

Power of humanity

Council of Delegates of the International
Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

8 December 2019, Geneva



COUNCIL OF DELEGATES

OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

Geneva, Switzerland
8 December 2019

Adopting a Movement Message to States on Migrants and our Common Humanity

Draft zero resolution

**Document prepared by
the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and
the International Committee of the Red Cross
in consultation with National Societies**

Geneva, September 2019

DRAFT ZERO RESOLUTION

Adopting a Movement Message to States on Migrants and our Common Humanity

The Council of Delegates,

1. *recalls and reaffirms* past resolutions on topics relating to migration adopted by the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (including Resolution 21, 24th International Conference, Manila, 1981; Resolution 17, 25th International Conference, Geneva, 1986; Resolution 4, 26th International Conference, Geneva, 1995; Resolution 1, Annex, Declaration “Together for Humanity”, 30th International Conference, Geneva, 2007; and Resolution 3, 31st International Conference, Geneva, 2011) and by the Council of Delegates (including Resolution 9, Budapest, 1991; Resolution 7, Birmingham, 1993; Resolution 4, Geneva, 2001; Resolution 10, Geneva, 2003; Resolution 5, Geneva, 2007; Resolution 4, Nairobi, 2009; and, in particular, the “Movement Call for Action on the Humanitarian Needs of Vulnerable Migrants”, adopted by Resolution 3, Antalya, 2017);
2. *recalls* the Policy on Migration adopted by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in 2009 (which was also welcomed by the whole Movement in Resolution 4 of the Council of Delegates, Nairobi, 2009) and the IFRC’s Global Strategy on Migration 2018–2022;
3. *adopts* the “*Movement Message to States on Migrants and our Common Humanity*”;
4. *urges* all components of the Movement to bring this Message to the attention of States and other relevant stakeholders.

Movement Message to States on Migrants and our Common Humanity

We, the representatives of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, have come together from over 190 countries to adopt and deliver this *Message to States on Migrants and our Common Humanity*.

We are neutral humanitarian organizations and, as such, do not seek to encourage, discourage or prevent migration. We also recognize that the management of migration poses significant challenges for States in many parts of the world. However, we are increasingly concerned that a hardening of laws, policies and attitudes in some countries is having grave consequences for the safety and well-being of vulnerable migrants and for refugees and other persons in need of international protection.

All migrants – including those in an irregular situation – have human rights, including the right to life, liberty and security of person. They must be protected from torture and ill-treatment, arbitrary detention, *refoulement* and threats to their lives, and they must have access to justice and essential services. Yet, in some countries, we are seeing these rights set aside.

International law also requires special protection for certain categories of persons, such as refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons. We are alarmed to see some States failing to fulfil their responsibility to extend this protection, which could lead to life-threatening consequences for the persons involved.

In 2017, we made a “Call for Action on the Humanitarian Needs of Vulnerable Migrants”, setting out the steps we believe States should take to protect migrants from harm. We called for particular attention to be paid to the most vulnerable migrants, such as unaccompanied and separated children, and for guarantees of access to essential services, irrespective of legal status. We also called on States to only use migration-related detention as a measure of last resort, with liberty and alternatives to detention always being considered first, and to commit to ending the detention of children and family separation for immigration-related reasons. Unfortunately, all these steps are still urgently needed.

In 2011, the States Parties to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 represented at the 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent unanimously adopted a resolution requesting that National Societies be allowed to enjoy “effective and safe access to all migrants without discrimination and irrespective of their legal status”. We call on States to fulfil this commitment, to support us in carrying out our humanitarian mandate and to respect our impartiality, independence and neutrality, including in relation to migration management. We also call on States to ensure that assistance of a strictly humanitarian and impartial character is never considered unlawful.

We have been greatly encouraged by the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees, both including critical commitments to address protection and assistance needs. If fully implemented, we think that they can make an important difference.

As auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are committed to supporting States to ensure that the humanitarian needs of migrants – as well as those of vulnerable persons in host communities – are met. While our areas of strength vary, we can help in a number of ways, from providing emergency relief and basic health services to supporting authorities in promoting longer-term social inclusion and fulfilling their obligations under international law.

We seek to foster our collaboration with States in a climate of mutual trust, with positive solutions and frank and constructive dialogue.

Let us work together, reaffirming our common humanity, to help all those in need.