



# ICRC

## **Twentieth Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Geneva, 21-25 November 2022**

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

At the outset, the ICRC commends the Committee on Victim Assistance comprising of Algeria, Ecuador, Italy and Uganda on their diligence and hard work in the past year. Our appreciation also goes to the Implementation Support Unit for all their work to support States Parties in assisting mine victims.

Victim assistance is an important pillar of mine action and of the Convention. It supports the Convention's goal of reducing the unacceptable suffering that anti-personnel mines cause, and fulfills its promise that mine victims, survivors and their families will enjoy full and effective participation and inclusion in society.

As for today over 30 States Parties have reported significant numbers of mine victims under their jurisdiction or control. However, health care and rehabilitation services remain underfunded in many of them, and they struggle to address fully the recognized needs and gaps in victim assistance due to challenges in access to services, available expertise, interdepartmental coordination, among others. It is therefore timely for this year's Victim Assistance Experts Meeting starting tomorrow to focus on addressing challenges faced by States Parties in delivering quality rehabilitation services in an efficient, affordable and sustainable manner. The ICRC is pleased to participate in and contribute to the discussion.

In this respect, the ICRC continues to assist persons with disabilities through its Physical Rehabilitation Programme, including victims of mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war. Our work focuses on: improving people's access to rehabilitation services; enhancing the quality and sustainability of these services; promoting the long-term availability of services; and facilitating the social and economic inclusion and participation of persons with physical disabilities through sport, microeconomic initiatives, job acquisition projects and education. Last year, 365'775 persons with disabilities benefited from our assistance. In 2022, persons with physical disabilities are benefiting from 323 ICRC-supported structures or projects (such as physical rehabilitation centers, component factories, social inclusion and training institutions) in 37 countries or territories. Notably, polypropylene technology developed by the ICRC is widely available through the social platform Rehab'Impulse, a social initiative owned by the ICRC. It is today a technology produced by persons with disabilities living in Switzerland and used by several organizations working for persons with disabilities, particularly in lower-income countries and countries where economy is devastated by war and violence. Devices and components produced using this technology are durable, inexpensive, adaptable to individual needs, easy to use and maintain, and compatible with various environments and climates. In these fragile contexts the ICRC is also working on establishing partnerships with public and private sector, and with local and international development actors to better sustain the rehabilitation sector and the long-term provision of services.

Mental health and psychosocial support is provided to help persons with disabilities to overcome the psychological consequences of their experience and to promote independence, self-esteem and self-reliance. In 2021, 5'235 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.