

# TACKLING THE NEW FRONTIERS OF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

In a world that risks losing its compass, we want to chart the future of humanitarian action. We accelerate humanitarian innovation and strengthen the ability of the ICRC, together with its partners, to prevent and alleviate suffering.

Guided by the principle of humanity, we strive to achieve the most relevant and sustainable impact for populations affected by armed conflict and violence.





## A RESPONSE TO TOMORROW'S HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES

The Foundation was established in 1931 to help the ICRC fulfil its vital mission in wartime as in peacetime. The interwar period was a time of great uncertainty, and establishing the Foundation was a response to secure the future of impartial, neutral and independent humanitarian action.

Ninety years on, the environment in which the ICRC operates presents major new challenges:

- There is a widening gap between traditional funding and the humanitarian needs driven by armed conflict, which are compounded by climate change and the pandemic. In 2020, only half of the UN humanitarian appeals were funded.

- The nature of warfare is changing: conflicts last much longer, battlefields are moving into urban areas and cyberspace, with new technologies heightening risks and opportunities.
- The world is more polarized. Political divisiveness is on the rise and societies are fracturing. As a result, the international community is often unable, or lacks the resolve, to put an end to armed conflicts.

In this context, there is a strong sense of urgency. Our objective is to help the ICRC and its humanitarian partners to anticipate, innovate and adapt to the new paradigm. This is the *raison d'être* of the Foundation, which offers an agile vehicle to foster innovative approaches for greater impact.

### THE ICRC: A PIONEER IN HUMANITARIAN AID

**Unmatched access** The neutrality and independence of the ICRC give the organization privileged access; it is often the only one able to help victims in the midst of hostilities and violence.

**An international reference** The ICRC is the guardian and promoter of the Geneva Conventions, the “laws of war” that protect the lives and dignity of people in armed conflict.

**An unparalleled reach and scale** As the founder of the world's largest humanitarian network, the ICRC works with 192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies – more than 17 million volunteers worldwide.

**Unique expertise** The ICRC has been carrying out its core mission to protect and assist people affected by armed conflict and violence for more than 150 years.



***“I deeply believe that innovation is part of how we can achieve greater impact with and for affected populations, while anticipating and preparing for unknown futures in a changing world.”***

Nan Buzard,  
Head of Innovation of the ICRC

## HOW WE OPERATE





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The Foundation fulfils three critical functions. It acts as a:

- **CATALYST:** We accelerate cutting-edge humanitarian innovation, providing the impetus and financial means to launch innovative projects in four key areas. The aim is to pilot new solutions that can be scaled up across the wider aid sector.
- **CO-CREATOR:** We serve as a “laboratory” for entrepreneurial minds to brainstorm and co-design novel approaches with humanitarian experts, engaging thought leaders from business, academia and the arts on the greatest challenges of our times.
- **ENABLER:** We step in to strengthen the ICRC’s ability to engage in multi-year, transformational projects.

The engine of the Foundation is its endowment and the dedicated funds it hosts. We want to substantially grow its capital to reach an ambitious threshold by 2031 – our 100th anniversary. We plan to grant around 4% of this capital each year in line with the Foundation’s objectives, while also offering our partners the possibility to spend down any given contribution over a period of up to fifteen years if they so wish.

### OUR FOCUS AREAS

-  Strengthening the laws of war
-  Leveraging science and new technologies
-  Exploring and scaling new financing models
-  Building environmental sustainability and resilience



## STRENGTHENING THE LAWS OF WAR

The ICRC acts as the guardian and promoter of international humanitarian law (IHL) under the Geneva Conventions. In the course of its 160-year history, it has played a central role in developing IHL, drawing the attention of states to the protection needs of war victims and the unacceptable effects of specific weapons. The ICRC has notably helped develop rules that ban chemical and biological weapons, anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions.

Today, the development of new means and methods of warfare gives rise to new threats – in cyberspace and outer space, for instance, or in the form of autonomous weapon systems powered by artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning.

