

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

at a glance



Jakob Dall/Danish Red Cross



ICRC



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



Working together to help others

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is the world's largest humanitarian network. The Movement is neutral and impartial, and provides protection and assistance to people affected by disasters and conflicts.

The Movement is made up of almost 97 million volunteers, supporters, and staff in 186 countries. It has three main components:

- ▶ The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- ▶ The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
- ▶ National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

As partners, the different members of the Movement support communities in becoming stronger and safer through a variety of development projects and humanitarian activities.

The Movement also works in cooperation with governments, donors and other aid organizations to assist vulnerable people around the world.

International Committee of the Red Cross

ABOUT

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an independent, neutral organization that provides humanitarian assistance and protection to victims of war and armed violence.

During situations of conflict, the ICRC is responsible for directing and coordinating the Movement's international relief activities. It also promotes the importance of international humanitarian law and draws attention to universal humanitarian principles.

As the custodian of the Geneva Conventions, the ICRC has a permanent mandate under international law to visit prisons, organize relief operations, reunite separated families and undertake other humanitarian activities during armed conflicts.

The ICRC also works to meet the needs of internally displaced persons, raise public awareness of the dangers of mines and explosive remnants of war and trace people who have gone missing during conflicts.

The ICRC's headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland, and the organization has more than 12,000 staff in 80 countries around the globe. About 30 per cent of the ICRC's operational activities are carried out in cooperation with National Societies.

ICRC key facts

In 2006, ICRC delegates visited close to half a million people deprived of their freedom in 2,500 places of detention in 71 countries.

ICRC water, sanitation and construction projects met the needs of around 16 million people in 2006, while ICRC-supported hospitals and health care facilities assisted about 2.3 million people.

It also distributed relief items to about 4 million people, food aid to 2.6 million people and

helped a further 3.4 million people through sustainable food-production and micro-economic programmes.

Overall, the ICRC supported around 4 million internally displaced persons and returnees in 32 countries in 2006.

In the same year, the ICRC enabled war-affected families to keep in touch with their loved ones through the exchange of more than 630,000 Red Cross messages.

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

The International Federation is a global humanitarian organization, which coordinates and directs international assistance following natural and man-made disasters in non-conflict situations. Its mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity.

The International Federation works with National Societies in responding to catastrophes around the world. Its relief operations are combined with development work, including disaster preparedness programmes, health and care activities, and the promotion of humanitarian values.

In particular, it supports programmes on risk reduction and fighting the spread of diseases, such as HIV, tuberculosis, avian influenza and malaria. The organization also works to combat discrimination and violence, and promote human rights and assistance for migrants.

These activities form part of the International Federation's Global Agenda. Its goals:

- 1 Reduce the number of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- 2 Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- 3 Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- 4 Promote respect for diversity and human dignity, and reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion.

International Federation key facts

The International Federation, as a whole, reaches and supports around 250 million people annually through its programmes.

Between May and September 2007, the International Federation responded to climate-related disasters in 18 countries in Africa, 16 in the Americas, 13 in Asia and ten European nations. In 2006, the International Federation launched a \$300 million appeal to fight HIV in Southern Africa, the world's worst affected region.

This will support 250,000 people living with HIV and 460,000 vulnerable children and orphans.

More than 8.3 million insecticide-treated mosquito bed nets were distributed in Africa in 2006 as part of an anti-malaria campaign.

The International Federation estimates that the value of the contribution made by youth volunteers in Africa alone is worth more than 1.6 billion Swiss Francs per year.

National Societies

There are 186 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the world, with more currently being formed. This unique network forms the backbone of the International Red Cross and 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 the victims of war, to first aid training and restoring family links.

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 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 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 Movement's global outreach, resources and know-how, give the Red Cross and Red Crescent a distinct advantage when it comes to dealing with today's complex humanitarian challenges.

National Society key facts

In 2006, around 35,000 Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers responded to 480 emergencies worldwide.

Between 2004 and 2006, the number of disaster response operations run by National Societies rose from 254 to 445.

The Movement's 186 National Societies represent 97 million of volunteers. About half are youth volunteers. Around 50 per cent of the Movement's volunteers are women.

Worldwide, National Societies employ around 300,000 people.

National Societies programmes and services address both immediate and long-term needs and include:

- emergency response
- disaster preparedness
- community-based health and care
- first aid training and activities
- restoring family contact for disaster victims
- youth and volunteer activities

Setting the humanitarian agenda

The different Movement partners meet regularly to discuss common issues and share best practices.

Every four years, the different members of the Movement hold talks with representatives of the states party to the Geneva Conventions at the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

The Conference is the Movement's highest deliberative body and offers an opportunity to examine cross-cutting priorities and challenges.

The Standing Commission serves as the trustee of the conference and offers strategic guidance to the Movement between meetings. It also promotes coordination between

Movement partners, furthers the implementation of conference resolutions and examines issues of concern to the whole Movement.

In addition to the International Conference, two other important meetings take place every two years: the General Assembly, which is made up of delegates from all member National Societies, and the Council of Delegates, which brings together National Societies, the International Federation and the ICRC.

The assembly determines the general policies of the International Federation, while the council adopts resolutions on Movement action and advocacy.



The Movement's emblems

About

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement currently has three emblems in use: the red cross, the red crescent and the red crystal.

National Societies must use one of these emblems in order to be recognized as a member of the Movement.

For decades, the red cross and red crescent have been used as universally recognized symbols of assistance for the victims of armed conflicts and natural disasters.

At a diplomatic conference in Geneva in December 2005, states adopted a third Protocol additional to the Geneva Conventions.

This allowed for the creation of the red crystal, an additional protective emblem that is designed to make it easier for National Societies, who do not wish to use the red cross or red crescent emblems, to be recognized as members of the Movement.

All three emblems have the same international status and offer the same level of protection under international humanitarian law.



The right to know

The ICRC and National Societies play a key role in tracing people who have gone missing as the result of armed violence and reuniting families torn apart by conflict, especially children and their parents.

Families have a right and a need to know their loved ones' fate. This is why tracing the missing and restoring family links are top priorities for the ICRC, which uses the internet, satellite phones and handwritten messages to enable families to re-establish contact during and after armed conflicts, as well as natural disasters, such as earthquakes or tsunamis.

Preparedness pays

The International Federation believes that risk reduction and preparedness are crucial to enable communities to cope with a growing number of humanitarian challenges, ranging from the consequences of climate change to the spread of HIV.

The organization knows from long experience that programmes aimed at mitigating the cost and impact of disasters and disease outbreaks – including early warning systems, evacuation planning, hygiene promotion, health campaigns, and improved access to safe drinking water and sanitation – save lives.



ICRC

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence and to provide them with assistance. It directs and coordinates the international relief activities conducted by the Movement in situations of conflict. It also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

www.icrc.org



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies promotes the humanitarian activities of National Societies among vulnerable people.

By coordinating international disaster relief and encouraging development support it seeks to prevent and alleviate human suffering.

The International Federation, the National Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross together constitute the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

www.ifrc.org