



# Power of humanity

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

DRAFT ZERO RESOLUTION

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**DRAFT ZERO RESOLUTION**

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

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The Council of Delegates,

*applauding* the increasing emphasis of “the centrality of protection” throughout the humanitarian sector and *reaffirming* the centrality of the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement) and the principle of “do no harm” to the Movement’s approach to protection work, and to all Movement work,

*noting* that the specific and unique nature of Movement protection work is founded on the Fundamental Principles of humanity and impartiality, which guide the substantive nature of the Movement’s protection work, with neutrality and independence guiding the means by which it is undertaken, and voluntary service, unity and universality, which guide the Movement’s unique institutional approach,

*recalling and endorsing* the definition of “protection”, adopted by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) as:

“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 (i.e. international human rights law (IHRL), international humanitarian law (IHL), international refugee law (IRL))”,

*recognizing* that this definition is broad enough to be accepted by the entire humanitarian community and is in line with relevant provisions of the Statutes of the Movement, and *recognizing further* the need to define the scope of protection within the Movement more precisely, as follows:

Protection in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement aims to protect those at risk, and those affected by, violations of relevant bodies of law in contexts such as disasters, conflicts, crises and other emergencies, as well as other situations of violence, persistent poverty, deprivation or inequality.

We seek to improve the protection of people at risk of such violations by aiming to address the causes, the circumstances that lead to, and the consequences of such violations. This includes activities that aim to prevent or stop violations of relevant bodies of law, and activities to alleviate the suffering and consequences stemming from these violations and other harmful actions.

We seek to ensure that duty bearers fulfil their obligations to uphold the rights of individuals without discrimination and to preserve their physical and psychological safety, integrity and dignity.

In protection and all other actions, we make all possible efforts to “do no harm” (i.e. to ensure the Movement’s actions have no adverse consequences).

*gravely concerned* about the continuing significant need for protection from violations of fundamental rights in the wide range of contexts that we work in – disasters, conflict, crises and other emergencies, as well as violations or risks of violations (referred to as “protection risks”) not linked to any particular crisis, and *equally concerned* about new and evolving crises – climate change, unplanned urbanization, growing poverty and inequality, risks within the digital sphere, increasing numbers of people on the move, increasing politicization of humanitarian aid – each presenting distinct aspects of protection risks,

*emphasizing* the profound influence of gender and all aspects of diversity and related power relations on people's experience of protection risks; the multifaceted and changing nature of vulnerabilities; and the importance of an inclusive, adapted and people-centred approach that ensures we "leave no one behind" when addressing protection risks,

*reaffirming* the primary responsibility of duty bearers<sup>1</sup> to protect people in their territory, and *recalling* that humanitarian organizations have a right to offer their services to protect affected people, in accordance with the applicable legal frameworks (IHL, IHRL, IRL and relevant national legislation),

*recalling* the mandate and role of each Movement component related to protection based on IHL, the Statutes of the Movement and key statutory documents; and specifically *noting* the local role of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (National Societies) as auxiliaries to public authorities in the humanitarian field, based on the voluntary service of members of the local community,

*recognizing* that better coordination on protection efforts will lead to efficient operations and clear positioning of the Movement with regard to other protection actors in the humanitarian sector, facilitating humanitarian diplomacy and improving our collective impact on people at risk,

*recognizing and celebrating* the long-standing, extensive and wide-reaching existing actions by all Movement components to engage in protection work and achieve protection outcomes – either through protection mainstreaming, specialized measures or by influencing standards, norms and laws,

*recalling* the Movement statutory documents and strategies related to protection,<sup>2</sup> in particular the protection, gender and inclusion policy of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC),<sup>3</sup> and the protection policy of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); and *highlighting* the complementarity and synergies with the new Migration Strategy for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement 2025–2030, the extension until 2030 of the Restoring Family Links Strategy for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement 2020–2025, and resolutions [CD/19/R7](#) on internal displacement, [CD/19/R5](#) and [33IC/19/R2](#) on mental health and psychosocial support, and [32IC/15/R3](#) on sexual and gender-based violence,

