. Extremely alarmed by this development, the ICRC earnestly appealed to all parties concerned to observe and enforce the fundamental humanitarian principles, in particular not to attack the wounded, the sick or civilians, and to respect the inviolability of places and persons protected by the Red Cross emblem. At the same time, an ICRC delegate and four members of relief organizations evacuated refugees to a quieter zone in the south of the West Nile District, whilst the Ombachi casualties were being conveyed to the Verona Fathers’ hospital at Angal by representatives of *Médecins sans frontières* and other humanitarian agencies.

## Relief

**RELIEF FOR DETAINEES AND THEIR FAMILIES.** – The measure of assistance provided for detainees was again considerable in 1981: the ICRC was virtually alone in supplying the clothing, bedding and toiletries needed by detainees. It also gave them a fairly large amount of food aid – 104 tons of beans, powdered milk, biscuits, butteroil, fresh fruit and vitamins – in view of the shortage in the prisons. The prisons were supplied with recreational articles, cooking and cleaning utensils, and seed to enable prisoners to grow their own vegetables and cereals.

The ICRC also gave some assistance to released detainees to facilitate their reintegration in daily life, and to 1,420 needy families of detainees.

The relief programme for detainees and their families amounted to 726,574 Swiss francs in 1981.

**RELIEF IN AREAS AFFECTED BY THE DISTURBANCES.** – The ICRC gave a limited amount of emergency aid in the form of food, blankets, soap, clothing and diverse utensils in the regions affected by the disturbances in Uganda, mainly in the West Nile District. It concentrated especially on people who had fled from the area and were returning from Sudan and Zaire to their villages when circumstances allowed. The ICRC tried to help them resume normal life by giving them agricultural implements and seed besides the aforesaid relief goods. It likewise gave assistance to displaced persons who had remained in the country, and to a lesser extent to residents who had suffered from pillaging or were unable to obtain essential items, due to the disorder.

Survey missions were carried out in northern Zaire, both by the ICRC delegation at Kinshasa and by the delegates based in Arua, to determine the needs of the Ugandan refugees. Thanks to other humanitarian organizations, a programme of assistance for these refugees was not considered necessary, and only a few medical supplies were handed over to *Médecins sans frontières*.

About 100,000 people were assisted in the Arua and Moyo areas of the West Nile District in the first half of the year. From the beginning of August and until the end of the year, the ICRC's range of activity was confined to the south of the Arua area and only some 50,000 people were able to benefit by the assistance programme, as access to areas further north was impossible because of the danger.

Aid was also given to 10,000 families who had been victims of acts of violence in the Mubende area and districts in the vicinity of the capital.

The value of the relief supplies distributed to victims of events came to 1,228,354 Swiss francs in 1981. The ICRC received foodstuffs from CARE, and various relief supplies from United Nations agencies which withdrew after the events in June. These relief supplies were distributed with the help of missionaries and the local authorities.

## Medical aid

**IN PLACES OF DETENTION.** – All through the year the ICRC sought to remedy the inadequacy of medical care and the unhygienic conditions in the places of detention, which resulted in the death of many detainees. Basic medicaments were regularly distributed in all the prisons visited by the ICRC, as well as the sanitary equipment recommended by a public health specialist sent out by the ICRC. A programme of dental treatment was also carried out under the ICRC's responsibility in five prisons.

In addition a doctor, soon joined by a nurse, was posted in June to the Kampala delegation to keep the nutritional and medical situation in the prisons under closer supervision. This team gave medical consultations and advised the prison health officials on treatment for the main ailments.

**IN THE AREAS AFFECTED BY THE WAR.** – The ICRC gave its assistance to 25 hospital establishments (government or mission hospitals and dispensaries) in the West Nile District; it provided medicaments, ensured that medical care was available for difficult cases and arranged for the evacuation of casualties. It also helped to make infirmaries operational again and set up seven special feeding centres for children in the Arua district.

The ICRC delegates in Arua worked in conjunction with the doctors of other humanitarian organizations on the spot. In September the staff of the Arua sub-delegation was supplemented by an ICRC doctor and nurse until the end of the year, since all the foreign medical teams had left the area following the events in Ombachi.

The value of medical relief supplies distributed in Uganda in 1981 amounted to 508,430 Swiss francs.

## Tracing Agency

The work of the Kampala Tracing Agency office was made necessary by events in Uganda since 1979, and by the breakdown of communications between the capital and the West Nile District as the general situation there deteriorated.

