

In Brief

Appeal 2026



ICRC



Northern Gaza. The ICRC brings clean water to conflict-affected communities through water trucking and setting up water distribution points.

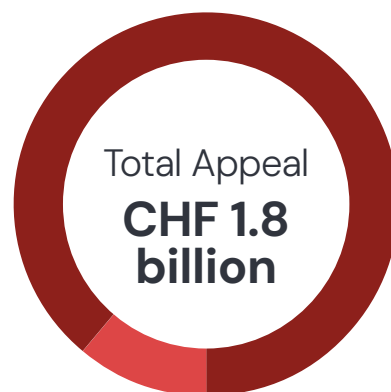
B. Al Nabili / ICRC

The number of armed conflicts has more than doubled in the last 15 years: around 130 are currently taking place around the world. Parties to armed conflict are increasingly challenging international humanitarian law (IHL) or simply ignoring it, leading to persistent and widespread violations. New technologies, such as autonomous weapon systems, cyber operations and information warfare, result in broader and deeper impact from armed conflicts.

Civilians bear the brunt of this. The scale of suffering is immense: hundreds of thousands killed, millions displaced, families dispersed and searching for missing loved ones, livelihoods destroyed. Children, women, wounded people or people with disabilities often pay the highest price.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) works to prevent and address the consequences of armed conflict as a neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian organization in accordance with its unique mandate under the Geneva Conventions. Every day, ICRC staff across the world bear witness to the horrors of war, advocate for the protections envisioned under IHL and work to ease the suffering of those who are affected. The ICRC often works in places that are hard to reach, or where it is one of the very few humanitarian actors present.

Since its creation 160 years ago, the ICRC has always been a lifeline to those affected by conflict, and its role remains as critical as ever. In order to continue responding to the needs of huge numbers of people affected by armed conflict, the ICRC needs strong donor support, especially amid the financial uncertainty currently facing the humanitarian sector. The ICRC is appealing for 1.8 billion Swiss francs to fund its global humanitarian response in 2026 to safeguard the lives and dignity of people living in the most dire of circumstances.



Total Appeal
CHF 1.8 billion

11%

CHF 199.9 million
Headquarters

89%

CHF 1.6 billion
Operations

The ICRC's response in 2026

The ICRC currently works in over 90 countries around the world, side by side with the staff and volunteers of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. In 2026, it will continue to fulfil its mission to promote the protection of people affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence and provide them with assistance.

Focusing efforts where the ICRC's help is most needed

The ICRC's [Institutional Strategy 2024–2027](#) guides its action plan for 2026. Calibrating the immense humanitarian needs and projected levels of funding, the ICRC has chosen to further prioritize efforts to uphold the centrality of protection in its work; strengthen its role as a neutral intermediary; promote IHL as a global political priority; and enhance its response to emergencies linked to armed conflict.

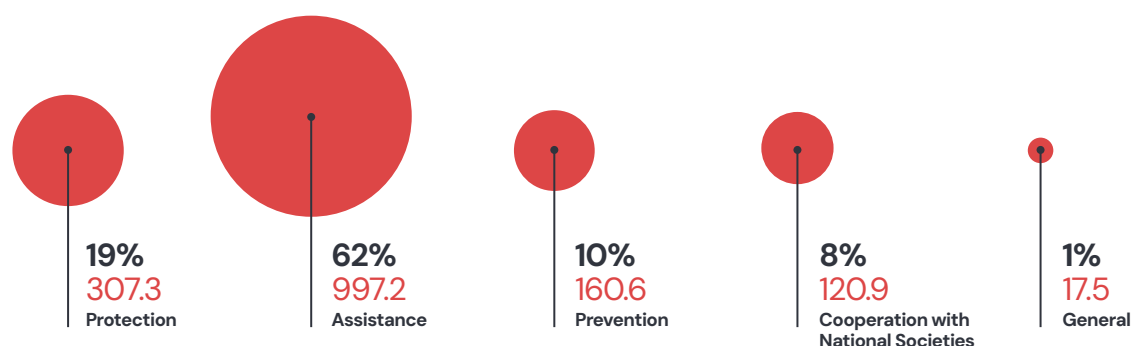
Protecting people's lives and dignity

The ICRC will continue its efforts to advocate for the protection of people who are not – or are no longer – participating in hostilities and to urge parties to conflict to fulfil their obligations under IHL. In contexts such as Israel and the occupied territories, Sudan, Ukraine and Yemen, it stands ready to undertake complex operations across front lines, as a neutral intermediary, to facilitate the safe transfer of people deprived of their liberty upon their release; evacuate civilians or wounded people to safer areas or medical facilities; repatriate children and/or reunite them with their families; and ensure the dignified return of the dead to their families. These crucial efforts are both humanitarian in nature and often the first steps in the long journey towards peace.

