



INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

Information Department

19, avenue de la Paix
1202 Geneva
Switzerland
Tel. 41 22 734-6001
Fax 41 22 734-8280

Delegation to the United Nations
780 Third Avenue - Suite 2802
New York, N.Y. 10017
Tel. (212) 371-0770
Fax (212) 838-5397

PRESS RELEASE

Communication to the Press No.91/36
1 July 1991

ICRC SURGICAL TEAM ASKED TO LEAVE ASMARA

Geneva (ICRC) - The surgical team of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) based in the Eritrean city of Asmara arrived in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Abeba, today, having been asked to leave Eritrea. The request to evacuate ICRC expatriate staff came from the Eritrean Provisional Government on 26th June.

The team, composed of one Swiss delegate, a surgeon, a theatre nurse and a ward nurse from the Netherlands and the British Red Cross Societies, had been working at the civilian Mekane Hiwot Hospital in Asmara since July last year. Hundreds of operations had been carried out on mainly war-wounded civilians over a 12-month period, with the help of local staff and Red Cross Youth volunteers.

The ICRC had also helped the local Red Cross to provide water for some ten thousand families per week in Asmara and to distribute relief supplies to conflict-affected areas in Eritrea.

The ICRC hopes to resume its dialogue with the authorities in Asmara as soon as possible to establish a new working relationship.

++++

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), together with the League of the Red Cross Societies and the recognized National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, is one of the three components of the International Red Cross. An independent humanitarian institution, the ICRC is the founding body of the Red Cross. As a neutral intermediary in case of armed conflicts or disturbances, it endeavours on its own initiative or on the basis of the Geneva Conventions to protect and assist the victims of international and civil wars and of internal troubles and tensions, thereby contributing to peace in the world.