



International Rescue Committee Emergency Preparedness & Response



Natural disasters or the outbreak of conflict can turn lives upside down – driving millions from their homes, tearing apart families, and ravaging communities. When a crisis hits, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) is often one of the first organisations on the ground, providing rapid and effective relief that saves lives, reduces suffering, restores dignity, and jump-starts recovery.

In support of the IRC's core mission—to respond to the world's worst humanitarian crises and help people to survive and rebuild their lives—the IRC's Emergency Preparedness & Response Unit (EPRU) is committed to responding to humanitarian emergencies anywhere in the world within 72 hours.

Emergency response is one of the IRC's globally-recognised strengths and this capacity has put us on the frontline in many of the worst crises in recent times—from violence-ridden Darfur to flood-devastated Pakistan.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROFESSIONALS

Based around the globe, the IRC's emergency team is made up of professionals with a range of expertise, including health, logistics, economic recovery, water and sanitation, children's protection, and sexual violence. They are emergency professionals with global experience responding to some of the world's worst crises, delivering aid that saves lives while paving the way for long-term recovery.

This emergency aid may be immediately evident, such as the construction of a health centre or water pump, or it may be less visible but just as essential, such as seed distribution for farmers whose crops have been destroyed or ongoing counselling for survivors of sexual violence.

ALWAYS PREPARED FOR A RAPID RESPONSE

The most effective way to reduce the impact of a crisis is to be ready before it strikes. The IRC is committed to emergency preparedness — giving field teams, local partners, and communities the training and resources to provide immediate relief. The Emergency Preparedness & Response Unit (EPRU) has a number of initiatives that help ensure rapid, effective, and holistic emergency responses.



SYSTEMS APPROACH

A systems approach helps the EPRU launch consistent, rapid, and holistic responses. The EPRU has defined systems that guide the process from preparedness to response: identifying at-risk countries, classifying the severity of an emergency, deciding to launch an emergency response, assessing the needs on the ground once the team arrives, and implementing holistic responses.



RESOURCES ON STANDBY

Pre-positioned resources allow the emergency team to access funds and supplies as soon as an emergency develops. The EPRU has a globally-sourced Emergency Fund made up of government, foundation, and corporate funding. This is complemented by a stockpile of supplies in Rotterdam, one of the largest and most advanced ports in the world.



EMERGENCY PROJECTS

The EPRU has a set of standardised emergency projects in each of its technical areas of expertise, from health to child protection. These projects have defined goals and activities, allowing the IRC to quickly put them into action while also adjusting them to each emergency context.



A GLOBAL TEAM

Recognising that a crisis can strike anytime, anywhere, the IRC has an emergency team on standby around the world and able to deploy within 72 hours. Globally, the emergency team has more than 50 staff members trained and ready to respond to a crisis at a moment's notice.



OUR WORK AROUND THE WORLD

For nearly 80 years, the IRC has responded to emergencies around the world, helping lead people from harm to home. Since it was founded in 1933 at the request of Albert Einstein, the IRC has provided life-saving care and life-changing assistance to refugees forced to flee war or disaster.

The IRC responds both to natural disasters and conflict-induced crises. Conflict destroys families, divides nations, and uproots generations. The IRC's emergency team has the expertise to respond to the many devastating facets of conflict. As the incidence of natural disasters increases, the IRC is increasingly positioning itself to respond whenever the scale of the disaster overwhelms local capacity, whether it's the sudden devastating sweep of a tsunami or the slow and insidious spread of drought.

In the wake of a disaster or in the midst of a crisis, the IRC draws on its expertise to help people find shelter, reconnect with family, access water and medical care, and rebuild their lives.