LEAGUE OF NATIONS


DISPUTE BETWEEN ETHIOPIA AND ITALY

Correspondence with the International Red Cross Committee.

I. Geneva, April 8th, 1936.

To the President of the International Red Cross Committee.

I have the honour to inform you that the Committee of Thirteen, at this morning's meeting, instructed me to ask the International Red Cross Committee whether it would be able to communicate to the Committee of Thirteen information emanating either from officers of the International Red Cross Committee, or from impartial persons such as the Red Cross ambulance doctors in Ethiopia in regard to infringements of the international conventions on the conduct of war signed by the two belligerents.

The Committee of Thirteen has been informed in particular that the International Red Cross Committee should be in possession of a report drawn up by Dr. Junod in March, and also a report of December last by the doctors of the Swedish ambulance.

I should be greatly obliged if you would let me have your reply as soon as possible, as the Committee of Thirteen has to continue its work this afternoon.

I have the honour to be etc.,

(Signed) Avenol,

Secretary-General.

(Translation) II. Geneva, April 9th, 1936.

International Red Cross Committee.

To the Secretary-General.

The International Red Cross Committee has the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of April 8th which it received yesterday afternoon.

In view of the importance of the request made by the Committee of Thirteen our Ethiopia Commission met immediately. The International Committee also considered this question at its plenary meeting to-day.

As stated in our Circular No. 224, the two Governments engaged in the present conflict expressed the desire that an enquiry should be instituted by the International Committee into the allegations made by both sides concerning violations of the Geneva Convention. The International Committee being desirous of affording all the aid in its power to both parties with a
view to complying with this wish, immediately got into touch with them on the subject. Until a final decision - which we hope will achieve a positive result - has been reached, the International Committee cannot hand over its documentary material for the purposes of another enquiry bearing partly on the same facts.

Moreover, even apart from the negotiations now in progress in connection with our enquiry, the neutrality which the International Red Cross Committee is bound to observe, makes it necessary for the Committee to exercise very great discretion. In particular, the International Committee does not feel that it can communicate information received from its own delegates, or information confided to it as being an international organ of the Red Cross, for any enquiry other than that for which the Geneva Convention itself makes a provision in the matter of establishing the facts regarding alleged violations.

As regards other information that may be supplied to the International Red Cross Committee by Governments or by National Red Cross Societies, it is for these Governments or Societies to make such use of this material as they may think fit.

I have the honour, etc.,

(Signed) GUILLAUME FAVRE,
Divisional Colonel,
Vice-President.

Annexed Circular No. 524.
To the Central Committees of the National Red Cross Societies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There has been no diminution in the manifestations of solidarity by the National Red Cross Societies on behalf of the Ethiopian Red Cross. The assistance given during the past few weeks has consisted mainly of consignments of money and supplies.

**Consignments of Money.**

- **American Red Cross**, (2nd and 3rd payments) transmitted by the League of Red Cross Societies ........................................ $6,544.45 = 19,633.-
- **Australian Red Cross** ........................................ £ 4.19 = 75.-
- **Canadian Red Cross** (handed over to the British Red Cross for its work in Ethiopia) £ 300.-- = 900.-
- **Danish Red Cross** ........................................ £ 500 = 7,500.-
- **Portuguese Red Cross** ........................................ £ 40 = 600.-
- **South African Red Cross**, transmitted by the League of Red Cross Societies ............ £ 26.11 406.-

The Ethiopian Red Cross has received direct 500 rupees from India and a few gifts from private persons in Austria, France and Switzerland.

On January 13th, the Australian Red Cross telegraphed to the International Committee to ask whether the Ethiopian Red Cross preferred the dispatch of a medical unit, or of funds. On the same day the International Committee telegraphed this question to the Ethiopian Red Cross, which replied on the 14th that it preferred funds.

**Consignments of supplies.**

- The German Red Cross has decided to send to the Ethiopian Red Cross 100 folding stretchers; these will be transported in seven cases by the Stolzenfels, which left Hamburg on January 23rd and is due to reach Jibuti in from 26 to 28 days.