The Kampala Tracing Agency office systematically registered the detainees visited, those transferred from one place to another and those who were released. It tried to find the families of detainees, especially those who originated from the West Nile District, and forwarded messages between detainees and their relatives. Since family visits in the prisons were forbidden, the detainees attached extreme importance to being able to send and receive Red Cross messages, and no less than 25,000 family messages were exchanged in 1981 via the Kampala Tracing Agency office.

It also dealt with the registration of victims affected by disturbances in various regions and of persons reported missing, in order to submit these cases to the authorities.



Many of the enquiries into the whereabouts of missing persons were concerned with the West Nile District, and were undertaken at the request of detainees or refugees living in Kenya and Sudan. The Kampala Tracing Agency office opened enquiries into about two thousands cases in 1981, and about half of them were successfully concluded.

In order to meet these various demands, a tracing office was attached to the Arua sub-delegation and a correspondent was installed in August at Aru, in northern Zaire, where there were a great many Ugandan refugees. The Kampala Tracing office also worked in close collaboration with the tracing offices in Nairobi and Khartoum, the latter having a correspondent in southern Sudan for Ugandan refugees there. It was furthermore assisted by the Ugandan Red Cross and the Verona Fathers.

## **Other countries**

### **KENYA**

The ICRC kept up a delegation in Kenya, mainly as a logistics base for the programme of assistance in Uganda. This delegation also continued its enquiries into the whereabouts of missing persons – in response to requests from various African and European countries – and its transmission of family messages, working in close conjunction with the ICRC delegations in Kampala and Khartoum. The activities of the Nairobi Tracing Agency office were largely concerned with Ugandan nationals; it maintained contact between refugees in Kenya or other countries and members of their families who had stayed in Uganda, or were detained in prisons there. The Nairobi delegation also gave a number of lectures on international humanitarian law and the Red Cross to members of the Kenyan police and to prison officials, in collaboration with the National Red Cross.

### **TANZANIA**

The ICRC concerned itself with a score of persons detained in Tanzania following the conflict with Uganda. These people had not wished to be repatriated when the general arrangements were made in March 1980 (see Annual Report 1980, p. 16). A member of the ICRC delegation in Kampala visited them at Rwan Rumba Prison in September. The ICRC contacted the UNHCR, which has undertaken with the consent of the Tanzanian authorities to find a country of asylum for these prisoners.

## **Central and West Africa**

### **Western Sahara**

The ICRC continued to follow developments in the conflict in the Western Sahara and tried, as it has done since 1975, to discharge its treaty obligations of assistance for the victims, and in particular the prisoners of war. It approached Morocco and the Polisario Front on several occasions in an attempt to obtain permission to resume visits to prisoners detained by them. With regard to Mauritania, the ICRC was informed by the Mauritanian Red Crescent that there had been no Polisario Front prisoners in its country since 1980 (these prisoners had been visited by the ICRC in 1979 and 1980).

In view of the intensification of military activities in autumn, and as its previous requests had failed to produce any results, the ICRC again approached all the parties concerned at the end of 1981 to remind them of the applicability of the Geneva Conventions, and of the obligations which were consequently incumbent on them. In this connection an offer of services to visit prisoners of war and to establish a system for exchanging Red Cross messages between prisoners and their families was addressed to King Hassan II of Morocco and Mr. Mohamed Abdel Aziz, secretary-general of the Polisario Front.

It should be noted that the Twenty-Fourth International Red Cross Conference in Manila, after hearing the ICRC Report, adopted a resolution inviting all the parties concerned to allow the ICRC to accomplish its tasks on behalf of all the victims of the conflict in the Western Sahara.

#### **Prisoners in Moroccan hands**

As a result of the deadlock which has blocked ICRC action in this part of Africa for the past few years, it was unable to visit either Algerian or Polisario Front prisoners in Moroccan hands in 1981 (its last visit to 99 Algerian prisoners was in 1978). The ICRC Central Tracing Agency, however, forwarded 94 letters and 626 parcels from families to Algerian prisoners through the intermediary of the Algerian and Moroccan Red Crescent Societies. The Algerian prisoners were furthermore able to reply to their families after an interruption of one year, and 250 messages were entrusted to the ICRC to be passed on in Algeria.

#### **Prisoners in the hands of the Polisario Front**

The ICRC was likewise unable to gain access to Moroccan and Mauritanian prisoners detained by the Polisario Front, some of whom it had visited in 1976. The Mauritanian Red



Crescent notified the ICRC that the Polisario Front had released 100 Mauritanian prisoners. At Morocco's request and in accordance with its role as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC approached the Polisario Front to speed up the release of several Moroccan prisoners, after the Front had publicly announced its decision to do so. There were, however, no tangible results in 1981.

