

## **2022 Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement**

### **WORKSHOP**

## **What will it take to build an International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement free from racism, xenophobia and discrimination?**

### **OUTLINE**

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#### **Context**

In every society and country, some population groups experience forms of discrimination, including racism. This increases the risk of interpersonal violence, exacerbates inequalities, adds to mental health and psychosocial challenges and reinforces barriers to basic essential services, such as health care, education, food, protection and legal support, including in emergencies.

Racism and other forms of discrimination have many causes and many effects. Racism and discrimination against black and indigenous people and people of colour (BIPOC), people of certain castes and other groups who are marginalized are at the origin of colonialism and have also been reinforced and exacerbated by deeply ingrained historic colonial and systemic attitudes, political, economic and social structures and power inequalities in local communities and around the world.

The intersection between these dynamics and humanitarianism is complex and needs to be examined – the problem of racism and discrimination is a reality in the humanitarian sector too, including in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. What do today's challenges of racism and discrimination look like within the Movement? They can be systemic, organizational or individual in nature. While some of the conversations on this subject can be painful and uncomfortable, they reveal hard truths about racism and discrimination which allow us to understand and acknowledge the challenges involved as the first step towards addressing the right issues.

These include entrenched problems of power imbalances and unconscious biases, which lead to insidious and inequitable working practices engrained in our structures and history, and processes and systems based on funding legacies that provide some National Societies with greater resources than others and a bigger place at the table.

Rejection of discrimination and inequity of all kinds lies at the heart of our Fundamental Principles and values. Our principle of impartiality demands that there be no discrimination on the basis of nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions in order to properly ensure respect for all human beings, as dictated by the principle of humanity. This is key to ensuring that the suffering of anyone in need may be relieved. Our principle of neutrality does not mean staying silent in the face of racism and violence.

The basis for our work on this agenda is further underlined in various strategies, policies and operational plans adopted by Movement components on diversity, inclusion and protection.

### **Overall objective and expected outcomes of the workshop**

The intended outcome of this workshop is the development of an initial roadmap with key actions charting a way forward, as a Movement, to act against racism and discrimination internally (both in terms of the people we serve and our own personnel).

To this end, the workshop seeks to:

- highlight findings from recent key internal processes and studies, such as the Humanitarian Advisory Group report on [Diverse Movement Leadership in COVID-19](#) and the BRC study;
- share perspectives and experiences of the challenges associated with racism and discrimination within the Movement today;
- build on the joint IFRC/ICRC leadership [statement](#) and the [blog](#) published in 2020;
- strategize on and define priority steps up to the International Conference.

### **Participants will:**

- discuss challenges and questions related to racism and discrimination within the Movement today;
- examine the causes and impact of systemic racism within institutions/organizations, including within the Movement;
- co-create action steps for accountability to combat racism and related discrimination in practice.

### **Key questions to be considered in the workshop session**

1. How can the Movement recognize and articulate its own history in relation to power imbalances and racist approaches and depictions and learn from its experience?
2. What smart practices, challenges and opportunities need to be considered to make the Movement safe from racism and discrimination for the people we serve and our own personnel?
3. What priority steps need to be taken to advance an agenda against racism and discrimination, including on the road to the 34th International Conference?

### **Supporting documents / resources / graphics for this spotlight session**

- [International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement Statement on building an environment free from racism and discrimination](#)
- Statutory meetings blog: [Beyond Rhetoric: The Need to Tackle Racism and Discrimination](#)
- [ICRC Humanitarian Law and Policy blog](#)
- IFRC Pledge: [A safe and inclusive humanitarian environment](#)