



# Power of humanity

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

22 – 23 June 2022, Geneva

## Movement Family Links Medal

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

May 2022

**EN**

CD/22/14  
Original: English  
For information

Document prepared by the RFL Leadership Platform  
in cooperation with the  
RFL Strategy Implementation Group

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To pay tribute to outstanding services in helping separated families and families of missing persons in armed conflicts or other situations of violence, in disasters, and in other situations requiring a humanitarian response, including in the context of migration, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement) decided at the 2019 Council of Delegates (CoD) to establish a Movement Restoring Family Links Medal. The RFL Leadership Platform drafted the regulations for awarding the medal, which were circulated to all components of the Movement in the draft elements of resolution for the 2022 Council of Delegates and received strong support in all the responses from National Societies. Furthermore, the RFL Leadership Platform elected from among its members a Medal Committee, which will be in charge of proposing a selection of nominees, with representatives from National Societies of the different regions, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), for endorsement and approval by the RFL Leadership Platform. All components of the Movement are called upon to make the medal known within their organizations and invited to identify suitable candidates for the medal and submit nominations to the RFL Leadership Platform Medal Committee.

As the 2019 CoD resolution that decided on the creation of the medal also adopted the Movement RFL Strategy 2020-2025, this background document provides an update on the outstanding individual and collective efforts of the Family Links Network that led to substantial progress in the implementation of the strategy over the past two years. In particular, the Movement is for the first time in a position to provide consolidated global RFL caseload statistics, and a monitoring and evaluation framework on key dimensions of the strategy has been developed. A survey to collect baseline data carried out with all members of the Family Links Network received a remarkable response: 153 National Societies and 93 ICRC delegations took part. The survey is to be carried out on an annual basis and the ambitious indicators serve both as a planning and monitoring tool and as a means to report progress in implementing the strategy. Specific monitoring by the IFRC of measures under its responsibility is under development.

## 1) INTRODUCTION

The staff and volunteers of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement) in the Family Links Network<sup>1</sup> across the world are doing truly outstanding work. Their work addresses some of the most basic and important human needs: to be in contact with loved ones and to know where they are and what has become of them. Staff and volunteers often carry out their work under harsh conditions in remote, difficult-to-access areas, working tirelessly for years without recognition. Thanks to their close contact with people in need, they sometimes find innovative and creative ways to overcome obstacles and offer services to those who need them.

To recognize such outstanding work, the 2019 Council of Delegates (CoD), in operative paragraph 8 of Resolution 6, “Restoring Family Links: Strategy for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement 2020–2025” (RFL strategy), invited the RFL Leadership Platform<sup>2</sup> to develop and propose regulations for a Movement RFL medal:

The Council of Delegates,

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8. *welcomes* the proposal to create a Movement RFL Medal for outstanding services in the field of RFL and invites the RFL Leadership Platform to develop regulations and conditions for the Medal, in

<sup>1</sup> The Family Links Network is composed of the RFL/tracing services of National Societies and the ICRC. (In 2021, there were 192 National Societies and 100 ICRC delegations and missions.)

<sup>2</sup> The RFL Leadership Platform comprising leaders from a geographical spread of 34 National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC. The National Societies represented in the platform are: Australia, Bulgaria, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Honduras, Iran, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Portugal, Samoa, Somalia, South Sudan, Sweden, Uganda, the United Kingdom

consultation with all the components of the Movement, and submit them to the 2021 Council of Delegates for adoption, together with the nominations of the first recipients of the Medal;

The present report provides background to the proposed draft resolution. It also seizes the opportunity to summarize progress achieved to date in the implementation of the RFL strategy.

## 2) BACKGROUND

In line with the mandate conferred on it by Resolution 6 of the 2019 CoD, the RFL Leadership Platform developed regulations and submitted the draft elements of the resolution on the Movement RFL medal, which were officially circulated to all components of the Movement in April 2021. The draft of the Family Links Medal resolution is the result of a process which involved several working sessions within the RFL Leadership Platform and the RFL Strategy Implementation Group (IG),<sup>3</sup> as well as feedback received from the components of the Movement on the draft elements of the resolution. The present background document has been drafted in consultation with the IG and the RFL Leadership Platform. Furthermore, the RFL Leadership Platform elected from among its members a Medal Committee charged with proposing recipients for the medal.

The RFL Leadership Platform, while regretting a missed opportunity to give due recognition to RFL staff and volunteers at the Council of Delegates in June 2022, took the decision, in a meeting on 10 March 2022, to suspend the nomination process and postpone the awarding of the medal until the next Council of Delegates, in 2023, owing to the data breach impacting the RFL services of the whole Family Links Network.

