

Scenes from the Red Cross Field Hospital

In August 2025, emergency nurse and Australian Red Cross Delegate Jean-Philippe (JP) Miller spent five weeks working with local teams at the Red Cross Field Hospital in Rafah, Gaza. It marked his fourth time deploying into Gaza since early 2024. Here, he shares snapshots of his experience, which demonstrate the life-saving impact of humanitarian care during conflict – impact that’s made possible by your generous support.

Arriving to increased security

“There’s been a lot of passive and active security measures taken since I was last here at the end of April, like these reinforced concrete walls that have been put up around the tents to try and make it safer for us, so when bullets are flying about, the staff and patients have somewhere they can reside in safety until the hostilities settle.”



Responding to mass casualty incidents

“I’m in the ED area and wanted to show the mass casualty incident boxes that they have here. These boxes are essentially colour coded. You’ve got red for critical patients. Yellow for acute patients. Green for the walking wounded. Black for patients that have arrived deceased. And then you’ve got blue, for those patients that have suffered un-survivable injuries. Then it’s a matter of trying to make them comfortable and allowing them to die with some dignity.”



Caring for malnourished patients

“The food situation here remains quite dire... This is really worrying for us because we know that malnourishment delays recovery, and we know that it increases the risk of complications for these patients. Simply put, our patients that are arriving malnourished, they’re staying in hospital longer and they’re having poorer outcomes.”



A carpenter with many skills

“Mohammed is the resident carpenter here at the Red Cross Field Hospital. He’s making things like traction frames for our patients, but what he’s become really well known for is making these wooden crutches. At peak times, he’s been making about 16 pairs of these crutches per week. But it’s not just crutches that Mohammed is making. He puts a lot of time and effort into making items that can be shared with children at the hospital, as a form of psychosocial support to foster child friendly-spaces, and support them through their time as an inpatient.”

A new baby brings hope

“Not long after I arrived at the Field Hospital, there was a patient named Mohammed Abu Halawa, who arrived with some horrific injuries from a gunshot. His recovery has been complicated by severe infection; he’s had to undergo multiple surgeries, and he’s still yet to be discharged. But every day whilst he’s been an inpatient, his pregnant wife and his young child have been by his side.”

“Now, overnight, something quite miraculous has happened. His pregnant wife gave birth to a baby boy, Abdallah, just 20 metres away in our maternity department. It’s really a moment that despite all the pain and suffering we do see here in Gaza, there are some moments of hope and joy.”



JP is part of our pool of specialist delegates, which includes those that are highly trained in fields such as nursing and surgery, water and sanitation, shelter, protection and humanitarian diplomacy. Your support makes it possible for professionals like JP to travel to conflict and disaster zones across the world, where their skills and knowledge are needed most.

In the year leading up to July 2025...



57 Australian Red Cross delegates, in fields including nursing, surgery, water, shelter and protection, were deployed internationally.



25 countries across the globe have received the expertise and support of our delegates, from Ukraine to Syria, Myanmar to South Sudan.



130,978 consultations have taken place at the Red Cross Field Hospital in Rafah, with over 7,000 surgeries performed.



Clinical psychologist and Australian Red Cross Delegate Rebecca with a young patient in Gaza. Photo: Supplied

The invisible wounds of war

On the ground, emergency nurses like JP provide life-saving care to those injured by conflict. But the impact of war reaches far beyond physical wounds.

Around the world, people are working to rebuild their lives while shouldering the emotional distress of immense loss – finding strength in connection, community and care.

Australian Red Cross clinical psychologist Rebecca has seen how mental health support can transform recovery. In Gaza, she worked with patients adapting to life after serious injuries, helping them regain confidence, resilience, and hope. “They had such a capacity to continue to live, to want to do the best they could with what they had,” she reflects.

Now on deployment in Ukraine, Rebecca facilitates psychosocial support groups for families of people whose loved ones have disappeared in the conflict. Many of these people are caught in an ongoing state of ambiguous loss – holding on to hope while coping with the pain of not knowing.

In some areas, support groups meet in shelters, where psychologists and survivors sit side by side, sharing tools for resilience and moments of connection. Even amid the chaos of war, these moments help people regain stability, hope, and the strength to begin healing and rebuilding.

What is ambiguous loss?

Also known as ‘frozen grief’, ambiguous loss is a term used to describe the debilitating impact of losing a family member and not knowing their fate and whereabouts. Unlike death, ambiguous loss does not allow opportunities for closure and resolution, which freezes the process of grieving and leaves families in a perpetual state of limbo, caught between hope and despair.

Through your support, people around the world are finding the strength not only to heal, but to rebuild.

In the busy wards of a hospital in Juba, South Sudan, specialist nurse and Australian Red Cross Delegate Sophie spent time working alongside children and adults whose lives have been forever changed by landmines.

In addition to the physical care they received, behind the scenes, a team of mental health professionals were helping these patients through peer support groups with other amputees, as well as one-on-one psychological care to help with adjusting to life with prosthetics.

And just as vital as caring for those in crisis is caring for those who stand beside them.



Specialist nurse and Australian Red Cross delegate Sophie (right) with Australian Red Cross Protection delegate Hakim, who has been on deployment in South Sudan since January this year. Photo: Supplied

Your generosity helps to ensure that our delegates – who witness immense hardship and trauma every day – receive the psychological care and support they need to stay strong, so they can continue to bring hope, comfort and humanity to those who have lost so much.

“There was a psychologist who briefed me before I left for deployment, checked in halfway through, and will follow up again now that I’m back,” says Sophie. “It was reassuring to know that if I needed to reach out, someone was there for me.”



Sophie with an amputee patient in Juba. Photo: Supplied

Why mental health support in conflict matters

Research shows that when disaster strikes, mental health needs spike. Yet less than two per cent of global health budgets are allocated to mental health support, leaving gaps in availability and access that are severely exacerbated in times of crisis. For governments, policy makers and humanitarian organisations like Australian Red Cross, there is an urgent opportunity to close these gaps by embedding psychological support within emergency preparedness and response frameworks. In 2024, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) network supported 9.4 million mental health and psychosocial support services globally, and with your help, we can continue to deliver this vital support in the future.

“When mental wounds go untreated, they affect everything: employment, relationships, even long-term health. But with the right support, people can heal. They can cope. They can live.”

– Rebecca, Australian Red Cross Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Delegate



\$4,000

can go towards the cost of comprehensive psychosocial screening and assessment to ensure delegate candidates are resilient and suitable for deployment.



\$15,000

can support specialised training for three delegates to ensure they’re prepared to respond to disasters internationally.