

REVUE INTERNATIONALE
DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

ET

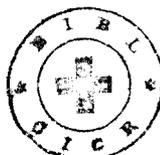
BULLETIN DES SOCIÉTÉS
DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

SUPPLEMENT

First Year, 1948

GENÈVE

1948



SUPPLEMENT

VOL. I

REVUE INTERNATIONALE
DE LA CROIX-ROUGE
ET
BULLETIN DES SOCIÉTÉS
DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

SUPPLEMENT

November 1948

No. 11

CONTENTS

	Page
Red Cross Relief to Victims of the Conflict in Palestine	180
The International Committee of the Red Cross in Palestine	186

Published by
Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, Genève
Editor: Louis Demolis

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

RED CROSS RELIEF TO VICTIMS OF THE CONFLICT IN PALESTINE

LEAGUE OF RED CROSS
SOCIETIES

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE
OF THE RED CROSS

Geneva, September 23, 1948.

INTRODUCTION

M. Paul Ruegger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and Mr. Basil O'Connor, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the League of Red Cross Societies, announced in Stockholm, 1st September 1948, that the two organizations, wishing to give effect to the recommendations of the 17th International Red Cross Conference, had decided upon a plan of action for the Near East.

This plan, the purpose of which is to extend Red Cross assistance to all victims of hostilities, will be synchronized with the general relief programme drawn up by the late Count Folke Bernadotte, United Nations Mediator for Palestine, as well as with the work of all other official and voluntary agencies concerned.

The International Committee of the Red Cross will continue to carry out its already extensive work for civilians in Palestine and will assume responsibility for the distribution of Red Cross relief in that area. Moreover, as in the past, the International Committee of the Red Cross will carry on its work for prisoners of war. The League of Red Cross Societies, acting in the name of the 66 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, will coordinate Red Cross relief intended for countries in which fighting is not taking place and in which National Societies exist and are active.

The situation of the victims of the Palestine conflict, both Arabs and Jews, gives cause for alarm. The National Societies, meeting in Stockholm, received information in this connection which showed that our organizations must give assistance as quickly and as effectively as possible to the hundreds of thousands of refugees, as well as to those persons deprived of their liberty. At a plenary session of the Stockholm Conference, a resolution was adopted promising still greater Red Cross assistance. The League and the International Committee of the Red Cross therefore recommend to the National Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies that they contribute towards this joint work, bearing in mind the technical arrangements and information set forth in this first circular.

PREROGATIVES OF THE I.C.R.C. AND THE LEAGUE

The *International Committee of the Red Cross* stated, in its circular of 16th August 1948 (Pal.S.5), that it would only intervene as regards material relief in areas where a neutral intermediary is indispensable.

In accordance with the plan referred to above, the International Committee of the Red Cross offers its services of intermediary to National Societies for the consignment of relief :

(a) to refugees, persons placed under its protection in hospitals and security zones and other victims of the conflict on *Palestinian territory*.

(b) to prisoners of war and civilian internees in *Palestine and outside Palestine*.

The *League of Red Cross Societies*, acting in the name of the 66 National Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies, offers its services for the transmission of Red Cross relief intended for refugees in countries bordering on Palestine and in which National Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies are active.

II. INFORMATION CONCERNING NEEDS

The International Committee of the Red Cross has sent notes consisting of its appeal of 12th May and the four subsequent bulletins to the 66 National Societies.

The League published an appeal to the National Societies dated 24th May 1948 supporting the appeal of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The present circular follows up the above-mentioned documents.

The two organizations are at present collecting information concerning the needs of all victims of the Palestinian conflict. They shortly will publish a joint document which will complete the instructions given previously.

III. NATURE OF GIFTS

The International Committee of the Red Cross requests recipients of the present circular to refer to its appeal of 12th May 1948 which gives details on the conditions under which it receives gifts in money and in kind.

The League refers the National Societies to its Relief Bureau Circulars Nos. 1 to 6 inclusive, which give the operational procedure of the League in matters concerning relief.

IV. ALLOCATION OF GIFTS

It is hoped that the National Societies taking part in relief actions in favour of victims of the Palestinian conflict will put their gifts at the unqualified disposal of the League and the International Committee of the Red Cross. It is more in conformity with the principles of Red Cross action for the allocation of gifts to be determined by the urgency of the need of the respective parties than for one of the parties to be favoured exclusively; if the latter procedure were followed the amount of relief might exceed essential needs, while it

might not be possible for adequate assistance to be given to the opposing party.

