PORTUGUESE RED CROSS
CONDES D’ÓBIDOS PALACE-NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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Abstract
The Portuguese Red Cross (CVP) is the Portuguese national society for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

In the aristocratic centre of Lisbon, leaning over the river Tejo, we find Condes d’Óbidos Palace, the national headquarters of the Portuguese Red Cross since the beginning of XX century.

Built in the XVII century the palace has a great historic value.

Keywords
Red cross; Battle of Solferino; Henry Dunant; Dr. José António Marques; Condes d’Óbidos Palace.

INTRODUCTION
The idea that mankind must be protected against the scourge of war can be found among all the peoples of Antiquity.

It was only in the nineteenth century, however, that considerable efforts were undertaken to make war more humane.

The decisive events were the creation of the ICRC in February 1863 and the signature, in August 1864, of the Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Wounded in Armies in the Field, which signaled the birth of international humanitarian law.

Portugal signs up the First Geneva Convention in 22 of August, of 1864. The delegate who represented our country was the military Dr. José António Marques.

DEVELOPMENT
International Red Cross

In 1862, Henry Dunant, a young Swiss businessman, wrote A Memory of Solferino, in which he described what he had seen on the northern Italian battlefield in 1859 where 40,000 troops
were killed or wounded and left without help. His concern touched many, leading to the birth in 1863 of the International Committee.

Chronology

- 1859 - Battle of Solferino - Henry Dunant
- 1863 - International Geneva Conference - International Committee for Relief to the Wounded: since 1876, Red Cross International Committee (ICRC)
- 1864 - Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field
- 1867 - First Red Cross International Conference

Nowadays, the Red Cross is a worldwide movement with millions of people who fight, united, for the achievement of the same goal: The well being of all Humankind.

The Red Cross has seven very important principles:

1. **Humanity** - alleviate human suffering
2. **Impartiality** - to aid everyone without discrimination
3. **Neutrality** - to not take sides in hostilities
4. **Independence** - R.C. societies always maintain their autonomy
5. **Voluntary Service** - help everyone with the value of solidarity
6. **Unity** - each country has its own society
7. **Universality** - commitment of help between all different societies

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Chronology

- 22 of August, 1864 - Portugal signs up the first Geneva Convention. The delegate who represented our county was the military Dr. José António Marques.
- 11 of February, 1865 - Temporary Commission to Aid the Injured and Ill In Times of War.
- 1870 - Franco-Prussian war - 1st aid action.
- 1887 - SPCV - Red Cross Portuguese Society.
- 1924 - Portuguese Red Cross.

The Portuguese Red Cross has participated, along the time, in a large diversity of humanitarian missions in both national and international fields.

In close collaboration with international organisations and associations, the Portuguese Red Cross has been helping and assisting populations of nations suffering from famine, war and other miserable situations.

Portuguese red cross international Actions:

- World War I and II;
- Civil War, Spain (1936);
- Earthquake in Greece (1953) and Agadir (1960);
- The invasion of Portuguese India By the Indian Union (1961/62);
- Struggle against a wave of paludism in S.Tomê and Prince (1986);
- Operation in Romania (1989/90), in Zaire and in the Angolan Conflict (1991);
- Support to the Curd and Kosovo populations (1991 e 1999);
- Help to the victims of the armed conflict in Guiné-Bissau (1998);
- Armed Conflict in Serra Leoa (2000).
Portuguese Red Cross National Actions:

- Provided help to the victims of military revolt;
- Pneumonic and Smallpox epidemic (1918/19);
- Earthquakes in the Azores islands of Páial (1926) and S. Jorge (1964 e 1990);
- Railroad disasters in Vila Franca de Xira (1947) and Aicafache (1985);
- Flooding in Lisbon District (1967 and 1983);
- Chiado Fire (1988).

For its action in both national and international plans, the Portuguese Red Cross has been honoured with the highest decorations:

1870 – Cross from the French Legion of Honour, given for the action in the Franco-Prussian war by the French R.C.
1896 and 1920 – Gold Medal of Merit, Philanthropy and Generosity
1911 – Silver Medal from the Italian Government for the services given to the victims of the Calabria and Sicilia Earthquake.
1919 – Military Order of the Tower and Sword, Value, Loyalty and Merit, for the services given in the World War I.
1925 – Military Order of Christ
1927 – Medal of distinctive Services (February Revolution, 1927)
1933 – Great Cross of Benevenence and 1st class War Cross
1943 – for its action in favour of Human-kind, victim of the World War II, the Portuguese Red Cross is distinguished with the Pope’s Blessing (Pope Pious XII).
1954 – Great Cross of the Order of Merit by the German Federal Government.

1955 – Great Cross of the Dutch Order of Orange-Nassau for the services given.
1982 – Order of the Infant D. Henrique

CONDES D’ÓBIDOS PALACE

History

D. Vasco de Mascarenhas, the 1st Count of Óbidos, ordered the construction of the Palace of the Counts of Óbidos in the 17th century.

In 1919 it became the headquarters of the PRC, through a deed between the 9th Count of Óbidos — D. Pedro de Mello da Assis Mascarenhas — and the 8th President of the Portuguese Red Cross, General Joaquim José Machado.

It was the residence of Jorge Colaço, author of the tile panel exposed in the Terrace and it was used, during the World War II as a ward for the prisoners from the countries involved in the war.

The Palace

The noble area of the Palace of the Counts of Óbidos is composed by six sumptuous halls covered by tile panels from the 18th century.

In the noble doorway we can see the Mascarenhas’ coat of arms, surrounded by tile panels from the 18th century.

The Palace’s courtyard, which shows the busts from King D. Luis I and Queen D. Maria Pia, the protectors of the Red Cross in Portugal, gives access to the library and to the rooms — the Room of the Supreme Council or Diana’s Room, the Room of the Parables and the Room D. João de Castro or of the Tapestries — decorated with tile panels with
allegories alluding to mythological, biblical and oriental scenes. There are portraits of the presidents of the Portuguese Red Cross hanging on the walls.

In the dining room, we find panels from Coronel Vitória Pereira. On the ceiling, paintings from Gabriel Constante, the author of the tiles and paintings which decorate the Room D. João de Castro.

In the library, rebuilt after 1935 and conceived by Afonso de Dornelas, a great lustre stands out, hanging under a painting representing the Peace of Alvalade, in which the Queen St. Isabel preaches peace between the King D. Dinis and D. Afonso.

The Chapel, dedicated to Nossa Senhora da Conceição presents a rich and exuberant decoration, with its walls and ceilings covered by tile and paintings.

Special thanks to: Portuguese Red Cross.

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