

## **List of Some ICRC News Releases & Report**

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### **1. Myanmar: ICRC denounces major and repeated violations of international humanitarian law (29- June 2007) News Release Excerpts**

The president of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Jakob Kellenberger, has strongly denounced violations of international humanitarian law committed against civilians and detainees by the government of Myanmar and demanded that the government take urgent action to end these violations and prevent them from recurring.

"Despite repeated entreaties by the ICRC, the authorities have consistently refused to enter into a serious discussion of these abuses with a view to putting a stop to them," said Mr. Kellenberger. In addition, increasingly severe restrictions imposed on the ICRC by the government have made it impossible for the organization's staff to move about independently in the affected areas and have hampered the delivery of aid intended for strictly humanitarian, apolitical purposes. Since late 2005 the authorities have also prevented the ICRC from visiting places of detention in accordance with its usual procedures, which include carrying out private interviews with detainees.

**"The continuing deadlock with the authorities has led the ICRC to take the exceptional step of making its concerns public," said Mr. Kellenberger. "The organization uses confidential and bilateral dialogue as its preferred means of achieving results. However, this presupposes that parties to a conflict are willing to enter into a serious discussion and take into account the ICRC's recommendations. This has not been the case with the authorities of Myanmar and that is why the ICRC has decided to speak out publicly."**

"I urge the government of Myanmar to put a stop to all violations of international humanitarian law and to ensure that they do not recur," concluded Mr. Kellenberger. "I would also like to remind all States party to the Geneva Conventions of their obligation, under Article 1, to respect and to ensure respect for the Conventions."

The ICRC stands ready to do everything it can to pursue its humanitarian activities for people in Myanmar who require assistance, in accordance with its internationally recognized mandate under the Geneva Conventions, the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and its customary working procedures.

### **2. Myanmar: No Progress in Talks, ICRC Closes Offices (15 March 2007) Excerpts**

"The ICRC's humanitarian work in Myanmar has now reached near-paralysis," the organization's director of operations has said. Speaking in Geneva, Pierre Krähenbühl explained that staff were still unable to resume visits to detainees anywhere in the country or to conduct independent field operations in sensitive border areas. "A recent meeting with the Ministry of Home Affairs made no headway," he added.

### **3. Myanmar: the head of delegation talks about ICRC activities - Interview (13 March 2006) Excerpts**

The ICRC's head of delegation in Myanmar, Patrick Vial, talks about the ICRC's activities in the country and explains why the organization has been unable to carry out detention visits since the end of last year.

#### ***What about detention activities today?***

“The ICRC detention teams faced increasing difficulties towards the end of last year in conducting detention visits: some of the standard working modalities that the ICRC applies to its operations around the world had been challenged by the authorities since mid-2005. As a result, the ICRC has been unable to visit detention facilities since the end of 2005.”

“The ICRC is currently engaged in ongoing discussions and negotiations with the Government authorities to resolve the situation. We remain optimistic and hope to resume detention activities as soon as possible for the sake of detainees and their families.”

### **4. ICRC Annual Report 2006, (Myanmar) (24 May 2007) Excerpts**

#### **ICRC ACTION**

“In 2006, ICRC activities in Myanmar, which included visiting detainees and assisting vulnerable populations in sensitive border areas, were subject to increasing restrictions. Late in the year, the government of Myanmar ordered the ICRC to close its five field offices in the country (Hpa-an, Kyaing Tong, Mandalay, Mawlamyine and Taunggyi), effectively making it impossible for the organization to carry out most of its assistance and protection work benefiting civilians living in difficult conditions in border areas.”

“Owing to the ICRC’s increased inability to do effective work in Myanmar and to the deterioration, and subsequent cessation, of dialogue with the government, the organization’s activities had to be scaled down towards the end of the year to a few unlimited projects in the field of physical rehabilitation for amputees. In addition, assistance activities for civilians in sensitive border areas were first severely hampered then prevented completely. The order to close down the field offices was rescinded in December, but no agreement was reached on the ICRC’s future activities in Myanmar.”

“Towards the end of 2005, ICRC teams had faced growing difficulties in conducting detention visits: the authorities began to challenge some of the ICRC’s standard working procedures. As a result, the ICRC was unable to visit detention facilities; this continued in 2006. In late 2006, the ICRC was officially informed that it would no longer be allowed to carry out its detention visits in accordance with its standard working procedures. Despite the limitations, the delegation continued to enable registered detainees to receive monthly visits from family members and to facilitate the return of released detainees to their places of origin.”