

Power of humanity

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33rd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT

Geneva, Switzerland
9–12 December 2019

**Addressing mental health and psychosocial needs
of people affected by armed conflicts, natural disasters
and other emergencies**

Draft resolution

**Document prepared by
the Working Group of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
Project on Addressing Mental Health and Psychosocial Consequences of Armed
Conflicts, Natural Disasters and Other Emergencies (MOMENT)**

Geneva, October 2019

DRAFT RESOLUTION**Addressing mental health and psychosocial needs
of people affected by armed conflicts, natural disasters
and other emergencies**

The 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent,

expressing deep concern about the unmet mental health and psychosocial needs of people affected by armed conflicts, natural disasters and other emergencies, including the needs of people on the move, *stressing* that mental health and psychosocial needs increase extensively as a result of these situations and that pre-existing conditions may resurface or be exacerbated and *underscoring* the urgent demand to increase efforts to respond to them by means of prevention, protection and assistance,

recognizing that mental health and psychosocial wellbeing are critical to the survival, recovery and daily functioning of people affected by armed conflicts, natural disasters and other emergencies, to their enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms and to their access to protection and assistance,

recognizing that early and appropriate mental health and psychosocial support is important to prevent distress from developing into more severe conditions and that children and youth face particular risks if their mental health and psychosocial needs are not addressed early and *acknowledging* that most people show resilience and do not develop mental health conditions provided they have access to basic services and family- and community-level resources,

recognizing that unmet mental health and psychosocial needs have far-reaching and long-term negative human, social and economic impacts, which affect individuals, communities and society as a whole, and that meeting these needs, in particular in armed conflicts, natural disasters and other emergencies, is critical to achieving universal health coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals,

recognizing that the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of volunteers and staff responding to humanitarian needs is often affected as they are exposed to risks and potentially traumatic events and work under stressful conditions and that the safety, security, health and wellbeing of staff and volunteers are vital to the provision of sustainable quality services and *recalling* the relevant recommendations and commitments set out in Resolution 4 “Health Care in Danger: Continuing to protect the delivery of health care together” and Resolution 5 “The safety and security of humanitarian volunteers” of the 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent,

recognizing that factors such as, but not limited to, pre-existing mental health conditions, age, gender, disability, state of health, socio-economic status, ethnicity, legal status, deprivation of liberty, displacement and exposure to violence can further increase risk and impact needs and vulnerability and that diversity factors should be considered in order to ensure effective access to, and the culturally sensitive provision of, mental health and psychosocial support services for all people affected,

reaffirming the fundamental premise and commitment to “do no harm”, by including people with lived experience and promoting applicable standards of care, ethical and professional guidelines and evidence-informed, participatory and culturally sensitive approaches that protect and promote mental health and psychosocial wellbeing,

recognizing that the stigma and often hidden nature of mental health and psychosocial needs are key challenges that need to be addressed with medium- and long-term strategies, as appropriate to the context, at individual, family, community and societal levels,

affirming that the existing international legal frameworks, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as applicable, provide for protections that may be relevant to mental health and psychosocial wellbeing and *recognizing* that respect for those protections may significantly contribute to addressing the challenges in preventing and meeting mental health and psychosocial needs,

reaffirming that States have the primary responsibility to ensure the protection and promotion of the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of people affected by armed conflicts, natural disasters and other emergencies and ensure their access to mental health and psychosocial support services in accordance with the applicable legal frameworks,

recognizing that the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement) have important complementary and supportive roles in addressing the mental health and psychosocial needs of affected people, including the role of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (National Societies) as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field, as reflected in the Geneva Conventions of 1949, their Additional Protocols of 1977, the Statutes of the Movement and resolutions of the International Conference,

acknowledging the important and diverse work carried out by the components of the Movement to address mental health and psychosocial needs, including basic psychosocial support through to specialized mental health care provided in close proximity to the affected people and their communities, *welcoming* the Movement's efforts to strengthen its response to these needs and *taking note* of the Movement's new policy on addressing mental health and psychosocial needs [to be] adopted by the 2019 Council of Delegates,

recalling all relevant resolutions adopted by the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (International Conference) and the United Nations (UN) and other commitments addressing mental health and psychosocial needs, including Resolution 29 of the 25th International Conference, *expressing appreciation* for existing relevant work and initiatives by the World Health Organization and other parts of the UN system, regional organizations, States, humanitarian organizations and other actors aimed at addressing mental health and psychosocial needs, *underlining* the complementary character of the work of the Movement and the International Conference in relation to such work and initiatives and *emphasizing* the importance of coordinating the response with other local and international actors and building on local needs and available resources,

1. *calls* upon States, National Societies, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to increase efforts to ensure early and sustained access to mental health and psychosocial support services by people affected by armed conflicts, natural disasters and other emergencies;
2. *calls* upon States, National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC to invest in local and community-based action, embedded in local and national services, on a longer-term basis to prevent, prepare for and respond to mental health and psychosocial needs, including by strengthening community resilience and the capacities of volunteers;
3. *encourages* States and National Societies to enhance their cooperation to address these needs, as appropriate, building on the National Societies' often unique humanitarian

access to affected people and auxiliary role to the public authorities in the humanitarian field;

4. *calls* upon States, National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC, in accordance with their respective roles, mandates and capacities, to ensure that mental health and psychosocial support responses include psychosocial, psychological and specialized mental health care;
5. *calls* upon States and the components of the Movement to integrate mental health and psychosocial support into all activities addressing humanitarian needs, including prevention and protection, and ensure that mental health and psychosocial support and responses addressing other humanitarian needs, such as shelter, food, livelihoods, education and support to separated families and families of the missing, are mutually reinforcing;
6. *calls* upon States to ensure that mental health and psychosocial support is an integral component in domestic and international emergency response systems, including disaster laws, preparedness plans and emergency response coordination mechanisms, and *calls* upon the components of the Movement, particularly National Societies, to support this effort in accordance with their respective mandates;
7. *calls* upon States and the components of the Movement to take action to address stigma, exclusion and discrimination related to mental health and psychosocial needs through approaches that reinforce the dignity and participation of affected people, in particular persons with lived experiences, in a context-specific and culturally sensitive way;
8. *encourages* States to work to strengthen the quality and capacity of the workforce, including volunteers, responding to the mental health and psychosocial needs of people affected by armed conflicts, natural disasters and other emergencies in close coordination and cooperation with the components of the Movement;
9. *calls* upon States and the components of the Movement to take measures to protect and promote the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of staff and volunteers who are responding to humanitarian needs across all sectors, equipping them with the necessary skills, tools and supervision to cope with stressful situations and responding to their specific mental health and psychosocial needs.