



ICRC | Kuwait pledging conference

28 March 2015

On 31 March, Peter Maurer, president of the ICRC, will represent the Movement at the upcoming pledging conference in Kuwait. His objective is to garner support and funds for the Movement's humanitarian operations for those affected by the Syrian conflict in Syria as well as in the neighbouring countries.

Mr Maurer will speak at the conference. Here are the main key messages around which his speech as well as the Movement communication for this event will be based:

- As the Syria crisis enters its fifth year the human costs across the region are so enormous they stretch beyond description. Constant, deadly conflict is destroying lives, families and communities. A political solution is needed but appears very far from sight.
- The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has mobilized enormous resources across the region to respond to the vast humanitarian needs inside Syria and the largest refugee crisis the Middle East has seen in generations. In the wake of unprecedented levels of humanitarian needs in Syria and its neighbouring countries and no political solution in sight, the RCRC Movement is determined and ready to double its current level of response in order to address emergencies in Syria and support host communities/refugees recover in the neighbouring countries.
- Over the last four years the pillars of normal life have crumbled across Syria. Medical services have collapsed, the economy has dwindled and water systems have dried up, with grave consequences for health. Infrastructural damage, brain drain, and shortages of equipment and supplies have left schools and other social facilities and essential services operating at a reduced capacity or closed altogether while the conflict has impeded access to those still operating. The Movement has stepped in to provide the basics of human existence, where possible. Even now electricity networks are collapsing, and the generators we have provided are keeping the lights on above the operating tables in Aleppo hospitals.
- The patient and principled approach of the Movement in Syria paid dividends last year, when we dramatically increased the number of times we crossed front-lines to deliver assistance. We are reaching parts of Syria previously blocked to us. But that success pales in comparison to the rising needs of a population exhausted by conflict.
- Terrible breaches of the laws meant to protect civilians in conflict occur on an almost daily basis. This has to change. Attacks on medical workers, on humanitarian workers and on non-combatants must stop. We call on states with influence to urge respect for the rules that protect the vulnerable, to support efforts to deliver assistance safely and not to allow humanitarian activity to be politicised.
- The burden of refugees in the region is tremendous, with significant impact on already vulnerable host communities. The generosity of these host communities has not been matched by support to their socio-economic resilience, and we are witnessing increasing poverty and community tensions. Schools and social facilities are overloaded, and many refugees, often scattered and supported by a fragile web of solidarity, do not even have access to these facilities. The failure to provide a safe and dignified environment to those who left their home and the violence in Syria, is also in itself a factor of risk for the region and must be tackled as a humanitarian priority.
- National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are making a remarkable contribution to relief efforts in Syria and the region. They play a unique role. With the support of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and other international partners, the Syrian Arab Red

Crescent is providing assistance to 3,5 million people in average every month. Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers risk their lives for others every day, showing enormous generosity of spirit and solidarity, including 10,000 volunteers in Syria alone. 40 Syrian Arab Red Crescent and 7 Palestinian Red Crescent aid workers have lost their lives while on duty - and many more were injured, kidnapped or detained. With large areas of the country either under siege or under armed opposition control, gaining safe access to communities who are in desperate need will remain an extraordinary challenge for the foreseeable future.

- The components of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, namely the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the ICRC, are committed to working for the people of Syria and the region. We are thinking long-term and predict at least another five years of large scale support. Allow us to plan for the long-term by being a long-term partner of the Movement and its humanitarian response.