

ACTIVITIES OF THE ICRC REGIONAL DELEGATION FOR THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

FACTS AND FIGURES

2025



MAIN HIGHLIGHTS

Helping people affected by the international armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine

- The ICRC continued supporting families of servicemen and with missing relatives. In 2025, our teams in Moscow answered over 45,000 calls from families enquiring on their relatives and delivered Red Cross messages from their captured relatives. The ICRC also strived to warn families of scams targeting them and impersonating the Red Cross. In September, in order to strengthen joint efforts to counter scams, the Moscow Delegation held a roundtable “Humanitarian Cybersecurity: Joint Strategies Against Online Fraud and Impersonation” at the International Technology Forum, with the participation of Russian authorities, the Russian Red Cross, cyber experts and technological companies.
- In June, ICRC forensics teams participated in a large-scale repatriation of fallen soldiers between Russia and Ukraine, upon the request of the parties. They provided technical advice and material support to allow the return of human remains in a dignified manner. Such operations are an important step towards identifying the deceased soldiers and bringing closure to their families. Regular repatriation of fallen soldiers continued throughout the year as well, with the ICRC participating in 16 simultaneous repatriation operations between Russia and Ukraine.
- In its role as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC continued participating in operations to help vulnerable people join family members on either side of the front-line. These operations significantly increased in 2025. They included the repatriation from Ukraine back to Russia of 78 civilians originally from Kursk region, in coordination with relevant authorities from both sides, including the office of Mrs Moskalkova and the Russian Red Cross.
- In 2025, the ICRC launched a new program — the micro economic initiatives — in Belarus and Russia. Its aim is to improve the income of people displaced by the conflict between Russia and Ukraine by supporting their businesses or helping them build new ones. As time passes, displaced persons’ needs change, as they seek to rebuild their lives and create sustainable sources of income. This assistance program comes on top of others, all coordinated with the Belarus Red Cross and Russian Red Cross. In June 2025, 1 billion RUB of direct cash assistance provided since 2022 to displaced persons in Russia was reached.

High-level meetings

- In July, the ICRC Director of Operations Mrs Yasmine Praz Dessimoz together with the ICRC Regional Director for Eurasia Mrs Ariane Bauer conducted an official visit to Moscow where they met with the Russian Human Rights Commissioner, Mrs Tatiana Moskalkova and the chairman of the Russian Red Cross, Mr Pavel Savchuk. Humanitarian issues related to the international armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine and ways forward were discussed during the visit.
- In January and December, the ICRC participated in two tripartite meetings with the ombudspersons of Russia and Ukraine, that took place in Belarus. Both ICRC Heads of delegations from Moscow and Kyiv took part in the meetings where the parties discussed pressing humanitarian issues, as well as possible humanitarian solutions, with a particular focus on prisoners of war and civilians affected by the conflict.
- In September, the new HORD Mrs Rania Machlab arrived in Moscow and held a series of introductory high-level meetings with authorities, including the Director of the Legal Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Mr Maksim Musikhin, the deputy Minister of Defense, Mr Vasily Osmakov, the Human Rights Commissioner, Mrs Tatiana Moskalkova and the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights in the Russian Federation, Mrs Maria Lvova-Belova.

International and regional highlights

- In 2025, the ICRC reignited important international humanitarian law (IHL) platforms. The XV International Conference on IHL “Martens Readings” took place in Saint Petersburg in June after 6 years break. Organized since 2000, “Martens Readings” is a major academic event in the area of international public law and the biggest forum dedicated to international humanitarian law among the Russian-speaking academia.
- In addition, the Eighth Regional Seminar on the Implementation of IHL was conducted in Tashkent in December. The previous Seminar took place in 2019. The seminar brought together representatives of ministries of foreign affairs, justice, defense, border authorities, research institutions, members of national IHL committees from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, as well as regional organizations, including the Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA-CIS) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). This wide representation allowed for an in-depth discussion of key issues related to implementing IHL norms into national legal systems.
- Beginning December, the VIII Coordination Meeting of High-level representatives of the ICRC and the Collective Security Treaty Organization Secretariat was held in Geneva. The CSTO Secretary General Mr Taalatbek Masadykov met with the ICRC Vice-President, Mr Gilles Carbonnier, ICRC Director General, Mr Pierre Krähenbühl as well as the ICRC Director of Operations, Ms Yasmine Praz Dessimoz.
- In November, the Moscow delegation participated in the International Conference on “Ensuring Food Sovereignty for African Countries” in Addis Ababa, organized by Rossotrudnichestvo. A bilateral meeting was also held with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ Department for Partnership with Africa. The ICRC visited the Russian Red Cross Hospital, together with the head of the Rossotrudnichestvo, Mr Yevgeny Primakov.