1. *adopts* the annexed Movement Protection Framework (MPF) as the overarching guide for a comprehensive, effective and complementary Movement approach to ensuring the safety, integrity and dignity of people by protecting them from violations of their rights, affirming the Movement's approach to protection as "driven by needs and informed by rights";
2. *encourages* Movement components to consider how to engage in the three distinct types of protection action outlined in the MPF, namely (1) protection mainstreaming; (2) specialized protection activities that meet relevant standards; and (3) influencing norms, standards and laws to improve protection;
3. *encourages* all Movement components to commit to their individual responsibilities and to work together through complementary actions related to protection. The main common commitments are:
  - a. ensuring the Movement Protection Framework and other protection-related internal policies and guidance are disseminated, mainstreamed and applied in all Movement

<sup>1</sup> The state bears primary responsibility to protect the people within its jurisdiction. In addition, *de facto* authorities that exercise government-like functions, non-state armed groups with control over territory, and other non-state actors are increasingly expected to respect international human rights norms and standards when their conduct affects the human rights of individuals under their control. See [Professional Standards for Protection Work](#), Chapter 3.

<sup>2</sup> See [Protection within the Movement Mapping Exercise](#), which maps all protection-related resolutions from 1993–2019.

<sup>3</sup> Adopted by the IFRC General Assembly 2022 as binding guidance for the IFRC and National Societies.

actions, integrating the principles of “do no harm” and a victim- and survivor-centred approach;

- b. increasing and improving protection work throughout the Movement by developing effective measures that lead to better protection outcomes,<sup>4</sup> based on a thorough analysis of risks and context, incorporating people-centred considerations of gender, diversity and inclusion, and the capacity of the responding Movement component in each context, which should include:
  - ensuring protection mainstreaming is applied as a minimum requirement in all Movement actions in all contexts;
  - investing in developing specialized protection work where necessary and appropriate;
4. *commits* to ensure increased cooperation, coordination and partnership among the Movement components in relation to protection, based on existing statutory agreements and their respective expertise, skills, knowledge and resources (including existing networks and communities of practice) to ensure that protection efforts are effective and efficient, based on the MPF and related policies;
5. *promotes* cooperation and coordination with state authorities and other external partners to ensure complementarity of action between Movement components and other actors based on the specific mandates and role of Movement components, and adherence to the Fundamental Principles;
6. *requests* National Societies to carefully consider the most appropriate manner to implement their commitments with regard to one or more of the three types of protection actions set out in paragraph 2, namely:
  - a. National Societies should strive to mainstream protection concerns into all areas of their programmes, projects and services;
  - b. National Societies, in accordance with their auxiliary role, can and should engage in locally led protection action, assessing and analysing which protection risks they can most effectively address, guided by local protection frameworks and practices;
  - c. National Societies can engage in humanitarian diplomacy and dialogue to meet their responsibility to influence decision makers to better consider the needs of people facing protection risks; and are also encouraged to develop further capacities and expertise to address new and emerging protection risks;
  - d. National Societies working internationally have a primary responsibility to ensure protection concerns are addressed within their own countries; but, based on existing expertise, they can 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);
7. *requests* the IFRC to carry out its specific duties and functions to fulfil its stated commitments – based on its constitutional role, the IFRC coordinates and supports strengthening the capacity of member National Societies, including in the area of protection, gender and inclusion (PGI), as set out in the IFRC’s PGI policy;

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<sup>4</sup> “Protection outcomes” are defined in the annexed Movement Protection Framework.

