

## Two-year mark of 7 October (ILOT): ICRC communications update for Movement partners

1 October 2025



*This document is intended to support communication efforts of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement components. It is for internal use by all Movement components only, and not to be shared externally.*

### Communication approach and objectives (internal)

- Focus on **humanitarian needs** and call for respect for basic principles of humanity, with reference to ICRC action secondary. **Lend voice to affected communities** that are caught in the middle and have continued to pay the heaviest price, centering the narrative around lived experiences.
- **Media outreach:** Select interviews pending our capacity and the evolving situation, keeping in mind there are a lot of political narratives and risk of instrumentalization.
- Keeping in mind a **turbulent information environment**, consider all the means at our disposal to address genuine concerns: social care, updated FAQs, and relevant press lines, making sure the same are also made accessible to Movement partners.
- Stay attentive to developments in real time, **prioritizing operational response and bilateral dialogue** – public COM will serve to reinforce and create space for these priorities.

### Key messages (public)

#### Gaza

- **Humanity is failing in Gaza.** For two years, civilians have endured death, injury, multiple displacements, and the denial of dignity on a devastating scale. The cumulative impact of 24 months of intense hostilities has rendered the humanitarian situation unbearable. With more than 80 percent of Gaza already impacted by evacuation orders, it is unimaginable that civilians are effectively compelled to move to an even smaller area while struggling to access food, water, medicine and safe shelter. The abhorrent suffering of civilians in Gaza and the degradation of human dignity must stop. Too many have lost hope that they will see a cessation of hostilities.
- More than **1,400 Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) staff and volunteers, alongside 350 staff of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)**, continue to provide medical care to the wounded, and deliver food, water and other lifesaving supplies.
  - The PRCS has been providing ambulance and other core health-care services in extremely dangerous circumstances in Gaza, caring for the many people wounded in the conflict. With the little medical resources that currently exist in Gaza, the PRCS is focused on providing life-saving support to the civilians who have been impacted by this escalation.
  - The ICRC reiterates that under international humanitarian law (IHL), the wounded and sick must receive the medical care and attention they require as

soon as possible. Medical facilities must be respected and protected to safeguard a lifeline for the wounded and sick. All feasible steps must be taken to support their work, ensure their safety, and guarantee that they are not deprived of vital resources.

- Today, in **Gaza City**, **medical personnel are working under extreme conditions** with limited supplies and equipment as they struggle to absorb a daunting surge in weapon-wounded.
- Even as conditions continue to deteriorate, **many civilians have no choice but to stay in Gaza City** because they can't afford the journey south or are unable to transport injured, sick or elderly relatives. Families are living in the rubble of destroyed homes or in the streets, desperate for safety and the essentials to live in dignity.
- **IHL protects all civilians**, whether they leave or stay. Constant care must be taken to spare them in the conduct of military operations. Civilians in Gaza City must have access to the essentials to live in dignity, including food, medical and hygiene supplies, clean water, and safe shelter. To this end, a rapid and unhindered flow of humanitarian assistance must be allowed and facilitated.
- Two years into the latest escalation of the conflict, the **humanitarian situation** is worse than ever before.
  - With ongoing hostilities and restrictions on the entry of humanitarian relief supplies and equipment, the needs of the civilian population remain immense. Intensified military operations have reduced the space for medical, humanitarian relief, and civil defence personnel to operate.
  - The PRCS and Civil Defence teams, along with the ICRC, are doing everything they can to reach people in need, wherever they are, with whatever means we have at our disposal.
- ICRC teams are racing to supply the last functioning hospitals in Gaza City, including Al-Shifa Medical Complex, the PRCS-run Al-Quds Hospital, and Al-Ahli Arab Hospital, which are absorbing a surge in weapon-wounded cases as medical supplies dwindle.
- The intensification of military operations in Gaza City has forced **the ICRC to temporarily suspend operations at its Gaza City office** and relocate staff to ICRC offices in southern Gaza to ensure staff safety and operational continuity.
- This comes as tens of thousands who are still in Gaza City face harrowing humanitarian conditions and are in desperate need of more assistance as the situation deteriorates. Gaza needs far more humanitarian assistance to enter, and our teams need the security and safety to deliver it to people wherever they are.
- Over **30 staff and volunteers of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement have been killed in Gaza since October 2023**. These include six ICRC staff members. The killing of eight PRCS medics in March sparked global outrage, yet humanitarian relief personnel continue to be killed. **It is an outrage that so many staff and volunteers of the PRCS and other humanitarian organizations have been killed and injured in the last 24 months of hostilities**. IHL is clear: humanitarian relief personnel must be respected and protected. They must never be attacked. The parties must do their utmost to ensure their safety.
- With most of Gaza impacted by evacuation orders or intense hostilities, **people are being pushed into an ever-shrinking area**. In southern Gaza, critical **civilian infrastructure is heavily damaged**, and homes, hospitals and schools have been reduced to rubble. Civilians are struggling to access food, safe water and medical care.