Such developments raise complex humanitarian, legal and ethical issues. Addressing them requires multidisciplinary expertise and long-term commitment. The Foundation supports the ICRC's development of a strong centre of expertise to take the norms and practices that protect civilians, critical infrastructure and the environment into the future.

- How can IHL be developed to suitably address the development of autonomous weapon systems, when life-and-death decisions risk being left to sensors and algorithms?
- How should the risks of weaponizing and militarizing cyberspace and outer space be mitigated for civilians?
- What are the challenges posed by cyber warfare, and how can we ensure that IHL keeps protecting conflict-affected people, essential infrastructure and data in our increasingly digitalized societies?
- How should the international legal and policy framework be strengthened to reduce the devastating consequences of urban warfare? How can the rule of law and the effectiveness of IHL be strengthened?

***“Ultimately, most of us can agree that an algorithm – a machine process – should not determine who lives or dies, that human life must not be reduced to sensor data and machine calculations.”***

Peter Maurer,  
President of the ICRC



## LEVERAGING SCIENCE AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES



New technologies such as AI and satellite imagery and nanotechnology have a vast untapped potential for humanitarian action. The Foundation helps leverage this potential to better empower, protect and assist war-affected populations.

- Advances in AI can increase the chances of finding missing persons and reuniting families. For example, when DNA matching is not an option, facial recognition software can accelerate the matching of pictures provided by relatives with images of missing persons.
- The use of drones that incorporate miniature thermal-imaging cameras can help locate landmines and unexploded ordnance, by detecting different heat signatures and using AI technologies to identify the types of mine or munition.
- Virtual reality can enhance the effectiveness of military training programmes for greater respect for IHL in the heat of combat. It can also improve the process of socio-economic reintegration of people who have become disabled during war.

The Foundation also supports the increased use of digitalization and big data in humanitarian work. This involves combining physical proximity and “digital proximity” with the aim of interacting more closely with affected populations – who are increasingly online – while handling and protecting personal data responsibly. Using data to make better decisions will result in greater impact, more timely response and more efficient use of resources.

- **People-centric tools:** By understanding user behaviours, constraints and digital literacy on a country-by-country basis, we can start building relevant digital solutions.
- **Modelling:** Data can be used to develop predictive models as a way to better anticipate conflict escalation and adjust the humanitarian response accordingly.
- **Responsible use of technology:** New technology creates new uses, which in turn create opportunities as well as risks that must be assessed in a comprehensive manner from a moral, legal, ethical and technological standpoint.
- **Digital equality:** Everyone in a community deserves access to broadband technologies and the skills to use them. The ICRC strives to provide greater digital equality in communities that have been impacted by conflict.



## EXPLORING AND SCALING UP NEW FINANCING MODELS

Traditional funding systems fall dramatically short of the needs on the ground, leaving millions of people behind. New Financing Models (NFM) offer new pathways to generate impact, enabling collaboration across the public and private sectors, widening the resource base and delivering measurable results.

The ICRC has led the exploration of NFM in the humanitarian sector with the first-ever Humanitarian Impact Bond, a CHF 25 million mechanism to provide care for people with disabilities. This NFM was supported by private

investors, financial service companies, foundations and governments. The Foundation contributes to the organizational efforts that aim to mobilize CHF 150 million annually through NFM by 2030 through a diversification of the portfolio.

Beyond the mobilization of additional and more diversified resources, NFM are about new ways of working that generate additional humanitarian impact. By leveraging partnerships, long-term planning and outcomes-based approaches, they contribute to building the resilience of affected

people. Critically, the Foundation invests in research and offers an expert dialogue forum to share learning, hence supporting the scaling up of innovative finance for greater investment in humanitarian impact.