- a. The policy commits the IFRC and National Societies to comprehensively integrate PGI issues in three areas: (1) institutional capacity, (2) programmes and operations, and (3) PGI advocacy, partnership and learning through a range of policies, tools and processes, including those related to safeguarding.
  - b. The IFRC's core commitment is to facilitate a coherent approach to improve the skills, knowledge and competencies required to adhere to the PGI policy. This consists of providing tailored technical support, training, capacity building and guidance to National Societies in all areas of PGI work described in the policy, based on what is most important in their contexts. This tailored support includes an emphasis on those areas where National Societies most commonly engage. The IFRC reference centres also consolidate and make available National Societies' collective knowledge in specific areas, much of which is relevant to protection issues.
  - c. The IFRC also commits to further strengthening its own capacity in these areas.
8. *requests* the ICRC to undertake specific duties and functions to fulfil its commitments, as set out below:
  - a. The ICRC will continue to deliver specialized protection activities in international and non-international armed conflicts and other situations of violence, as per its conventional and statutory mandate and rights of initiative. This includes: protecting persons deprived of their liberty, operating the Central Tracing Agency, coordinating the Restoring Family Links network, protecting the civilian population and fulfilling its role as a neutral intermediary.
  - b. The ICRC will uphold its role as a key technical reference organization for other components of the Movement with regard to protection in armed conflict and other situations of violence.
  - c. It will continue to work with National Societies to strengthen their capacity in the areas outlined in paragraph 8a, as well as key protection matters specific to armed conflict and other situations of violence, where necessary and appropriate. Beyond capacity strengthening, the ICRC also acknowledges the importance of collaborating with National Societies on various protection activities.
  - d. The ICRC remains dedicated to leading the process of improving the Professional Standards for Protection Work.
9. *encourages* Movement components to commit to mobilizing sufficient human and financial resources to properly support protection efforts; this should include making sufficient allocations within operational and programmatic work for protection mainstreaming, as well as securing and allocating resources for specialized, stand-alone protection work;
10. *recommends* that, to ensure that these commitments are integrated into the working culture and processes of the Movement, components should undertake to include the commitments made in this resolution in their own strategic and annual plans, and to undertake to report on the implementation of these commitments in their standard annual reporting processes. This integration will inform an overall mechanism to monitor and report on progress on this resolution to future Council of Delegates.

# ANNEX: THE MOVEMENT PROTECTION FRAMEWORK

## Introduction

The Movement Protection Framework (MPF) sets out the scope of all International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement work in relation to protection.<sup>5</sup> The MPF aims to clarify how action by Movement components can collectively and individually achieve more and better “protection outcomes” – meaning the risk to affected persons is reduced through minimizing threats and vulnerability and enhancing the capacity of affected people, including through concrete preparedness and preventive measures, and greater fulfilment of rights.<sup>6</sup>

The framework highlights each component’s specific mandate, role and expertise in protection. This includes leveraging the proximity, knowledge and expertise of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies at the local level, and their role as auxiliaries to public authorities in the humanitarian field. It recognizes that as National Societies are “the basic units and ... vital force of the Movement”,<sup>7</sup> strengthening their protection role enhances the Movement as a whole, supported and complemented by the protection roles of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The MPF thus highlights the importance of National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC taking cohesive, complementary and coordinated protection action, in line with the spirit and scope of the Movement Coordination for Collective Impact Agreement (Seville Agreement 2.0).<sup>8</sup> It reinforces the existing protection-related policies and strategies of Movement components, without replacing or superseding them, while also accentuating key recent developments.

## Protection in the Movement

The mission of 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”.<sup>9</sup>

As an integral part of this mission, the Movement seeks to ensure that people in need or at risk enjoy the protection they are entitled to under existing legal frameworks – international, regional and domestic law, as applicable. This includes the special protection that certain categories of people are entitled to – for example, refugees.

It is the primary role and responsibility of duty bearers<sup>10</sup> to protect people and ensure their security, rights and dignity.

However, in some contexts, authorities sometimes lack the knowledge, capacity or will to ensure that people at risk are protected, or prevailing local legal, cultural and social norms may prevent or limit the application of the law. People may also be at risk because of the deliberate actions of states and non-state actors.

