



“Building resilience of the communities, beyond victim assistance”

Meeting of the Standing Committees of the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention  
(Geneva, 21-25 May 2012)

Agenda item: Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration  
“Challenges and work that remains in applying the victim assistance aspects  
of the Cartagena Action Plan at the national level”

Statement by  
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President of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society

On behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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Mr President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) thanks for the floor and takes this opportunity to thank the Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia for the excellent organisation of the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties (MSP) in Phnom Penh. On behalf of IFRC, the Cambodian Red Cross leadership delivered a plenary statement to share the progress made in the implementation of the Cartagena Action Plan. The Australian Red Cross and Cambodian Red Cross also shared their experiences through two exhibition stands organised during the MSP.

Mr President,

The IFRC welcomes the accession to the Convention of Somalia recently and of Finland in January. With the joining of Somalia, Finland, as well as South Sudan and Tuvalu in 2011, we are approaching the universalisation of the Convention. The ICRC, IFRC and its National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as auxiliaries to national authorities support governments in the promotion of universalisation and the work in other related areas of the Convention. Today, to illustrate the work National Societies do on the ground, speaking in my capacity as the President of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society I would like to share a few thoughts concerning support to the victims and their socio-economic integration in Iraq.

One of the results of many years of war in Iraq is that my country became plagued with landmines, ERW and unexploded ordinances (UXO). According to the Iraqi Environment Ministry, the country is riddled with an estimated number of 25 million landmines, ERW and

UXO, including cluster bombs. Contaminated sites cover an estimated 1,730 square kilometers and affect around 1.6 million people in over 1,600 communities.

The worst affected area exists along the Iran-Iraq border rendering more than 8,500 victims in the past five years. In that region 24% of the victims of UXOs are children and almost 61% of the victims are young men living in rural agricultural communities near water resources and oil fields. As a result, the development of the current and future generations is marred with the existence of landmines and UXO.

Mr President,

As we know, the Convention entered into force for Iraq in 2008, one year after the accession. Since then, progress has been made in the Convention's implementation, but the needs on the ground remain tremendous. The Iraqi Red Crescent Society is auxiliary to its government in the implementation of its first national plan (2012) on victim assistance and disability in six areas of victim assistance. For example, in the area of emergency and continuing medical care the Iraqi Red Crescent Society reached out to 165 beneficiaries, physical rehabilitation to 102 beneficiaries, psychological reintegration to 75 beneficiaries, and socio-economic reintegration to 50 beneficiaries. Support is also provided for data collection and the Iraqi Red Crescent Society is increasingly engaged in the consultation of relevant legislation and policies.

Long-term support is also being provided to the family of the victims. Prevention activities are underway to reduce the number of future victims. For example, public education programs are provided to raise awareness and reduce risks. Mine risk education is brought to schools, local communities and public servants in the weapon-contaminated areas and neighbouring zones. For 2011 alone, the programs reached out to 32,534 beneficiaries of different age and gender.

Mr President,

The most imperative period for rebuilding a sustainable society after an armed conflict is the post-conflict period. National ownership and local capacity for the implementation of the Convention needs to be further enhanced with more support from the international community to countries in need. In addition to victim assistance and their socio-economic integration, countries in fragile situations will need sustained and co-ordinated engagement to build up resilience. Interventions that aim at increasing resilience of local communities to existing and future threats will ultimately also contribute to personal dignity, and to support communities and, most importantly, regional security.

In closing, the IFRC reaffirms its commitment in line with Action #62 of the Cartagena Action Plan which calls on Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to continue supporting Governments in fulfilling their commitments through local actions. We also call upon States to go beyond victim assistance and include cross-disciplinary capacity building to build up local resilience to support and sustain their development.

Thank you.