

Al Akhbar recently published two articles on Aleppo, Syria (*New details shed light on the Aleppo Prison Siege*, 5 June, and *Drinking water and war profiteers in Aleppo*, June 15). We would like to clarify some incorrect and misleading information about the role of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Aleppo, which may put the organization and its staff members at risk in what is a highly volatile environment.

In the first article, it is stated that the ICRC had "a pivotal role" in an agreement that resulted in the delivery of food assistance to detainees held at Aleppo Central Prison and, according to the writer, delayed their release. However, ICRC's only involvement in Aleppo was, as a recognized neutral intermediary, to bring the parties together and relay their respective messages. It never suggested solutions to the Aleppo Central Prison crisis, the various parties to the conflict did. The ICRC is a strictly humanitarian actor that works with parties to improve the situation of civilians and detainees affected by armed conflict.

In the second article, the ICRC in Aleppo is accused of colluding with parties to supply diesel fuel for generators for profit. The ICRC does not provide and has never provided any fuel to authorities in Aleppo. Rather, as the article rightly notes, the ICRC has worked tirelessly to provide technical support to local water authorities and provides clean water to millions across Aleppo governorate. In recent weeks, they have provided the Aleppo water board with generators, water pumps, decontamination consumables and water dispensers. The ICRC and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent have also installed toilets, taps and water pumps, and upgraded the pipe network at a temporary facility accommodating detainees recently transferred out of Aleppo Central Prison.

Ralph El Hage,

Spokesperson, ICRC Syria