Volunteers, 17 million of them, are the core of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. More than 1 million operate in extremely unsettled situations, in complex emergencies or in circumstances of protracted conflict. Natural disasters and health emergencies are becoming more frequent and severe, and volunteers are more necessary – to help ensure access for vulnerable people to essential services – than ever. They deserve more recognition and support, and the need for that has never been more urgent. Their safety and security, including their psychosocial and mental well-being, are matters of pressing concern.

The 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent:

The safety and security of humanitarian volunteers

What conclusions did the 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent reach on the subject of the safety and security of humanitarian volunteers?

It adopted Resolution 5, “The safety and security of humanitarian volunteers”.

Some of the actions to be taken in the next four years, following the 32nd International Conference, are listed below.

BY STATES

- Create as safe an environment as possible for volunteers, for instance by taking measures at the national level to ensure their protection.
- Develop and/or maintain national systems for collecting and disseminating detailed data pertaining to the safety and security of volunteers.
- Include National Societies on National Disaster Coordinating Committee.
- Invest in volunteers by ensuring that they have sufficient protection, as well as psychosocial support and insurance.
- Recognize the contribution of volunteers.

BY THE MOVEMENT

- Work with States and others concerned to create and maintain an enabling environment for volunteering, for instance by promoting supportive legislation and policies.
- Review potential threats to volunteers and work continually to strengthen access, acceptance and security for National Societies.
- Provide volunteers – in a timely manner – with the best safety-related information and guidance, and with protective equipment, psychosocial support and insurance.
- Train volunteers in safety procedures and protocols and in the application of the Movement’s Fundamental Principles.

BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- Respect the Red cross and Red Crescent emblems
- Respect humanitarian volunteers and make them feel welcome.
- Support the local Red Cross and Red Crescent in protecting their volunteers.