

# Action Plan on the Non-use, Prohibition and Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

2018–2021

Awareness of the unacceptable risks posed by nuclear weapons instils in us a profound sense of responsibility to prevent the unspeakable human suffering that any use of such weapons would cause. Neither our Movement nor any other humanitarian actor or State could ever adequately address the needs of victims and the long-term humanitarian consequences of such use.

While the risk of nuclear-weapon use is growing, we are also facing an unprecedented opportunity to bring our collective power to bear in preventing their use, advancing their prohibition and, ultimately, bringing about their total elimination.

Through this action plan, the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement) are committed to intensifying our global action based on the commitments made in Resolutions 1 of the 2011 and 2013 Council of Delegates, and to implementing Resolution 8 of the 2017 Council of Delegates.

The action plan is inspired by the Nagasaki Appeal and Action Plan adopted by 34 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (National Societies), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) at a high-level meeting in Nagasaki in April 2017. It is motivated by the knowledge that our efforts have contributed to the unprecedented mobilization of States in recent years to address and prevent the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons.

The **key objectives** of this action plan are to:

- promote adherence by all States to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, based on existing commitments and international obligations, as a crucial step towards their total elimination;<sup>1</sup>
- raise awareness of the incalculable human suffering that can be expected to result from any use of nuclear weapons, and of the lack of any adequate humanitarian assistance capacity to meet the needs of victims in the event of such use;<sup>2</sup>
- raise awareness of the increased risk of nuclear-weapon detonations in the current international environment, and promote concrete measures by all States to reduce the risk and to ensure that nuclear weapons are never used again;<sup>3</sup>
- promote a better understanding, in particular among young people, of the experiences of survivors of past atomic bombings (*hibakusha*) and nuclear testing, and of the humanitarian, environmental and development implications

---

<sup>1</sup> 2011 Council of Delegates, Resolution 1, “Working towards the elimination of nuclear weapons”, operative para. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* operative para. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* operative para. 3.

of any use of nuclear weapons, so that future generations will remain committed to continuing efforts to ensure that nuclear weapons are never used again and are completely eliminated.

To attain these objectives, the present action plan outlines the types of activities that National Societies, the ICRC and the IFRC intend to undertake and to support. The components of the Movement will implement the actions identified, to the extent possible, in accordance with their respective mandates, expertise and capacities, taking into account their specific societal and political contexts.

Also for the purpose of achieving the above objectives, this action plan commits the Movement to a global humanitarian advocacy strategy on nuclear weapons that aims to increase the visibility of, resources for and coordination of the actions undertaken by all components of the Movement over the next four years.

## **1. NATIONAL ACTION**

### **a. In States that negotiated the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons:**

- ensure those States sign the treaty as soon as possible, and promote their rapid ratification of or accession to the treaty through public communications and contacts with parliamentarians and government officials;
- promote the early adoption of national legislation, policies and other measures to ensure effective implementation of the treaty.

### **b. In States not involved in the treaty negotiations:**

- urge those States to adopt planning, policy and military practices that will not undermine the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and that will enable them to accede to the treaty;
- Urge States still associated with nuclear weapons to urgently adopt measures to reduce the risk of nuclear-weapon use by intent, miscalculation or accident, based on their existing international commitments. Such measures include: reducing the role of nuclear weapons in military doctrine; taking nuclear weapons off “hair trigger” alert status; pre-notification of nuclear training exercises and missile launches; and the establishment of “early-warning” centres to ensure real-time communication concerning potentially destabilizing events;
- promote further deep reductions in nuclear-weapon arsenals in accordance with existing commitments.

