

EXHIBIT 59



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Red Cross alleged to have complained to US over torture

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The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said it could neither confirm nor deny a newspaper report on Tuesday that it had complained to the US authorities that prisoners at Guantanamo Bay were being tortured with the help of doctors.

Doctors and other medical staff conveyed information about prisoners' mental health and vulnerabilities to interrogators in violation of their duty to uphold patient confidentiality, said a report in the New York Times published on 30 November.

US authorities have denied using medical files to harm prisoners and emphasised that these detainees were "enemy combatants who were fighting against US and coalition forces."

The newspaper said its report was based on an internal US government memorandum that cited a confidential Red Cross report on a visit to Guantanamo in June this year.

"We will not confirm or deny whether these quotes reflect the findings reported by the ICRC to the US authorities on Guantanamo," said Anton Ella Notary, a spokeswoman for the Geneva based Red Cross.

Red Cross workers have paid regular visits to detainees at the US detention facility at Guantanamo Bay since early 2002 to report on whether they are being held in accordance with international law and standards, Ms Notary said.

Under a decades-old system, the Red Cross secures access to detainees and prisoners of war in return for keeping their findings confidential. Instead, the humanitarian group lobbies behind the scenes for prisoners to be treated in accordance with international law.

Ms Notary said that, as with all prison visits, the Red Cross compiled a report after their visits to Guantanamo this year and informed senior US officials of its findings in person before sending them the full reports.

The Red Cross has in the past hinted that treatment of some detainees, both physical and psychological, amounted to torture but never stated this clearly and publicly.

The newspaper said information about some detainees was passed on to interrogators at the detention centre by a group of psychologists called the Behavioural Science Consultation Team known as Biscuit.

It said that during their June visit, the Red Cross team had found a far greater incidence of mental illness produced by stress than the American medical authorities had found, adding that much of this was caused by prolonged solitary confinement.

It said the Red Cross report found that medical care was of high quality at the detention centre, but criticised doctors and medics for betraying patients' confidence, saying that, because of this, many detainees no longer trusted medical personnel.

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