



# ICRC

## **Nineteen Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention The Hague, 15-19 November 2021**

### **International Committee of the Red Cross Statement on Victim Assistance**

The ICRC commends the work done by the Committee on Victim Assistance in the past year to enhance the understanding and promote the implementation of the Oslo Action Plan, in particular in relation to assisting affected States to establish or strengthen a centralised database with disaggregated information of mine victims.

As was outlined in the ICRC Vice-President's opening speech, the needs of mine victims must always be at the centre of any mine action so as to reduce their suffering. The lifelong needs of survivors and their families must be met – taking into account gender, age and diversity factors – to allow them to participate fully, equally and effectively in society.

Today 30 States Parties have reported significant numbers of mine victims under their jurisdiction or control. While commending the efforts made by most of these States to improve the quality and quantity of health and physical rehabilitation programs for survivors, we note that many struggle to address fully the recognized needs and gaps in victim assistance. In particular, the ICRC has repeatedly called on States Parties to address the gaps of qualified professionals and structures to provide physical rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities including mine victims.

In this respect, the ICRC continues to assist all persons with disabilities, including victims of mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war through its Physical Rehabilitation Programme. In particular, it helps reduce the barriers to obtaining appropriate care by helping develop national capacities and by directly providing people with physical rehabilitation services. The ICRC is also strengthening its efforts to facilitate the full participation of persons with disabilities into their communities through other means – for example, by helping them gain or regain access to education, undertake livelihood activities and participate in sports. In 2020, despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 300'000 persons with physical disabilities benefited from 323 projects, such as physical rehabilitation centres, component factories and training institutions, run or supported by the ICRC in 45 countries. These States include, among others, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, South Sudan, Sudan and Yemen. In addition, the ICRC MoveAbility Foundation, which was integrated into the Physical Rehabilitation Programme as of January 2020, supported a total of 32 projects in 14 countries, and is developing a framework to enhance governance of the rehabilitation sector. This makes the ICRC one of the few organizations having systems-based rehabilitation services and, at the same time, remaining people/individual centric.

Mental health and psychosocial support is also gradually integrated into the Programme, with a view to helping persons with disabilities to overcome the trauma of their experience and

promote independence, social well-being and self-reliance. In 2020, 2'685 beneficiaries, including hospitalized weapon-wounded patients in facilities supported by the ICRC, benefited from such support, culturally and individually adapted to their psychological and physical recovery and rehabilitation needs.

To conclude, let us underscore that victim assistance is a long-term commitment that requires continued resources and political will from States Parties with mine victims and other States in a position to provide support, as well as the Convention community as a whole. The ICRC stands ready to continue supporting States Parties to fully implement their obligations towards mine victims.

Thank you.