The ICRC handed over 18 requests for news of Moroccan prisoners to the "Sahrawi Red Crescent", but only received one reply.

### Repatriation of 48 South Korean fishermen

On 17 June, 48 South Korean fishermen captured by the Polisario Front off the West African coast (one in 1979, the others in 1980) were released and handed over by the "Sahrawi Red Crescent" to three ICRC delegates. They were then taken to Algiers and flown, in an aircraft specially chartered by the ICRC, to Zurich where they arrived the same night and were entrusted to representatives of their own country.

### Medical assistance in Mauritania

The ICRC participated in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project to set up a rehabilitation centre for disabled persons at Nouackchott; it provided assistance in the form of machines and equipment worth 75,580 Swiss francs, including transport costs (see Annual Report 1980, p. 24).

## Chad

In view of the military situation at N'Djamena, control of which had been regained by the Transitional Government of National Unity (GUNT – *Gouvernement d'union nationale de transition*), the ICRC – after more than two months of absence – sent out a team of five delegates in mid-December 1980 to assess the needs for protection and assistance resulting from the hostilities in the latter months of 1980 and to start distributions of relief supplies (see Annual Report 1980, p. 20). This programme of assistance was destined to become the ICRC's most important activity in Chad in 1981, with priority given to the medical needs. It should also be noted that the Chad Red Cross, which was revived on 7 February 1981, co-operated in several ICRC activities.

For the first three months of the year its intervention was directed from Kousseri in Cameroon, and the ICRC was unable to provide assistance beyond the capital. Then its

delegation was reopened at N'Djamena on 1 March 1981, and it immediately tried to extend its programme to other parts of the country. Three missions were organized to assess the needs for medical aid, hygienic supplies, food and tracing activities: one in the south of the country at the end of March (Bongor, Moundou and Sahr regions); the second in May in the centre (Bokoro, Bitkine, Aboudeia, Mongo and Am Timam regions); the third in June to the west and north of Chad (Lake, Kanem, Bourkou, Ennedi and Tibesti regions). Occasional distributions of medical supplies and food were made during these missions. It was generally found that the needs observed could best be met by development programmes and not by programmes of emergency aid.

For this reason the ICRC programme of assistance was taken over at the end of July by other charitable organizations, whereas the ICRC only kept up a rehabilitation programme for war disabled. As the situation did not require its intervention in a protective capacity, the ICRC closed down its delegation on 6 October, leaving one physiotherapist there.

### Protection

On returning to Chad, the ICRC at once enquired into the possible existence of prisoners following the clashes which had led to the regain of control of N'Djamena by the GUNT armed forces and the retreat of the Armed Forces of the North (FAN). In early January the Chad Government declared that it had no prisoners, and that there was therefore no need for ICRC protective activities. It should be noted, however, that after the government amnesty of 28 June for detainees, convicted prisoners and political exiles, 16 FAN prisoners detained at the "Camp of 13 April" at N'Djamena were released on 4 August in the presence of the ICRC; the authorities then restated that they had no more prisoners, apart from penal law detainees.

No protective action was taken for prisoners held by the Armed Forces of the North. Despite their agreement in principle to a visit by the ICRC, they finally failed to respond to the latter's requests for information (lists of names and the return of capture cards) concerning the prisoners they had announced to be in their hands.

The ICRC also tried to keep abreast of the return of former prisoners of war and civilian detainees from Bourkou, Ennedi and Tibesti to their homes in the south of the country, after their release in accordance with the Lagos agreements of August 1979 and the measures for release announced by the President of GUNT in March. The ICRC systematically registered prisoners passing through N'Djamena and was thus able before its departure to hand over to the Chad authorities for further enquiries a list of about 350 prisoners whom it had been unable to trace. The ICRC was unable to draw up lists of prisoners returning from other provinces, since events had prevented it from pursuing a continuous programme of action there at the time.

The ICRC also approached the authorities on behalf of two groups of prisoners who were still detained at Fada and Bao, in Ennedi, despite the release agreement. Those at Fada were immediately able to return to the south, unlike those at Bao, which is located in a zone not controlled by the government.

At the request of Libya and with the consent of the Chad authorities, the ICRC acted as a neutral intermediary between the Cameroon and Libyan authorities to arrange for the return of the body of a Libyan pilot whose plane had crashed near Kousseri, in Cameroon. The ICRC brought out his mortal remains and handed them over to the Libyan commander at N'Djamena.