***“Through innovative multistakeholder models, we can mobilize human and financial resources to generate new ways of working and achieve what no one could on their own.”***

Catherine Howell,  
Innovative Finance Advisor  
of the ICRC







***“We need to join forces across the humanitarian sector and beyond to mitigate climate change and ensure that people are adequately supported as they adapt to the climate crisis now and into the future. Inaction is not an option.”***

Robert Mardini,  
Director-General of the ICRC

## BUILDING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Climate change and environmental degradation affect every aspect of our lives, but those hit the hardest are marginalized communities in fragile contexts. Of the 25 countries most vulnerable to climate change, 14 are mired in conflict. This is not because climate change directly causes conflict. Rather, climate change amplifies the humanitarian needs triggered by conflict, while conflict increases the fragility of institutions that are critical to helping people cope and adapt to climate change.

For us at the Foundation, it is crucial that we help strengthen resilience in conflict zones and invest in environmental sustainability and nature-based solutions. We support

the ICRC and its Red Cross and Red Crescent partners in stepping up their climate and environmental ambitions, as laid out in the new Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations. Specifically, we want to help factor in climate and environmental action into all ICRC programmes by 2025.

We also assist in reducing the organization's impact on the environment and cutting its greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030. We further aim to promote energy-efficient options for the functioning of health and detention facilities in conflict zones.

Examples of climate adaptation and environmental programmes:

- In Iraq, the ICRC mitigates water stress and loss by repairing pumping and treatment stations and piped network and irrigation systems.
- In the Sahel, the ICRC supports farmers and herders through the renovation of irrigation schemes and the stabilization of advancing dunes.
- In Cameroon, Libya and Myanmar, the ICRC distributes solar lamps to vulnerable households and displaced communities for use at night, which enhances their security and allows children to study.



## SECURING THE FUTURE OF HUMANITARIAN ACTION



While the ICRC deals with emergencies on an annual basis, the Foundation takes a long-term view. We play an important role in building the ICRC's organizational readiness so it can effectively carry out its humanitarian mission in a neutral, impartial and independent manner.

Through our investment, we aim to support the profound transformational changes necessary to respond to the current and looming humanitarian challenges. This often translates into organizational projects spanning several years, which require significant investment and have a game changing potential.

### Examples:

- Establishing a center of excellence for the search of missing people and restoring family links.
- Strengthening the Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies in conflict zones.
- Digitizing and making available the ICRC's public archives since 1863.

In exceptional circumstances, when an emergency or a neglected crisis requires massive mobilization, the Foundation may also step in to help strengthen the ICRC's humanitarian response and preserve its independence of action.

### EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY THE FOUNDATION

We helped assess the feasibility of collecting voluntary DNA samples from migrants so that – if they go missing – their families can find out what happened to them.

We explored how hate speech and the weaponization of information heighten the risk of grave violations of IHL, and how to counter it.

We contributed to economic and livelihood recovery for people affected by protracted armed conflicts through value-chain analysis.

We helped improve the ICRC's organizational readiness to develop new financing models and generate a strategic pipeline of projects.



## ENGAGING ARTISTS IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Art is a force that connects us with our shared humanity – creating empathy, understanding and curiosity. By engaging our senses, art has the transformative power to connect us with peoples, cultures and situations outside our own life experiences.

The Foundation wants to harness the power of the arts and engage renowned and emerging artists to advance our humanitarian agenda.

- **Art as storyteller:** Conflicts are viewed mainly through the media, which can make them appear unrelated to our everyday life. By telling the story of humanitarian work and innovation through the arts, we believe we can touch people's hearts and minds and engage a broader audience.
- **Art as forward thinking:** Artists have the freedom to question and anticipate emerging humanitarian issues, bringing invaluable insights and outside-the-box thinking. They can reflect on today's world in innovative, visionary ways and hence be meaningful contributors to our laboratory of ideas.
- **Art as investment:** We want to create our own art collection and curate it as an additional asset in our endowment so that young and renowned artists have the time and space to tell their humanitarian story in compelling and inspirational ways.
- **Art as connector:** Art and artists have a powerful convening power. They can trigger excitement, interest and exchanges between different stakeholders – from the local communities affected by a crisis and humanitarian workers to influencers, thought leaders and philanthropists.