V. DESPATCH OF GIFTS

Bearing in mind the wish expressed above that gifts be placed at the unqualified disposal of the League and the International Committee of the Red Cross for their synchronized action, we give donors the two following addresses to which their relief may be sent :

International Committee of
the Red Cross, Free Zone,
Beirut

(or) League of Red Cross So-
cieties, Free Zone,
Beirut

(With bills of lading addressed to the Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Post Office Box 714, Beirut, and a copy to the International Committee in Geneva.)

(With bills of lading addressed to Mr. Jules Vallay, c/o Lebanese Red Cross, Beirut, and a copy to the League in Geneva.)

NOTE : Relief intended expressly for prisoners of war should be addressed according to the detailed instructions given in Section V of Circular Pal.S.5 of the 16th August issued by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

VI. PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

One of the most important points in the synchronization of the relief of the League and the International Committee of the Red Cross is the establishment of a plan of distribution. Information concerning the needs of all victims of the Palestinian conflict will be centralized in Beirut where, subject to instructions of the League and the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva, representatives of the two organiza-

tions will determine the share of relief to be allocated to each of the categories of victims, bearing in mind the areas in which the latter are located.

VII. DISTRIBUTION

The League of Red Cross Societies will transfer to National Societies for distribution to the beneficiaries under supervision of the League the relief which it receives in Beirut in accordance with the distribution plan indicated under VI.

The International Committee of the Red Cross, acting in areas where there are no National Red Cross organizations, will entrust the distribution of relief to reliable local bodies but will supervise the carrying out of this work.

VIII. REPORTS ON DISTRIBUTION

Reports on distribution, to which will be attached in particular the receipts of the beneficiaries and the statements of account, will be sent directly by the International Committee of the Red Cross or the League, as the case may be, to the donors on whose behalf they have acted.

IX. FINANCE

Since the beginning of its relief actions for victims of the Palestinian conflict, the International Committee of the Red Cross has asked donors for an advance payment equivalent to 10% of the value of their gifts to cover expenses (cf. Appeal made by the International Committee of the Red Cross on 12th May 1948). These expenses arise not only from the various formalities and the forwarding of relief, but also from its distribution which is undertaken by the Committee alone, or if need be in cooperation with local organizations. The International Committee of the Red Cross will not in future ask for the payment of this advance tax of 10% but will request that the amount

in question be paid when the relief to which it relates has been received in Beirut. The International Committee of the Red Cross considers that after a period of six months, it may be possible to alter the rate on the basis of experience gained.

As regards the League, the usual administrative expenses, based on a percentage of the total value of each shipment, will be added to each bill. This percentage is 6% to December 31, 1948, when it will be reviewed. (See League Relief Bureau Circulars Nos. 5 and 6.)

League of Red Cross Societies
(signed) B. DE ROUGÉ
Secretary-General

*International Committee of
the Red Cross*
(signed) G. DUNAND
Director Delegate

*THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE
IN PALESTINE*

Before dealing with the various aspects of the International Committee's work in Palestine, some account should be given of the circumstances in which one of their delegates, Dr Fasel, was involved in the tragic events which led to the death of Count Folke Bernadotte, Mediator of the United Nations.

On the day of his death (September 17), Count Bernadotte paid a visit to the Delegation to discuss certain questions which concerned both the Red Cross and the United Nations Truce Commission. The interview took place at Government House, the headquarters of the Committee's delegation in Jerusalem. After a friendly talk on matters in which they were both interested, Count Bernadotte asked Dr Fasel to accompany him to the Y.M.C.A. building to continue the conversation. At 5 p.m. a convoy of three cars left the Security Zone, the first with four members of the United Nations staff, the second with the delegate of the International Committee, who drove himself, and the third with Count Bernadotte and three members of the United Nations staff. On arriving at the outskirts of the Kattamon and Talbieh areas, the two cars bearing the United Nations flag were riddled with shots, the Committee's car remaining untouched, although it had been inspected by the authors of the outrage.

The members of the Committee's delegation at once offered their services and cooperated in the necessary steps for the transport of Count Bernadotte's remains. On September 18, a convoy composed of a Jewish police car, a United Nations car, an ambulance with the bodies of the two victims and a car of the International Committee, also carrying two Swedish Red Cross doctors, together with the cars of the Belgian, American and French General Consulates (members of the Truce Commission) set out for Haifa, escorted by Jewish police motor-

cyclists. The funeral party had to cross the combat area, and in the no man's land a detachment of the Arab Legion lined up to salute. At the entrance to the town of Haifa the convoy was formed anew and a procession of forty cars accompanied the bodies to the Government Hospital, to await transport for Europe.

