

# IN THE RED CROSS WORLD

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## INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE OF THE RED CROSS IN INDO-CHINA

*On 18 March 1974, the President of the Executive Council of the ICRC, Mr. R. Gallopin, the Secretary General of the League of Red Cross Societies, Mr. H. Beer, and the Director of the Indo-China Operational Group, Mr. O. Stroh, sent the following circular letter to National Societies :*

In sending you the latest progress report of the Indo-China Operational Group we wish to take the opportunity of announcing a change in responsibility and organization.

It will be recalled that, in the perspective of a ceasefire in Vietnam and the further steps which might follow towards peaceful developments in Indo-China, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies decided, in December 1972, to establish an integrated staff called the Indo-China Operational Group (IOG) under the direction of Mr. Olof Stroh, Secretary General of the Swedish Red Cross. Its tasks were to mobilize and co-ordinate the employment of the full resources of the Red Cross in order to assure the most effective protection and assistance to those in need in the war affected areas.

The following factors now prompt the ICRC and the League to modify these arrangements. Firstly, the general situation in some areas has stabilized. Secondly, the plans and programmes which are capable of being implemented within the present financial perspectives are now well under way and the pattern of co-operation with the various Red Cross organizations in Indo-China is firmly established. Finally, pressure of work in connection with his normal duties will compel Mr. Stroh to withdraw as Director of the IOG on 31 March 1974.

Accordingly it has now been agreed that, with effect from 1 April 1974, the responsibilities hitherto undertaken by the Director IOG will be exercised by the Directors of Operations of the ICRC and the League. The two Institutions will resume their normal responsibilities so far as the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the Republic of Vietnam and the Kingdom of Laos are concerned; in the Khmer Republic the integrated activities of the International Assistance of the Red Cross under ICRC responsibility will continue for so long as the situation makes this desirable. Overall policy concerning material assistance will be formulated by the existing ICRC/League Co-ordinating Body, to which Mr. Stroh will be co-opted when it meets to discuss matters concerning Indo-China.

It must be emphasized that this internal reorganization and redistribution of responsibilities will not affect the vigorous prosecution of international Red Cross plans and programmes for assistance; it is merely a reflection of the determination of both Institutions to adapt their methods and organization to a changing situation.

To this end, and in order to ensure the closest possible co-ordination and co-operation, an integrated IOG staff will continue to serve both Institutions thus assuring full continuity and preserving the detailed knowledge and expertise built up since December 1972. Furthermore, despite the change in direction and the redistribution of responsibilities it will, for the sake also of administrative and practical convenience, continue to be known as the IOG and correspondence and communications will continue to emanate from and be addressed to the IOG as hitherto until such time as the structure outlined above may need to be adapted to further changes in the situation.