

The ICRC is the successor of the Committee which, in 1863, undertook the task of putting Dunant's ideas into practice. Its headquarters are at Geneva.

The work of the ICRC is international, while, because of the neutrality which is essential for that work, it is composed exclusively of Swiss citizens (a maximum of twenty-five).

The ICRC is an institution which is private, independent and strictly neutral in all political, ideological and religious matters. Its humanitarian activity is part of a long-standing tradition of assistance to the victims of war. Today it is recognized in international law in virtue of the Geneva Conventions.

Within the International Red Cross, the ICRC has its own field of responsibility. Its ideals and activities keep it in close contact with the other members of this association—the national Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies and their federative body, the League of Red Cross Societies.

The ICRC is required by its Statutes to recognize new national Red Cross Societies and to maintain the Red Cross principles (neutrality, impartiality, universality, etc.). Respect of these principles ensures the moral unity, the protection and the efficacy of its activities.



*What it is*