

# **First Aid in situation of urban violence: opening access to health services in Haiti**

Geneva Health Forum 2008



**ICRC**

# The International Committee of the Red Cross

- ▶ Neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian organization
- ▶ International mandate
  - ▶▶ to protect & assist victims of war
  - ▶▶ to promote International Humanitarian Law
- ▶ Part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement



# Port-au-Prince (Haiti): The situation

- ▶ High degree of violence in *Cité du Soleil* and *Martissant*, two popular districts of the capital city
- ▶ Violence generates injured and prevents the population from access to health care
- ▶ No emergency transport system
- ▶ Health care facilities available (MSF + MoH)



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# Actions

- A concrete neutral and impartial humanitarian project
- Connexion with existing MSF community health centre
- Permanent dialogue with all armed groups and the community
- Strict security rules
- First Aid posts and ambulance service within the community and managed by First Aid volunteers

# Results

- ▶ Access to the victims day-to-day and during the riots (food crisis)
- ▶ Evacuations to MSF centre and the MoH city hospital
- ▶ Permanent dialogue with the gangs



# Other contexts

- ▶ Afghanistan, Sudan
- ▶ Brazil
- ▶ Kenya, Bolivia, Guinea
- ▶ armed conflict
- ▶ urban violence
- ▶ street demonstration

**First Aiders: 1<sup>st</sup> responders anytime everywhere**



# Lessons learned

- ▶ To develop the capacity of individuals and not only the means of intervention and the effectiveness of emergency services
- ▶ To find solutions thorough community self-reliance programmes, such as First Aid, in challenging contexts where the access to health is far too difficult, even impossible
- ▶ First Aid by the Red Cross/Red Crescent can appear as a neutral, impartial and humanitarian community service
- ▶ First Aiders help rekindle the humanitarian spirit of individuals and communities, inspiring tolerance and ultimately building healthier and safer living environments



# Conclusion

- First Aiders maintain a humanitarian link promoting and ensuring access to health for the affected population and the victims



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