

REPORT  
OF THE  
CYPRUS RED CROSS SOCIETY  
FOR THE YEAR  
1974

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REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CYPRUS RED CROSS SOCIETY  
FOR THE YEAR 1974

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INTRODUCTION

During the first part of the year and until the 15th July, 1974, the activities of the Society were carried out on the pattern of previous years, under the following headings:

1. Red Cross Home for Sick Children;
2. Blood Donors Scheme;
3. Disaster Relief;
4. Youth Section;
5. Publicity and Christmas Cards;
6. Home and Hospital visiting;
7. Dissemination of Red Cross Principles.

2. The ordinary activities of the Society were so overwhelmingly overshadowed by the events which followed the coup of the 15th July, 1974, and the Turkish invasion of the 20th July, 1974, that this Report will deal almost exclusively with the activities during this latter part of the year.

3. The only matter worthy of special mention with regard to the first part of the year is the fact that our renewed application for recognition of the Society by the I.C.R.C. and membership of the League was being actively considered in Geneva and certain suggestions had been made by the I.C.R.C. for amendment of the Rules. Due to supervening events, the question of recognition and admission to the League is in abeyance for the time being.

4. The calls made on the Society since the 15th July, 1974, have been varied and overwhelming. It is gratifying to report that the Society, as a whole, rose to the occasion beyond any expectation. It should at the outset be mentioned that not only the officers and members of the Society offered their services unstintingly and devotedly but also scores of volunteers. No sooner was an appeal made for volunteers than the response was immediate, extensive and generous. Persons of all ages and walks of life immediately came forward and put themselves at the disposal of the Society. Without this moving and spontaneous response, the Society would never have been able to cope with the great demands made on it.

/EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES.

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5. A summary of the events and activities of the Society during this period follows.

COUP:

6. As soon as the curfew was lifted on 17.7.1974, a request was made by the President of the Society to the Medical and Hospital authorities for lists of dead and wounded to enable the Society to answer the queries of relatives who did not know the whereabouts of members of their families. Unfortunately, it was not possible to obtain such lists as the military authorities then in control did not provide them, and the Medical and Hospital authorities were unable to do so.

TURKISH INVASION:

Destruction of Red Cross Headquarters and Nicosia Stores:

7. On the second day of the invasion, ie. on 21.7.1974, the premises used as Headquarters and Stores received a direct hit by a mortar and were completely gutted. All the records and stores of the Society were thus destroyed, at the time when they were most necessary. The Society therefore had to cope with this additional handicap during the greatest emergency not only in the life of the Society but of Cyprus itself. As a result of this, the Society became one of the first refugees in the island.

8. The most obvious place from which to operate during the first days of the invasion was the Hospital where the need for the Society's services was great and immediate. Temporary headquarters were therefore established at the Nicosia General Hospital. As soon as the need for the Society's presence at the Hospital was over, the Society moved to temporary accommodation kindly offered by Mr. Felix Cirilli, Treasurer of the Nicosia Branch, and then to accommodation placed at its disposal in the premises of the Trust Club. There it remained until the 27.9.1974. Since that time the Society has been housed in offices kindly placed at its disposal by the Cyprus Tourism Organisation at Princess de Tyra's Building, Theofanous Theodotou Street, No. 18, Nicosia, Tel. 46955.

Activities:

9. The fields of activity fall under the following categories:

(1) Blood Donation:

The first need was for volunteers to give blood for the wounded. All Branches of the Society provided blood donors to meet this great need.

(2) Nursing and other services to Hospitals and to the Wounded:

The members and volunteers of the Society served in the Hospitals in many capacities: as nursing auxiliaries in the wards, assistants in the kitchens, laundry workers, drivers, clerks and generally in any capacity where there was a need.