- The Belgian Red Cross has sent to the Swedish Red Cross for its work in Ethiopia, 10,000 packs of individual dressings.

- The Japanese Red Cross is sending a further consignment of twenty stretchers, five double tents able to hold 20 persons, each, and five ground sheets for tents.
Second British Red Cross Ambulance.

In a letter dated February 5th the British Red Cross announced that the second British Ambulance Unit, consisting of two doctors, Dr. Percy James Kelly, C.B.E., and Dr. Robert Blackwood Robertson, a transport officer, Captain Leslie Hayward Sackville Strudwick, and three medical orderlies, Robert Morgan, John Henry Thake and Albert Percy Wheeler, is on the point of leaving for Ethiopia.

Dr. Kelly will leave Marseilles on the "Yorkshire" February 8th, arriving at Port Sudan on the 16th. There he will join up with Captain Strudwick, who is at present at Khartoum, where he arrived from Nairobi on December 24th, 1935.

They will then join up with the East African contingent, consisting of two Indian Surgeon sub-assistants and nine native orderlies arriving at Port Sudan from Mombasa in the "Madura" on the 17th, and will take this contingent to Gedaref to await the arrival of Dr. Robertson and his orderlies, who will leave London in the s.s. "Mantola" on February 8th, and will arrive at Port Sudan on the 27th.

This ambulance unit should be able to enter Ethiopia via Gallabat and Gondar at the beginning of March.

Fixed establishments.

In our Circular No. 322 of December 27th, 1935, we published a first list of fixed establishments of the Ethiopian Red Cross which are entitled to display the Red Cross emblem. Since then a further list with rectifications and additions to the first has been received by the International Committee. This list is as follows:

New List of Hospitals, etc. entitled to display the Red Cross Emblem.

Position as at December 26th, 1935.

Addis Ababa.
1. Headquarters of the Ethiopian Red Cross, Ras Makonnen Street.
3. Zauditu Memorial Hospital at Filwoha (Adventist).
4. Taffari Makonnen Hospital at Gollale (American Hospital).
5. Hermannsburger Mission at Gollale (German Hospital).
6. Ospedale de la Consolata at Gollale (Italian Hospital).
7. Bete Saida Hospital (Dr. Hanner, near the Little Palace).
8. Menelik II. Hospital (Kabanna, near the German Legation).

Dessie.
1. Taffari Makonnen Hospital (Adventist).
2. Hospital of the Catholic Mission (French).
3. House reserved for the Ethiopian Red Cross Ambulances.

Harrar.
1. Gebi of the Duke of Harrar, situated outside the town (250 sick or wounded).
2. Gebi of the Ras Makonnen (wireless station removed) (100 sick or wounded).
3. French Hospital (150 sick).
4. Taffari Makonnen Hospital of the Swedish Mission (250 sick).
5. Former Treasury Buildings near the French Hospital (120 sick.)
Dire Dawa.

List of Buildings will be sent later.

Fekte-Tabor.

Haile Selassie I Hospital (Adventist).

On January 16th, this list was communicated for information to the Italian Red Cross, which was requested to bring it to the notice of the Italian Government; it was emphasised that the said list is not exhaustive.

Correspondence concerning Bombing from the Air.

The damage done to fixed establishments and ambulances of the Red Cross by air bombing was referred to in our Circular No. 323.

We were anxious to make no comment upon the letters thus published, leaving the National Red Cross Societies, and, in particular, those which have sent medical units to Ethiopia to draw the conclusions which ensue from this statement from the Italian point of view.

The International Red Cross Committee sent the Head of the Italian Government, on January 25th, 1936, an acknowledgment of the receipt of his letter dated January 16th.

As for the letter of the General President of the Italian Red Cross, dated January 11th, (appended to Circular 323), this was answered by the International Red Cross Committee. That body stated that by the publication, in Circular 323, of the correspondence exchanged with the Head of the Italian Government, it had taken note of the assurances given.