The ICRC's neutral, impartial and independent approach, and its dialogue with parties to armed conflict, enables it to work in hard-to-reach areas with limited presence of other humanitarian actors. These include places where conflicts have been ongoing for many years, typically out of the media spotlight or lacking donor attention. Though these crises are often neglected or forgotten, these remain places where the international community cannot simply turn away and where, as a result, the ICRC cannot fail as its work to address people's suffering becomes even more essential.

Operations budget: breakdown by programme

Budgets in CHF millions



Protection is at the core of the ICRC's work. The protection programme accounts for 19 per cent of the ICRC's operations budget. Protecting the well-being and dignity of civilians, people deprived of their liberty, and the wounded and sick is the driving force behind its other programmes. It is at the heart of its assistance programme, which addresses the consequences of conflict and other violence, and violations of IHL in particular, and represents 62 per cent of the operations budget. As such violations cause widespread devastation and deprive millions of basic services, assistance for the people affected constitutes the largest portion of the ICRC's operations budget. The prevention programme further strengthens protection by promoting knowledge of IHL and its incorporation in legal frameworks and decision-making processes. Cooperation with National Societies aims to build local capacities in delivering life-saving aid and to support them in fostering respect for humanitarian principles – efforts that are directly linked to protection goals. Together, these programmes underscore the centrality of protection across all areas of the ICRC's action.



Sudanese refugees arrive every day at the Djabal camp in the Sila region of Chad. The ICRC helps them search for family members separated from them by conflict, or enables them to make phone calls to their loved ones.

ICRC

Striving to end violations of IHL and strengthening compliance with the law

At a time when the rules of war are questioned and violated, urging compliance with IHL remains a priority. The global IHL initiative, launched by the ICRC together with several states, will continue to galvanize political commitment to IHL within the international community. The ICRC will also step up its efforts to engage in confidential dialogue with the parties concerned, including state authorities, military officials and armed groups, to bring to their attention the realities observed on the front lines and the suffering caused. The ICRC will seek to work with them to identify urgent measures to put an end to unlawful conduct. As advancements in technology transform the means and methods of warfare, the ICRC will work to strengthen the application of IHL to the use of new technologies in armed conflict.

Responding to the urgent consequences of armed conflict, together with the Movement

The ICRC will step up its emergency response activities where intensified conflict has increased people's humanitarian needs. Working closely with conflict-affected communities, and in partnership with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, ensures that the ICRC can deliver protection activities and assistance in a timely and maximally impactful manner. In contexts such as Israel and the occupied territories, Sudan, Ukraine and Yemen, the ICRC will concentrate its resources on efforts to address the most urgent needs – including protection and life-saving activities – while scaling back others. Drawing on its full spectrum of humanitarian capabilities, the organization will restore access to water and electricity, deliver health-care services, provide food, shelter and cash, give critical livelihoods support, and mitigate the risks associated with explosive remnants of war, among others. By doing this in partnership with communities, National Societies and other local organizations, the ICRC is able to contribute to increased resilience and capacity to respond to future crises, even at the front lines.

Operations budget: breakdown by region

Budgets in CHF millions

Africa 38%	614.1
Americas 6%	89.2
Asia and the Pacific 12%	185.0
Europe and Central Asia 14%	227.4
Near and Middle East 30%	487.7

Most of the ICRC's operations are in Africa. However, its top five operations are located in the regions of the Near and Middle East (Israel and the occupied territories, Syria and Yemen), Europe and Central Asia (Ukraine), and Asia and the Pacific (Afghanistan).

Ten largest operations

Budgets in CHF millions

1		Israel and the occupied territories 158.3
2		Ukraine 134.1
3		Syrian Arab Republic 104.3
4		Yemen 100.7
5		Afghanistan 84.0
6		Sudan 81.2
7		Democratic Republic of the Congo 81.1
8		Somalia 65.7
9		South Sudan 60.0
10		Ethiopia 57.6

Sustaining principled humanitarian action: a call for support

The significant rise in the number of armed conflicts and growing humanitarian needs have come at a time of financial uncertainty, which has compelled the ICRC to reduce its overall 2026 budget by 17 per cent compared to its initial 2025 budget. It has reduced its headquarters budget by 18 per cent and its operations budget by 17 per cent, resulting in an initial 2026 appeal for 1.8 billion Swiss francs.

Between the first budgetary reduction in 2023 and the current one, the ICRC has taken significant steps to create a leaner, more efficient organization and minimize the resulting impact on its response activities for conflict-affected populations. The result is an ambitious, realistic and focused operational plan.

Early, flexible, predictable and sustained support from donors is critical for the ICRC to fulfil its mandate and remain relevant to the communities for whom it cannot fail.



After more than thirty years apart, Diko Augustino finally reunites with his son Moro and the rest of his family in the Haut-Uele province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He had been separated from them after fleeing the country because of armed conflict. He was able to return home with the help of the ICRC, bringing an end to a long wait.

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