



ICRC

Speech of Ms. Jelena Stijacic

Head of the ICRC Regional Delegation

**On the occasion of 145th anniversary of the Red Cross
of Serbia**

Belgrade, 6 February 2021

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear colleagues and friends,

Last year, at the same occasion, I was discussing with President Radovanovic "to prepare something specific for the 145th anniversary" - none of us could have imagined having this kind of specificity today. But here we are, facing a great challenge of a pandemic, but still standing strong in spite of the fact that some of our colleagues have unfortunately lost the battle with the virus.

Although the corona virus pandemic is an unprecedented challenge for the whole world, once again Red Cross of Serbia's volunteers and its staff displayed great humanity, sacrifice, knowledge and courage, be it at reaching the elderlies and people in remote households, working in health facilities and in operational theatre or being 24 hours available in call centres providing information, support and comfort.

We as the Movement have experienced an immense humanitarian challenge. The Red Cross once again demonstrated its strength because it responded as a unified whole in which all members are of great and equal importance.

Therefore, the need for partnerships is ever so important and it is what makes the Red Cross so powerful and the partnership so strong.

Principles of the Red Cross are not just slogans, they are tools which often make a difference between life and death. What happened in the past is happening in the present and unfortunately, will continue to happen in the future, so they remain as relevant as ever.

We have the principles no one else has, we should be proud of our Fundamental Principles. They are relevant today as they were 150 years ago.

We see the humanitarian landscape is changing, we are experiencing in real time huge challenges of humanitarian approach and I think we need to be more ambitious of the potential of working together.

Trust and partnership is not always easy, but as proven many times before and correspondingly during this pandemic, we react much faster together.

We are very innovative in the way we adapt our response. As humanitarians we will have to continue to respond in very acute emergencies and the only way to do it is in strong partnership National societies and ICRC are able to answer all these challenges with different competencies and to be prepared for the worst and we have to be prepared for the worst.

I use the opportunity to express ICRC's gratitude to the Red Cross of Serbia for its unfailing partnership in all our joint activities and congratulate all your staff, members and volunteers on what you have achieved in the last 145 years!

Dear friends, congratulations on your anniversary wishing you that the next one is marked in a more traditional way and with all of us onboard.

Thank you!