## 3) ANALYSIS

### A) Movement Family Links Medal

The regulations set out in the draft resolution and the more detailed elements on the nomination and selection process for the Movement Family Links Medal are inspired by those of existing Movement medals and awards, in particular the Florence Nightingale Medal, which similarly pays tribute to outstanding services within a specific field of humanitarian action. RFL services are, however, the one and only service of the Movement that are truly delivered collectively in an interdependent manner, with one component ultimately depending on the services provided by the other. As is the case for the Henry Dunant Medal, the medal regulations stipulate that no more than five medals should be awarded each time and in a ceremony on the occasion of the CoD.<sup>4</sup>

The first round of nominations and the selection of recipients of the medal to be awarded at the 2023 CoD will be a test and learning experience, both for the components of the Movement – to see how best they can organize themselves internally for the process leading up to their submission of nominees – and for the RFL Leadership Platform – to see how best to provide guidance for nominations and to organize the selection process. In this sense, the process will be reviewed by the RFL Leadership Platform and, if need be, adjusted for the next time in 2025.

#### **Name of the medal**

The draft elements of the resolution proposed the name “Marguerite Frick-Cramer Restoring Family Links Medal”. While the responses of many National Societies supported this proposal, some

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and the United States.

<sup>3</sup> The RFL Strategy IG comprising RFL leaders from a geographical spread of 34 National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC. The National Societies represented in the Implementation Group are: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Colombia, Croatia, Dominica, Ecuador, Ethiopia, France, Georgia, Honduras, Iran, Italy, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Rwanda, Serbia, Somalia, South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom, Unites States of America and Zambia.

<sup>4</sup> Unlike the Florence Nightingale Medal, where up to 50 medals are distributed during each award session and the medals handed over in the country where the recipients reside.

expressed reservations, and a few alternative names were proposed. The RFL Leadership Platform debated the issue in its meeting in June 2021 and decided to opt for a name not linked to a specific individual but rather for a more generic and neutral name, as set out in the draft resolution: the Movement Family Links Medal.

### **Nomination process**

A circular letter calling for nominations and recalling key elements to consider will be sent by the chair of the RFL Leadership Platform, together with a nomination form, to all components of the Movement, addressed to the secretaries-general and presidents of National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC.

In the nomination form, the outstanding achievements of the nominee are to be described with specific, practical examples of the services and activities undertaken to respond to the needs of affected people and the circumstances under which these activities were carried out and/or a detailed description of innovative activities that have significantly improved the quality of the services.

The nomination form is not to be filled out by the candidates themselves but by a member of their organization who can testify to their achievements. It is to be approved and submitted by the president and/or secretary-general of the National Society concerned (or either the ICRC director-general or the IFRC secretary-general) regarding their staff and volunteers.

A partner National Society, the ICRC or the IFRC, having witnessed outstanding services by a staff member or volunteer of a National Society, may encourage that National Society to consider the person for nomination but may not submit a joint nomination. Each component of the Movement shall propose no more than one nominee to the RFL Leadership Platform.

National Societies, the ICRC and the IFRC will promote the Movement Family Links Medal within their organizations and set up an internal mechanism to identify potential candidates. It is left to the submitting National Society, the ICRC and the IFRC to decide to what extent they wish to communicate the identity of their nominee.

### **Criteria**

The draft regulations mention that the medal shall be awarded to individuals who have performed outstanding services in the field of RFL, primarily National Societies staff and volunteers working on the front lines who provide RFL services in contexts where there is great need, including in acute emergency situations, and who have distinguished themselves through exceptional service and devotion.

The draft regulations further outline two non-cumulative categories as criteria for the selection.

The emotional support provided by the Red Cross and Red Crescent to separated families and families of missing persons should also be taken into account in the first category, even if, for instance, the fate and whereabouts of a missing person have not been conclusively clarified. In the second category, one could also consider, for instance, the establishment of a particularly successful partnership that contributed significantly to the development of RFL services.

