



ICRC STRATEGY 2011-2014

**ACHIEVING SIGNIFICANT RESULTS
FOR PEOPLE IN NEED**



ICRC



ICRC

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INTRODUCTION

The 2011-2014 Institutional Strategy will guide the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) over the coming four years. It builds upon the orientations presented in the previous Institutional Strategy, related to responding to humanitarian needs in the entire scope of its mandate, enhancing its expertise in certain fields to better meet the needs of people affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence, ensuring complementarity and coordination with other humanitarian actors, and investing in operational partnerships with National Societies. (ICRC Strategy 2007-2010: *Committed to meeting new challenges through action*).

The Strategy will be put into practice by ICRC staff members around the world, in accordance with clearly defined management priorities that build upon the organization's Key Success Factors. Indicators will be developed to monitor results, and progress reports will be made.

ICRC management has defined six Key Success Factors that describe the areas that are crucial for the ICRC's success and provide a common reading grid for all of the organization's activities: Relevance; Access; Acceptance and Reputation; Organization and Processes; Human Resources Capacity and Mobility; and Positioning.

MISSION

The ICRC is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance.

The ICRC also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles.

Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the Geneva Conventions and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It directs and coordinates the international activities conducted by the Movement in armed conflicts and other situations of violence.

VISION

In fulfilling its mission, the ICRC puts people's needs at the centre of its work and builds on their resilience. It is able to make a significant difference for people affected by ongoing and emerging humanitarian crises, working in close proximity to them and providing high-quality services, together with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and other partners. It shapes the debate on legal and policy issues related to its mission; it uses its humanitarian diplomacy as a strong lever to influence governments and other stakeholders in order to strengthen respect for the lives and dignity of people affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence.

In line with its mission, the ICRC has identified four broad strategic orientations for the 2011-2014 period:

Reinforce the ICRC's scope of action

The ICRC will increase the relevance and effectiveness of the support it provides to people suffering because of armed conflict (including in the early recovery phase) and other situations of violence.

Strengthen the ICRC's contextualized, multidisciplinary response

The ICRC will develop contextualized, multidisciplinary responses that address the vulnerabilities and build on the resilience of people in need.

Shape the debate on legal and policy issues related to the ICRC's mission

The ICRC will remain the reference organization for developing and clarifying international humanitarian law and will influence the policy agenda related to the human costs of armed conflict and other situations of violence, the future of humanitarian action, and other emerging issues.

Optimize the ICRC's performance

The ICRC will strike an appropriate balance between achieving consistency throughout the organization and maintaining operational flexibility in managing its performance.

A CHANGING WORLD

Today's armed conflicts and other situations of violence present a host of complex challenges. Most conflicts where the ICRC is active tend to be long and drawn out, rarely coming to a clear-cut end. They often revolve around competition for access to critical resources (such as energy, land and water) and have ethnic or religious dimensions. The plight of many people affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence is gravely exacerbated by the combined effect of phenomena or "mega-trends" such as climate change, natural disasters, environmental degradation, migration, pandemics, and rampant urbanization. Moreover, international humanitarian law is repeatedly flouted in armed conflict, due, in large measure, to a lack of political will on the part of both State authorities and armed groups.

The global environment in which the ICRC operates will continue to evolve significantly in the coming years. Ongoing transformations in the international political, economic, social, and environmental landscapes will likely have a significant impact on people's lives. The humanitarian sector may be altered as a result of the growing interest and involvement of States, local and regional organizations, and the private sector. At the same time, beneficiaries will play an increasingly active role in formulating their own requests and assessments, as easy-to-use technologies become more readily available. In addition, new actors of influence will emerge, prompting the ICRC to diversify its networks and more firmly anchor its presence regionally and locally to preserve and strengthen its access to the people it seeks to help. As the international community struggles to address the consequences of the aforementioned "mega-trends," attention may be deflected from the needs of people affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence. These trends will lead to more and new manifestations of organized armed violence, many of which will lie below the threshold at which international humanitarian law begins to apply.

BUILDING ON THE ICRC'S STRENGTHS TO RESPOND TO THESE CHANGES

A strong capacity to adapt to new challenges has been a hallmark of the ICRC in the past. The organization has evolved significantly in the last ten years as a result of strategic choices made. It has gradually broadened its scope of action to meet the needs of people affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence. Accordingly, it has widened its access to people in need and striven to ensure that it is accepted on the ground as a neutral, impartial, and independent humanitarian actor. It has reviewed its organizational structure and processes and reinforced its capacity to evaluate the results of its activities.

Going forward, the ICRC must be prepared for further adaptation. The character, pace, and unpredictable nature of changes in its environment will make it necessary to ensure that ICRC managers are both guided by more clearly defined strategic frameworks and entrusted with strong decision-making authority and responsibility. While the organization's broad ambitions are clear, the precise path to their fulfilment cannot be predetermined. The ICRC must increasingly work on the basis of scenarios, building upon its rapid response capacity, capitalizing upon the mobility of its staff, and preserving its flexibility. It must integrate "lessons learnt" by more systematically taking stock of new experiences and sharing good practices throughout the organization. In addition, the ICRC needs to identify and work well with strong National Society partners and others to ensure that responses are relevant and effective.