Transportation was an immediate problem. An appeal was put out for persons with small vans to assist in the transportation of patients from the Hospitals to the Clinics of private practitioners in order to vacate as many Hospital beds as possible for the seriously wounded. A number of Red Cross volunteers offered themselves for this work which was not only essential but even dangerous in that transportation was carried out whilst bombs and mortar shells were falling everywhere in Nicosia.

Those who worked in the Hospital were under no less danger; two mortar shells hit the Hospital premises on 16.8.1974.

During this time the Hospital authorities looked to the Red Cross for assistance in a large variety of fields in addition to the above. To quote only some illustrations:

Provision of ice which had to be transported from Limassol as there was none in Nicosia;

Provision of oxygen;

Transportation of the sick and lightly wounded to private clinics so as to release the hospital beds for the seriously wounded;

Clerical assistance;

Submission of urgent request for blood and blood plasma and for medicines and other drugs through the International Committee of the Red Cross;

Arranging for viewing of Turkish dead by UNFICYP doctor and removal from Hospital;

/Liaising

Liaising with UNFICYP Commander to stop attacks on Hospitals (the Psychiatric Hospital was bombed on 20.7.1974 and 14.8.1974 and the Famagusta Hospital on 21.8.1974);

Arranging with UNFICYP for transport to the Nicosia General Hospital of persons (both Greeks and Turks), wounded by Turkish attacks, from various areas inaccessible to the ambulances;

Providing Red Cross Flags for protection of the Hospital.

On 1.8.1974, the Cyprus Red Cross Society assisted the I.C.R.C. in an operation undertaken by the latter whereby 28 gravely wounded soldiers were transported by I.C.R.C. plane from Akrotiri to Athens for special treatment which could not be given in Cyprus.

The Cyprus Red Cross Society also assisted in the transport to the Turkish quarter of Nicosia, through UNFICYP and I.C.R.C., of some Turks, mostly women and children, who had been wounded during the Turkish bombing at Kaziveran and were treated at the Nicosia General Hospital.

(3) Requests for and provision of medical and other supplies:

As the emergency grew in magnitude so the needs for medical supplies, clothing, food and other necessities became increasingly urgent. The Society submitted these requirements to the I.C.R.C. which immediately set up stores and brought in supplies. This work was greatly hampered by the fact that Cyprus remained without an airport immediately after the invasion, and supplies had to be flown in through Akrotiri or brought by ship.

Generous supplies were immediately sent by Greece, where the Government, the Red Cross, other organisations and individuals organised the purchase, collection and despatch of supplies to Cyprus. Shipping companies transported the supplies free of charge. Without this immediate and generous assistance it would have been almost impossible to survive.

The Society received many requests for medical supplies to people in the Turkish controlled areas. All these were met and the necessary supplies sent to those in need.

(4) Stores:

The Society had to adjust itself to the great needs made upon it, and it organised proper stores, especially in Limassol where the consignments from overseas arrived, and in Nicosia where the first concentration of displaced persons occurred. The stores are now operating on a much more professional footing than in the old days, with proper records and store-keepers.

(5) Missing persons:

Soon after the invasion, the Red Cross offices were flooded with enquiries about missing persons. Before the establishment of a proper Tracing Agency by the I.C.R.C. all such queries were dealt with by the Cyprus Red Cross Society.

When one remembers that 200,000 persons became displaced, that about 2,460 were held prisoners, and about 3,000 are still missing, and a large number have been killed, one can imagine the volume of enquiries that reached the offices of the Society from relatives looking for their families.

The I.C.R.C. Tracing Agency was set up on 27.7.1974, and the Cyprus Red Cross Society arranged for suitable premises for it (Lycavitos Elementary School) and provided volunteers to run it. The Tracing Agency has grown tremendously and now employs about 100 persons.

The Agency deals with a variety of matters, the main ones being:

1. Requests for information re missing persons;
2. Provision of information re persons in Turkish occupied areas;
3. Sending of messages from one part of Cyprus to the other as well as to and from countries abroad;
4. Listing persons in the Turkish occupied areas;
5. Making lists of dead persons;
6. Making lists of missing persons;
7. Making lists of persons in cut-off areas;
8. Despatch of medicines and other articles from relatives of persons in Turkish occupied areas.

