



## **Power of humanity**

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

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# **War in cities: A solemn appeal from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement**

**DRAFT ELEMENTS OF RESOLUTION**

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**EN**

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Document prepared by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Norwegian Red Cross,  
in consultation with the War in Cities Movement Reference Group

## DRAFT ELEMENTS OF RESOLUTION

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# War in cities: A solemn appeal from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

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### BACKGROUND

The draft elements of the proposed solemn appeal on war in cities 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

War in cities results in immense suffering. The human consequences are devastating, and include: an appallingly high number of civilian deaths; extensive and long-lasting physical and mental suffering; lack of safe access to vast tracks of weapon contaminated land; destruction of homes and critical civilian infrastructure; disruption to essential services, such as health care, water supply, food supply, sanitation, solid waste disposal, electricity and education; environmental damage; and widespread displacement of people, which affects both those displaced and the communities hosting them. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement) is working to better prevent and respond to these humanitarian impacts, in accordance with the 2022–2027 Movement Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to the Humanitarian Impacts of War in Cities, adopted in Resolution 6 of the 2022 Council of Delegates. In recent years, the international community has also paid particular attention to the issue of explosive weapons in populated areas, and in November 2022, 83 states adopted the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas.

Given the devastating impacts we have seen in many cities around the world, and the clear signs of international concern regarding these issues, the 34th International Conference of the

Red Cross and Red Crescent (International Conference) has an historic opportunity and indeed a responsibility to address the unacceptable realities of war in cities and the profound implications of such wars for the protection of civilians, for humanitarian assistance, for the fabric of international humanitarian law and for future generations, who will increasingly live in cities. We, as a Movement, must bring this concern to states and work with them over the coming years to build the capacities to prevent and respond to the brutal realities of urban warfare. International mobilization is needed to recognize the unique horrors of urban warfare, to prevent them from occurring by changing how wars in cities are fought, making essential urban infrastructure more resilient and developing new norms where needed. The solemn appeal proposed for adoption in this resolution is an important part of this work. It could be delivered to all participants in the International Conference, where they will be asked to join the Movement in preventing and reducing civilian harm from war in cities.

Throughout 2024, the Movement will also present states with a number of open and/or model pledges articulating the Movement's concerns and suggesting concrete, practical steps that states, specifically, and others can take to help prevent and respond to the humanitarian impacts of war in cities. States and Movement components can then use these models to make their own individual or joint pledges, based on their interests, influence and capacities.

### **Preambular paragraphs (PP)**

#### ***PP 1:***

A preambular paragraph could acknowledge the devastating humanitarian impacts of war in cities.

#### **Rationale:**

To establish a common understanding of the humanitarian issues and give context to the need for the solemn appeal.

#### ***PP 2:***

A preambular paragraph could explain the need to bring this concern to states and to work with them over the coming years to build their capacities to prevent and respond to the devastating civilian harm brought about by urban warfare.

#### **Rationale:**

To recognize and give context for the need to bring this issue to states' attention.

### **Operative paragraphs (OP)**

#### ***OP 1:***

The first operative paragraph could adopt the solemn appeal to be delivered to states at the 34th International Conference and ask them to take further action to prevent and respond to the humanitarian impacts of war in cities.

#### **Rationale:**

To adopt the solemn appeal through a resolution of the Council of Delegates, and call on states to take further action to prevent and respond to the humanitarian impacts of war in cities.

#### ***OP 2:***

The second operative paragraph could call upon states to make pledges at the International Conference to take concrete steps to prevent and respond to the humanitarian impacts of urban warfare and to support the Movement's work on war in cities.

#### **Rationale:**

To remind states of the pledges on war in cities and encourage them to make pledges and take concrete action.

## DRAFT ELEMENTS OF SOLEMN APPEAL

A draft solemn appeal is currently being prepared by the Movement Reference Group on War in Cities, which was established in accordance with 2022–2027 Movement Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to the Humanitarian Impacts of War in Cities. The group will conduct further consultations over the coming months, before submitting the draft zero resolution, and welcomes input from National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

The solemn appeal could be organized into three sections.

First, it could identify the humanitarian impacts of war in cities of greatest concern, building on Resolution 6 of the 2022 Council of Delegates, “War in cities”. The group has considered including: the appallingly high number of civilian casualties, damage to critical infrastructure, separation of families and the long-term effects on people’s lives and livelihoods.

Second, it could provide context for why it is so important that states pay particular attention to the impacts of urban warfare at this time.

Third, it could call upon states to stand by their legal commitments to comply with international humanitarian law, with a particular focus on protecting civilians and taking action to minimize their suffering during urban warfare. Such action could include calling on states and belligerents to prioritize protecting civilians in all aspects of war in cities, including in drafting and implementing doctrine, in developing policies and practices related to selecting means and methods of warfare, in training and in planning military operations. It could also encourage further commitments on documenting humanitarian impacts, exchanging good practices and implementing measures and policies to ensure humanitarian access is facilitated.