



# PROTECTION

Ensure that prisoners, whatever the reason for their arrest and detention, are treated with dignity and humanity, in accordance with international norms and standards.

## GAMES BEHIND BARS: A WAY TO IMPROVE MORALE



©Abdikarim Mohamed/ICRC

“Stop hogging the ball! Pass!” Ahmed\* shouts as he moves to an open position in anticipation of the ball from his teammate, Yussuf\*. They are playing a football passing drill and are keen not to concede possession to the opposing team.

Ahmed and Yussuf are inmates of Cell Block B in a prison in Puntland, in northern Somalia. They finished their morning chores early and are now playing football with fellow inmates in the veranda outside their sleeping quarters.

The players are fully immersed in the game and don't seem bothered by their limited playing space, or by the fact they are

playing with a basketball and not a football. The entire cell block is a flurry of activity. Some inmates cheer the players from the sidelines, while others compete at ludo and dominoes in a corner.

The prisoners are playing with balls and board games donated by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to four prisons in Puntland. The 450 board games and 56 balls were given to the prisons as part of the ICRC's work with detainees, work that seeks to promote humane and dignified treatment regardless of the reason for their arrest or detention.

For the inmates of Cell Block B, the games deliver rich face-to-face interactions and a positive recreational activity. The sessions lift the general mood of the population and provide valuable health benefits.

“This is like a town, a home, a residence all in one. When we leave our cells, the residence, we step out into the veranda which is like the town. Be it football, ludo or dominoes, it cheers us up and we get some sun,” Hassan\*, the cell block representative, explains.

Between January and June this year, the ICRC conducted 17 visits to 25 places of detention across Somalia to work with the authorities to improve the living conditions of detainees. Other ICRC support includes

renovations to detention facilities' water systems and the donations of medical supplies.



©Abdikarim Mohamed/ICRC

Board games, particularly dominoes, are a favourite amongst the inmates inside the prison.

\*Not their real names



To find out more about the ICRC Somalia visit [www.blogs.icrc.org/somalia](http://www.blogs.icrc.org/somalia)

Email: [sok\\_somaliblog\\_services@icrc.org](mailto:sok_somaliblog_services@icrc.org)