

migration



Stephen Ryan / IFRC

Red Cross and Red Crescent along the migratory route



The Hungarian Red Cross present on migratory routes with food, warm clothes and smiles. At the beginning of September, Red Cross staff and volunteers were mobilized to provide immediate assistance to those in need along the main highway from Budapest to Austria, after thousands of migrants took to the road with the aim of walking to Austria (Photo: Stephen Ryan / IFRC).

munity level, we contribute to alleviating pressures that induce people to migrate against their will and desire.

Introduction

International migration looks set to continue to increase in the short- and medium-term. It is a truly global phenomenon. In the new wave of global migration, the great majority of migrants are showing extraordinary resilience and courage as they make dangerous and difficult journeys to reach safety and adapt to new environments. In recent decades, faced with limited opportunities for safe and regular migration, vulnerable people have come to increasingly rely on the services of smugglers, embarking on dangerous sea and land voyages in search of safety and dignity. Equally, many host communities have shown great tolerance and continue to be accommodating in the face of considerable change.

In recent years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of migrant casualties moving from Africa and the Middle East as they attempt to reach and cross the Mediterranean. In 2014, more than 3,400 people are believed to have died attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea.

Purpose

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), together with its partners, seeks to engage in dialogue with key stakeholders, on how to effectively address the needs of vulnerable migrants and to deploy all efforts in their protection along the migratory routes. By supporting disaster preparedness and building resilience at the com-



Kigoma, Tanzania. Senginuyava Fitness sits on the ground in the middle of the stadium clutching her youngest child, a six-month old girl who looks like a little princess in her colourful dress. She and her family have finally reached the second to last stop on their long journey to safety. (Photo: Maija Tammi/Finnish Red Cross)

During the first ten months of 2015, a similar figure are believed to have died or are missing having attempted to cross the Mediterranean Sea trying to reach Europe from North Africa and Turkey.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is uniquely placed to respond to this through its network of 189 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and 17 million community-based volunteers. The IFRC is present in all countries and with its extensive external partner network, can play a key role at all points along major migration routes, at all stages of the process, from country of origin, to transit, upon arrival and at the stage of reintegration.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement offers a coordinated approach that is multi-country and trans-regional, focusing on assistance, protection and awareness raising and building on the presence of National Societies along the migratory routes. The IFRC's *Response plan to meet the humanitarian needs of vulnerable migrants in the Mediterranean and neighbouring regions* is an example of this approach.

Responding meaningfully requires a truly holistic way of dealing with this issue, one that offers a future for people in their home countries and one that prioritizes the assistance and protection needs of vulnerable migrants at all stages of their journeys and regardless of their legal status. This must include efforts to support integration and reintegration, alongside committed and sustained efforts to tackle the factors that force people to leave their homes in search of livelihoods, safety and dignity.

Countries of origin: strengthening resilience and highlighting risks

The decision to leave home and seek safety and dignity elsewhere is often the result of a complicated interaction between a number of factors. Instability, food insecurity, health shocks and conflict, which thrive against a backdrop of persistent poverty, environmental degradation, and unplanned urbanization among other factors, lead to increased loss of life and livelihoods and force many people to leave their homes.

The IFRC addresses many of these factors by supporting communities to become stronger and more resilient. National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, in collaboration with key partners, strengthen resilience by supporting communities to identify and address their risks and vulnerabilities as well as identifying durable solutions that can reduce the impact of recurrent and preventable threats and contribute to alleviating migratory pressures. This may involve livelihoods development programmes, vocational training, and basic services including food security, health and social and environmental protection.

The IFRC and its National Societies address vulnerabilities in promoting the protection of migrants along migratory routes, including providing information

on the risks associated with people smuggling and human trafficking. The IFRC does not advocate for or against migration.

In transit: humanitarian assistance and protection

Once people decide or are forced to leave their homes, their vulnerability rarely disappears and in most situations increases. While in transit, vulnerable migrants face exploitation and abuse, challenges compounded by inadequate support and access to basic services. The IFRC and its National Societies fill these gaps by providing basic humanitarian assistance, including shelter and emergency accommodation, relief items and food, and social and health services.

Through the provision of humanitarian services and community presence, the Red Cross and Red Crescent has access to vulnerable migrants and is thus uniquely placed to offer protection by facilitating access to legal advice, monitoring treatment and conditions in detention facilities and supporting people to restore links with their families. Where relevant, the IFRC, through its National Societies, also works to support integration into local communities.

Arrival: continued assistance and protection, promotion of respect and tolerance

The provision of assistance and protection services continue throughout the journeys of vulnerable migrants, including when they reach their country of destination. More emphasis is placed at this point on supporting people to integrate into local communities, including through practical interventions such as language courses, ensuring that people have access to housing and labour markets and vocational training and educational support. Restoring Family Links programmes help



people keep and remain in contact with families back home.

Leveraging its influence with the media and with authorities, the IFRC advocates publicly for respect of diversity, and against intolerance, prejudice and discrimination.

Back in country of origin

Returning home must represent a free and informed choice of the individual, be voluntary, and occur in an environment that supports safety and dignity. Returns should only be carried out in accordance with international and domestic law, including the principle of non-refoulement.

In addition to continuing the services that accompany vulnerable migrants at all points of their journeys, the IFRC and its National Societies promote the inclusion of people back into their societies. Upon their return, people have access again to longer-term, sustainable support that seeks to redress the vulnerabilities and risks that made life so difficult in the first place.

Josuf Arafia, 10, and his father are from Quneitra, Syria. They are now heading to Germany, seeking a safer future. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement recognizes the importance of family through its tracing services, ensuring, where possible, that children remain together with their parents and are able to connect with family members back home (Photo: Olav A. Saltbones/ Norwegian Red Cross).

Protect Humanity – Stop Indifference!

This global campaign, launched in Tunis in September 2015, calls on the public, decision-makers, social commentators and leaders at all levels to continue to do everything they can to support vulnerable people on the move.



African migrants saved from the sea play football with Tunisian Red Crescent volunteers in front of a newly refurbished dormitory, a former chicken farm.

(Photo: Tatu Blomquist / Finnish Red Cross)

The light of a tent provides shelter and solace at the end of a long day of walking – a place to rest a while and nourish the body and soul. In a camp of tents in Kanjiža, northern Serbia, vulnerable migrants arriving from the south of the country receive assistance while waiting for buses or other means of transport to take them a few kilometres closer to the border.

(Photo: Olav A. Saltbones / Norwegian Red Cross)



The IFRC and its global network are uniquely placed to respond to the humanitarian needs of vulnerable migrants in countries of origin, transit and destination. Through its permanent, local presence, the Red Cross and Red Crescent is able to accompany vulnerable communities, supporting them to become stronger and more resilient.

Working in partnership

Harmonization and coordination of activities within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and among humanitarian partners on migration and resilience-building is being pursued.

Concerted efforts are also made to create and enhance partnerships with key stakeholders, including IOM, OHCHR, UNHCR, WFP, Wetlands International and others in order to share knowledge and experience in responding to the needs of migrants and addressing their vulnerabilities.



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