*“Through art we can start building a world that works differently.”*

Tania Bruguera



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*“I have always believed and still believe that artists who live and work with spiritual values cannot and should not remain indifferent to the conflict in which the highest values of humanity and civilization are at stake.”*

Pablo Picasso

## HOW YOU CAN ENGAGE

As we embark on this journey, we are looking for a select number of partners to join us and help shape this ambitious initiative. We are inviting individuals, companies and foundations to commit their leadership, expertise and resources to make a lasting legacy for humanitarian action.

### You want to donate in perpetuity to our endowment or create a dedicated fund on a humanitarian topic

We have set up four categories to allow for different levels of financial contribution:

- Ally
- Investor
- Founding Partner
- Creation of a Dedicated Fund

Each of them gives access to a broad range of privileges, in terms of involvement, access and recognition, customized to your preferences and needs.

Our Leadership Advisory Council, which is comprised of Investors and Founding Partners willing to contribute their expertise, plays a central role in advising on innovation and organizational adaptation. It directly interacts with the ICRC leadership to maximize impact.

### You want to leverage your expertise and resources to co-create innovative solutions

- Through field visits and exchanges with ICRC colleagues in the field and at headquarters, we will assess the potential and feasibility of new solutions and how best to move forward.

### You want to contribute ideas to the future of humanitarian action

- Our conferences allow you to debate with peers and humanitarian leaders to get a 360° view of tomorrow's humanitarian challenges and a venue to identify new approaches.

We want to publicly launch the Foundation and announce our Founding Partners in 2022, before rolling out a global campaign in 2023 on the 160th anniversary of the ICRC. 2024 will also provide an important milestone as we mark the 75th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions.



***“Securing the future of humanitarian action is crucial. Our goal is to engage thought leaders to help sustain the ICRC’s ability to carry out its vital mission in a fast-changing and ever more polarized world.”***

***Join us, we want to work together to make a lasting difference.”***

Gilles Carbonnier,  
ICRC Vice-President and President  
of the Foundation for the ICRC.



## YOUR PARTNER OF CHOICE



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The Foundation for the ICRC is a unique vehicle to reimagine the future of humanitarian action. Whether you join as a catalyst, a co-creator or a thought leader, you will make a difference while enjoying a wide range of advantages tailored to your philanthropic ambitions.

### **A long-term approach**

By spending down the assets you invest in the Foundation over a number of years, or donating in perpetuity through an endowment fund, you will help shape the humanitarian response of tomorrow. The capital of the Foundation is administered by first-class asset managers and is invested according to strict ethical guidelines.

### **A tax-deductible investment**

All donations are tax deductible in Switzerland since the Foundation is recognized as a public utility organization in this country. Options for tax deductions are available in other countries.

### **No administrative costs**

The Foundation for the ICRC does not take any administrative costs on the donations it receives. The entirety of your investment goes into its mission.

### **Named funds**

The Foundation is structured as an umbrella foundation, meaning that we can host dedicated funds, created on the initiative of an individual, in memory of a loved one or as part of a family's philanthropic investment plan. These funds can also be created by companies or other legal persons to advance their humanitarian ambitions.

This option offers several advantages: you are freed from the constraints of financial management of your hosted fund while you participate in the selection of initiatives you want to invest in, alongside a representative of the Foundation. You also get the credit your investment deserves.

### **Visibility**

By partnering with the Foundation, you associate your name or brand with one of the leaders in the humanitarian field. Your support will be recognized in the Foundation's annual report and other relevant communication materials.

### **Privileged access to the ICRC network**

Through the Foundation, you gain unique access to the ICRC leadership and the wealth of expertise of its more than 20,000 staff members. Field visits and other exclusive exchanges may be arranged to gain deeper understanding of a specific country or topic.

### **A global philanthropic platform**

The Foundation is a space to connect with philanthropists and relevant artists from all over the world. By pooling funds and expertise with other like-minded leaders, you reinforce one another's efforts and multiply your impact.



# TOGETHER LET'S REIMAGINE THE FUTURE OF HUMANITARIAN ACTION



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