

IN THE RED CROSS WORLD

INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS ASSISTANCE IN INDO-CHINA

International Red Cross Assistance is pursuing its activities in Geneva and in the field.

Republic of Vietnam

The Saigon tracing bureau has registered 34,000 displaced persons. It has received 9,000 enquiries, 50 per cent of them relating to missing persons assumed to be in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, 4 per cent in the Khmer Republic, and 1 per cent in the Republic of Vietnam. Thirty-eight per cent of these enquiries concern army men, 12 per cent orphans and non-Vietnamese.

At the end of August, the Red Cross of the Republic of Vietnam and Indo-China Operational Group (IOG) delegates carried out over a thousand distributions, benefiting 210,000 families or more than a million persons in the country's four areas. Such relief supplies (including food, fabrics, blankets, mats, mosquito nets, toilet articles and farming tools) are bought locally or withdrawn from National Society stocks. The supplies are valued at 4 million Swiss francs.

A medical team of the Netherlands Red Cross has been at work in Chau Doc since September. Another team, recruited by IOG, based at Phu Bon, is providing treatment for some 11,000 montagnards. The ICRC is pursuing its programme of medical assistance in various orphanages of the Saigon area.

Democratic Republic of Vietnam

At the end of August, the Central Tracing Agency in Geneva transmitted to the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam 3,300 enquiries received from the Saigon office of the Tracing Agency with the request that it proceed with the necessary tracing operations in co-operation with the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam.

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The programme relating to the construction of prefabricated dwellings for 10,000 homeless families, at a total cost of 20 million Swiss francs, is being actively prepared. IOG has provided medicaments and surgical equipment to the value of over a million Swiss francs, and nine ambulances.

Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam

The Central Tracing Agency in Geneva has relayed 3,300 enquiries received from Saigon, in order that the necessary tracing operations may be carried out in co-operation with the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

The project for a 250-bed hospital is under way. A number of National Societies have already made contributions enabling IOG to cover the first instalment of 2.5 million Swiss francs of the priority needs of the polyclinic section and the haematology and blood transfusion laboratory. In addition, IOG has provided medical relief amounting to 320,000 Swiss francs.

Laos

The Vientiane tracing bureau has received 1,000 enquiries, of which 350 concern Americans missing in action, 150 other foreigners, and 500 Laotians.

Lao Red Cross distributions, in which IOG delegates have taken part, are carried out mainly in the provinces of Savannakhet, Paksé and Wapikhamthong.

Three medical teams are at work in Luang Prabang (Swiss Red Cross), Paklay (Japanese Red Cross) and Paksane (British and French Red Cross). IOG has provided the Lao Red Cross with an ambulance and medical supplies to a value of 175,000 Swiss francs.

Pathet Lao

Mobile X-ray equipment, medicaments and surgical kits worth 280,000 Swiss francs have been despatched by IOG.

Khmer Republic

The Phnom Penh tracing bureau has registered 18,000 displaced persons while 3,500 enquiries have been received, 1,700 of which have been relayed to the Central Tracing Agency in Geneva. A special index has been established, containing names of missing persons of other nationalities.

Relief distributions, carried out by the Khmer Red Cross in co-operation with IOG delegates, have been made to 30,000 displaced families in Phnom Penh camps and in several other camps set up in the provinces of Battambang, Kompong Cham, Kompong Thom, Kompong Chnan, Prey Veng and Svay Rieng. Distributions have consisted mainly of food, mosquito nets and fabrics. IOG's local purchases have totalled 250,000 Swiss francs a month. IOG has also helped to improve living conditions in camps, particularly with medical installations and milk distribution to children and expectant mothers.

The two medical teams (a Belgian Red Cross team at Svay Rieng and a Swiss Red Cross team in the Phnom Penh paediatric hospital) were joined in October by two further teams, a Swedish Red Cross team at Kompong Cham and a Danish-Norwegian Red Cross team at Kompong Thom.

Royal Government of National Union of Kampuchea

IOG approached the Royal Government of National Union of Kampuchea (GRUNK) and offered the services of the Red Cross to the population of territory controlled by that Government. The offer was welcomed, but so far no word has been received as to what services IOG might be asked to render in aid of victims of the conflict in GRUNK-controlled territory.