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PRESS RELEASE

For Mike  
from Carrie  
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**United States: ICRC president urges progress on detention-related issues**

Geneva (ICRC) – The president of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Jakob Kellenberger, had talks this week with Secretary of State Colin Powell, National Security Adviser Dr Condoleezza Rice and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz. The discussions represented a follow-up to a meeting in May 2003 when the ICRC president had appealed for detainees in Guantanamo Bay to benefit from due legal process and for significant changes to be made at the camp itself.

Mr Kellenberger, while appreciating the frankness of the dialogue with the US authorities, lamented the fact that two years after the first detainees arrived at Guantanamo, and despite repeated pleas, they are still facing seemingly indefinite detention beyond the reach of the law. He also noted that the ICRC's concerns regarding certain aspects of the conditions and treatment in Guantanamo have not yet been adequately addressed.

Mr Kellenberger welcomed assurances from the US authorities that the review process in place is to be accelerated, leading to possible further releases from Guantanamo, while stressing the importance of ensuring that those remaining should either be charged and tried or placed within a legal framework which governs their continued detention.

Beyond Guantanamo, the ICRC is increasingly concerned about the fate of an unknown number of people captured as part of the so-called global war on terror and held in undisclosed locations. Mr Kellenberger echoed previous official requests from the ICRC for information on these detainees and for eventual access to them, as an important humanitarian priority and as a logical continuation of the organization's current detention work in Guantanamo and Afghanistan.

Said Mr Kellenberger after the meetings: "The talks were held in a constructive atmosphere and the US authorities seemed sincerely receptive to our concerns and challenges, as we are aware of theirs, although we expect of course that this important dialogue will yield concrete results relating to our concerns. We remain committed to the dialogue process with the US authorities and to our important humanitarian work in Guantanamo and elsewhere."

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