ICRC deployment in response to a disease outbreak occurring in an active armed conflict context. Case Study of the ongoing Ebola outbreak in DRC

International Committee of the Red Cross

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The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an **impartial, neutral and independent** organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance.
A competency based approach

ICRC response to Weapon Contamination guideline

Agreed competency standards

Training partners
CBRN «Survive to Operate» course (Irish Defence Forces)
CBRN reconnaissance course (Spietz Laboratory)
Pre-deployment training (Epeisses – GVA)

Standardised equipment

Guidelines and SOPs
Partnerships and trainings: Defence Forces of Ireland
Partnerships and trainings: Spiez Laboratory
ICRC Operational Response
Rapid Deployment Mechanism

Crisis

- ICRC business continuity is at risk (related to ourselves)
- ICRC faces an unprecedented situation (related to context)
- ICRC faces unprecedented needs (related to our beneficiaries)
- ...or any combination of these three situations...

Need of urgent additional resources

Activate the Rapid Deployment Mechanism
ICRC Operational Response
Rapid Deployment Mechanism

Self-sustainable

RDM

ICRC response

Movement response

ICRC RD Capacities

NS RD Capacities

Deployable within 48h for 4-6 weeks

Deployable for 3 months
RDM Workflow

Preparedness
Activation
Orientation
Mobilization
Operation
Termination
Learning
Mainstreaming
ICRC Operational Response

- Coordination with other responders to avoid duplication
- Communication with responders optimizes the response
- Surgical activities are crucial in an armed conflict context
- An outbreak like Ebola in such context could impeach all humanitarian operations
- A risk management approach allows to identify optimal solutions to keep providing aid while ensuring safety of our staff
- A multidisciplinary competency based response is designed
Ebola virus in a conflict Zone, North Kivu.

A challenge to help the weapon wounded while keeping the medical teams safe

Process and definitions designed with the medical team
Setting up a controlled ER/OT with specific SOP

ICRC pictures
PPE training and buddy check
Adapting to do normal work in PPE

• The SOPs and PPE allows to save a life while waiting for EBV confirmation
Lessons learned from challenges in previous deployments:

- Export/End user licensing
- Use of glasses or scarfs
- Need for better vision and eye contact with victims
- Need to be able to perform precise actions
- Need for better communication
Challenges whilst responding to an outbreak of disease

• A reaction or a non-reaction may be interpreted as upholding or rejecting the allegations
• Getting access (security, political)
• The difficulty to know whether the release of the agent was intentional, and the time and format of its release
• The political and security implications for any organisation or agency that, comes into possession of information pertaining to whether the outbreak resulted from a deliberate release.
• This might put the ICRC in a sensitive situation while ensuring its neutrality and impartiality in relation to the possession of such information.
• Consequences on contributing to coordination mechanisms. ICRC should be able to ensure neutrality confidentiality.
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Thank You