



Power of humanity

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

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Protection in the Movement: Improving our collective impact in protecting people

DRAFT ELEMENTS OF RESOLUTION

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BACKGROUND

The draft elements of this resolution seek to provide an outline of the possible substance of individual paragraphs, without providing a definitive draft text. Each paragraph is followed by a rationale explaining why it would be useful to include such a paragraph in the resolution.

This document is being shared for consultation with the members of the Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in order to gather a first round of comments and feedback, and to gain an initial understanding of whether the proposed approach would be acceptable and garner consensus.

When providing comments and feedback on this document, please consider the following questions:

- Do you agree with the proposed elements for the preambular and operative paragraphs of the proposed resolution?
- Are there any elements that are missing or should be included in the resolution?

Detailed comments on the wording of the draft elements of this resolution are not expected at this stage. There will be an opportunity to comment on specific wording at a later stage, once the draft zero of the resolution is available.

INTRODUCTION

The mission of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement) is:

“to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found, to protect life and health and ensure respect for the human being, in particular in times of armed conflict and other emergencies, to work for the prevention of disease and for the promotion of health and social welfare, to encourage voluntary service and a constant readiness to give help by the members of the Movement, and a universal sense of solidarity towards all those in need of its protection and assistance.”

In line with this mission, the Movement recognizes the pressing need to address protection challenges. Millions of people across the globe continue to endure violence, discrimination, exclusion and other violations of their fundamental rights due to armed conflicts, disasters, crises and other emergencies, or due to ongoing deprivation and denial of their rights. Seeking to reduce these risks by helping people to be better protected from such threats has become increasingly crucial for all components of the Movement.

Over the past years, all components of the Movement have undertaken strategic and operational initiatives to address protection risks and consequences in various contexts. These efforts have helped better protect individuals and communities around the world. However, there remains a lack of a completely common understanding of the scope and practice of protection work within the Movement. This lack of a common understanding risks causing confusion, limited cooperation and the deprioritization of protection work within the Movement, which will ultimately have a negative impact for people on the ground.

To strengthen the Movement's protection work, the proposed resolution aims to develop and adopt a clear, coherent, complementary and comprehensive framework. The overall goal is to **improve the collective impact of the Movement in protecting people experiencing or at risk of violence, discrimination, exclusion and other violations of their fundamental rights.**

The resolution endeavours to achieve the overall goal by meeting five objectives, that is by:

- 1. Establishing a common understanding of protection work within the Movement**
The resolution seeks to foster a shared and unified understanding of what protection work entails within the Movement.
- 2. Acknowledging the broad scope of existing protection efforts in the Movement**
Recognizing the diverse and valuable protection work carried out by each component of the Movement, the resolution aims to acknowledge and appreciate their respective contributions.
- 3. Establishing what the Movement seeks to collectively achieve in its protection work**
This will be based on clear complementarity, coordination and coherence of efforts of the different components of the Movement.
- 4. Positioning a coordinated and coherent protection response externally**
The improved common understanding (objective 1) will demonstrate the added value and complementary character of the protection work of each component to external stakeholders and partners, to ultimately better serve affected people.
- 5. Adopting a Movement Protection Framework**
This will set out common minimum requirements for all components, supported by clear commitments on how each component will further our collective aim to protect people's dignity at all times.

By adopting the proposed resolution at the Council of Delegates in 2024, the Movement will reinforce its commitment to safeguarding human dignity and well-being. Through enhanced complementary efforts, guided by the Movement Protection Framework and commitments adopted through the resolution, the Movement will strengthen its ability to protect more individuals and communities affected by conflicts, disasters, crises and other emergencies worldwide.

Preambular paragraphs (PP)

PP1:

This preambular paragraph could recognize the importance of protection in humanitarian action by emphasizing the “centrality of protection” and recognizing the centrality of Fundamental Principles and the principle of “do no harm” in the Movement’s approach to protection.