(6) Care of the elderly during the fighting:

During the fighting, some homes for the elderly became cut off and needed assistance for the transportation of the inmates to safer areas or for provision of food. This was undertaken by the Society. At the risk of their lives, the Red Cross volunteers plied through the streets of Nicosia irrespective of falling bombs and mortar shells, to assist these needy persons.

(7) Neutral Zones:

Under the Geneva Conventions steps were taken in conjunction with the I.C.R.C. and the necessary documents prepared by Mr. Josephides, Vice-President of the Society, to declare two neutral zones in Nicosia which would be respected and not be subjected to attack by the Turks. The necessary documents were signed by the Acting President of the Republic on 16.8.1974. The two zones were the Hilton Hotel and the Cleopatra Hotel. Arrangements were also made and documents drawn up and signed for similar protection of the Nicosia General Hospital.

(8) Displaced persons:

The Society became immediately active with regard to displaced persons. These began to come out of the Turkish occupied areas immediately after the first round of the invasion. Red Cross members met these persons on arrival. Red Cross teams visited daily all the places where displaced persons were put up and offered the first needs in the way of food, clothing, blankets and campbeds. Some of the items needed were obtained from the stores of the I.C.R.C..

Red Cross teams from all Branches travelled throughout Cyprus daily distributing comforts to the displaced.

When the Special Service for the Care and Rehabilitation of Displaced Persons was set up in August, 1974, to undertake the relief of the 200,000 displaced and needy persons, the President of the Society was appointed Co-ordinator between the Special Service and the President of the Republic and International Organisations.

It soon became necessary to define the areas of activity of the Cyprus Red Cross Society vis-a-vis the Special Service with regard to the care of refugees so as

to avoid duplication. A circular was issued to the Branches on 20.10.1974 and the system has worked well, the Special Service and the Society co-operating to ensure the most effective assistance to the needy.

The volume of clothing, blankets, campbeds and food distributed by the Society during these months is considerable and will form the subject of a separate report. It is worthy of special mention that the Red Cross workers had to sort out, repair, clean, iron, classify according to type of clothing and size. The contributions received both locally and from abroad were of all sorts of clothing mixed together, some of it unusable without special treatment. This work was extremely heavy and needed patience and meticulousness. The Red Cross volunteers did not stint of their time or their efforts, working literally day and night, to have sufficient supplies ready to meet the needs.

It is almost impossible to convey the overwhelming demands during the whole of August and September. Thousands of persons expelled from their homes took refuge in the non-occupied areas arriving mostly at night with only the shirt they had on their backs. The Red Cross volunteers had to minister not only to their physical needs but also to give them human comfort. Most of them had lost not only their homes but also their loved ones.

(9) Enclaved persons:

Another category of persons needing relief and assistance was that of persons cut off in the Turkish occupied areas.

Agonised calls came from such people as the Turkish forces advanced and before telephone communication was cut off. Many reports of murder and rape thus reached the Society which took immediate steps to send help by the I.C.R.C. and UNFICYP, if possible.

Enclaved persons were either in their own villages or had been transported from their villages to other areas of concentration, the main ones being Marathovouno, Voni, Gypsou and Vitsada, and the Dome Hotel. These persons needed comforts of all kinds, medicine, food and clothing. All these were supplied by the Red Cross. Food is now supplied on a

/regular



regular basis by the Special Service, but the Society continues to provide special needs and to ensure that parcels from relatives and medicines reach the enclaved persons.

