

**International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Statement on Victim Assistance
Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention 17th Meeting of States Parties
Geneva, 26-30 November 2018**

The ICRC would like to commend Prince Mired for his long commitment and efforts on promoting the Convention and its implementation, and to Belgium for the leadership that it has shown in its capacity as Chair of the Committee of Assistance.

The Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention was the first treaty to ban a weapon that committed States Parties to provide assistance to victims of that weapon. Victim assistance is a pillar of mine action and of the Convention, supporting its goal of reducing the unacceptable suffering that these weapons cause and fulfilling its promise that survivors will enjoy full and effective participation and inclusion in society. Achieving this requires a holistic and integrated approach to victim assistance.

Support to the ICRC's annual Special Appeal for Disability and Mine Action has allowed the ICRC to carry out activities for the benefit of mine victims and affected communities around the world, and we thank all donors for their generous contributions. ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation centres fit persons with disabilities with assistive devices (such as prostheses, orthoses or wheelchairs) as an important step towards their social reintegration. In 2017, the ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation centres in Afghanistan, Iraq, Myanmar, Pakistan, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen, among others, fitted more than 6,300 mine and ERW victims with prostheses and orthoses, and more than 10,000 mine and ERW victims received physiotherapy treatment. Such devices help the affected person to gain autonomy, to lead an independent life and to participate more fully in society.

The ICRC is currently helping to construct new physical rehabilitation centres in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mali, Nigeria, Erbil Irak and Bangui CAR. We are also helping governments develop and/or implement national plans of action or policies for the provision of physical rehabilitation services, for example in Colombia, Ethiopia, Iraq, Mali and Niger.

The ICRC also helps persons with disabilities to gain access to economic programs, vocational trainings and education, for example in Afghanistan, Cambodia, DRC and South Sudan, as well as providing them with psychological support.

The ICRC also runs programs to enable persons with disabilities to participate in sporting events in a range of countries. In the ICRC rehabilitation centre in Kabul, football has become an integral part of physical, mental and social rehabilitation. It helps people who experience similar struggles to meet, develop physical coordination and regain confidence. Since 2008, players selected by the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) Team of the Year award have donated their award to the ICRC's orthopedic programme in Afghanistan, and visited the ICRC rehabilitation centre to meet with patients including mine victims.

Among the 33 States Parties with significant numbers of mine victims in areas under their jurisdiction or control, most have made efforts to improve the quality and quantity of health and physical rehabilitation programs for survivors. Mine victims themselves play a key role in implementing programmes and providing services in many contexts.

However, more work needs to be done. Most States Parties with significant numbers of mine victims suffered from a lack of adequate resources and practices to fulfil the commitments, and a number of them have ongoing armed conflicts on their territory, or are facing humanitarian emergencies or internal instability, disrupting services and accessibility for mine victims.

In conclusion, it is clear that positive accomplishments in assisting mine victims have been achieved through the concerted efforts of States Parties, the ICRC, UN agencies, and civil society organizations. This partnership should continue and be reinforced in order to move forward to meet the goals that have been set for 2025.

Thank you.