

Review of International Activities in FY 2023 - No. 1 -

The series reviewing our international activities will be published in four parts for the fiscal year 2023 (from April 2023 to March 2024).

No.1: Dissemination of humanitarian value

No.2: Development cooperation

No.3: International relief

No.4: Human Resources in the Field - deployment, training and managing security



In FY 2023, beginning with the Turkey-Syria earthquake, we have faced a variety of humanitarian crises around the world, including armed conflicts in Sudan, Israel and the Occupied Territories; cyclones in Myanmar and Bangladesh; fires in Hawaii; earthquakes in Morocco and Afghanistan; and floods in Libya.

The Japanese Red Cross Society (JRCS) continues to provide support throughout the year in cooperation with [191 Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies](#) around the world. With your help we save lives, promote health and respect human dignity of people who are exposed to critical situations such as conflicts, disasters and diseases.

In 2022, the number of people who have been forcibly displaced by conflict or persecution, including the Russia-Ukraine international armed conflict, has exceeded **100 million** for the first time in history. In the fiscal year 2023, under the theme of "**Red Cross is moving on! To save the lives of the 100 million people in crises**", the JRCS has organized the "[NHK Overseas Helping Hand Campaign \(TASUKEAI\)](#)", raising awareness of the deteriorating situation refugees and displaced people faced.



(Photo) To raise awareness of the current situation of people forcibly displaced from their hometowns due to conflicts, the JRCS published

the "#wish-list" on our website and in Tokyo Metro Shinjuku Station.

* The Domestic Charity Campaign with Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK)

Dissemination of International Humanitarian Law

With conflicts intensifying such as in Ukraine, Israel and the Occupied Territories, more public attention has been drawn to civilian casualties and concern over the potential use of nuclear weapons. At JRCS chapters and facilities throughout the country, the JRCS has strengthened its communication efforts on humanitarian work of Red Cross and Red Crescent for the recent humanitarian crises, and disseminated international humanitarian law (IHL).

On February 15-16, 2024, the JRCS held an annual online IHL dissemination seminar, targeting about 50 JRCS staff across Japan. In addition to the Japanese Red Cross College of Nursing/Japanese Red Cross Institute for Humanitarian Studies and [the International Committee of the Red Cross \(ICRC\)](#) delegation in Japan, several guest speakers joined from the Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs Division of Foreign Policy Bureau in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Judge Advocate General of the Ground Staff Office of the Ministry of Defense. The government

official from the Arms Control and Disarmament Division of the Ministry of Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Science Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was invited to speak on the Japanese government's efforts to disarmament on nuclear weapons. At the end of the two-day seminar, participants were divided into groups and discussed how to disseminate the IHL with knowledge and skills learned at the seminar. The participants strengthened their commitment to disseminate the IHL at their respective chapters and facilities, contributing to humanitarian assistance particularly in conflict situations.

Toward the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

Ahead of the G7 Summit in Hiroshima from May 19 to 21, 2023, the President of the JRCS, Atsushi Seike and the President of the ICRC, Mirjana Spoljaric, issued a [joint statement](#) reminding the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons and calling for action to ensure they will be never used again. President Spoljaric visited Japan in June and reaffirmed her commitment to strengthening cooperation with both the Japanese government and the JRCS.



On November 7, 2023, the JRCS and the American Red Cross, in cooperation with the ICRC Delegation in Japan, held an online event named "Nuclear Weapons: A Japanese & American Youth Perspective." Two representatives of the JRCS, three representatives of the American Red Cross, and an ICRC representative held discussions on nuclear weapons. The report and recording are available on our website (click [here](#)).

A view of the event "Nuclear Weapons: A Japanese & American Youth Perspective"

From November 27 to December 1, the Second Meeting of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York, hosted by the Government of Mexico. Three delegates from JRCS attended in the meeting as observers. During the meeting, the delegate whose relative is *Hibakusha* (atomic bomb survivor) read the statement of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. As the only National Society who experienced two atomic bombings during war time, the JRCS continuously advocates for the elimination of nuclear weapons in coordination with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. (Click [here](#) for the report of the staff who participated in the Meeting).

Humanitarian Diplomacy through International Red Cross Red Crescent meetings

To further strengthen the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, [the 191 Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies](#) hold regular meetings in each region and globally to share humanitarian issues and make important decisions that will determine future actions.

July: East Asia Regional Red Cross Executive Meeting.

Amid worsening disasters, participants discussed strengthening cooperation in and mutual issues in East Asia.



Asia-Pacific Regional Conference (Hanoi, Vietnam) (c) Vietnam Red Cross Society

November: Asia-Pacific Regional Conference.

As a region where the number of disasters and deaths are higher than in other parts of the world, discussions were held from various perspectives, such as: how to prepare for disasters and crises, and the strengthening of cooperative relationships among Red Cross Red Crescent Societies.

December: Ms. Kate Forbes was elected as the new president of [the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies \(IFRC\)](#) . The IFRC is an international organization that unites 191 Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and selects its leadership through periodic elections. This time, Ms. Forbes from the American Red Cross was elected. (Click [here](#) for news published on the IFRC website)

The JRCS was elected as the member of the IFRC Governing Board from Asia Pacific region in 2022, and is actively contributing to the IFRC governance. The JRCS is also expected to [play an active role in the General Assembly](#) which is held every two years to determine the overall policy of the entire IFRC network. Through these opportunities, National Societies in the Asia Pacific region makes suggestions to strategies and policies of the IFRC, based on the lessons learned from their domestic and international activities. Also, National Societies work on reflecting IFRC policies and decisions to their domestic and regional operations.

In 2024, the [International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent](#), which is held every four years, will be convened in Geneva. The Conference is the highest policy-making body of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and is attended by representatives of the ICRC, the IFRC, National Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies and governments of the States Parties to the Geneva Conventions. Discussions at the Regional Conference in FY 2023 will be reflected in the plenary session and some important issues such as promoting an universal culture of compliance with international humanitarian law will be addressed, and consensus among the parties will be adopted as a resolution.

Promoting Diversity through Woman's Empowerment (GLOW Red)

Red Cross is actively working to foster a culture of respect for diversity so that necessary assistance can be delivered to people in times of humanitarian crises.

In June, one JRCS staff participated in the annual meeting of [GLOW Red](#) (Global Network for Women leaders in the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement) held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. GLOW Red is a Red Cross network that actively advocates for the empowerment of women, enhanced gender equality in governing positions and the importance of diversity. The meeting developed a new strategy and an action plan for the next five years. (Details of GLOW Red and the meeting report can be found [here](#))



An associated event for GLOW Red was held during the Asia-Pacific Regional Conference in November, which was moderated by one of the JRCS staff. Participants exchanged their views and opinions on the important role of female leaders in disaster response. A GLOW Red booth was set up in the conference hall and participants' messages on woman's empowerment were displayed.