A certain degree of freedom and flexibility in the description of the achievements is necessary so that the RFL Leadership Platform can take into account the diverse nature and circumstances in which the candidates operate. To enable the RFL Leadership Platform to reach a well-founded decision, it is important that the nomination form explains clearly in what way the nominee distinguished himself or herself, going above and beyond other staff members or volunteers who are also carrying out their work in a consistently good and dedicated manner. Although it goes without saying that RFL staff members' long-term service and experience is precious and a great asset for the network, long years of service in RFL should not alone suffice for paid staff to receive the award; however, this condition is acceptable for volunteers who have dedicated many years of their time to

the service. Furthermore, the medal is intended to be awarded to front-line staff and volunteers on the ground rather than managers. Finally, the medal shall not be attributed to a National Society or an RFL department as a whole but rather to an individual or to a team of clearly identified individuals. The RFL Leadership Platform will decide whether to issue further clarification on the nomination process after assessing the quality of nominations received in the first round.

### **Selection process**

In line with the regulations proposed in the draft resolution, the RFL Leadership Platform elects five National Society representatives from among its members, one from each region, who, together with a representative of the ICRC and the IFRC, and, in principle, at least two representatives of affected people/people who have experienced family separation, form the Medal Committee. All necessary steps will be taken to ensure that the involvement of affected people will be empathetic, respectful and considerate.

The Medal Committee will be in charge of reviewing the nominations and proposing by consensus the recipients of the Movement Family Links Medal. The proposed selection by the Medal Committee will be approved by the RFL Leadership Platform, who will present the winners with the medal in a ceremony on the occasion of the CoD.

Nominations should be sent to the email or postal address of the ICRC Central Tracing Agency (CTA) indicated in the nomination form. If considered essential, the members of the Medal Committee can request further information with regard to nominations that are under final consideration. Nominations received after the given deadline shall not be considered but can be resubmitted in the next round of award nominations.

As is the case for other Movement medals and awards, the RFL Leadership Platform will not communicate externally on the number of nominations, submitting components, identities of the nominations received or the selection process, and no justification for its choices will be given.

## **B) Progress in the implementation of the RFL Strategy 2020–2025**

The RFL strategy sets forth the vision, mission, objectives, enablers and implementation measures for all components of the Movement for the years 2020–2025. It references the need to set up a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanism (including the identification of appropriate indicators) and to collect key RFL statistics, which the CTA will compile, analyse and share with all components of the Movement. An M&E Framework for the RFL strategy was therefore developed by the IG in 2020, under the leadership of a specific M&E Working Group. The main purpose of the M&E Framework is to monitor the progress made towards achieving the strategic objectives and enablers of the RFL strategy through the collection of data provided by all components of the Movement, creating a solid basis for consistent reporting on the results achieved, and the value and performance of the global Family Links Network. The data for global monitoring is to be collected annually by the CTA through a worldwide survey of National Societies and ICRC delegations. The survey will be launched at the beginning of each year and collect data from the previous year. For the IFRC, a different mechanism is under development.

For each of the RFL strategy's objectives and enablers, an outcome statement has been articulated that sets out what the strategy aims to achieve. For each outcome, a global indicator was determined.

The first data collection process took place between February and March 2021, and the results form a baseline. This will enable the members of the Family Links Network to set targets and RFL service priorities, and to compare the data from year to year to see what changes have occurred overall for the Family Links Network. For the first time, the Family Links Network set out to collect and collate global RFL statistics. Figures were compiled in 2020 for the year 2019 and again for 2021 for the year 2020.

The response rate to the RFL M&E baseline survey was 84% of the Family Links Network, i.e. 153 National Societies and 93 ICRC delegations/missions.

The findings of both the RFL M&E baseline survey and RFL global statistics for the year 2020 have been shared with the leaders of all Movement components and with National Society RFL/tracing services. The overall results show that 80% of the Family Links Network provide RFL services, though 3% does RFL only in emergencies and 5% does RFL for capacity strengthening. Despite the impact of COVID-19, the Family Links Network continued to provide substantial RFL services – even increasing them in some areas, such as connecting separated family members.

#### **4) RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

Resources will be required for the design and production of the medal and the certificate, for travel and accommodation expenses for the award winners and other expenses concerning the award ceremony.

#### **5) IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING**

The RFL Leadership Platform will implement the resolution by selecting the award winners and presenting them to the CoD, and will monitor the implementation and submit, if required, proposed amendments to the regulations. All components of the Movement contribute to implementation by taking part in the nomination process.

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### **Conclusion and recommendations**

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The work done by staff and volunteers to provide RFL services is deeply appreciated; its importance cannot be overstated. The RFL Leadership Platform and the IG are grateful for the support from all components of the Movement for their work and for the positive feedback received on the draft zero resolution. They call upon all components to promote the Movement Family Links Medal and RFL, to identify potential candidates for the medal and to adopt the Movement Family Links Medal resolution.