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US Senators Want to Punish ICRC Over Criticism

By Abdul-Qader Bin Cheba , IOL Correspondent

WASHINGTON, June 15, 2005 (IslamOnline.net) – Republican Senators believe the US should reconsider funds allocated to the International Committee of the Red Cross in view of its repeated criticism of rights violations by US troops in Guantanamo, Iraq and Afghanistan.

In a report titled "Are American Interests Being Disserved by International Committee of the Red Cross?", the Senate Republican Policy Committee called for an audit of funds spent by the ICRC to ensure that American dollars are not being used for lobbying against US interests.

It noted that the US, the largest donor to the international humanitarian group, funds 28% of the group's budget and has contributed \$1.5 billion since 1990.

The report, circulated this week, accused the group of "inaccurately and unfairly" accusing US officials of not adhering to the Geneva Convention.

The ICRC, the guardian of the Geneva Conventions governing conduct in warfare, lambasted late last year "utter contempt" for humanity in US-occupied Iraq.



The ICRC described the US abuses against Guantanamo detainees as war crimes.

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The international group also described the US abuses against Guantanamo detainees as war crimes.

Anti-American

The 10-page report claimed that the ICRC had "lost its way" and veered from the impartiality on which its reputation was based.

"The ICRC effectively no longer serves as the guardian of obligations that have been accepted under a ratified treaty or treaties."

It accused the international humanitarian group of becoming "more responsive to the preferences of the liberal and frequently anti-American international nongovernmental organization community".

The report even claimed that the ICRC "has become an aggressive advocate - like Amnesty International - for enforcing a broader set of obligations."

It argued that the international body was exceeding the bounds of its mission by trying to "reinterpret and expand international law in favor of terrorists and insurgents".

In its annual report issued on May 25, Amnesty said the US war on terror has encouraged governments around the world to roll back the rule of law, taking their cue from the global US anti-terror rhetoric.

Founded in 1863, the International Committee of the Red Cross oversees compliance with the Geneva Conventions on the treatment of prisoners.

The body also undertakes projects aimed at alleviating the suffering of civilian populations during times of military conflict.

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