### **c. All National Societies:**

Each National Society, according to its specific circumstances and capacities, will:

- support and participate in the Movement’s global humanitarian advocacy strategy on nuclear weapons and cooperate with the ICRC, IFRC and other National Societies in this effort;
- name a focal point on nuclear weapons within the National Society (and inform the ICRC and IFRC of this contact) by 1 March 2018, with responsibility for

- coordinating the efforts under this action plan and for liaising with the ICRC, IFRC and partner National Societies where appropriate;
- increase the role and visibility of National Society leaders in communicating about the current risks and opportunities regarding nuclear weapons;
  - significantly increase outreach to young people to raise awareness of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and to promote their active involvement in support of Movement objectives;
  - invite youth sections of National Societies to consider supporting the organization of regional Red Cross and Red Crescent youth conferences on nuclear weapons, to include the testimony of nuclear-bomb survivors (*hibakusha*), populations affected by nuclear testing, and other experts, with international support as provided for in section 2 of this document;
  - write or talk to Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Environment, Health and Emergency Response and to leading parliamentarians responsible for these areas to communicate the Movement's urgent concerns and position on nuclear weapons;
  - communicate publicly, including through opinion pieces, interviews and letters to the editor, to raise awareness of current nuclear weapon-related risks and of the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, based on the Movement's position, ICRC briefings and other materials produced in support of this action plan;
  - convey to National Society members, volunteers and staff the Movement's views on nuclear weapons and on current risks and opportunities through National Society websites, publications and meetings of staff and volunteers;
  - brief national IHL committees and/or other relevant national bodies on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons;
  - host public seminars and events on nuclear weapons for specific groups, such as parliamentarians, health professionals, the scientific community and emergency responders;
  - reach out to and cooperate with national organizations working in the fields of health, the environment and emergency response;
  - communicate and cooperate with longstanding organizations working on nuclear-weapon issues;
  - integrate the voices of nuclear-bomb survivors (*hibakusha*) and those affected by nuclear testing into outreach activities;
  - include lectures on the humanitarian consequences and legal aspects of nuclear-weapon use during training in international humanitarian law (IHL) and other dissemination activities for the armed forces and civil society;
  - promote this action plan through regional Movement structures to share information with other National Societies and, where possible, consider joint approaches to governments on a regional basis.

## **2. GLOBAL COORDINATION AND SUPPORT**

For us to achieve the objectives of this action plan, there is a need for consistent messages, a smooth flow of updated information, and concerted action by every component of the Movement. To this end, a global humanitarian advocacy strategy on nuclear weapons will be implemented through a range of practical actions that will result in: (a) a significant increase in professional communication materials in a variety of languages; (b) regional workshops to facilitate national action; (c) continuous

communication and follow-up on activities planned or implemented; and (d) more regular updates for all components of the Movement active on this issue.

The following specific actions will support the global humanitarian advocacy strategy:

- A Movement Support Group, including dedicated National Societies, the ICRC and the IFRC will be established to support and guide implementation of the action plan;
- The ICRC will lead the promotion of adherence to and faithful implementation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons at the global level, including through activities in capitals, participation in relevant global and regional events, and leadership of and support to National Societies as needed;
- The International Federation will strengthen its role as focal point for sharing information on National Society activities, outputs and needs and for maintaining an up-to-date database of all National Society focal points on nuclear weapons;
- Red Cross and Red Crescent youth sections are invited to consider how to integrate the Movement's objectives on nuclear weapons into global Red Cross and Red Crescent youth conferences and other events to raise the awareness of new generations of the risks of nuclear weapons and of the need for their prohibition and elimination;
- The ICRC will provide interactive briefings on the content of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the formulation of key messages for National Societies in specific regions, to promote and facilitate timely national action among authorities and the public;
- The ICRC, with the assistance of the Movement Support Group, will prepare professional communication materials, including social and traditional media tools, model letters, talking points and opinion editorials to support National Societies in reaching out to their audiences and relevant officials;
- National Societies, with the support of the IFRC, will maintain and develop the international network of National Societies active in promoting the Movement's objectives on nuclear weapons, with particular support from the IFRC in the exchange of information on progress and challenges faced in national contexts;
- The ICRC will maintain its lead role in representing the Movement in relevant multilateral fora and provide timely reports on results achieved, next steps and opportunities for action by National Societies.
- The International Federation will coordinate the involvement of National Societies in meetings of States party to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and other relevant multilateral meetings, and its support in the development of common statements on behalf of National Societies.

### **3. IMPLEMENTATION**

The ICRC maintains a lead role within the Movement in promoting and monitoring the implementation of the present action plan..

All National Societies in a position to do so are requested to contribute material, financial and expert support to the common effort of implementing this action plan.