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2011-2014 STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS

Reinforce the ICRC's scope of action

The ICRC aims to increase its relevance and effectiveness in all situations where it is active.

- Ensuring respect for IHL in situations of **armed conflict** will remain at the heart of the ICRC's mission. In such situations, it will strive to improve its access to vulnerable populations and respond more comprehensively to their needs. During the **early recovery** phase, the ICRC will be more assertive and structured in initiating programmes in certain areas – medical, economic security, and water and habitat. It will prepare to withdraw once the entry strategies of development organizations have been clearly set out and are followed by concrete actions. The collaborative dimension will be crucial here, with the ICRC developing both operational and thematic partnerships with National Societies and others.
- The ICRC will also more systematically and effectively bring the humanitarian consequences of **other situations of violence** within its scope of action. It will focus primarily on situations of organized armed violence in urban settings, State repression or inter-community violence. The organization will engage in each new context in light of its potential added value. This will require it to adapt its knowledge of various bodies of law, such as human rights law, to the expected operational needs in certain specific domains (e.g. arrest, detention, and use of force). Once again, partnerships will play an important role in such situations.
- The ICRC will deepen its understanding of the impact of **phenomena such as climate change, natural disasters, environmental degradation, migration, pandemics, and rampant urbanization** on populations affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence. This will permit the organization to ensure that its response takes into account their cumulative impact.
- In all situations where it is active, the ICRC will play a **pivotal role in certain domains** (e.g. emergency response supported by a strong rapid deployment capacity, health services, water and sanitation in urban settings, treatment and conditions of people deprived of their freedom, and restoring family links).
- To achieve related objectives, it will consolidate its access to people affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence by developing relationships with **traditional and emerging actors of influence**. In line with its **security strategy**, the ICRC will continuously adapt its *modus operandi* as needed, to ensure the safety of its staff.

Strengthen the ICRC's contextualized, multidisciplinary response

The ICRC aims to improve and systematize its ability to place the needs of affected populations at the centre of its humanitarian response. At the same time, it aims to more firmly anchor its presence and enhance its response through local resources and skills.

- The ICRC will strengthen its ability to **address the vulnerabilities and build on the resilience of populations in need** and will ensure greater **involvement of beneficiaries** in identifying their own needs and formulating adequate responses.
- It will confirm its **multidisciplinary approach** – encompassing protection, assistance, prevention, and cooperation with National Societies – and undertake **integrated planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation**.
- This orientation has an important **human resources dimension**; the ICRC will place a premium on attracting, retaining, and developing staff – both internationally and locally hired – with the skills needed to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of its response to changes in its operating environment.
- It will also further develop **partnerships** both within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and beyond, in order to obtain the best possible understanding of local situations and communities and to respond more effectively to identified needs. This will entail further strengthening cooperation with National Societies and their International Federation.

Shape the debate on legal and policy issues related to the ICRC's mission

The ICRC aims to bring its expertise to bear and make its voice heard in a timely and effective manner in forums both traditional and new, constantly expanding its network of contacts. This will help enhance respect for the lives and dignity of people affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence and for the ICRC's neutral, impartial, and independent humanitarian action.

- The ICRC will remain the **reference organization for the development and clarification of international humanitarian law**, undertaking a broad range of related initiatives.
- At the same time, it will endeavour to increasingly **influence the debate on the human costs of organized armed violence more generally, the future of humanitarian action and principles, as well as other emerging issues**.

2011-2014 STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS

Optimize the ICRC's performance

The ICRC aims to meet its objectives and fulfil expectations, safeguarding consistency across the organization while maintaining operational flexibility.

- The ICRC's **13,000 staff members** are its strongest asset; their individual contributions are crucial to the organization's overall performance. The ICRC will **adapt its approach to developing and managing its human resources** so as to enable it to make the most of the skills and experience of its staff – be they internationally or locally hired – and to define and implement human resources strategies in support of its operational objectives.
- Staff members will incorporate into their work **best practices for managing people**. They will focus in particular on increasing self-awareness, fostering an environment conducive to open communication, making clear and transparent decisions, and providing relevant and timely feedback.
- The ICRC will ensure that **decision-making is aligned** with the organization's Strategy and **measure its overall performance** on the basis of its Key Success Factors.
- It will further strengthen its internal culture of critical self-appraisal by enhancing its **result-based management practice**. It will also complement its own assessment with independent, external perspectives on its results. Activities will be geared towards making a significant difference for people affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence.
- The ICRC will continue to ensure that its processes and procedures reinforce **accountability**, both within the organization and vis-à-vis external stakeholders, by permitting efficient management of activities and strengthening coherence across the organization.
- In addition, the organization will further develop its **information-management capacity**, channelling, synthesizing, and sharing information so as to facilitate decision-making and to guide the process of adapting its humanitarian response to constantly changing situations. It will also better incorporate the use of **new technologies** in its work.
- The ICRC will strive to ensure that it always has **adequate, quality funding** to implement its activities.



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