* * *

It will be recalled that the International Committee had endeavoured to set up security zones in Palestine, principally in Jerusalem. For many weeks these zones were used to shelter non-combatants of all categories and as transit centres for the evacuation or exchange of civilians. Of the first three zones, two had to be given up during July ; in August, the third zone, called Zone No. 2, was seriously imperilled. Situated in an area of great strategic importance for both belligerents, it was attacked and partially occupied, so that the question of abandoning it altogether was seriously considered. An arrangement was finally proposed and met with the approval of both parties.

The United Nations representatives in Palestine seconded the scheme, and it was decided to evacuate all armed forces and to establish a wide demilitarized area round the security zone. Unfortunately, it was soon found extremely difficult to maintain the zone owing to its location. After numerous alarms and incidents caused by both sides, the Committee decided to remove their flag and to give up the zone definitely, as it no longer fulfilled the purpose for which it was intended and the refugees therein were not in safety. Further, communications with the outside world were risky, as they involved crossing the fighting area.

The attempt has, however, not been vain ; the closing of the security zones in Palestine does not rule out the establishment of similar zones in future. Though short-lived, the experiment has shown that the scheme can be carried out in practice.

It should also be stressed that in Jerusalem the zones were established in the fighting area itself. In the Draft Revised or New Conventions which the International Committee published in May 1948, it is definitely stipulated that such zones

should not be situated in regions which are in any way likely to become theatres of war.

Events in Palestine have shown that this condition is fully justified, yet it is now proved that zones set up in the immediate vicinity of the fighting lines, in order to meet humanitarian emergencies, can be of great service, even if of short duration only.

* * *

The successive truces called by the United Nations in Palestine have led to a situation of relative quiet. The Committee's delegation has thus been able to devote all its time to helping prisoners of war and victims of the conflict in general. The particular nature of the hostilities since the month of May, in which irregular forces were often involved, made the delegates' duties particularly dangerous. In these regions very few persons were familiar with the Red Cross and knew what it stands for. The first business of the delegates was to make the principles of the Red Cross more widely known; their educational efforts in this respect are now bearing fruit. The population, who were at first indifferent and even hostile, now understand that they may turn to the Red Cross for help and grasp the moral significance of its emblem.

The first duty of the Committee is obviously the relief of prisoners of war. In this field, the delegates have made constant endeavours to convince the Jewish and Arab authorities of their obligation strictly to adhere to the terms of the Conventions for the protection of prisoners of war, and they have had the satisfaction of observing the success of their efforts. The reports on camps and prisoners' living conditions which they are sending to Geneva clearly show that the circumstances of detention have notably improved. Prisoners on both sides enjoy the privileges stipulated by the Conventions; they are allowed to correspond, to receive relief supplies of food, clothing and even money; in each camp they have been authorised to nominate a camp leader to act for them. Their treatment is, on the whole, in conformity with the Conventions, which both parties undertook to respect.

Mail for Jewish prisoners in the Arab States, or for Arab prisoners in Jewish camps, passes through the International Committee's various delegations, who forward it to the addressees. In order that next of kin may be better informed of the men's circumstances, the Delegation has made arrangements for public exhibitions of photographs of Jewish prisoners in Arab hands, in particular those detained in Mafrak Camp. All the men in this camp were photographed in groups of twenty; enlargements were made and the photographs placed on view first in Jerusalem, then in Tel-Aviv and finally at Haifa. These exhibitions were a great success; relatives went to see them in crowds and as they can order photographs in which they are interested, several thousands of copies have been supplied to date.

The Committee's Delegation has also endeavoured to help the civil population, particularly by organising the exchange of civilian messages and an enquiry office for tracing persons whose exact whereabouts are unknown. The number of enquiries handled by the delegates is steadily increasing; whereas there are a good many missing from the Jewish side, a far larger number of Arabs are being sought for. A great many enquiries are received from Arab localities occupied by Jewish forces, or situated in the area now controlled by the latter; others are sent by the many thousands of refugees who are sheltered in the countries bordering on Palestine. To help handle this work, which is becoming more onerous every day, the Committee's delegation at Tel-Aviv has appointed a number of Arab correspondents in the occupied Arab localities, principally at Jaffa, Lydda, Ramleh, Acre and Nazareth. These correspondents, who are appointed in full agreement with the Jewish authorities, are rendering most valuable service. The Tel-Aviv Delegation is now considering the opening of a central Arab office at Jaffa, under its direction, and which could take over a large part of these enquiries. This system of correspondents has practically the same object as the local branches of a national Red Cross.

