

# Red Cross Halts Prison Visits in Uzbekistan

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GENEVA — The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has scrapped all prison visits in Uzbekistan because its terms were not respected, including being able to speak to detainees in private about conditions of detention.

Torture is rife in Uzbekistan's criminal justice system, according to UN human rights investigators and activist groups such as the New York-based Human Rights Watch.

ICRC visits to prisons in the former Soviet republic have been suspended since last October.

There was no immediate reaction from Uzbek authorities to Friday's ICRC announcement.

The decision, which the ICRC described as rare, came after last-ditch talks between its director-general Yves Daccord and authorities this week in Tashkent.

*(Reuters)*

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