When some of these enclaved persons started being evacuated from the Turkish controlled areas, in accordance with the agreements reached in the talks between Mr. Clerides and Mr. Denktash, the Society arranged for their reception. Those of them who needed hospitalisation or special care were treated accordingly, whereas the others were received first at the Blind School and then at the Hotel and Catering School, a hot meal was provided for them and clothing was issued to them. Arrangements were made to reunite them with their relatives and in conjunction with the Special Service to find suitable accommodation for them. They were then transported to the places at which they would stay by Red Cross workers. A large number of the persons so received were elderly and needed special care.

The largest evacuation operations were those of Voni and Gypsou carried out between the 15.11.1974 and 29.11.1974, when about 1,600 persons, most of them very old men, women and children, were evacuated. They were all in a bad state, as they had been living under concentration camp conditions of the worst kind.

(10) Rapes:

Another category of enclaved persons needing special attention were girls and women who had been the victims of rape. The Society received them and their families and made special arrangements for their medical treatment and care.

(11) Prisoners of War:

2,461 Greek Prisoners of War and 3,411 Turkish Prisoners of War were released during the period 16th September 1974, to 31st October 1974. The lists of Prisoners of War to be exchanged were obtained by the Red Cross from the Authorities and handed to the I.C.R.C.. The Society's activities in connection with Prisoners of War were as follows:

(1) taking over the Prisoners of War and checking and signing the relevant lists at the place of handing over (Ledra Palace Hotel);

/(2)

(2) arranging for their transportation to a place of reception (the Hotel and Catering School) where the Society arranged for the following procedure and co-ordinated all relative services:

As each prisoner came in, he gave his name and place of origin which was transmitted directly on the radio;

The particulars and next of kin were recorded by the Special Service;

Each prisoner was inoculated by teams of the Medical Services;

The prisoner received a refreshment and cigarettes from Red Cross volunteers;

He then went into the clothes room operated by the Society where he was handed a nylon bag into which he put fresh clothing, from underwear to shoes;

He then had a bath, throwing his old clothes away for burning;

He then had a hot meal;

He was given an allowance of £2.000 mils;

He then either joined his relatives if they were present, or arrangements were made for him to be transported to his relatives by the Red Cross. If he had none, accommodation was found for him;

Red Cross teams took messages for transmission to relatives.

A great deal of preparation was necessary before each release of prisoners, the Society co-operating closely with the I.C.R.C., the authorities and the Police, to ensure smooth transportation of Turkish Prisoners of War to Ledra Palace and of Greek Prisoners of War from the Ledra Palace.

(12) Visits to Prisoners of War Camps:

The I.C.R.C. ensured that delegates of the I.C.R.C. had access to Prisoners of War camps, the Society obtaining the necessary passes and smoothing out any difficulties.

Cyprus Red Cross workers visited the camps where Turkish prisoners and detainees were kept and provided any needs.

(13) Missing Persons:

There are still about 3,000 missing persons. The Society makes every effort to assist the relatives seeking for them by obtaining as many particulars as possible and passing them to the I.C.R.C. and UNFICYP, and also by co-operating with I.C.R.C. in every way.

(14) Functions of the Red Cross in a continuing Emergency:

There was a tendency on behalf of the public, of the authorities and even of some Red Cross members to consider that the Red Cross was responsible for providing all relief needs and also for doing the impossible. In the days of the fighting and immediately after, people turned to the Red Cross for such impossible tasks as feeding their animals in occupied areas, bringing their stocks of food, animals and other property out of Turkish occupied areas.

The Society assisted in all demands made upon it by collecting the necessary data and referring them to the appropriate authorities which might be able to assist, such as the I.C.R.C. and UNFICYP. With regard to food stores and factories, arrangements were made for them to be protected in so far as possible, by placing the Red Cross emblem on them to preserve them for feeding persons in need.

It had to be explained to all concerned that the Red Cross never undertakes relief on a permanent basis but steps in to provide "first-aid" until the authorities are ready to take over. It would have been neither physically possible nor within the duties of the Society to undertake the care of the refugees. That is why, as mentioned in paragraph (8) above, the limits of Red Cross responsibility in this area were clearly defined.