In addition to enquiries, the Civilian Message Scheme has been introduced, and the number of messages distributed or

transmitted is steadily increasing. Here again, many technical difficulties had to be met, mostly due to the fact that the senders write practically all the addresses in Arabic only ; the help of the Arab correspondents above-mentioned has been most useful in this connexion. This means of assisting the Arab population under Jewish control is certainly of great importance, as the wide use made of Red Cross messages helps to make known the principles and work of the Red Cross and will, in due course, lead to appreciable results.

The Committee's Delegation is also pursuing its role of protecting agency for hospitals. Its mission consists in giving legal advice (on the basis of the Geneva Convention) and relief supplies to certain categories of hospitals, in particular to the Arab hospitals in the Jewish zone. Some of these hospitals are in a very difficult position. At Jaffa, the Municipal Hospital, the French Hospital, the Mekor Hayim Hospital and the polyclinic enjoy this protection ; the Delegation has also been able to assist medical practitioners by preventing the requisitioning of their cars, thus allowing them to carry on their work. At Ramleh, the delegates intervened in behalf of a hospital under the Egyptian Red Crescent. Part of the hospital equipment had been requisitioned, but at the delegates' request it was handed back unconditionally by the Jewish authorities and sent on to Ramallah. At Nazareth, protection is extended to the French Hospital and the Scottish Mission Hospital, to both of which it has been possible to send medicaments and blood plasma. At Jerusalem the delegation is particularly interested in the Government Hospital. This is an Arab institution and is entirely surrounded by the Jewish front line ; it is thus in a very exposed position, which so far could not be improved. The evacuation of the premises is now being considered.

* * *

Mention should lastly be made of the Committee's activities in favour of refugees. As is known, it was decided in principle that the Committee would give relief to the refugees in Palestine

proper ; to this end, the Committee received supplies from various donors, including several National Red Cross Societies.

In our September issue, attention was drawn to the position of the Palestinian refugees, and a brief account was given of the relief being planned in their behalf both by the International Committee and by the League.

Despite the help they have received, the situation of the refugees is becoming steadily worse. Their means of existence are dwindling rapidly and the coming winter raises the grave problem of finding them accommodation, clothing, blankets, etc. The last reports received from the Committee's delegates show increasing distress, a worsening of the already poor health situation and an alarming increase in the death-rate. This tragic condition is further complicated by the mass exodus of refugees from North to South Palestine, who hope to find a warmer climate. Other groups are leaving their usual places of residence to go South, and thus increase the number of persons in need.

Appeals have been circulated, first by the International Committee and then jointly by the League and the Committee since September ; all National Red Cross Societies who are in a position to help should give them earnest consideration. Several Societies have already responded favourably and large relief consignments are on the way to Beirut ; these will allow the Red Cross to pursue its activities.

Turning to what has been done during the last few months, it will be noticed that in almost every case the donors have confined themselves to the requirements specified in the appeals. The consignments made include a large proportion of medical supplies ; at the present time they are principally composed of food and clothing.

On the whole, the Committee have up to now been able to issue slightly more than 50 tons of goods, worth approximately 1,150,000 Swiss francs. Supplies issued increase each month ; whereas in July only five tons were distributed, worth 70,000 francs, the August issue was eleven tons, for about 325,000 francs ; in September 14½ tons were handed out, which represented 550,000 francs. Half way through October the distri-

bution of 20 tons, for a value of 160,000 francs, was already carried out.

Issues are made through the various delegations of the Committee, with the help of local agencies set up by them in most Palestinian regions. These agencies include residents who are representative of the local groups and parties, medical practitioners and, in a general way, persons able to appreciate the position and who can be relied upon to ensure equitable distribution. The Committee have also enlisted the support of the local health authorities and of many religious institutions which maintain hospitals. The distribution scheme adopted has given good results.

When mentioning some of the results obtained by the Committee's action, it should not be forgotten that they themselves are not in a position — nor is it within their scope — to supply hospitals or refugee camps with medical supplies, clothing, food, and so forth. The Committee must confine their activities to the actual means at their disposal, and it is not superfluous to recall once more the fact that they depend entirely upon the donations they receive.

