

ICRC RESPONSE

COVID-19 NEAR & MIDDLE EAST

JUNE 2020



INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT RESPONDS TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the world's largest humanitarian network, has been supporting national health structures across the Near and Middle East in their response to the COVID-19 since the onset of the pandemic.

It has also been sharing life-saving information to prevent the spread of the disease using social and traditional media, as well as posters, billboards and even loud-speakers in hard-to-reach communities. In its communications, the Movement has focused on risk-awareness messages for children, hygiene promotion and advocacy relating to stigma of COVID-19 patients and first responders.

The Movement consists of the ICRC, national Red Cross and Red Crescents Societies and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Its community-based volunteers and staff help the world's most vulnerable people, including those living in countries with under-resourced health and social welfare systems; people recovering from recent disasters; migrants and displaced people; those in conflict zones and who face ongoing violence; people in urban slums; detainees; and people suffering from the socio-economic impact of COVID-19.



RCRC Day

8 May 2020

#KeepClapping
To celebrate the World Red Cross Red Crescent day, the Movement came together to thank all frontline workers.

THE MOVEMENT: TOGETHER AS ONE

Since the onset of the pandemic, the Movement has been able to quickly mobilize resources and use its wide range of expertise to support health care systems and provide essential services to local communities across the region.

RAISING RESOURCES

Since March 2020, the Movement has launched two emergency appeals for the COVID-19 Crisis, both of which were widely covered by the media. On 28 May 2020, the Movement appealed for 3.1 billion Swiss francs (3.19 billion US dollars) to address both the immediate impacts of the pandemic and its long-lasting social and economic repercussions.

“National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies’ local volunteers and staff are delivering life – saving services and equipment to contain the spread of the pandemic and address the deterioration in vulnerable peoples’ livelihoods and socio-economic situations.”

Jagan Chapagain, IFRC Secretary General

“The ICRC is working hand in hand with the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, at the intersection of the pandemic, armed conflict and violence to ensure that we assist both now and beyond the pandemic’s immediate effects to help families in the long-run.”

Robert Mardini, ICRC’s Director-General



ACTING TOGETHER TO STOP THE PANDEMIC

The Egyptian Red Crescent received Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) from the ICRC to be able to protect its staff and volunteers who are working on the frontlines of the national response to COVID-19 in Egypt.

HIGHLIGHTING HUMANITARIAN NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

Fabrizio Carboni, ICRC Regional Director for the Near and Middle East, Dr Hossam El Sharkawi, IFRC Middle East and North Africa Regional Director and Georges Kettaneh, Secretary General of the Lebanese Red Cross highlighted the humanitarian needs related to COVID-19 in NAME and the challenges for the Movement response in the webinar for over 200 international donors and humanitarian workers on 22 April.

The online event provided an opportunity to showcase the progress of the Movement so far and to outline the ways in which the ICRC, IFRC and National Societies are coordinating their response to the pandemic across the region.

SOME COUNTRIES LACK BASIC SERVICES TO COPE WITH THE VIRUS

At a time when preventing the spread of the virus is key, lack of access to clean water and electricity makes it impossible to implement basic hygiene measures such as hand-washing and to access to verified public health information, crippling the capacity of conflict- or disaster-affected societies to contain the current pandemic.

“For millions of people in north-east Syria, consequences of fighting, shortages of water, food and medicine, a lack of electricity, the economic downturn with job losses and price hikes are as much of a worry as coronavirus, arguably even more so right now,” said Karim Mahmoud, ICRC head of Hassakeh office



Syria. Millions of people in the north east of Syria are coping with fighting, destroyed infrastructure and lack of critical basic services, on top of the global COVID-19 crisis that has also hit the country.



MONITORING THE IMPACT FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

“The #COVID19 is having a massive impact on #Iran & its population. In last years, #Iran went through earthquakes, floods and epidemics... Efforts should be stepped-up asap to support their health actors/system dealing yet again with an unprecedented challenge.”

Christian Cardon, ICRC Deputy Director for Near and Middle East

[TWEET](#).



Iraq. COVID-19 is causing a financial shock for families, particularly in conflict zones. Coping mechanism that families use to overcome lean times have been exhausted for many, leaving millions of people exposed to food insecurity and increasing malnutrition rates.



Yemen. ICRC and Yemen Red Crescent Society (YRCS) worked on improving the living conditions of people in 18 quarantine facilities and 2 isolation centers across the country by either improving their access to clean water or providing food, house items and hygiene materials.

HUMANITARIAN WORK CONTINUES... BUT IT IS NOT BUSINESS AS USUAL

The onset of COVID-19 exacerbated already strained health systems, water infrastructure and economy in the region impacted by conflict and natural disasters. The Movement has been adapting its activities to this new reality, while doing its best to protect its staff and volunteers, and those it serves, from the pandemic.

In Gaza, Occupied Palestinian Territories, the ICRC printed posters to help authorities prevent the spread of virus in the places of detention.



In Iraq, ICRC teams distributed large quantities of protective personal equipment to the central testing lab, the emergency services to hospitals treating COVID-19 patients across the country.

Several health facilities in Yemen received personal protection equipment, hygiene items and disinfectants from the ICRC. ICRC has also rehabilitated operating theatres and water infrastructure, as well as donated oxygen generators.



HUMANITARIAN WORK CONTINUES... BUT IT IS NOT BUSINESS AS USUAL



ICRC and SARC mobile clinics in Al Hassakeh, north-east Syria continue providing health care, while physical distancing is ensured between patients. Since March 2020, 1,180 people have received health care at the clinic.

[READ MORE.](#)

ICRC Lebanon shares tips and information on how to prevent the spread of Coronavirus for people with motor disabilities and their caregivers in four weekly episodes shared on social media.

[WATCH THE VIDEO.](#)



In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, finding coping mechanisms for the stress caused by these difficult conditions is essential. The ICRC Delegation in Iran produced video in Farsi to help safeguard mental health. [WATCH THE VIDEO.](#)

Weapon-related injuries and global pandemic might seem rather different phenomena. Yet, like COVID-19, weapon related deaths and injuries are a public health issue requiring effective community engagement and messaging. [READ MORE](#) in this article published by the *Australian Institute of International Affairs*.





COVID-19 IN SYRIA'S NORTH EAST

“The humanitarian situation in places of detention and in camps in Syria’s northeast was dire even before the threat of COVID-19 appeared,” said Fabrizio Carboni, the Near and Middle East director for the International Committee of the Red Cross. “We’re extremely worried about all detainees during this pandemic.” [READ MORE.](#)



IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON YEMEN

“The tricky thing is that corona actually reduces the efficiency of humanitarian actors, and it reduces the efficiency of an economy,” says ICRC’s Rauchenstein. “These secondary effects of the coronavirus are weakening Yemen even more, and lowering its resilience.” [READ MORE.](#)



DIRE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN NORTH EAST SYRIA AMID CORONAVIRUS

Fabrizio Carboni, ICRC’s regional director, said “there’s a risk that profound crises will worsen, hidden in plain sight, while the world’s attention is on” the COVID-19 pandemic. [READ MORE.](#)



COVID-19 AFFECTING THE DISPLACED IN IRAQ

Displaced people are hugely vulnerable to coronavirus due to the fact that settlement or camps are so crowded and people living in close proximity, said James Mathews, the spokesperson for International Committee for the Red Cross in Iraq. [READ MORE.](#)



We help people around the world affected by armed conflict and other violence, doing everything we can to protect their lives and dignity and to relieve their suffering, often with our Red Cross and Red Crescent partners. We also seek to prevent hardship by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and championing universal humanitarian principles.