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NAM-Red Cross

INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS PREPARES CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR IRAQ

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 24 (Bernama) -- The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has prepared its contingency plan in the event of a war breaking out in Iraq.

Its vice-president, Eric Roethlisberger, said today that the ICRC had deployed its humanitarian workers to Iraq and the neighbouring countries to ensure that they would be able to provide humanitarian assistance if the need arose.

"We are executing the plan phase by phase," he told a media conference on the sidelines of the 13th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit, here.

"We are preparing quietly and not publicly like those who are going to war," he said.

He said the people of Iraq would be suffering further if a new war broke out as they were already vulnerable due to war and international conflict in their country over the past two decades.

In the event of war, the ICRC would attend to the needs of civilians who are displaced, wounded and disabled, he said.

Roethlisberger reminded the world to respect international law which bans the use of weapons that cause unnecessary and excessive human suffering.

He also said that countries engaged in war should not force their people to be human shields as it was against the international humanitarian laws and if the people did it on their own accord then it would become the responsibility of the country concerned to protect the "human shields".

He said the ICRC still had some unfinished job in Iraq such as attending to the water needs of the Iraqi people and solving the problem of limited medical supply due to the United Nations sanction.

He also supported Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's calls to the international community to outlaw war.

-- BERNAMA

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