Rationale:

In the landscape of humanitarian action, the significance of protection has grown immensely. Acknowledging this, the paragraph aims to emphasize the centrality of protection as a fundamental aspect of the Movement’s work to alleviate human suffering by addressing needs, safeguarding fundamental rights and upholding the dignity of individuals affected by armed conflicts, disasters, crises and other emergencies.

This paragraph reinforces the Movement’s commitment to prioritizing and integrating protection efforts into all its work, recognizing the diverse and complex protection needs of vulnerable populations.

The centrality of protection in a Movement context is founded on the Fundamental Principles, which guide and shape protection activities in line with the Movement’s mission.

The “do no harm” principle (a core component of humanitarian practice) emphasizes the importance of avoiding actions that may inadvertently cause harm to affected populations. This paragraph can reiterate how protection work supports the integration of this principle across all Movement work.

PP2:

This preambular paragraph could endorse and build on the definition of protection adopted by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).

Rationale:

The most common definition of protection among humanitarian organizations is the one developed during the Movement-led workshops, later adopted by the IASC and included in the *Professional Standards for Protection Work*:

Protection refers to all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of the relevant bodies of law – human rights law, international humanitarian law, and refugee law.¹

By acknowledging the source of the definition of protection adopted by the IASC, the resolution would demonstrate that the Movement has always been at the forefront of setting the recognized global standard for the work of humanitarian and human rights actors in this area. It could also recall the coherence between this definition and the Statutes of the Movement, which states: “**the Movement promotes a lasting peace ... founded on respect for ... equality [and] human rights.**”²

¹ This is the definition adopted in the [IASC protection policy in 2016](#), taken from the ICRC-led workshop on professional standards for protection work, as recorded in [Strengthening Protection in War](#).

² The full quote is: “declares that, by its humanitarian work and the dissemination of its ideals, the Movement promotes a lasting peace, which is not simply the absence of war, but is a dynamic process of cooperation among all States and peoples, cooperation

The paragraph could point out that this definition is useful in covering many different types and modes of protection work (do no harm, protection mainstreaming, specialized protection activities and influencing standards, norms and laws), and is widely accepted by the humanitarian community. It could strongly emphasize that in many contexts where the Movement works, the prevailing local legal, cultural and social norms take precedence over international legal frameworks.

In that context, and to make this very broad definition more meaningful, the resolution could more precisely frame the scope of protection within the Movement, emphasizing the Movement's unique role and contributions in this field.

PP3:

This preambular paragraph could express concern about continuing protection needs worldwide.

Rationale:

This paragraph could reiterate the diverse contexts where significant protection needs exist due to violations of fundamental rights – and due to many other circumstances. It could underscore in particular the emergence of new and evolving crises, each presenting distinct aspects of protection risks.

The paragraph could also outline the breadth of contexts in which the Movement works to address protection needs, with a particular emphasis on conflict, disasters, crises, climate change and other emergencies, as well as in the daily lives of people who have protection needs because of violations of their rights or other reasons that are **not** linked to any particular crisis.

This paragraph could also refer to the principle that the Movement is “driven by needs and informed by rights”.³

This principle could be further explained in the background document. In summary it means that we actively support the fulfilment of people’s entitlement to protection and assistance under international and domestic law (including those established by international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law). However, it is the needs of those affected, rather than upholding legal rights *per se* or holding duty-bearers to account, that determines what we do and how we do it.

PP4:

This preambular paragraph could recognize the importance of people-centred protection work, and the related issue of how diversity factors (aspects of people’s personal characteristics) have a significant impact on their level of vulnerability to protection risks.

Rationale:

It is a well-known fact that various aspects of diversity (age, colour, disability, ethnic origin, gender, nationality or citizenship, religion, sexual orientation and social background, and the intersectionality between those aspects) strongly influence the severity of protection risks. By

founded on respect for freedom, independence, national sovereignty, equality, human rights, as well as on a fair and equitable distribution of resources to meet the needs of peoples.”

