ICRC

January–June 2026



Activities of the ICRC Regional Delegation for the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus

Main highlights

- On July 1–2, **a high-level visit of the ICRC President, Mirjana Spoljaric,** took place in Moscow. The objective was to discuss humanitarian issues and concerns related to the international armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine, as well as conflicts in the Middle East, the Sahel, and elsewhere. She met with Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Vasily Osmakov, Deputy Minister of Defence, Ms. Yana Lantratova, High Commissioner for Human Rights, Maria Lvova-Belova, Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights, and Pavel Savchuk, President of the Russian Red Cross (RRC). Earlier in the year, in January, the ICRC President had received the Russian and Ukrainian Ombudspersons for a high-level meeting in the ICRC headquarters in Geneva.
- Since the beginning of the year, **the conflict has been increasingly affecting the civilian population,** with growing casualties, displacement, impact on civilian infrastructure and, occasionally, power outages. The ICRC carried out visits to impacted areas, for instance Belgorod, to assess the situation and the humanitarian needs. Our partner, the RRC, with our support or on its own, responded to the needs of people affected by the conflict in different regions of the country, through its regional branches.
- The ICRC also continued **supporting vulnerable people striving to join family members on the other side of the front line.** Since the beginning of this program in 2022, the number of people supported has been increasing year after year. In 2025, 550 people were helped to join family members on the other side of the front line, including people originally from Kursk repatriated back to Russia. In the first half of this year, 562 have already been thus supported.
- From March 23 to 27, **the Head of the ICRC Moscow regional delegation was in Minsk,** to meet Belarusian authorities, the Belarus Red Cross (BRC) and the Russian ambassador to Belarus. This mission was critical in engaging with key Belarusian authorities, namely the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Justice, the Deputy Chairman of the State Border Committee, and representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The promotion of international humanitarian law (IHL) was discussed, as well as support to humanitarian operations in Belarus related to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.
- In the first six months of 2026, the Head of the ICRC regional delegation held meetings with senior representatives of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Ministry of Defence (MoD), the Federation Council of the Russian Federal Assembly, the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), the Spiritual Administration of Russian Muslims. She also met with the Secretary General of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Executive Committee and representatives of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly (IPA CIS).

International armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine: Responding to the humanitarian needs

Prisoners of war and their families

In Ukraine, the ICRC visited

3,601 prisoners of war (POWs)

and detained civilians during the first half of 2026. In Russia, we continue our dialogue with Russian authorities at all levels to gain full and sustained access to POWs and other persons deprived of liberty in connection with the conflict.

Since 2022, more than

30,500 personal messages (Red Cross messages and oral messages/Salamats)

have been delivered by the ICRC and National Societies to POWs and their families in the Russian Federation and Ukraine. These exchanges of family news are possible thanks to ICRC visits to POWs (the number of messages exchanged does not reflect the number of PoWs held).

Missing people and their families

Since 2022:

257,000 cases

opened of people from both sides of the front line reported missing to the ICRC by their families.

17,800 families

informed by the ICRC delegations and National Societies about the fate of their missing loved ones.

From January to June 2026, almost

27,000 calls

were answered by the ICRC team in Moscow with enquiries on POWs and the missing.

Fallen servicemen

The ICRC participated in **5** **simultaneous repatriation operations of deceased soldiers** between Russia and Ukraine.

The ICRC regional delegation in Moscow regularly discussed issues related to prisoners of war and ICRC's access to them, as well as the fate of people gone missing, with the relevant authorities, for instance the Russian MoD, and the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner. In addition to the regular communication between the ICRC team and families of the missing, the Head of the delegation held in June a bilateral meeting with the Women's Dialogue NGO and a group of families with missing relatives, with the objective of listening to them, their concerns, and their needs.

The ICRC also organized **two briefings for the diplomatic corps,** the Russian MFA and international organizations on humanitarian forensic action, and the work of the Central Tracing Agency Bureau for the Russia-Ukraine international armed conflict.

The ICRC continued supporting and working alongside the RRC on the issue of missing persons. The RRC manages the cases of missing civilians, including those who have disappeared during the hostilities in the Kursk region. In June, the ICRC Protection Family Links team visited the RRC Kursk branch and several temporary accommodation centres in Kursk.

