

Red Cross Official on Contacts

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[Text] A Mozambican and three expatriates working for the ICRC, the International Committee for the Red Cross, are being held by Renamo rebels after a battle last week. Renamo took the town of Memba from Frelimo troops. On the line to Geneva, Josephine Haysley asked ICRC spokesman Paul-Henri Morat how the four come to be in Renamo hands:

[Begin recording] [Morat] There has been an attack on this town, and our people have (?discovered) themselves waking up on the other side. Now Renamo is trying to release those people, to give them back to us as soon as possible and in the safest way.

[Haysley] I understand, though, that the Renamo rebels have released a statement, and they have since accused the four people held of not being neutral during a battle in the garrison town of Memba in Nampula District of Mozambique.

[Morat] Yes. We are totally against this declaration. The ICRC, wherever it is working around the world, is always working in an impartial and neutral way.

[Haysley] Another allegation that they have put across is that your organization is limiting its operations to government-held areas.

[Morat] In Mozambique, we are working on both sides of this conflict. We have a [word indistinct] program. We are visiting people, detainees for security reasons in governmental prisons in the provinces, nearly all the provinces of Mozambique, and we have a rather extended program, a relief program, medical relief and orthopedical program, as well in the Renamo side than in the government side.

[Haysley] Now I believe you are in touch with Renamo. Have they made any demands for the release of your four workers?

[Morat] As I said before, Renamo has [words indistinct] and themselves contacted us to try to find the best way to release the people in the safest way. So it is an incident, and, for the time being, we are rather optimistic that they should be released as soon as possible.

[Haysley] And you take Renamo in good faith?

[Morat] Yes, madame, we are trusting the people we are dealing with. [end recording]