The ICRC also attended to the civilian population, and was obliged to issue a reminder of the respect due to them after hostilities flared up again in the east of the country in September.

### Medical assistance

From the beginning of the year basic medicaments, dressings and medical material were supplied on several occasions to the two hospitals and all dispensaries in N'Djamena, to meet the needs observed. The ICRC likewise gave supplies to the social welfare centres run by the Ministry of Public Health and Social Affairs (primarily for the care of mothers and children) and to the Catholic mission, the leper colony and the Chad Red Cross. Medicaments and medical material were also distributed outside the capital to hospital establishments and various forms of public health centres in the larger and smaller administrative districts, by three relief convoys (which went first to the south, then to the centre and then to the north and west), and during the mission to Abéché. At Moundou, the ICRC promoted the establishment of a regional pharmacy to facilitate the maintenance of medical supplies in the area.

At the request of the Ministry of Health, the ICRC also gave its attention to the problem of war disabled. After sending out a specialist to Chad, it decided to support the action taken with limited resources by a priest of the Catholic mission of Kabalaye in N'Djamena: it shared in the purchase of material and sent out a physiotherapist in mid-September. By the end of the year some thirty patients had been fitted with prostheses.

Medical supplies provided by the ICRC were valued at 544,330 Swiss francs, including 82,250 francs for equipment for the Catholic mission orthopedic workshop.

### Relief

The ICRC's material aid consisted chiefly of food. It was distributed mainly via the social welfare centres in the capital, which were kept regularly supplied; the assistance was thus able to reach the most needy of the town's civilian

population. In this way 5,000 mothers of needy families (representing about 30,000 beneficiaries) received cereals, oil and milk under the programme for the care of mothers and children. Food aid was also given at these centres to the aged, the disabled and the destitute. The ICRC kept the nutritional condition of children under particularly careful observation, and in view of the increasing number of children suffering from malnutrition, a special programme was started in the social welfare centres in July. Suitable meals were provided several times a week, and special courses on nutrition were given for mothers; the ICRC supplied the provisions and money to buy additional food to supplement the protein content of these meals. The leper colony also received regular food aid. For a time the ICRC gave foodstuffs to the hospitals and dispensaries, to the Catholic mission for social welfare, to former prisoners of war passing through N'Djamena, to teams working for the Ministry of Public Health and Social Affairs, and to employees of the municipality who were cleaning the streets and clearing away bodies.

Outside N'Djamena, the ICRC distributed food to the regional committees of the Chad Red Cross for the civilian population of the regions it had visited. The food was provided by the WFP (World Food Programme), the French Government, the Red Cross of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Catholic Relief Service. The ICRC terminated its food aid programme at the end of June, and its activities were taken over by the WFP and the AICF (International Aid against Hunger).

The ICRC likewise sought to improve sanitary conditions in the capital. It helped with cleaning operations by supplying the necessary products and equipment, disinfectants and food for the workers, and by lending vehicles where necessary. A campaign to clean up the streets and markets of N'Djamena took place in March, with the technical support of the municipality, and a second campaign to clean the Central Hospital was carried out in May with the help of 54 volunteers from the Chad Red Cross.

Help was given to the lepers, whose village near Chagoua on the outskirts of N'Djamena had been repeatedly bombed and ransacked. The ICRC first set up tents to shelter the lepers, cleaned the well and repaired the sanitary installations. Thanks to a private donation made specially for the lepers, the ICRC was able to have the houses rebuilt. On 29 June, 57 lepers and their families were resettled in their village. This private donation also enabled the ICRC to participate in the reconstruction of the leprosarium at Abéché.

In 1981, the ICRC distributed 1,058 tons of relief supplies in Chad (including 1,050 tons of food) for a total value of almost two million Swiss francs.

### Tracing Agency

The work of the Tracing Agency office at N'Djamena was principally concerned with the prisoners of war and their

actual release, either when relief convoys were despatched to various parts of the country, or in N'Djamena itself, where it registered prisoners in transit. In this way it was able to retrace 75 % of the prisoners previously in captivity in the Bourkou, Ennedi and Tibesti provinces.

It also made enquiries, though less numerous than in the past, into the whereabouts of missing persons, in response to requests from refugees in Cameroon and Sudan.

## Zaire

The ICRC's main activity in Zaire was to protect persons imprisoned in civilian and military places of detention, combined with a programme of assistance. The ICRC tried as well to promote contact between the detainees and their families.