80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War

- In relation to the commemoration of the end of the Second World War, the ICRC presented in many events its work during the conflict, as well as the relevance today of the 1949 Geneva Conventions adopted in its aftermath. The ICRC organized a dedicated roundtable at the 33d International Educational Christmas Readings in January. During the 58th Plenary Session of the IPA-CIS, an address was delivered on behalf of the ICRC’s President, Mirjana Spoljaric. The ICRC also participated in dedicated panels at the St Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) with MGIMO, the Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) in Vladivostok, at the international IPA-CIS conference, and in Moscow, at a Russian Historical Society panel dedicated to the Nuremberg trials.
- For the 80th anniversary of the Russian Red Cross’ Tracing Information Center (TIC), the ICRC co-organised with the Russian Red Cross an event on the “Humanitarian aspects of the history of the Second World War and the role of public institutions in the preservation of historical heritage”, bringing together institutions and experts from Russia and abroad. It was the opportunity to highlight the importance of preserving TIC’s unique archives on the victims of the Second World War.

FACTS AND FIGURES



PRISONERS OF WAR AND THEIR FAMILIES

Since 2022:

The ICRC has visited **more than 8,000 prisoners of war** (POWs) on both sides, though mainly in Ukraine.

More than 25,000 personal messages (Red Cross messages and oral messages/Salamats) were delivered by the ICRC and National Societies to prisoners of war and their families in Russia and Ukraine (the number of messages exchanged does not reflect the number of POWs held).



MISSING PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES

Since 2022:

- **193,000 open cases** of people from both sides of the front-line reported missing to the ICRC by their families
- **15,900 families informed** by ICRC delegations and National Societies about the fate of their missing loved ones.

In 2025, **over 45,000 calls** have been answered by the ICRC team in Moscow with enquiries on POWs and the missing.



FALLEN SERVICEMEN

The ICRC participated in **16 simultaneous repatriation operations of deceased soldiers** between Russia and Ukraine.



VULNERABLE CIVILIANS, INCLUDING CHILDREN

550 people with vulnerabilities were supported in **safe cross-border passage operations**, including civilians originally from Kursk repatriated from Ukraine back to Russia. These operations are coordinated with Russian and Ukrainian authorities, including the office of the Russian High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Over 50 children joined close family members in Ukraine and in Russia with the support of the ICRC, in cooperation with Russian and Ukrainian authorities, including the office of the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights, and officials of Qatar.



DISPLACED PEOPLE

In partnership with the Russian Red Cross:

- over **12,900 vulnerable people** in Russia benefitted from cash assistance
- over **6,700 primary school children** from displaced families received school kits and value vouchers for the purchase of school materials
- **174 people** benefitted from a vocational training programme, which finances trainings and courses
- **64 people** received a cash grant through the Micro-economic initiative program.

In partnership with the Belarus Red Cross:

- over **2,100 vulnerable people displaced** due to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine received cash assistance
- **20 people** received material to start business through the Micro-economic initiative program.



LOGISTIC HUB FOR ASSISTANCE TO DONETSK AND LUHANSK

18 convoys delivering assistance were sent to Donetsk and **19 convoys** to Luhansk to support ICRC's response to humanitarian needs, including 15,000 food parcels, over 20,900 hygienic parcels, 3,500 bed-ridden kits, 2,395 tarpaulins, 850 poultry kits as well as health, forensics, and construction items and material.



COOPERATION WITH RED CROSS PARTNERS

Russian Red Cross (RRC)

Emergency stock worth 21 million rubles for 4 RRC branches (Belgorod, Voronezh, Kursk, Rostov-on-Don regions) was provided in the form of food vouchers (over 4,400 vouchers were handed over to the branches for further distribution to beneficiaries).

More than 12,500 people altogether participated in **451 first aid trainings** organized by the RRC Belgorod branch (2 first aid instructors supported by the ICRC).

ICRC supported **6 regional trainings for local emergency preparedness and response teams** (in Belgorod, Voronezh, Kursk, Rostov-on-Don, regions, and Saint-Petersburg), comprising over 95 RRC staff and volunteers.

The ICRC supported the purchase of a car for the Voronezh RRC branch and of equipment for an ambulance for the Kursk RRC branch to enhance emergency response, aid delivery, and socio-medical activities.