³ As included in the main guidance documents developed by the Protection Advisory Board.

recognizing the multifaceted and changing nature of vulnerability, the Movement emphasizes the importance of adopting an inclusive and tailored approach to its protection efforts.

By highlighting the significance of diversity factors, the resolution also underscores the Movement's commitment to respecting and upholding the fundamental rights and dignity of every individual. It recognizes that protection efforts must go beyond a one-size-fits-all approach and strive to cater to the context and the needs, vulnerabilities and power relations of different communities.

PP5:

This preambular paragraph could reaffirm the primary responsibility of states to protect people in their territory, and recall that humanitarian organizations can contribute to ensure effective solutions to protect affected people and have a right to offer their services in accordance with the applicable legal framework.

Rationale:

Based on international humanitarian law (IHL), international human rights law, refugee law and other national and international legal and moral norms, state authorities are required to safeguard the protection and well-being of individuals in their territory.

The resolution firstly attempts to call attention to the responsibility of states. It also recalls that humanitarian organizations can support states, especially when they do not have sufficient resources to successfully protect all people in their territory. The resolution may set the context for the Movement components engaging in protection work, with particular reference to the established mandate of each component, including IHL, the Statutes of the Movement, with particular reference to the auxiliary role of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (National Societies).

The paragraph could also address how the Movement can ensure protection of people in those contexts in which the official state authorities have limited or no ability to protect people in some of their territory, and other non-state groups are acting as the *de facto* authorities.

PP6:

This preambular paragraph could recognize the role of each component in relation to protection, the relevance of the role of National Societies as auxiliaries to public authorities in the humanitarian field and the benefit of better coordination on protection work.

Rationale: Each component of the Movement plays an important and complementary role in protecting people in vulnerable situations arising from violations of rights. Each component strives to prevent, mitigate and respond to the consequences of these violations based on their respective mandates.

National Societies are auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field,⁴ which may include alleviating protection risks, while upholding their neutrality and independence. National Societies possess invaluable local knowledge and understanding of the cultural, social and

⁴ National Societies support states as "auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field", in accordance with the Statutes of the Movement (and elaborated by Resolution 2 of the 30th International Conference and Resolution 4 of the 31st International Conference). See [this guide](#) for detailed background on the nature and function of the auxiliary role as defined by the Geneva Conventions and elaborated by successive International Conference resolutions.

political context in which they operate. This knowledge enhances the effectiveness of protection efforts by tailoring responses to the specific needs of affected populations.

Ensuring strong coordination will lead to more efficient operations, greater collective impact, and position the Movement as a key player in the wider humanitarian landscape.

PP7:

This preambular paragraph could recall the relevant Movement statutory documents and strategies related to protection.

Rationale:

By referencing relevant statutory documents, strategies and technical guidance, the paragraph recognizes the historical evolution of protection efforts within the Movement. It highlights the continuous commitment to addressing protection risks and the significance of past initiatives in shaping current approaches. The inclusion of relevant documents and strategies encourages collaboration among different components of the Movement, enabling them to draw on shared knowledge and experiences to enhance protection outcomes. The detailed study supported by the Norwegian Red Cross on behalf of the Protection Advisory Board provides a detailed overview of previous resolutions.⁵

Operative Paragraphs (OP)

OP1:

This operative paragraph could adopt a Movement protection framework (MPF).

Rationale:

The resolution aims to adopt a Movement protection framework (MPF) as the overarching guide for the Movement's comprehensive approach to protection.

The MPF will build on the invaluable work of the Protection Advisory Board over the past six years to frame and guide protection within the Movement.

