



ICRC



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OVERVIEW

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement) has been working for more than a decade to reduce the impact of cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war. Most recently, in November 2009, the Movement adopted a new strategy to ensure that civilians are no longer affected by cluster munitions and other weapons that continue to cause suffering after hostilities have ended. As a result, all the components of the Movement are committed to a comprehensive approach that integrates the development, promotion and implementation of rules of international humanitarian law, operational activities to prevent accidents for alleviating the effects of weapon contamination, and assistance to survivors.

CLUSTER MUNITIONS

WHAT IS THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT DOING TO REDUCE THE IMPACT ON CIVILIANS?

DEVELOPMENT, PROMOTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NORMS

The Movement plays a crucial role in the development, adoption and promotion of international humanitarian law. On the issue of cluster munitions specifically, the ICRC has been active since 2000 when it called for specific new rules of international humanitarian law to protect civilians from the effects of these weapons. In addition, both the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and the Council of Delegates have, since 1999, repeatedly sought to strengthen the protection of civilians from the indiscriminate use and effects of weapons. The most recent development in this regard is the 2009 Movement Strategy on Landmines, Cluster Munitions and Other Explosive Remnants of War, which outlines specific goals for the promotion and implementation of norms on cluster munitions.

The Movement's principal goals in this area include:

- Achieving universal adherence to the Convention on Cluster Munitions;
- Monitoring compliance with the treaty's prohibitions as well as with its clearance and stockpile destruction deadlines and commitments to victim assistance;
- Ensuring that States Parties adopt domestic legislation providing for the implementation of the Convention and for the prosecution and punishment of those who violate it;
- Stigmatizing, as appropriate, the use of cluster munitions, wherever it may occur;
- Documenting the use and consequences of cluster munitions, taking appropriate action with government officials, non-State actors and the media, promoting adherence

to the relevant rules of international humanitarian law, and urging an end to the use of these weapons;

- Providing international assistance, particularly for those States Parties most affected by cluster munitions.

To achieve these goals, the Movement engages in regular dialogue with government officials, members of parliament and armed forces, other humanitarian actors, the media and the general public to raise awareness and stress the importance of the Convention, provides support for national programmes for the implementation of clearance, stockpile destruction and victim assistance obligations, and organizes seminars and workshops to promote increased adherence and implementation.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions refers to the role of the Movement in furthering the Convention's implementation. This attests to the importance of the Movement's contribution in treaty promotion and implementation at the global, regional and national levels. By remaining actively engaged, the Movement can continue to make vital contributions towards ensuring that the commitments in the Convention on Cluster Munitions are kept and that their potential to save lives is realized.

PREVENTING ACCIDENTS AND REDUCING THE EFFECTS OF WEAPON CONTAMINATION

"Weapon contamination" is the umbrella term to describe activities aimed at reducing the effects of mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war such as unexploded bombs, shells and projectiles that continue to kill and maim after the fighting has ended. In 1997, the ICRC established a full-time 'Mine Action Sector', based in Geneva, in response to the Movement's request that it become the

lead organization in this field. It has since supported mine action activities in more than 40 countries. During, before and after conflicts and in rapid onset emergencies, the Movement carries out activities to prevent accidents and alleviate the effects of weapon contamination. These activities can include data gathering and analysis, risk reduction, risk education, and survey and clearance.

Data gathering and analysis consists of collecting and analyzing data from weapon-contaminated areas. It is the basis of all plans to reduce risks caused by weapon contamination. Once it is analysed, the gathered information contributes to the identification of dangerous areas, and makes it possible to plan and prioritize activities related to surveying, clearance, risk reduction and risk education. Such data can also be the source of important information for locating and providing support for survivors. As grassroots organizations with a presence in virtually every country, National Societies are often uniquely placed to gather this data.

Risk reduction – Often, in countries where the economy and society have been disrupted by war, people in areas contaminated by weapons have to continue to farm, collect water and firewood, graze livestock, or travel. Clearing affected areas would, of course, be the ideal solution, but the consequences of contamination can be alleviated in the short term by providing safer alternatives. The aim is to prevent persons in contaminated areas from having to take risks in order to survive or live as normally possible, and to ensure that survivors receive support for their social reintegration and for normalizing their lives as far as possible. Activities to this end typically involve the establishment of safe areas, the provision of new sources of water on non-contaminated ground and of alternative sources of food or fuel, and the implementation of micro-credit projects.

Risk education includes raising awareness in emergencies, carrying out activities aimed at effecting long-term changes in behaviour, and ensuring that communities have a central role in determining clearance priorities. Any method of raising awareness must give

careful consideration to cultural and social factors and to the nature of the threat. Community liaison is, like data gathering, a characteristic element in the long-term role that a National Society plays as an integrated component of a sustained national mine action strategy.

Survey and clearance – When technical surveys or clearance are required, the Movement will mobilize personnel with accreditation or certification in accordance with International Mine Action Standards, or National Mine Action Standards where they exist.

Besides developing the ability to intervene directly, the ICRC has done much to support National Societies, particularly in the field of capacity building. National Societies have taken advantage of their grassroots networks, developing data gathering and working in communities to change behaviour and act as a link with clearance agencies. The ICRC, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (the International Federation) and National Societies working internationally have also provided funding for activities.

ASSISTING VICTIMS

Assistance for victims of cluster munitions aims to reduce the number of people who die of their injuries by providing better access to emergency and medical care. It also seeks to remove – or reduce as much as possible – the factors that limit the social integration of persons with disabilities, including survivors of cluster munitions, so that they may achieve and maintain the highest possible level of independence and quality of life.

Victim assistance activities provide emergency and continuing medical care, physical and functional rehabilitation, psychological support and social reintegration, economic inclusion, and development and promotion of legislation and policies that advocate effective treatment, care and protection for all persons with disabilities, including survivors of weapon-related accidents. The activities described below are carried out by the ICRC with the support of National Societies, and/or by National Societies in their own countries with

the support of the ICRC and/or the International Federation.

Emergency and continuing medical care consist of providing emergency first aid and ensuring access to health care facilities and appropriate medical care. The goal is to establish and enhance health care services to respond to immediate medical needs, by increasing the number of health care workers, improving health care infrastructure, and ensuring that health care facilities have the equipment, supplies and medicine necessary to meet minimum standards.

Physical and functional rehabilitation – Physical rehabilitation focuses on helping persons regain or improve their physical abilities. Functional rehabilitation consists of all the measures that are taken to help persons with disabilities recover their ability to carry on activities or fulfil roles that they consider important, useful, or necessary. Physical rehabilitation consists of providing devices such as prostheses, orthoses, walking aids and wheelchairs along with appropriate physical therapy.

Psychosocial support consists of both psychological support and efforts to achieve social reintegration and inclusion. It includes activities that help victims overcome traumatic experiences and promote their social well-being. These activities may include participation in community-based peer support groups, associations for persons with disabilities, sporting and related activities, and professional counselling.

Economic reintegration – Activities that support economic reintegration and inclusion consist mainly of providing education and vocational training and developing sustainable economic activities and employment opportunities in affected communities. Enhancing opportunities for economic inclusion contributes to survivors' capacity for self-reliance and to community development as a whole. National Societies, as auxiliary to their public authorities in the humanitarian field, actively participate in forums and coordinating bodies whose aims are to develop, implement and/or monitor services provided to persons with disabilities, including survivors of weapon-related accidents.