Through ICRC support to the Saint-Petersburg branch, **49 awareness sessions about the Movement, Fundamental Principles and IHL basics** were organized during which more than 500 persons were reached.

The ICRC continued to cooperate with the RRC **on helping families locate civilians** who went missing in relation to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Technical support to the RRC Restoring Families Links (RFL) service, as well as trainings for the new RRC RFL staff, were provided.

Belarus Red Cross (BRC)

The ICRC continued its cooperation with the BRC, carried out within the framework of two important areas related to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine: strengthening capacities in the field of restoring family links and providing assistance to persons arriving from Ukraine.



DIALOGUE WITH AUTHORITIES AND POLITICAL ACTORS

In Russia

The ICRC was in regular contact with its key Russian interlocutors to discuss humanitarian issues and IHL, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Ministry of Defence (MoD), EMERCOM, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights, the State Duma, Federation Council, IPA CIS, CIS Secretariat, CSTO Secretariat among others.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rossotrudnichestvo, & affiliated universities

ICRC maintains regular bilateral confidential dialogue with the MFA on a wide range of issues, concerning ICRC operations in Russia and beyond. In 2025, meetings with the MFA Crisis Center, regular discussions with the Legal Department, and exchanges with the Ambassador-at-large Rodion Miroshnik took place.

Furthermore, the ICRC also engaged with the MFA and affiliated academic institutions in diplomatic briefings and events, including regular MFA Diplomatic Academy's Ambassadorial Roundtables.

In April and October, the ICRC partnered with the BRICS Project Lab, building on its relationship with

MGIMO University. This collaboration highlighted shared humanitarian priorities and reinforced the ICRC's interest in engaging with BRICS. The ICRC also participated twice in MGIMO's International Career Week, showcasing its work and career opportunities.

Ministry of Defence (MoD)

The ICRC maintains regular bilateral confidential dialogue with the MoD on issues related to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

12 lectures and 2 workshops were held at 2 IHL sessions in the frame of the officers' advanced training in the Combined Arms Academy of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, training over 20 participants in IHL.

High Commissioner for Human Rights' Office

The ICRC further developed its close cooperation with the office of the Human Rights Commissioner of the Russian Federation (HRCHR), on a variety of issues, related to missing persons, assistance for POWs and vulnerable civilians. The delegation took part in the HRCHR's IXth International Scientific and Practical Conference "Problems of human rights protection: exchange of best practices of Ombudsmen".

Federation Council and State Duma

In September, a Duma Deputy Dmitry Kuznetsov and his team visited the ICRC's call centre, and discussion on solutions for affected people took place.

In November, the ICRC presented the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo and ICRC's operations at roundtable in State Duma

In May, the ICRC received the first invitation to the Russia-Islamic World Forum in Kazan to speak at a panel hosted by the Federation Council. The Head of Regional Delegation presented the ICRC's Micro Economic Initiative programs at the session dedicated to women entrepreneurship.

Ministry of Emergency Situations (EMERCOM)

In February, the head of Moscow Regional Delegation had a meeting with the Russian Ministry of Civil Defence, Emergencies, and Disaster Relief (EMERCOM), the first formal meeting at head of delegation's level since 2022. Both sides emphasized the importance of information exchange, particularly on mine safety awareness, forensics, and broader humanitarian issues.

In March 2025, a delegation from EMERCOM, International Affairs Department, met with the ICRC Headquarters colleagues during the "Humanitarian Net-

works and Partnerships Week” in Geneva, discussing further cooperation on humanitarian emergency response amid a changing international environment.

In Belarus

The ICRC mission in Minsk engages regularly with relevant authorities on IHL and other humanitarian issues, as well as on the humanitarian operations taking place in Belarus.

4 seminars on IHL and ICRC activities were organised for the State Border Committee in Gomel, Grodno and in Minsk, as well as for the representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Minsk.

Several IHL dissemination trainings were delivered for the officers of Belarusian Armed Forces and cadets of military educational institutions.

The ICRC attended the III Minsk International Conference on Eurasian Security on the 28–29 October.



RELIGIOUS CIRCLES

The ICRC participated in the 12th the All-Church Congress on Social Service in November, at the sidelines of which the ICRC Head of Moscow Delegation met with Archpriest Mikhail Potokin, the Chairman of the Synodal Department for Church Charity and Social Services.

The ICRC conducted two training sessions on “Risk Awareness and Safer Behavior in areas contaminated by explosive remnants of war” for around 60 volunteers of the Russian Orthodox Church Hospital of St. Alexis in Moscow, who work in areas directly affected by the conflict.

