



ICRC | Syria: Civilians must be protected, whether they stay in Eastern Aleppo or not

28 July 2016

Geneva/Damascus: The creation of humanitarian corridors in Eastern Aleppo, as proposed this morning, must ensure the safety and respect of all civilians, regardless of whether they decide to leave the city or not, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said today.

"Any initiative that can successfully give civilians some respite from the ongoing and indiscriminate violence, and allows them to voluntarily leave for safer areas, would be much welcomed", said Robert Mardini, ICRC's Regional Director in the Near and Middle East. "But humanitarian corridors need to be well and carefully planned, and have to be implemented with the consent of parties on all sides."

If some people do decide to leave their homes, aside from guarantees they can move safely, plans must also ensure they can access appropriate shelter and assistance, and that families are not split up. Those who decide, for whatever reason, to stay in Eastern Aleppo must be protected, and all sides must allow humanitarian agencies to reach and assess their well-being and needs.

"What we need urgently is a humanitarian pause in all areas of Aleppo affected by the violence", Mardini continued. "We ask for this to be implemented on a daily basis and as soon as possible. Our teams need to reach communities in Eastern Aleppo now, especially families and the most vulnerable, such as the elderly, the sick or injured, and detainees."

The ICRC and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) stand ready to step up their joint humanitarian response in Aleppo city and Governorate. The past few weeks have seen intense fighting in the city and neighbouring areas, and have been marked by an alarming lack of respect for civilians, health facilities and civilian infrastructure.