Scams targeting families of servicemen and missing persons continued being a concerning trend. In May, an outcome document and recommendations drawn up as a follow-up of an ICRC roundtable on the topic, which was held at the International Technology Congress in 2025, were distributed to various authorities and Moscow diplomatic corps. The ICRC engaged regularly with various private sector and tech actors on these issues, including at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in June.

Supporting civilians impacted by the conflict

Vulnerable civilians, including children

In 2026,

562
individuals

with vulnerabilities were supported in safe cross-border passage operations. These operations are coordinated with Russian and Ukrainian authorities, including the Office of the Russian High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Since 2022, over

100
children

have 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.

Assistance to displaced people

In partnership with the RRC: over

6,000
vulnerable displaced people

in Russia benefitted from cash assistance.

72
people

benefitted from a vocational training program, which finances trainings and courses.

9
people

received a cash grant through the Microeconomic initiatives program.

In partnership with the BRC:

over 1,600 vulnerable people

displaced due to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine received cash assistance.

37 people

received materials to start business through the Microeconomic initiatives program.

1,182 jerrycans for water

were donated to the Patriarchal Humanitarian Mission for affected people.



Kareem used to work as a massage therapist, but now he's into poultry farming. "We would have found it difficult to find the money for many of the items provided by the Red Cross. This has made things much easier for us," says Kareem.

K. Demidov/ICRC

The ICRC carried out visits to affected areas, for instance Belgorod, in order to assess the humanitarian situation as well as the impact of the conflict on the civilian population and their humanitarian needs.

In April, the Head of the ICRC regional delegation met with Metropolitan Anthony, Chairman of the ROC External Church Relations Department, to discuss humanitarian cooperation in response to the international armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Meetings were also held with representatives of the ROC Hospital of St. Alexy with a view to regularly supporting the hospital's two mobile clinics operating in areas affected by the conflict with necessary medicine and medical consumables until the end of the year.

In February, the ICRC organized an **operational briefing for the Moscow diplomatic corps,** the MFA and international humanitarian organizations on ICRC's economic security programs, presenting alongside our partners from the RRC.

Support to the RRC emergency response

600 people received pre-paid bank cards worth 7000 rubles each as emergency aid. The cards were provided by the ICRC and distributed by 4 RRC regional branches (Belgorod, Bryansk, Kursk and Voronezh).

The ICRC continued its support to the RRC federal and local emergency response teams increasing their capacity to provide **timely assistance to people affected by emergencies,** for instance in response to recurring power outages in Belgorod and to flooding in the Republic of Dagestan.

With the ICRC's support, the RRC organized 30 **awareness sessions about the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, its Fundamental Principles and basic IHL** for over 200 people.

Logistic support 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 materials.

Promoting international humanitarian law

Russia

Since the beginning of the year, the ICRC has participated in key conferences, bringing its perspective on IHL and meeting with relevant legal experts.

In March, it attended the **Moscow Nonproliferation Conference** and shared its position on nuclear weapons. In June, the ICRC also took part in the **14th St. Petersburg International Legal Forum** and met with a number of leading actors in the Russian legal sphere, discussing implementation of IHL in the Russian Federation as well as its dissemination. On the latter subject, when speaking at the opening of the **69th annual meeting of the Russian Association of International Law,** the Head of the ICRC regional delegation stressed the crucial role of academics in disseminating IHL knowledge and studies in Russia. In June, the ICRC attended a conference held by the **Russian History Society** on the protection of cultural property in armed conflict.

Main events and meetings

The ICRC attended two rounds of the Diplomatic Academy's Ambassadorial Roundtables, during which Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov addressed the diplomatic corps and international organizations.

Other meetings with high-level interlocutors included:

- **Russian MFA:** Alexander Alimov, Deputy Foreign Minister ; Rodion Miroshnik, Ambassador at Large
- **Federation Council:** Konstantin Kosachev, deputy speaker
- **Spiritual Administration of Russian Muslims:** Chief Mufti Ravil Gaynutdin
- **Belarusian parliament:** Sergey Aleinik, Chairman of the Standing Commission of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly on International Affairs and National Security
- **IPA CIS:** Dmitry Kobitsky, Head of the Secretariat of the IPA CIS Council
- **CIS Executive Committee:** Sergey Lebedev, Secretary General

In June, the ICRC also took part in the **29th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum.** The Head of the ICRC regional delegation delivered a speech about the ICRC's role and mandate at the session entitled «The Organization of Disunited Nations? Russia's Future in International Collective Governance Institutions».