Throughout the year, the ICRC carried out several donations of medical consumables, reconstruction materials, and other humanitarian items to the Synodal Department for Church Charity and Social Services and the Russian Orthodox Church Hospital of St. Alexis.

On sidelines of the Russia–Islamic World Kazan Forum, the ICRC head of regional delegation met with Sheikh Ravil Gainutdin, the Chairman of the Russian Council of Muftis, head of the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Russia.

ICRC also engaged with representatives of Jewish and Buddhist circles at the 28th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum.



REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO)

In 2025, the ICRC participated in 2 CSTO working groups on Afghanistan, in the CSTO-led field training exercise “Interaction-2025”, and held 2 training sessions for CSTO Joint Staff officers.

Interparliamentary assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS)

In April, the IPA CIS, the UN Office of Counterterrorism (UNOCT), and the ICRC, co-organized a conference on Artificial Intelligence and brought together over 20 international speakers including lawmakers, legal scholars, and AI experts.

In October, the ICRC participated in the activities of the IPA CIS Permanent Commission on Social Policy and Human Rights, including the second meeting of the Working Group on the renewed Concept of a CIS Common Migration Space. The ICRC submitted written comments and presented inputs emphasizing the need to address the humanitarian impact of migration policies. During the same session, IPA-CIS agreed to include the ICRC model recommendations on the Emergency Travel Document (ETD) into their plan for 2026–2028.

Additionally, the ICRC held a meeting with the Deputy Head of the IPA CIS Secretariat to discuss current and future cooperation.

Council of Defense Ministers of the CIS states members

A regional meeting on challenges of the international humanitarian law in an armed conflict for representatives of the military legal services of the Ministries of Defense of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and CSTO Joint Staff was held in Kazan on 12–14 November, jointly with the Secretariat of the Council of Defense Ministers of the CIS states members.

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

From August 21 to September 3, ICRC Moscow took part in a two-week seminar on Enhancing the Humanitarian Aid Capacity of SCO Member States, organized by the Training Center of the Red Cross Society of China.



ACADEMICS AND EXPERT COMMUNITY

The ICRC regularly engages in dialogue with the Valdai Club, PIR-Center, the National Research Institute of World Economy, IMEMO, Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Fund, etc. attending expert discussions on Middle East dynamics, Africa, food security and the history of humanitarian action, among other topics.

In April, the delegation participated in the “Russia-Africa: What’s Next?” youth forum at MGIMO, where different aspects of the dialogue and diplomacy with Africa were discussed, including humanitarian topics. The ICRC also organized a round-table on food security in Africa, with the participation of Russian experts.

In November, the ICRC spoke on the humanitarian situation in Gaza at the Vth International Expert Forum “Russia – the Middle East” organized by the Primakov Center, in cooperation with the Gorchakov Fund and the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The event gathered some of the leading Russian researchers on Middle Eastern issues, and specialists from Middle Eastern countries.

The XXVI Martens Moot Court competition on IHL took place in Moscow region in April. Every year, this competition brings together not only the best law students, but also, teachers and practitioners to exchange knowledge and experience. 27 teams from 8 countries took part in the competition.

Together with its long-standing partner the Russian Humanitarian Mission (RHM), the ICRC conducted two courses on safer behavior for media professionals covering conflicts and sent on dangerous assignments.



FORENSIC EXPERTISE

The Forensic team was invited to take part and present in 7 Forensic Medicine Conferences, in Moscow as well as in other regions of the Russian Federation.



PRIVATE SECTOR AND CYBER/DIGITAL

At SPIEF, the ICRC met with the BL.ZONE, cybersecurity company and attended several sessions on the development and use of Artificial Intelligence technologies. Also, in August, the ICRC attended the OFFZONE conference on practical cybersecurity.

In December, the Moscow Delegation took part in the ICRC Symposium on the Responsible Use of Technology in Humanitarian Action in Beijing, in which also participated representatives of Russian tech actors, including BL.ZONE, ITMO University, the Regional Privacy Professionals Association.



DIPLOMATIC CORPS

The ICRC maintained ongoing exchanges with Moscow’s diplomatic corps throughout the year, including the Apostolic Nunciature, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Canada, Cameroon, China, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Germany, Finland, France, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Palestine, Qatar, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Yemen.

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.

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Cover photograph: On December 16th, ICRC teams, in coordination with the Russian and Ukrainian Ombudspersons, helped vulnerable people join their family members on both sides of the front-line.
 K. Demidov / ICRC