The Movement uses a variety of means to achieve the best protection outcomes for people affected by disaster, conflicts, crises and other emergencies. In addition to working with the authorities, this

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<sup>5</sup> The MPF was developed on the basis of earlier drafts made by the Protection Advisory Board and builds on previously adopted documents, as cited in preambular paragraph 7 of the resolution.

<sup>6</sup> This description of “protection outcomes” is based on the definition in the Professional Standards on Protection Work, itself taken from the IASC definition.

<sup>7</sup> [Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement](#), Article 4.

<sup>8</sup> “The Agreement applies to those international activities which the components are called upon to carry out in cooperation, on a bilateral or multilateral basis, to the exclusion of the activities which the Statutes of the Movement and the Geneva Conventions entrust to the components individually.”

<sup>9</sup> [Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement](#), p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> The state bears primary responsibility to protect the people within its jurisdiction. In addition, *de facto* authorities that exercise government-like functions, non-state armed groups with control over territory, and other non-state actors are increasingly expected to respect international human rights norms and standards when their conduct affects the human rights of individuals under their control. See [Professional Standards for Protection Work](#), Chapter 3.

may include reducing risks by engaging directly with communities to identify and address their concerns about risks to their enjoyment of their fundamental rights.

The protection activities of the Movement are therefore characterized as *driven by needs and informed by rights*.

## The scope of protection work

The definition adopted by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and widely accepted by the humanitarian sector, is that 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 (i.e. international human rights law (IHRL), international humanitarian law (IHL), international refugee law (IRL)).”<sup>11</sup>

This definition supports a common understanding by humanitarian actors, covering a range of different types and modes of protection work. To frame the scope of protection within the Movement more precisely, emphasizing the Movement's unique role and contributions in this field, the Movement's protection work is defined as follows:

Protection in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement aims to protect those at risk, and those affected by, violations of relevant bodies of law – in contexts such as disaster, conflicts, crises and other emergencies, as well as other situations of violence, persistent poverty, deprivation, or inequality.

We seek to improve the protection of people at risk of such violations by aiming to address the causes,<sup>12</sup> the circumstances<sup>13</sup> that lead to, and the consequences<sup>14</sup> of such violations. This includes activities that aim to prevent or stop violations of relevant bodies of law and activities to alleviate the suffering and consequences stemming from these violations and other harmful actions.

We seek to ensure that duty bearers<sup>15</sup> fulfil their obligations to uphold the rights of individuals without discrimination, to preserve their physical and psychological safety, integrity and dignity.

In protection and all other actions, we make all possible efforts to “do no harm” (i.e. to ensure the Movement's actions have no adverse consequences).

### *Internal dimension of protection in the Movement*

This refers to ensuring that the actions of the Movement always respect, and never intentionally endanger, the dignity, safety and rights of persons. This includes establishing mechanisms and processes that ensure we can safeguard the people we seek to assist and remain accountable to them, by preventing, mitigating and responding to intentional harmful actions by individuals working for Movement components.

## The overarching principles in protection

In all situations, the **main principles** that are central to humanitarian work also apply to the Movement's protection work, namely:

- To put the **affected population, communities and individuals at the centre** of the response to ensure accountability towards affected people. This means Movement components should ensure meaningful participation of affected people in shaping the protection response, including ensuring a victim- and survivor-centred approach.

<sup>11</sup> 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](#).

<sup>12</sup> For example, (a) confidential dialogue to ensure that authorities and other actors respect their obligations and the rights of individuals; (b) addressing discriminatory attitudes in society.

<sup>13</sup> For example, (a) absence of respect of IHL or the rule of law; (b) unsafe settings in humanitarian contexts that facilitate violent acts.

<sup>14</sup> Physical, psychological, emotional or other negative impacts on an individual because of acts of violence, discrimination and exclusion.

