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ICRC News Release No. 17/15

18 February 2017

Afghanistan: An appeal for the safe and unconditional release of ICRC staff

Kabul / Geneva (ICRC) – The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is calling for the safe and unconditional release of two staff members abducted when their convoy was ambushed on 8 February in Jawzjan province, an attack that resulted in the killing of six ICRC staff members.

“We call on the abductors’ sense of humanity and request the immediate, safe and unconditional release of our colleagues and to avoid taking any action that could endanger their lives” said the Head of the ICRC Delegation in Afghanistan, Monica Zanarelli. “We do not want the agony and heartache of this tragedy to deepen.”

We also appeal to all authorities and armed groups operating in the area, to do their utmost to secure the safe release of the two ICRC staff members, and to avoid taking any action that could endanger their lives.

The ICRC has been active in Afghanistan for three decades, assisting impartially victims of the conflict with medical care, food assistance, family contacts and the dignified handling of human remains. It is a neutral, impartial and independent organization whose sole mission is strictly humanitarian.

Following the unjustifiable killing of six staff members and the abduction of two others, all ICRC activities in Afghanistan have been put on hold.

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