Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 823 (1984)[1]

Activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Recalling that the International Committee of the Red Cross has since its inception made every effort to come to the aid of the victims of armed conflicts ;

2. Recalling that :

2.1. ICRC activities are based on the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 for :

the amelioration of the condition of the wounded and sick in armed forces in the field,

the amelioration of the condition of wounded, sick and shipwrecked members of armed forces at sea,

the treatment of prisoners of war, and

the protection of civilian persons in time of war,

and on their two additional Protocols of 8 June 1977 ;

2.2. all the member states of the Council of Europe are parties to those conventions ;

3. Recalling its Recommendation 945 (1982), which urged the Committee of Ministers to invite the governments of the member states to speed up ratification of the two 1977 Protocols, and the decision of that Committee to transmit that recommendation to the governments of the member states ;

4. Emphasising that the ICRC's mission goes beyond protection, to include assistance (medical, material and food) for the victims of armed conflicts, the wounded and prisoners of war, civilian internees, the inhabitants of occupied territories, displaced persons and political detainees ;

5. Emphasising the unceasing development of the activities of the ICRC, which is now represented in approximately fifty countries throughout Africa, the Americas, Asia and Oceania, the Middle East and Europe, a development which is a tragic reflection of an increasingly unsettled world ;

6. Commending the principles underlying its activities and the entire Red Cross movement, in particular humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, universality, which allow it to win the confidence of all the parties concerned ;

7. Affirming that the ICRC, by virtue of its specific tasks, is indispensable ;

8. Noting :

8.1. that the ICRC's protection activities are often linked to relief operations exceeding its resources, and that the number of conflicts will probably increase ;

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1. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 28 June 1984. See Doc. 5241, report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography.

8.2. that the ICRC is faced with increasingly complex problems as a result of the diversity and extension of conflicts ;

8.3. that the financing of the ICRC's permanent activities depends on voluntary contributions of which Switzerland alone has until the present provided almost half ;

8.4. that some emergency actions, also financed with voluntary contributions, are seriously short of funds ;

8.5. that all the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Conventions share an equal burden of responsibility to ensure respect for the principle of humanitarian protection, which is the cornerstone of the said conventions, and that they must take into account the ICRC's independence in carrying out its tasks ;

8.6. that this feeling of responsibility is not always shared by public opinion since the international action of the Red Cross is insufficiently known,

9. Invites the governments of member states :

9.1. to make the international activities of the Red Cross better known among the public, in cooperation with their national societies ;

9.2. to substantially increase their regular annual contributions to the ICRC ;

9.3. to help cover, through ad hoc contributions, the expenses incurred by emergency humanitarian activities ;

9.4. to ratify, if they have not yet done so, the two additional Protocols of 8 June 1977, or to accede to them ;

9.5. to provide the ICRC with any form of support likely to facilitate the discharge of its solidarity-dependent mission.