(15) 16th August, 1974:

On this day, when the heaviest fighting took place, many of the services stopped functioning and there was mass evacuation from Nicosia. Even the Government departments and Civil Defence were not to be found. The Society, operating from the Nicosia General Hospital, was virtually the only "authority" in Nicosia on that day.

(16) Red Cross Home for Sick Children:

As communications with Kyrenia were cut off immediately on 20.7.1974, great anxiety was felt about the children and staff of the Home. It was fortunately possible to communicate with them a few days later through the I.C.R.C. representatives. The Home continued to function throughout and still continues to do so, under the Matron, Miss Sue Quinn, who showed great devotion to duty, courage and fortitude. Special thanks and appreciation are due to her.

There are now 10 children at the Home. All the staff, Greek and Turkish, continue to serve there. The housekeeper, Susan Kalindjian, was away on holiday and is now serving at an old people's home in Nicosia within the framework of assistance provided by the Society for the care of the elderly.

The children receive their schooling from a local teacher and they are brought to the Nicosia General Hospital for treatment regularly. They are well and happy. In fact, the Matron reports that their health has been better during this period than ever before.

(17) Youth Section:

The Youth Section of the Society has done extremely useful work throughout the emergency and has helped in every facet of the activities described above. Congratulations and grateful thanks are due to them and to the Central Committee and Branch Committees.

(18) Christmas Preparations:

All the Branches of the Society have been extremely busy with the preparations for Christmas, the Society co-ordinating with other organisations to avoid duplication. Every displaced and every enclaved child will receive a present and every enclaved family will receive a Christmas parcel.

(19) Appeal to I.C.R.C. and National Societies:

On 3.8.1974, the President of the Society addressed to the President of the I.C.R.C. and to National Societies the attached appeal, which speaks for itself.

I.C.R.C.

10. The Representatives of the I.C.R.C. arrived through Akrotiri, headed by Mr. Pierre Gaillard, at 10 p.m. on 22.7.1974, bringing with them the first supplies of blood and drugs. The activities of the Cyprus Red Cross Society during this period have been closely connected with those of the I.C.R.C. Mission in Cyprus with whom there has been close, harmonious and fruitful co-operation throughout. So far, the I.C.R.C. Mission has been headed successively by Mr. Pierre Gaillard, Mr. Laurent Marti and Mr. Philipp Züger.

11. The I.C.R.C., by being on the spot immediately, was able to provide the first emergency requirements. It has always looked upon all demands for help most sympathetically and effectively, and their activities in Cyprus in all fields have been very effective and are greatly appreciated.

12. For a time, when UNFICYP was not allowed to circulate in the Turkish occupied areas, the I.C.R.C. was the only link with the enclaved persons. It was the only medium through which food, medicines and messages could be sent to them. The I.C.R.C., through its medical teams, was able to provide medical treatment to those in need and to transfer those who needed hospitalisation. Furthermore, the I.C.R.C. delegates did all in their power to improve the conditions of living of enclaved persons. The exchange of prisoners was carried out under their auspices, and they are making great and concerted efforts to find missing persons.

U.N.H.C.R.

13. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees visited Cyprus in August and established a U.N.H.C.R. Mission to provide aid for displaced persons and other persons in need as a result of the Turkish invasion. As Co-ordinator with International Organisations, the President of the Society is in close contact with the U.N.H.C.R. and signs all agreements for aid to displaced and other persons in need on behalf of the President of the Republic.

14. A Memorandum as to such needs was prepared on 25.8.1974, and handed to the High Commissioner. On the basis of this, an appeal was made by the U.N. Secretary-General setting the sum of \$22 million as a target to meet the needs up to 31.12.1974.

15. The High Commissioner for Refugees also pledged a sum of \$300,000 towards the needs of the Cyprus Red Cross Society during the present emergency. The relative agreements for the provision of this sum in cash or kind have been concluded. In pursuance of these agreements, two Volkswagen microbuses have just been provided to the Society; it is hoped that when the emergency is over one of them can be converted into a mobile blood taking unit.

