



ICRC

Eighth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions Geneva, 3-5 September 2018

International Committee of the Red Cross Statement on Victim Assistance

Victim assistance is a central component of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and its goal of reducing the unacceptable suffering that these weapons cause. The principal aim of victim assistance is to enable survivors to enjoy full and effective participation and inclusion in society. Victim assistance seeks to remove, or reduce, the barriers that may limit the individual, or the families of those killed or injured, from achieving and maintaining the highest possible level of independence and quality of life.

Achieving this requires a holistic and integrated approach to victim assistance. Fitting people with disability with an assistive device (such as prostheses, orthoses or a wheelchair) is an important step towards their social integration. In 2017, with thanks to the generous contributions of donor states, ICRC supported physical rehabilitation centres fitted more than 6,300 mine and ERW victims with prostheses, 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. Training and recognition of professional service providers are of paramount importance in order to assure long-term service provision in this field.

Alongside physical rehabilitation, the affected person must be empowered, and the society in which they live must be more inclusive. Hence victim assistance should also encompass measures to ensure the participation of victims in the making of policies that affect them; to deliver assistance that is age- and gender-sensitive; and to promote social and economic inclusion.

Today, all States Parties with cluster munition victims have some form of assistance. Most have established a national action plan and nominated a national focal point. These are welcome achievements. The ICRC encourages those States Parties that do not yet have a national action plan in place to take the final remaining steps without delay, in accordance with the 2018 benchmark agreed in the Dubrovnik Action Plan.

Much more needs to be done before we can claim that the Convention's goals are achieved. The implementation of the victim assistance obligations entail responsibilities for all States Parties which persist for so long as there remain cluster munition victims. In other words, victim assistance is a long-term commitment that requires continued resources and political will.

The ICRC is deeply concerned that civilians continue to be injured and killed by cluster munitions. Hence putting an end to the use of cluster munitions and clearing all territories of cluster munition remnants without delay are critical to avoiding any new victims.

Thank you.