The ICRC attended the **Women's Iftar** organized by the Association for Women's Cooperation under the Spiritual Administration of Muslims, discussing IHL and preservation of humanity in conflict.

The regional delegation organized the **annual Martens Competition** for Russian-speaking students from universities of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The 27th iteration of the competition, held in April, brought together more than 100 participants representing 24 teams.

Belarus

In April, the ICRC held another round of its regular **IHL training for officers of the State Border Committee** in Brest.

In May, the ICRC held a **seminar on IHL implementation in Minsk.** The seminar was attended by members of the National Commission on IHL Implementation under the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus constituted of representatives of the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence, the State Border Committee, Ministry of Internal Affairs and the BRC. The seminar allowed a working exchange with a representative of the National Commission on IHL Implementation of Kyrgyzstan who also took part in the event.



ICRC organisers and participants in the XXVII Martens Competition — 2026.

K. Demidov/ICRC

Regional organizations: CSTO and IPA CIS

In February and May, the ICRC took part in the **Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Joint Staff training sessions** on IHL and humanitarian forensics.

In April, the ICRC addressed Russian and foreign officials and diplomats, regional bodies and experts on the enduring relevance of IHL at the CSTO conference on analytical partnership held at the MFA university, MGIMO.

The ICRC participated in several IPA CIS sessions on a variety of topics, for instance contributing to the development of the **Concept of Common Migration Space of the CIS member states** at the April session of the IPA CIS's Permanent Commission on Human Rights and Social Affairs. At a conference on the sidelines, the ICRC addressed representatives of the Russian government agencies, experts and academics on the protection afforded by IHL to children associated with armed groups.

The ICRC also presented the draft **Recommendation on the Use of the ICRC Emergency Travel Document in the CIS member states** at the plenary session of the IPA CIS and the session of its Permanent Commission on Political Issues and International Cooperation in May. The Assembly voted to include further work on this document in its Long-Term Plan of Model Law-Making for the period of 2026-2028.

Highlighting ICRC global operations and humanitarian concerns

In April, the ICRC briefed the **CSTO Working Group on Afghanistan** on ICRC operations in the region and an overview of humanitarian issues in the country.

The escalation in the Middle East was also a focus of the ICRC's engagement. In May, the ICRC briefed Russian and CIS parliamentarians on the humanitarian situation and impact of the hostilities in the Middle East at the IPA CIS Commission on International Cooperation and Political Affairs. In June, for the second time, the ICRC attended Russia-Middle East Conference organized by the Primakov Center.

Concerning **humanitarian issues in Africa,** the ICRC met with the management of the Russian MFA Department for Partnership with Africa, to discuss ways to further strengthen the dialogue between the ICRC and Russia on African humanitarian issues. In May, the ICRC presented the organization's economic security programs in Africa to Russian and foreign officials, experts and academics, at the Russia-Islamic World Kazan Forum.

A special highlight was also set on **the Central African Republic (CAR)** with the June visit to Moscow of the former Head of the ICRC delegation in Bangui. The humanitarian situation and the ICRC's activities in the CAR were discussed with Russian interlocutors, including the Russian MFA Department of African States and Crisis Management Centre, the State Duma, the Institute for African Studies, and the African Initiative information agency.

In April and June, the ICRC presented its **global physical rehabilitation programs** to entities supporting people with life-changing injuries, including the Soldier's Heart NGO that provides prosthetics and support to amputees.

In April, the ICRC also participated for the third time in **the BRICS Project Lab at MGIMO,** where it presented its perspective on the prospects for ICRC-BRICS cooperation and supervised a student project of a potential session on IHL at the BRICS Legal Forum. In February, the ICRC held its first formal meeting with Ivan Polyakov, Chairman of **TV BRICS,** to discuss cooperation in covering humanitarian issues.

The ICRC delegation also organized briefings to students from the MGIMO Faculty of Management and Politics, and the Institute for Oriental and Classical Studies, Higher School of Economics.



Since 1863, the ICRC works to relieve suffering and preserve human dignity during war and armed violence. We deliver vital aid without discrimination and reconnect families alongside our Red Cross and Red Crescent partners.

Engaging with all sides and armed forces, often confidentially, we advocate for detainees' humane treatment and urge compliance with international humanitarian law to protect civilians on the ground and online.

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