The MPF to be adopted could:

- be accompanied by a clear commitment, outlining the broad, high-level collective goals of protection in the Movement and the ways in which each component will meet those commitments based on existing statutory roles and mandates
- incorporate recent developments in protection-related policies and programmes in the Movement
- establish a minimum requirement that protection considerations be integrated and mainstreamed into every aspect of the Movement's work, leading to a more comprehensive and effective approach to achieving protection outcomes.⁶

⁵ Important recent policies and strategies include: Movement Strategy on Migration (to be adopted by the Council of Delegates in 2024), the Protection, Gender and Inclusion Policy adopted by the IFRC General Assembly (2022), the Movement Strategy on RFL (2019), Council of Delegates 2019 resolution "Strengthening implementation of the Movement Policy on Internal Displacement", IC resolution 2015 on sexual and gender-based violence, the 2008 ICRC protection policy, Resolution 2 of the 33rd International Conference, "Addressing mental health and psychosocial needs of people affected by armed conflicts, natural disasters and other emergencies" (2019), the Movement Policy on Addressing Mental Health and Psychosocial Needs, the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Framework.

⁶ A protection outcome would be defined, on the basis of the definition in the *Professional Standards for Protection Work* (2018), as any action that leads to a "reduction of the [protection] risk, including through improved fulfilment of rights and restitution, for victims. It includes reducing the threats people face, reducing people's vulnerabilities to these threats, and enhancing their capacities". It may be updated if/when the definition is updated in the *Professional Standards for Protection Work*.

The paragraph could also outline how this comprehensive approach will allow the Movement to prepare for “emerging protection risks” such as those within the digital sphere.

OP2:

This operative paragraph could encourage the Movement components to ensure protection outcomes are effective, by analysing and identifying protection risks and addressing the identified risks in an appropriate manner.

Rationale:

This operative paragraph could link to preambular paragraph 3 and elaborate on how each of the three types of Movement protection address issues of effective assessment and analysis of these risk factors (recognizing analysis is more difficult in some contexts than others).

By systematically considering protection risks and vulnerabilities faced by the affected population, the Movement components may develop more effective protection measures that lead to better protection outcomes. The resolution could acknowledge the common agreement that exists on the importance of analysis of gender, diversity and inclusion as part of all protection work.

Reference could be made to other relevant policies, guidelines and tools that provide guidance on the links between protection, gender and inclusion. For example, the Dignity, Access, Participation and Safety (DAPS) Framework outlined in the protection, gender and inclusion (PGI) policy of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) and elaborated in the minimum standards for PGI in emergencies, and the “vulnerability factors related to gender or age” in the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) publication *Enhancing Protection for Civilians in Armed Conflict and Other Situations of Violence* (among many other examples).

OP3:

This operative paragraph could clarify how the MPF will present the three distinct types of protection action, and the actions needed to support them.

Rationale:

MPF will provide comprehensive insights into the three different types of protection action:

- 1) do no harm and protection mainstreaming** (a minimum requirement for any action by Movement components)
- 2) specialized protection activities**
- 3) influencing norms, standards and laws to improve protection.**

This paragraph could also elaborate on the enabling actions necessary to support the three types of protection action, such as capacity-building and partnerships.

OP4:

This operative paragraph could promote cooperation, coordination and partnership among the Movement components in relation to protection (based on their respective expertise and existing statutory agreements).

Rationale:

Different Movement components possess different skills, knowledge and resources. By emphasizing that the components engage in actions based on their respective mandates and expertise, the Movement ensures that protection efforts are efficient and effective.

The Movement components are committed to promoting collective and complementary action, leveraging the unique mandate and strengths of each component to enhance protection outcomes and focusing on developing common approaches to similar work based on close coordination and collaboration.

Existing networks and communities of practice should be further supported to encourage peer learning and support.

OP5:

This operative paragraph could promote cooperation, coordination and partnership with external partners in relation to protection.

Rationale:

Movement components often engage with external actors on all three types of protection work, this paragraph could outline some key ways to ensure collaboration has a bigger positive impact on affected people, while not compromising any component's adherence to the Fundamental Principles, and how we collectively manage this interaction, as a Movement.

OP6:

This operative paragraph could request that Movement components promote the MPF and related policies within the Movement and externally.

