



Klaus Reisinger/RAPHO

Into the fire. The residents of Kabul had hardly breathed a sigh of relief at the collapse of the communist government in April 1992 before their city was once again resounding to the rattle of gunfire and rocket explosions. In the ensuing months rival factions vying for power turned the streets of the capital into a battleground. With each successive wave of fighting, the toll of dead and wounded rose inexorably, homes and shops were destroyed and thousands fled into the countryside. Despite worsening security the ICRC remained in Kabul throughout, concentrating its efforts on support to the capital's medical facilities.



Caroline J. Cremo/AFP

Caring hands. An Afghan doctor in the ICRC hospital in Kabul provides some comfort for an Afghan boy wounded in the crossfire. As casualties flooded in staff worked in gruelling conditions, even as fighting raged around the hospital compound itself. Other hospitals in the capital faced greater problems still; with no medicines, fuel, electricity or water most were barely able to function. The ICRC distributed medical assistance to these health facilities and carried out medical

OUT OF THE FRYING PAN...

In 1992: • CHF 3,873,000 of medical supplies used and distributed • 5,517 patients treated in ICRC hospitals in Kabul, Peshawar and Quetta • 12,900 surgical operations performed • 1,046 patients fitted with artificial limbs



Les Stone/SYGMA

All behind him now. A former inmate walks away from the notorious prison fortress of Pul-i-Charki outside Kabul. For thousands more behind bars their turn for freedom came in April when the gates of Afghanistan's prisons were thrown open. Until then and since the beginning of its operation in Afghanistan the ICRC had been visiting detainees arrested because of their opposition to the government. In a major breakthrough in January 1992 delegates had been granted access to detainees held by the Ministry of State Security. Three months later the turn-around in the conflict rendered these visits unnecessary. After that, ex-detainees who passed by the delegation following their release were given some help in getting home.



Yannick Mueller/ICRC

evacuations, often crossing battle lines to bring patients to hospital. The only medical supplies to reach Kabul throughout most of 1992 were brought in by a weekly ICRC convoy via hazardous roads and terrain from Peshawar.