THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

BACKGROUND

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (The Movement) is the world's largest humanitarian network. The Movement is comprised of three main components:

- The International Committee of the Red Cross
- The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
- The 187 National Red Cross Red Crescent Societies

Guided by seven Fundamental Principles including Neutrality and Impartiality, the Movement works in cooperation with States, donors and other aid organizations to assist vulnerable people affected by natural and human-made disasters, as well as conflicts around the world.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an independent, neutral and impartial organization, whose humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance.

As the custodian of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, the ICRC works to strengthen and promote respect for international humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles.

The ICRC enjoys a permanent mandate under international law and the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement) to visit prisons, organize relief operations, reunite separated families and undertake other humanitarian activities in times of war and other situations of violence. It also works to meet the needs of internally displaced persons, raise public awareness on the dangers of mines and explosive remnants of war, and to trace people who have gone missing during conflicts.

In situations of armed conflict and internal strife, it directs and coordinates the international activities conducted by the Movement.
ICRC key facts from 2012:

- More than 6.3 million people received aid in the form of food and over 5.5 million people received aid in the form of essential household, hygiene items, agricultural infrastructure rehabilitation/construction, veterinary services and livestock management or seed and tools. Around 2.5 million people benefited from work (such as food/cash-for-work programmes), services and training opportunities; and over 500,000 benefited from micro-economic initiatives.

- An estimated 7,168,000 people (26% women; 53% children) benefited from ICRC support to health care facilities. ICRC delegates visited around half a million detainees in 97 contexts, including detainees under the jurisdiction of international courts and tribunals.

- The ICRC handled close to 280,000 Red Cross messages, enabling family members separated by hostilities and other crises to restore contact. Around 50,000 of the messages were exchanged between detainees and their families; moreover, 209,977 phone calls were facilitated between family members.

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) secretariat supports the world’s largest volunteer-based humanitarian network, reaching 160 million people each year through its 187 member National Societies. Two new National Societies, the Cyprus Red Cross Society and the South Sudan Red Cross society will be admitted to the IFRC during the 19th session of the IFRC General Assembly in Sydney thus the total membership to 189.

The IFRC secretariat coordinates international support before, during and after large-scale disasters and health crises, supports community development programmes, strengthens the capacities and leadership of its member National Societies, and acts at the international level to raise resources and persuade decision makers to act at all times in the interests of vulnerable people and respect Red Cross Red Crescent Fundamental Principles.

Guided by Strategy 2020 – its collective plan of action to tackle the major humanitarian and development challenges of this decade – the IFRC and National Red Cross Red Crescent Societies are committed to ‘saving lives and changing minds’.

IFRC key facts from 2012:

- As a whole, the IFRC reaches and supports more than 168 million people annually through its programmes.

- Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers contributed USD 6 billion dollars-worth of services annually.
The global Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteer workforce numbers 15 million.

NATIONAL RED CROSS RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

The global network of 187 National Red Cross Red Crescent Societies – also known as National Societies – is present in almost every country around the world. This unique network forms the backbone of the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement.

Each National Society is made up of volunteers and staff, who provide a wide variety of services, ranging from disaster relief and assistance for victims of conflict, to first aid training and reconnecting families who have been separated during conflict or disasters. These committed individuals are on the front line, delivering humanitarian assistance and supporting vulnerable communities to become stronger and more resilient.

National Societies support the public authorities in their own countries as independent auxiliaries to the government in the humanitarian field. Their local knowledge and expertise, access to communities, and infrastructure enable the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement to get the right kind of help where it’s needed, fast.

National Society volunteers are often the first on the scene when a disaster strikes, and they remain active within affected communities long after everyone else has come and gone. This unparalleled network of community-based volunteers and staff also plays a vital role in ensuring that care, prevention and preparedness programmes are carried out on a day-to-day basis – from visiting chronically-ill HIV patients in Africa to organizing early warning drills in hurricane-prone areas of the Americas.

This local presence and community-based approach, coupled with the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement’s global outreach, resources and know-how, give the National Red Cross Red Crescent Societies a distinct advantage when it comes to dealing with today’s complex humanitarian development challenges.

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies key facts from 2012:

- 15 million Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers serve vulnerable communities worldwide.
- Donor resources go much further with the support of the volunteer network. On average, the Red Cross Red Crescent network of volunteers extends its paid workforce by a ratio of 1 to 20 – meaning that for every paid staff member, there are 20 volunteers.
- Worldwide, National Societies employ around 270,000 people.
- National Society programmes and services address both immediate and long-term needs including: emergency response, disaster preparedness, community-based health and care, first aid training, restoring family contact for disaster victims, youth and volunteer activities and more.