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## **ICRC Reiterates Need for Access to All US-Held Terror Detainees**

Agence France Presse

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GENEVA, Dec 9 (AFP) - The International Committee of the Red Cross reiterated Friday that it wanted access to all detainees held by the United States in the campaign against terror groups.

"We would like to have information on these people and have access to them," ICRC spokesman Florian Westphal told AFP, following comments by a senior US official indicating that the humanitarian agency could not have access to the full range of detainees.

The ICRC is allowed to visit detainees held at the US military base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, under an internationally recognised legal mandate to oversee the fair treatment of detainees captured in conflicts.

Recent reports by human rights groups have alleged that the United States is holding more detainees in "secret prisons" abroad.

Westphal underlined that the ICRC had publicly expressed its concerns about the fate of an unknown number of detainees since early 2004.

"It is a subject that is regularly dealt with in our contact with the US government," Westphal said.

John Bellinger, senior legal adviser for Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice, declined to comment Thursday on the alleged existence of secret prisons outside the United States.

He told journalists that the ICRC had access to "absolutely everybody" in Guantanamo Bay.

When asked if the ICRC had access to everybody held in similar circumstances elsewhere, Bellinger said: "No."

During a tour of Europe this week, Rice sought to allay fears about secret prisons and emphasised US respect for international law.