

ICRC remains committed to helping Somalis

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) regrets the decision of the Office for Supervising the Affairs of Foreign Agencies of the Harakat Al-Shabaab Al Mujahideen to terminate the agreement under which the ICRC was allowed to deliver emergency food aid in Al-Shabaab administered areas of Somalia.

"Under the agreement, we provided more than 1.2 million people living in central and southern Somalia with one-month food rations between June and December 2011," said Daniel Duvillard, the ICRC's head of operations for East Africa. "The food distributions helped address severe malnutrition among the population."

Despite adverse conditions faced by the ICRC during this emergency operation, the organisation succeeded in distributing more than 17 000 tonnes of rice, beans and oil directly to the neediest people in more than 1 600 different places. As a result of heat, moisture and exposure to heavy rain, 6% of the food intended for distribution was found to have deteriorated.

"Those beans were either withdrawn by the ICRC or destroyed by the Al-Shabaab authorities," said Duvillard. "No food suspected to be unfit for human consumption was distributed to aid recipients in Somalia."

In the current circumstances, the ICRC remains unable to retrieve a food consignment intended for distribution to 240 000 people in the Middle Shabelle and Galgaduud regions that has been blocked by the Al-Shabaab authorities in Jowhar. This situation led the ICRC to suspend its food distributions in mid-January.