- The roads to southern Gaza are congested and damaged, with very few working vehicles available to transport tens of thousands of people from Gaza City. When people arrive, **many are left to sleep along the roads until they can find shelter**. There isn't enough space or tents to house the people arriving from the north. The way evacuations are carried out matters. Under IHL, all possible measures must be taken to ensure that civilians have satisfactory conditions of shelter, hygiene, health, safety and nutrition, and that families remain together.
- Hospitals in southern Gaza remain under severe strain, including the **Red Cross Field Hospital**, the last fully functioning medical facility in the area. The RCFH continues to operate at more than double its capacity as the injured pour in. Between the end of May when the first food distribution sites were opened in Gaza and early September, the **Red Cross Field Hospital admitted over 6,000 patients suffering from injuries inflicted by weapons**. Most of these patients were admitted in what we describe as "mass casualty incidents" in which the majority stated they were trying to access food when they were wounded. This illustrates the dangers that people are forced to confront in southern Gaza just to secure food for their families.

## Hostages

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- **Families of hostages have lived through an indescribable nightmare for two years.** Children, spouses, siblings and parents have all waited anxiously, every day, for the release of their loved ones, or at a minimum, for news of their fate.
- Since day one, our Movement partner – the ICRC – **has called for the immediate release of all the hostages, and for access to them**. The ICRC has reiterated that hostage-taking is prohibited under IHL, continuously requesting information on them and their current health condition. The ICRC hasn't stopped doing so and will continue until all hostages are released.
- The ICRC has facilitated **multiple release operations**, and is relieved that more than 140 persons were reunited with their loved ones. But this is not enough – the ICRC has repeatedly confirmed its willingness to facilitate the release of all hostages. For this to occur, parties need to reach an agreement. If this does not happen, the ICRC cannot act.
- Hostage-taking is strictly prohibited under IHL. All forms of public exposure that humiliate persons deprived of liberty and endanger their safety must be absolutely avoided. Our Movement partner reiterates its call that until the hostages are released, the **ICRC must be granted access to all the hostages** – access that has been withheld so far – so they can assess their condition, give them the necessary medical support and facilitate contact with their families.
- The ICRC has **advocated for the hostages** in bilateral dialogue with those who have the influence to make a difference. It has published a dozen statements where this has been communicated publicly. The ICRC has regularly met with relatives of the hostages, and its president has herself publicly asked for their release.
- Along with the ICRC, we acknowledge the **agony of the families of hostages**. However, the ICRC cannot force its way to the hostages. The agreement of the concerned parties is an absolute must for the ICRC to carry out its work.

## West Bank

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- For two years, there have been **tangible negative impacts** on the lives of Palestinians in the occupied West Bank. **Hundreds of people have been killed, thousands have been wounded and tens of thousands have been displaced** during search and arrest operations in different areas. Homes and properties have been damaged or destroyed – this has left many families without shelter or anywhere to go.
- Before October 2023, communities in the West Bank already lived with multiple challenges, from restrictions on travel and movement, to settler violence and attacks, to increased search and arrest operations. In the last 24 months, **violence has drastically accelerated**, and many Palestinians are living in perpetual fear and uncertainty.
  - Livelihoods and the ability to work has been affected; parents fear for their children each day as they leave the house to go to school or outside to play; people wait for hours at checkpoints to get to medical appointments or simply to try and see family members who live in other areas.
- Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, are **protected persons under international humanitarian law**. All protected persons of an Occupied Territory have a right to a life free from violence, and conditions must exist for them to enjoy this right.
- Long-standing occupation translates into concrete humanitarian consequences.
  - In the West Bank and East Jerusalem, house demolitions and movement restrictions compromise human dignity and affect people's livelihood and economic prospects.
  - Over the past decades, the ICRC consistently raised its concerns about the defining feature of the Israeli occupation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem: Israeli settlements and their continued expansion.

## Calls to action

- **Saving lives and restoring dignity must be a priority.** Our Movement partner, the ICRC, reiterates its urgent call for a cessation of hostilities to end the abhorrent suffering of the civilian population.
- **Today we need immediate political action.** States have an obligation under the Geneva Conventions to not only respect the rules of war in their own conduct but also ensure they are respected by others. The time to fight for those rules is now. There are still lives to be saved today, but not if the world watches the worst unfold and takes little action to stop it.
- **States must use all leverage to influence the warring parties to reach an agreement** and ensure respect for international humanitarian law. **The safety of civilians, the release of those taken hostage, and safe and unhindered access to humanitarian aid are basic requirements that must be facilitated.** Parties to the conflict bear a legal and moral obligation to facilitate this. Only political will can restore dignity and hope that millions desperately need.

- All **civilians are protected by IHL**, whether they leave Gaza City or stay behind, and must be allowed to return home.
- **The rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian assistance must be allowed and facilitated across the Gaza Strip.** Under the law of occupation, **Israel is bound to use all available means to ensure that the basic needs of Palestinians are met.** This includes access to water, food, hygiene, medical care, and shelter.
- The ICRC reiterates that under IHL, **medical facilities, medical workers and first responders must be respected and protected.** All feasible steps must be taken to support their work and ensure their safety. The ICRC urgently calls for the respect and protection of those who play essential roles in safeguarding life and dignity amidst armed conflict.

### For more information

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