



M. U. Karim/ICRC

This woman in Bangladesh, a widow, lost her only source of income when refugees from Myanmar took shelter on her land. A cash grant, given as part of the ICRC's livelihood assistance programme, helped her buy this rice field and support her family of nine.

THE ICRC

UNIQUE ACCESS, A GLOBAL PRESENCE, AND EXPERTISE IN ADDRESSING COMMUNITIES' NEEDS IN CONFLICT- AND VIOLENCE-AFFECTED CONTEXTS

Extreme poverty is increasingly becoming concentrated in places affected by conflict and violence. It is estimated that by 2030, a great majority of the world's poor will live in fragile and conflict-affected States.

As conflicts become more protracted and encroach on middle-income countries, the resources and capacities of the entire aid ecosystem must be harnessed into wider systemic responses to increasing, and increasingly complex, humanitarian needs.

Addressing extreme poverty in environments of conflict, violence and fragility requires first ensuring sustainable humanitarian impact in addressing the needs of the people affected. In this realm, the ICRC is uniquely placed to make a powerful contribution.



160 YEARS OF UNINTERRUPTED SERVICE IN VOLATILE ENVIRONMENTS

- The ICRC is one of the largest humanitarian organizations in the world, with some 20,000 employees in more than 90 contexts, and an annual budget of over 2 billion Swiss francs. Established in 1863, it is a private organization to which the community of States has given a **unique mandate**, through the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, to ensure humanitarian protection and assistance for victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence.
- Owing to its principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence, the ICRC has **unparalleled access to the people in greatest need**, including communities in hard-to-reach areas, such as places where fighting is intense, or areas not under government control.
- The ICRC's **fit-for-purpose approach** is geared for situations of conflict, violence and fragility, including those with multi-layered complexities. Its knowledge of the contexts in which it operates is informed by its long-term presence on the ground, its independent and rigorous assessment of local needs, its extensive and diversified networks, and its ability to take regional and global geopolitical interlinkages into account.
- Its **unique organizational model** enables the ICRC to pre-finance its operations, respond quickly to crises, and sustain a field presence in environments of protracted conflict or violence. Its institutional practices, procurement procedures and financial management processes have been fine-tuned over decades of working in contexts affected by conflict, violence and fragility.



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DIRECT IMPLEMENTATION AND HOLISTIC RESPONSE CAPACITY

- The ICRC averages a 91% implementation rate and ensures **cost-effective service delivery** with an overhead rate of 6.5%. It implements most of its activities directly, while taking appropriate measures to avoid, reduce or mitigate risk.
- The ICRC employs a **people-centred approach** that considers the range and diversity of individuals' and communities' needs, vulnerabilities and capacities, and the environmental factors that affect them. This approach facilitates the active participation of diverse groups of people, and allows the ICRC to ensure that its activities address people's varied needs and support their agency and autonomy.
- The ICRC has **broad multidisciplinary expertise** in designing and implementing urgently needed interventions while simultaneously sequencing resilience-building and system-sensitive undertakings. Its priority areas include preserving access to essential services (e.g. health, water, food, shelter and sanitation), enabling livelihood rehabilitation and diversification, and supporting dimensions of social protection, as applicable, in conflict-affected and underserved environments. Its reach and response capacity are augmented by the global network of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.



LEADERSHIP IN GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN POLICY AND PRACTICE

- The ICRC's mandate includes promoting, developing and ensuring respect for **international humanitarian law** (IHL). IHL remains the primary, globally recognized body of norms that regulate armed conflict by aiming, notably, to preserve essential infrastructure and safeguard social cohesion.
- Respect for IHL includes respect for principles of humanity and the protection of people's access to vital services. Strengthening respect for IHL puts countries in a better position for **rebuilding after conflict**.
- The ICRC engages with, and often brings together, **a wide range of global and local interlocutors**. In the arena of international policy, its network encompasses governments, multilateral bodies, international and regional financial institutions, think-tanks, foundations, and key players in the private sector. In the course of its operations in more than 90 contexts, it engages with national and local authorities, international and local NGOs, the United Nations system, civil-society groups, traditional leaders, non-State armed groups, international military forces, the media and other influential parties.



GEARED TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE HUMANITARIAN IMPACT ACROSS THE NEXUS

- Protracted or recurrent conflict compounds vulnerabilities arising from broader problems, such as poverty and limited economic opportunities, environmental and climate disasters, underdeveloped or degraded infrastructure and essential services, and weakened or unreliable governance and institutions. Working in situations of chronic violence has shaped the ICRC's response to humanitarian needs, and its relationship with the people it assists. It aims not only to help individuals and communities survive crises but also to achieve **sustainable humanitarian impact**.
- As humanitarian and development challenges converge in many of today's crises, the ICRC is well placed to provide the **principled, professional and comprehensive operational and policy response** required of a key actor in the international aid ecosystem.
- Humanitarian protection and assistance for people affected by conflict are preconditions for achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The ICRC's action is driven by its mandate, not by the SDGs, but there is a significant overlap between them. In conflict-stricken places, where people are at the greatest risk of being left behind, the ICRC's work – upholding people's dignity and supporting basic services and infrastructure – forestalls development reversals, preserves development gains, and lays the foundations for **future recovery**.



ICRC

International Committee of the Red Cross
19 Avenue de la Paix
1202 Geneva, Switzerland
T +41 22 734 6001
www.icrc.org
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