16. Weekly co-ordination meetings of all International Organisations connected with relief are held at the Ledra Palace and are attended by the President of the Society.

#### EXPRESSION OF THANKS

17. It is impossible to find words to thank adequately all those who have so selflessly rendered their services for the relief of suffering. The Officers of the Society, the Matron of the Home, the Presidents and Committees of the Branches, the President of the Central Committee and the Presidents and members of the Branch Committees of the Youth Section, the members of the Red Cross, adult and youth, all gave devotedly, generously and willingly. The Presidents of the Branches excelled themselves, showing a wonderful Red Cross spirit, initiative and fortitude; they were a source of great inspiration to their Committees and members. The Secretary of the Society showed exceptional devotion to duty. To all of them we express our heartfelt gratitude, appreciation and thanks.

18. No words can describe the special debt of gratitude due to Mr. Jules Josephides, Vice-President of the Society. Throughout the period since the Turkish invasion, and particularly during the days and nights when Nicosia was under heavy attack, Mr. Josephides was constantly present, giving selflessly of his best. Without his wisdom, guidance, support and unstinting hard work, the burden would have been impossible to carry.

19. Last but not least our gratitude and thanks go to the volunteers without whose assistance the magnitude of the task would have been beyond us. Some of these volunteers have become devotees of the Red Cross, working long hours and remaining in their posts, together with the Officers of the Society, sometimes even at the risk of their lives.

20. No differentiation has been made in this Report between the various organs of the Society. All have worked equally devotedly and loyally and the word "Society" covers them all - Headquarters, Branches, Sections and Committees.

Stella Soulioti  
President,  
Cyprus Red Cross Society.

Nicosia,  
19.12.1974.

APPEAL BY THE CYPRUS RED CROSS SOCIETY

The attached appeal was cabled by the President of the Cyprus Red Cross Society to the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva and to some fifty other National Red Cross Societies all over the world asking for their support and intervention so that the Turkish authorities may comply strictly with the provisions of the Geneva Conventions and put an end to the inhuman treatment of the Greek population in the areas occupied by the Turkish forces in Cyprus.

Nicosia, 4.8.1974.



3.8.1974.

Mr. Martin,  
President,  
International Committee of the Red Cross,  
Geneva.

Dramatic situation of Greek civilian population in areas occupied by Turkish forces in Cyprus involving thousands of human lives compels us to address this urgent appeal that you intervene with the utmost speed for their protection and safety.

According to most reliable evidence given to our Society by Greek civilians expelled from Kyrenia zone, the invading Turkish army arrests and deports the whole male civilian population. The women and children, left without protection, are harrassed, interned and then expelled by the Turkish army to the Greek zones, without any warning or belongings. Numerous reports also received by our Society of murders, rape of women, seizure of personal possessions and looting by Turkish army. Some of the areas concerned are Kyrenia town, Bella Pais, Karmi, Trimithi, Thermia, Kazafani, <sup>and</sup> Ayios Georgios, the built-up areas at ~~the~~ 5th and 6th mile posts west of Kyrenia.

All the evidence points to organized wholesale expulsion and decimation of Greek civilian population from Turkish occupied zones against all humanitarian laws and international conventions.

We thank the I.C.R.C. and its delegates in Cyprus for constant action taken by them to ensure protection of these populations but we ascertain with regret that the Turkish authorities systematically violate Geneva Conventions by expelling entire populations, confiscating food convoys sent by I.C.R.C. and preventing I.C.R.C. delegates from visiting Greeks held prisoners by the Turks in Cyprus, as the I.C.R.C. delegates do regularly in the Greek areas to the benefit of Turkish prisoners.

Awaiting your help with extreme anxiety and agony we express our heartfelt thanks and appreciation.

Stella Soulioti,  
President,  
Cyprus Red Cross Society.