



**INTERNATIONAL  
COMMITTEE OF  
THE RED CROSS**

## Israel and the occupied territories: President of the ICRC arrives in Gaza, calls for the protection of civilians



Geneva (ICRC) – Mirjana Spoljaric, the president of the ICRC, is in Gaza today to advance efforts that alleviate the devastating humanitarian toll the ongoing conflict is taking on civilians.

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President Spoljaric will call for the protection of civilians in Gaza and respect for the laws of war. She will also reiterate the ICRC's call for the hostages to be immediately released.

Her travel to the region is happening in several stages, with a visit to Israel expected over the coming weeks.

In Gaza, President Spoljaric will spend time with the ICRC team on the ground and visit the European Hospital, where ICRC medical teams have been conducting life-saving surgery alongside local health-care workers. The ICRC has also been providing medical and other supplies to health-care facilities as well as livelihood support to displaced people.

The Palestine Red Crescent Society has been providing ambulance and other core health-care services in extremely dangerous circumstances in Gaza since the fighting

escalated. Many humanitarian and health-care workers, including members of the Palestine Red Crescent Society, have been tragically killed in the conduct of their duties over the last weeks.

President Spoljaric said:

*"The level of human suffering is intolerable. It is unacceptable that civilians have no safe place to go in Gaza, and with a military siege in place there is also no adequate humanitarian response currently possible.*

*The purpose of my visit is to advance efforts that alleviate the desperate humanitarian situation. I will convey my deep concern for the plight of civilians and underline the ICRC's utmost commitment to doing everything we can to ease their suffering. We have urgently appealed for civilian life to be protected and respected on all sides, in line with international humanitarian law, and I reiterate that appeal today.*

*An unimpeded and regular flow of aid must be allowed to enter Gaza. All those deprived of liberty must be treated humanely. The hostages must be released, and the ICRC must be allowed to safely visit them.*

*The last week provided a small degree of humanitarian respite, a positive glimpse of humanity that raised hopes around the world that a path to reduced suffering could now be found. As a neutral actor, the ICRC stands ready to support further humanitarian agreements that reduce suffering and heartbreak."*

### **About the ICRC**

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is a neutral, impartial and independent organization with an exclusively humanitarian mandate that stems from the Geneva Conventions of 1949. It helps people around the world affected by armed conflict and other violence, doing everything it can to protect their lives and dignity and to relieve their suffering, often alongside its Red Cross and Red Crescent partners.

**For more information, please contact:**

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