PROTECTING THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF DETAINES

Ahmed Zaroug, who is in charge of coordinating at the ICRC detention activities in Somalia, explains why ICRC visits to detainees is so important.

Q: Why does ICRC visit detainees?
A: Generally, the ICRC visits half a million detainees in more than 90 countries worldwide (such as in Afghanistan, Yemen, Iraq, Colombia, Philippines, Guantanamo, Djibouti and Kinshasa among others). The aim of this humanitarian activity is to ensure that persons deprived of their freedom are treated with dignity and respect and that authorities maintain contact with their families and relatives.

Even though, we do not question the reasons for any given person’s detention, we do stress the importance of full respect of relevant legal guarantees. This includes the right to a fair trial, to the presumption of innocence, to be treated with dignity and humanity. We also try to ensure that the treatment of the people under their custody is as humane as possible.

Part of the reason ICRC visits detainees is to support the authorities, directly through visits and advice and indirectly through the ICRC’s broader humanitarian work, such as in providing health care to detainees.

It should be understood, that the detention authorities have the sole responsibility to ensure the well-being and human treatment of detainees and prisoners worldwide.

Q: How do these visits work?
A: Currently, the ICRC visits half a million detainees in more than 90 countries worldwide. The ICRC visits to places of detention.

Q: Are you ever asked to visit prisoners in far away places? Do you have a multidisciplinary approach?
A: In fact, we do. The ICRC’s focus is on providing medical and humanitarian support to people deprived of their liberty, including to those in detention. It is important to note that we cannot take time on the road to investigate or find out all the difficulties.

Q: Do you help the families of the personnel detained?
A: A special focus of the ICRC is to investigate and report on the treatment of the people under their custody. This involves receiving and analyzing reports and observing conditions, and communicating our findings to the authorities.

Q: How many visits have taken place?
A: In 2013, the ICRC carried out 14 visits to various places of detention in Somalia. The numbers of visits increased in 2017 to 31 and in 2018 to 45. There are efforts to maintain this level of visits at high and medium visits and to maintain this level of visits.

Q: Is there any impact of your interventions?
A: In our detention-related program we have a multidisciplinary approach. It means we try to look at all aspects of the conditions and environment of detained persons, their treatment, individual, institutional, public health, medical and nutritional aspects as family contacts.

Q: Are there any steps visited?
A: Ahmed Zaroug, who is in charge of coordinating at the ICRC detention activities in Somalia, explains why ICRC visits to detainees is so important. If there are inadequate or no medical treatment, families should be allowed visits to their detained relatives. When such visits cannot take place, because of security or economic constraints or the third-party detention, the ICRC helps detainees and their families to establish and maintain contact through Red Cross Messages (RCM). The ICRC also provides detainees with the ICRC’s telephone calls.

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Q: Do you visit families in other countries and territories in the world (such as in Afghanistan, Yemen, Iraq, Colombia, Philippines, Guantanamo, Djibouti and Kinshasa among others)?
A: The ICRC delegate talks privately with a detainee.

Based on feedback received from families, authorities and detainees themselves in various countries around the world, the ICRC detention-related activities are well appreciated.

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The importance of hygiene in detention facilities

Daily detained persons need water in sufficient quantity to drink, shower, clean their surroundings and perform religious ablutions. Regular washing with clean water and soap prevents the occurrence of many diseases, especially also conditions and diarrhoea. Prison kitchen also needs enough water to prepare food and keep equipment clean.

Water and sanitation system

After thorough assessment and discussions with detainees and prison management, ICRC specialists may help places of detention to maintain or rehabilitate existing water and sanitation systems. For detention to maintain or rehabilitate existing water and sanitation systems. For detention to maintain or rehabilitate existing water and sanitation systems.

Hygiene committee

An important aspect of improving hygiene in places of detention is the prison staff and detainees' capacity to manage hygiene procedures to maintain a clean and healthy environment. To better supervise, manage and implement these hygiene procedures, a hygiene committee made up of inmates and prison staff is created to fulfil this shared responsibility. A practical plan of collaboration is established to ensure that all important aspects such as showers, toilets and sinks are cleaned regularly and that solid waste, one of the many causes of disease, are well treated.

Learning: a way forward

My name is Isfihard. I am originally from Horn where my wife and two young sons live. I have been detained in this prison already for 2 years. In 2012 I entered for the first time the ICRC team in the prison. They had come with the aim of setting the aided to detainees about our daily life, our conditions, and our health. Among the hygiene materials that were distributed by ICRC included soaps, buckets and cleaning tools. Also the detainees that did not have access to hygiene news from Somaliland such as we were able to receive messages from ICRC through the phone service given to us by ICRC may read little but can change lives of many. A year later I noticed the ICRC in collaboration with the management of the prison wanted to initiate vocational training for detainees. I could not believe it at first because ICRC only takes detained of detainees to train them.

In my environment I have never had any opportunity to be for a job, but the activities available to detainees will enable them to become productive members of society and improve my health in prison. Before I entered the prison I used to be independent. I will also expand the investment I can plan my own business and make wooden furnishings and sell them.

Vocational training in prison

The ICRC has been implementing a vocational training program in prisons since 2011 and is looking to expand these activities to other detention facilities. Currently the detainees, male and female, are exposed in six-month carpentry (furniture making), masonry and tailoring skills training. Vocational training program in Bossasso could not believe it at first. Who takes care of the management of the prison wants to change lives of many. A year later I noticed the ICRC in collaboration with the management of the prison wanted to initiate vocational training for detainees. I could not believe it at first because ICRC only takes detained of detainees to train them.

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I have been included in the carpentry training. Others were in metal working. It was hard to believe that we would have an activity in the prison. A training needs place, equipment, trainers a lot of motivation to move the project forward.

Life after prison

Hats to people deprived of liberty is a central achievement of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) work around the world. The ICRC’s visitation activities were to Western Romanian and Serbian prisoners of war during WWI. It visits since have ranged from thousands of prisoners of war during the World Wars to visiting Nelson Mandela during his imprisonment. It has always been at the core of ICRC’s mandate and a key component of our diverse response to armed conflict and humanitarian emergencies.

ICRC works to support the unique needs of detainees in Somalia. The ICRC works to support the unique needs of detainees. The ICRC works to support the unique needs of detainees. The ICRC works to support the unique needs of detainees. The ICRC works to support the unique needs of detainees.

Our Approach

The ICRC recognizes that every detainee is unique and that every person is a special person. The ICRC recognizes that every detainee is unique and that every person is a special person. The ICRC recognizes that every detainee is unique and that every person is a special person. The ICRC recognizes that every detainee is unique and that every person is a special person. The ICRC recognizes that every detainee is unique and that every person is a special person.