From these assurances it may be inferred that, if an Ethiopian or foreign ambulance should be attacked from the air, this could only be due to a combination of exceptional circumstances beyond the control of the Italian Government which, deploring any such contingency, has been good enough to declare that it would make every effort to prevent its materialising.

The telegrams sent by the International Red Cross Committee to its mission in Ethiopia have been interpreted in this way. The heads of Ethiopian and foreign ambulances, who were inclined to abandon the use of any distinguishing signs, decided, with a consciousness of the great importance of the assurances received, to fly the Red Cross flag with complete confidence.

The International Committee in its letter to the General President of the Italian Red Cross took the opportunity of adding that it greatly appreciated the efforts of the Ethiopian Red Cross, recently founded under extremely difficult conditions, as well as the magnificent spirit of solidarity shown by the National Red Cross Societies, who have in various ways lent their assistance to their new sister society. It gave particulars of the composition of the Central Committee of the Ethiopian Red Cross and emphasised the results it had achieved in so short a time.

On January 3rd, the Central Committee of the Swedish Red Cross asked the International Committee to institute a juridical enquiry into the bombing of Malka Lidar. The International Committee replied on January 7th that, for an official enquiry to be undertaken, it would have to be requested by one of the belligerents, which had not been done so far.

In its letter of January 16th, the Italian Government declared that it could wish nothing better than that International Committee delegates, selected for the purpose, should proceed to the scene of operations, in order to ascertain whether, and if so, how, the rules of the Geneva Convention are observed or violated by each of the parties.1)

This desire was also expressed by the General President of the Italian Red Cross.2)

The Ethiopian Government for its part, cabled on January 23rd, that it would welcome the sending of representatives selected by the International Committee to enquiry into the observance of the provisions of the Geneva Convention on both sides. The Ethiopian Government added that it would give our representatives every facility.

The International Red Cross Committee declared its willingness to accede to the desire expressed by the Italian and Ethiopian Governments and got into touch with both. A two-fold enquiry will call for the appointment of persons with legal and medical qualifications and entail expenditure which will greatly exceed the financial capacity of the Committee and which should be borne by the Governments concerned.

In contemplation of this enquiry, the International Committee is keeping before it the reports already received from its mission on the aforesaid bombing incidents, as well as on a number of facts of the same kind and on the alleged misuse of the Red Cross Emblem in Ethiopia.

Mission of the International Red Cross Committee.

The mission of the International Committee in Ethiopia has endeavoured to coordinate the work of the Red Cross in that country. In particular, it received the medical units sent by the National Red Cross Societies of neutral countries, and facilitated their organisation and their journey to the stations assigned to them.

One of the International Committee delegates, Mr. Sidney H. Brown, proceeded to Dessie, where he saw the first Italian prisoners of war and satisfied himself that they were well treated and able to correspond with their families.

Another delegate, Dr. Marcel Junod, travelled on two occasions from Addis Ababa to Dessie and in a medical service aeroplane piloted by the Swedish Airman, Count de Rosen, to Muggelli and Malka Lidar, to collect evidence concerning the bombing on December 30th.

1) Cf. Circular No. 323, p. 3.
2) " " " p. 8.
The work carried out by the mission has been appreciated and, spontaneously, several National Societies have sent special contributions to the International Red Cross Committee, to assist it in defraying the heavy expenditure entailed by the despatch and maintenance of this mission as well as the daily expense of telegrams and radiograms.

The American Red Cross has increased its 1956 contribution from $3,000 to $6,000.

The Luxemburg Red Cross announces that it is sending 500 Swiss francs.

The Swedish Red Cross has made a special donation of 2,000 Swiss francs.

The International Committee is deeply grateful to the above National Societies for these contributions which partly cover its extra expenditure.

We have the honour to be, etc.,

For the International Red Cross Committee,

MAX HUBER,
President.