At the request of the Deputy Prime Minister, the ICRC also prepared a programme of information about the Red Cross for various target groups, and in particular for young people. A specialist was temporarily posted to the Kinshasa delegation in September. More than thirty informal talks, accompanied by films, have already been given to school-children and students, plus radio and television broadcasts.

### Protection

After starting its activities in Shaba in 1978, when it had obtained authorization to visit all places of detention in the province, the ICRC negotiated a number of agreements which finally guaranteed access to all places of detention under the authority of the Ministry of Justice, the armed forces (military prisons, police cells, etc.) and the security services. Specific permission by the authorities still had to be requested, however, for each visit.

Between January and September 1981, ICRC delegates visited ten places of detention in the Zaire capital – the Makala civilian prison, military and security centres; some were visited several times. In May, eleven places of detention under the authority of the military and the *Centre national de recherches et d'investigations* (CNRI) in Shaba were visited (previous visits dated back to August 1980). This time, however, the ICRC was not authorized to visit the places of detention in Shaba under the authority of the Ministry of Justice. In Kivu region in the east of Zaire, difficulties cropped up during the ICRC delegates' first visit there in June and prevented them from having access to all places of detention, except for two prison cells under the authority of the CNRI. However, during a mission in September the ICRC was able to visit seven places of detention under the authority of the armed forces, the CNRI and the Ministry of Justice. In 1981, the ICRC had access to about 4,620 detainees.

The protection activities in Zaire were the object of a mission by the delegate for detention problems in January, to try and arrange for the repetition of visits to certain places of detention. In addition he had detailed discussions with the director of the penitentiary services in Zaire, who was received at ICRC headquarters in February. Accompanied by the delegate for Central and West Africa, the delegate for detention problems returned to Zaire in late June to take part in the first series of visits planned in Kivu (see above). The ICRC delegates took this opportunity of re-examining with the Zaire authorities whether and to what extent collaboration with the ICRC could be improved. They met, among others, Mr. Nsinga Udjuu, Prime Minister; Mr. Bomboko Lokumba, his Deputy and State Commissioner of Foreign Affairs; Mr. Inonga l'Ome, State Commissioner of Justice; the Attorney General of the Republic of Zaire; and the General Administrator of the CNRI. Having requested, among other things, access to all places of detention and the possibility of repeating visits, they were informed that the Zaire Government was willing to co-operate closely with the ICRC and also to allow the ICRC access, in accordance with usual ICRC conditions, to all places of detention. New problems arose, however, in October and continued until the end of the year, preventing the ICRC from performing its task.

After a wave of arrests in October, the ICRC consequently asked the Zaire authorities for the list of new detainees and their places of internment, primarily to reassure the families concerned. This request had not been answered by the end of December, although the ICRC had sent a memorandum to the Prime Minister, reviewing its collaboration with the Zaire Government up to that date.

### Medical assistance and relief

Besides its protection activities, the ICRC organized assistance for the detainees, giving them blankets, recreational articles, toiletries, clothing and some food, and keeping the places of detention supplied with medicaments and disinfectants. It also occasionally financed water facilities and provided released detainees and needy families of detainees with a certain amount of relief items. The overall assistance (medical and other aid) for the prison population and their families came to 56,950 Swiss francs.

### Tracing Agency

The Tracing Agency office opened in the Kinshasa delegation in November 1980 began the systematic registration of the detainees visited and kept up contact between them and their families, searching for the latter to inform them of their relatives' arrest and transmitting Red Cross messages between them.

The Kinshasa tracing office also tried, in response to family requests, to find persons reported missing after the events in Shaba in 1977 and 1978, Zaire refugees believed to be in Angola and Angolan refugees in Zaire. Action was also taken in aid of Ugandan refugees in Upper Zaire (see the chapter "Uganda").

## Other countries

### GAMBIA

On 3 August, the Gambian authorities and the National Red Cross asked the ICRC for emergency medical aid, following the abortive *coup d'état* of 29 July.

A medical delegate and a relief delegate were promptly despatched to Gambia to assess the needs there, taking with them an initial consignment of medicaments and dressings. Additional medical supplies and various other articles were bought in Dakar together with the Senegalese Red Cross, which also arranged for the rapid transport of all these relief supplies to Gambia. The ICRC did not continue its programme of assistance any further, however, as other relief organizations were already on the spot in Gambia, and the survey mission had not disclosed any needs which could not be met locally.

