THE ICRC’S PHYSICAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMME
REHABILITATION AND INCLUSION SINCE 1979
LEBANON: WORDS THAT HEAL WOUNDS

One day in the early 1990s, Ali stepped on a landmine near his home in Kafra in southern Lebanon. It cost him an arm and a leg. His immediate reaction was anger. He immersed himself in books and articles about the use of weapons and explosive devices, and learned that many of them – including the one that had maimed him – were banned under international humanitarian law (IHL). He channelled his fury into his studies. First, he completed a master’s degree in law. Then he began working towards a Ph.D. in IHL. Ali is now in his 40s. He still lives and studies in southern Lebanon. With the help of ICRC rehabilitation professionals, he has recovered his gait and autonomy. The ICRC-assisted physical rehabilitation centre in Saida in southern Lebanon remains a source of support for him.

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At first I felt that nothing linked my past life to my new life. But, with time the prosthesis provided that connection. It grew into something more than a mass of plastic and metal. It became a kind of bridge and an indispensable part of me.

- Ali
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S. Gerard Kelly/ICRC
The International Committee of the Red Cross’ (ICRC) Physical Rehabilitation Programme was established in 1979 to support the victims of armed conflict and other violence.

At first, that support meant providing assistive devices to people with disabilities. But over the years, it has become more comprehensive and more tailored to specific contexts and needs.

Our projects have had a real impact: through our services, more people with disabilities have gained access to physical rehabilitation, and the quality of care and assistive devices has improved dramatically. In addition, we work with local authorities and partners so that they can take over projects and provide ongoing access to sustainable, quality services.

Today our work goes well beyond physical rehabilitation; we also help people with disabilities to become more socially and economically active in their communities through adaptive sport, education and (self-)employment initiatives.
More than 330 projects in over 100 countries and one territory have received support.

Over 300,000 people with disabilities benefit from physical rehabilitation services each year.

As of 2023, 2.1 million prostheses and assistive devices have been distributed.
We also help people with disabilities participate fully in their communities, through:

- microeconomic assistance, such as grants to start a small business for 4000 people yearly
- educational opportunities and vocational training for 2000 people yearly
- sport, mental health and psychosocial support for over 5,500 people yearly
We help people around the world affected by armed conflict and other violence, doing everything we can to protect their lives and dignity and to relieve their suffering, often with our Red Cross and Red Crescent partners.