Rationale:

Through raising awareness of the MPF, we aim to ensure wider recognition of protection work being done by the Movement, increase confidence in this work, support our dialogue with state authorities and other influential actors, and strengthen our collective humanitarian diplomacy on these issues.

This will amplify the visibility, impact and effectiveness of the Movement's protection work, both internally and externally, while fostering stronger relationships and partnerships to advance protection outcomes.

OP7:

This operative paragraph could encourage the Movement components to commit to implementing the common and specific responsibilities set out in this resolution.

Rationale:

This resolution will incorporate a statement of commitment that outlines the very broad and high-level goals of the Movement in this area. The aim will be to have a simple and concise tool, the primary aim of which is to ensure the commitments in this resolution are implemented.

The statement of commitment could also outline a proposal for the ways in which Movement components can develop practical and feasible ways to meet and improve their shared and individual responsibilities.

It will elaborate on the shared responsibilities set out in the paragraphs above and the specific responsibilities of each component stated in the following paragraphs. By outlining these key

commitments of each Movement component (based on established mandates, roles and responsibilities), it also helps effective coordination and collaboration within the Movement, as well as other stakeholders involved in protection work.

OP8:

This operative paragraph could describe how National Societies will implement their commitments domestically and internationally.

Rationale:

This paragraph will clearly define the specific duties and functions that National Societies are expected to fulfil, especially in terms of implementing the commitment. It also ensures that there is a shared understanding of the National Societies' mandate and contributions in the field of protection, thereby enhancing accountability and effectiveness in addressing protection needs and challenges. National Societies also provide extensive technical, financial and peer support to strengthen the capacity of their partner National Societies in protection work, both individually and through established bodies (such as the Protection Advisory Board and relevant technical working groups).

OP9:

This operative paragraph could describe how the ICRC will implement its commitments.

Rationale:

The paragraph will clearly define the specific duties and functions that the ICRC is expected to fulfil to execute the commitments. The ICRC has a long and distinguished history in delivering specialized protection services such as in detention, restoring family links (RFL) and the protection of the civilian population (PCP). The ICRC intends to remain a key reference point for the other components of the Movement on these technical areas of protection work. It will also continue to work with National Societies to strengthen their capacity in these areas, where necessary and appropriate. The ICRC remains dedicated to steering the process of improving the professional standards for protection work.

OP10:

This operative paragraph could define how the IFRC will implement its commitments.

Rationale:

Based on its constitutional role, the IFRC coordinates and supports strengthening the capacity of its member National Societies in the area of protection, gender and inclusion, facilitating a coherent approach to improving the skills, knowledge and competencies required to adhere to the IFRC's PGI policy. This consists of building institutional capacity, protection mainstreaming and specialized PGI work in programmes and operations, and supporting advocacy, partnership and learning for PGI work, through a range of policies, tools and processes. Support is provided to National Societies in all areas of PGI work, with a particular emphasis on those areas where National Societies engage the most – prevention, mitigation and response to issues of sexual and gender-based violence, child protection, safeguarding, trafficking in persons, and implementation of RFL (among others). Community engagement and accountability is integrated into all areas of PGI work. The IFRC reference centres also consolidate and make available the collective knowledge of IFRC members in specific areas, many of which are relevant to protection issues.

OP11:

This operative paragraph could encourage the Movement components to mobilize sufficient resources to support its protection work.

Rationale:

The provisions in this resolution will only be useful and meaningful if they are adequately resourced – the Movement components should therefore commit to sufficient and equitable funding of different protection efforts.

OP12:

This operative paragraph could recommend key steps for each Movement component to take to implement their commitments, and invite the components of the Movement to report back to the Council of Delegates in 2026 on their implementation of this resolution.

Rationale:

To ensure the integration of the commitments into the working culture and processes of the Movement, components should undertake to include the commitments made in this resolution within their own strategic and annual plans, with the aim of reporting on progress made in meeting those commitments in their standard annual reporting processes. This integration will inform an overall mechanism to monitor and report back on progress to future Councils of Delegates.