On the other hand it did try to find out about the situation of the persons arrested after the abortive *coup d'état*. Another mission was effected in late August to ask the Gambian authorities for permission to visit these persons; an offer of services addressed by the ICRC President to the Gambian head of state, Sir David Jawara, was handed to Mr. Lamin Kiti Jabang, Minister of Foreign Affairs. After receiving no reply from the Gambian authorities, the ICRC sent a delegate to Banjul in late September: he was informed orally about the government's official standpoint, namely that the ICRC could not visit these detainees as long as they were remanded in custody. Another overture in November had produced no result by the end of the year.

The ICRC furthermore notified the Gambian authorities about its concern with regard to the misuse of the Red Cross emblem during the abortive coup.

### GHANA

At the request of the Ministry of Health, the ICRC gave Ghana medical aid for the victims of events which occurred

in the north of the country in June. Three tons of medicaments and dressings were taken to Ghana by an ICRC delegate and handed over to the Red Cross there.

During his visit to Switzerland the President of the Republic of Ghana, Dr. Hilla Limann, was received at the ICRC on 22 October.

### RWANDA

The delegate for detention problems and the delegate for Central and West Africa were in Rwanda from 12 to 21 June. They had talks there with Mr. Charles Nkurunziza, Minister of Justice, Dr. Ildephonse Musafili, Minister of Health, Mrs. A. Habyarimana, Honorary President of the Rwandan Red Cross and wife of the Head of State, and Dr. Kamilindi, President of the Rwandan Red Cross.

The ICRC delegates raised the question of official recognition of the Rwandan Red Cross by the ICRC. They discussed the diverse activities of this Society and went to see some of the work it had accomplished. As a result of this mission, the ICRC decided to allocate the sum of 15,000 Swiss francs to equip an orphanage which is being taken care of by the Rwandan Red Cross.

The delegates also discussed the question of ICRC visits to all places of detention (the last visit took place in 1976). Although the Rwandan authorities granted access to all prisons, they did express some reservations – due to local legislation – concerning visits in accordance with the customary ICRC conditions to security detainees in preventive detention, as visits to this category of detainees could only be authorized by the head of state. The ICRC thereupon sent him a request to this effect. A new representation was made in December to the Rwandan Ambassador in Bonn, after several security prisoners had been convicted; a memorandum setting down the terms and conditions of ICRC visits was handed over to the Ambassador.

### BURUNDI

The delegate for detention problems and the delegate for Central and West Africa went on mission to Burundi from 22 to 27 June to resume contact with the authorities and the National Red Cross. During their stay they met Mr. Laurent Nzeyimana, Minister of Justice, and several senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They presented an offer of services to the authorities for new visits, in accordance with the customary ICRC terms and conditions, to all places of detention in the country. The authorities of Burundi agreed in principle. The last such visits had been made in 1977.

**RELIEF AND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE SUPPLIED  
OR FORWARDED BY THE ICRC IN 1981 \***

*AFRICA*

Country	Recipients	Relief		Medical assistance	Total Sw.Fr.
		Tons	Value in Sw.Fr.	Value in Sw. Fr.	
Angola . . . . .	Displaced civilians, disabled persons	2,531.3	7,401,350	237,410	7,638,760
Botswana. . . . .	Refugees	—	—	2,500	2,500
Chad . . . . .	Displaced civilians	1,058.1	1,905,690	544,330	2,450,020
Ethiopia . . . . .	Displaced civilians, disabled persons	1,203.4	3,826,470	120,000	3,946,470
Gambia . . . . .	National Society, civilian population	3.2	8,840	12,590	21,430
Ghana . . . . .	Ministry of Health, civilian population	—	—	12,220	12,220
Mauritania. . . . .	War amputees	—	—	75,580	75,580
Mozambique. . . .	Refugees	—	—	135,940	135,940
Rwanda . . . . .	National Society, civilian population	—	15,000	—	15,000
Somalia . . . . .	National Society, civilian population	—	—	7,090	7,090
South Africa . . .	Detainees and their families	117.1	226,030	6,970	233,000
Sudan . . . . .	Displaced civilians	3,384.—	9,447,860	223,200	9,671,060
Uganda. . . . .	Displaced civilians, refugees	609.1	2,328,060	508,430	2,836,490
Zaire . . . . .	Detainees and their families	3.4	35,100	21,850	56,950
TOTAL		8,909.6	25,194,400	1,908,110	27,102,510

\* Includes food assistance from the EEC and Swiss Confederation, aid to National Societies, to detainees and their families, and aid provided in programmes financed by specific funds.