In some cases the authorities, and the refugees in particular, have been disappointed in not receiving the large quantities of supplies they had anticipated. It had to be explained to them that the Committee's main efforts were centered on assisting the sick and wounded, expectant mothers and children, and that they were unable to give full relief supplies to masses of refugees.

The distributions effected by the Committee's delegates have had three clear results :

- (a) To provide medical equipment and medicaments over a large area where supplies were completely exhausted and where, in addition to the civil population, a great number of refugees and many wounded are assembled.
- (b) The Committee has given immediate relief to refugees by opening dispensaries. At the present time these are seven in number, the maintenance of which is entirely in the Committee's care. These institutions are of great service,

as thousands of sufferers are given daily treatment by the Committee's nurses, who have trained native personnel to help them.

In addition, the nurses try to teach refugees the first principles of hygiene and simple prophylactic measures.

A gift of about eight tons of clothing, which included about 50,000 garments, enabled fairly large issues to be made.

- (c) The third result is the campaign for the prevention of epidemics which were threatening, especially typhoid fever. Thanks to the serum and vaccines received, the local medical authorities and the Committee's nurses have vaccinated a very great number of persons. The effect is apparently satisfactory, in spite of the deficiencies inherent in the system employed. These are largely due to the fact that, in many cases, the refugees are constantly on the move and cannot thus have the proper number of injections, control being frequently impossible.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS IN PALESTINE

*RELIEF ACTIVITIES IN BEHALF OF THE VICTIMS OF THE PALESTINIAN CONFLICT
FROM JULY 1, 1948, TO OCTOBER 15, 1948¹*

I. CONSIGNMENTS FOR ARAB POPULATIONS

Areas benefited	Donors	Description	Value in Sw. Francs
North Palestine Region, Ramallah, Nablus	Egyptian Red Cross	40,000 doses antityphoid vaccine	40,850
French Hospital, Bethlehem	ICRC (Pharmac. Sect.)	Vaccines, sulphamides	1,200
Gaza, Ramallah, Nazareth, Jerusalem, Bethany	American Red Cross	Plasma	147,153
Ramallah, Nazareth	Canadian Red Cross	Vitamine glucose	5,680
Gaza, Ramallah, Nazareth	British Red Cross	Penicillin	4,420
Gaza, Ramallah, Nazareth, Jerusalem	ICRC	Sundry equipment	23,000
Gaza, Ramallah	American Red Cross	Dressings, disinfectants	13,317
Gaza, Ramallah	British Red Cross	Sundry medicaments	28,916
Gaza, Ramallah, Nablus (refugees)	American Red Cross	Clothing	313,900
Gaza, Ramallah	Turkish Red Crescent	Dressings	20,210
Gaza, Ramallah, Amman	American Red Cross	Plasma	180,438
Gaza, Ramallah, Tel-Aviv (Arabs in Jewish Zone)	American Red Cross	Medic. and minor surgical instrum.	143,772
Gaza, Ramallah, Jerusalem	Egyptian Government	Anti-typhoid vaccine	84,280
Ramallah	British Government	Tents	16,700
Ramallah (Arab refugees)	ICRC	Serums and vaccines	2,000
Ramallah (Arab refugees)	Egyptian Government	Dressings	600
Ramallah, Gaza	Egyptian Red Crescent	Anti-rabies vaccine	8,278
Syrian Red Crescent	British Red Cross	Plasma	10,530
Lebanon Red Cross	British Red Cross	Anti-typhoid vaccine	4,214
Lebanon Red Cross	French Red Cross	Sundry medicaments	4,540
Lebanon Red Cross	South African Red Cross	Medicaments, dressings	3,216
Ramallah, Gaza, Bethany	ICRC	Medical kits, needles, syringes . .	150
Mere Mahé, Tarshiha village	ICRC	Various medicaments	686
Arab refugees, Ramallah	British Government	Foodstuffs	700
Acre Hospital	Egyptian Red Crescent	Chloride	1,500
Arab areas	Egyptian Government	Vaccines	24,956
Arabs, Ramallah area	ICRC	Medicaments	2,500
			1,087,706

II. CONSIGNMENTS FOR JEWISH CIVIL POPULATIONS

Tel-Aviv	American Red Cross	Plasma (1st consignment)	46,347
Tel-Aviv	American Red Cross	Plasma (2nd consignment).	25,962
Tel-Aviv	American Red Cross	Equipment (American Red Cross)	20,292
			92,601

III. SUMMARY

Arabs	1,087,706
Jews	92,601
Total	1,180,307

¹ Statistics supplied by the Committee's Relief Centre in Beirut.