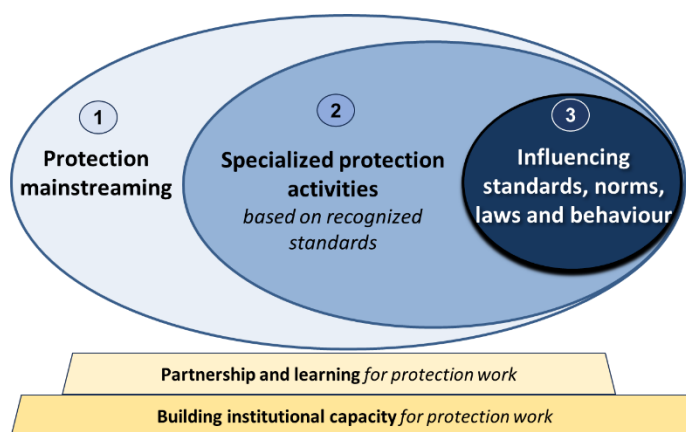
<sup>15</sup> See footnote 10.

- To respect the **principles of humanity and impartiality** – including the aspect of impartiality that exhorts all components of the Movement to “make no discrimination ... being guided solely by needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress”.
- To respect and act in accordance with **the principle of “do no harm”**. This principle generally refers to avoiding any negative effects as a result of humanitarian activities, especially by not making a situation worse. It includes ensuring that Movement action does not exacerbate community tensions through perceived or actual bias towards one group over another, as well as ensuring that our systems never create additional risks for people.

These principles must inform and be respected through the three different, complementary types of action that contribute to protection outcomes, as set out below.

### Three types of Movement action to achieve protection outcomes

This section outlines the broad scope of the different types of action that Movement components can engage in to achieve protection outcomes. The diagram illustrates the three broad types of action identified and the enabling actions which support them. All the key principles described above should be integrated and respected throughout each type of action.



#### Type of action 1: Mainstreaming protection in all our work

This type of protection action aims to ensure that all humanitarian activities respect the rights and the dignity of the people they aim to support.

“Protection mainstreaming” refers to ensuring that protection risks and concerns are minimized, including that potential violations of international and domestic law are taken into consideration when carrying out all humanitarian activities, so that those activities may contribute to addressing protection risks by ensuring dignity, access, participation and safety for affected people.

It includes supporting all teams to know how to recognize protection risks, and how to safely refer to internal or external protection specialists. It is therefore relevant for all humanitarian actors – whether protection actors or not. It is closely linked to the principle of “do no harm” and is one of the ways in which this principle can be upheld.

At an absolute minimum, Movement actors must ensure that they “do no harm”, and should mainstream protection concerns in all their actions to support people at risk. The enabling factors illustrated here (and detailed below) are particularly crucial in this regard, as our organizations need to be fit for that purpose, at all levels.<sup>16</sup>

#### *The reactive protection approach<sup>17</sup> – linking mainstreaming and specialized action*

Between the first type (above) and the second type of action (below) are a variety of activities and approaches. In some contexts, a Movement actor may choose to remain focused on service provision – ensuring the minimum requirements of “do no harm” and protection mainstreaming.

<sup>16</sup> The ICRC-led [Professional Standards for Protection Work](#) (the key reference guide for all protection actors) places these principles in the wider context of protection work, demonstrating their importance for all protection actors and all protection action. The IFRC’s [Minimum Standards for Protection, Gender and Inclusion in Emergencies](#) provides comprehensive guidance on how to mainstream protection, while the [Better Programming Initiative](#) provides guidance on specific aspects of “do no harm”.

<sup>17</sup> This approach was previously piloted as the “minimum protection approach”; it is reframed here with a focus on reactivity.



Without designing a full protection programme, they can build in measures to *reactively* address any protection concerns identified by staff, volunteers, community members and beneficiaries in the course of service provision. The most common reactive measures are to:

- **refer individual cases and issues**, ensuring informed consent of the individuals concerned:
  - internally, by establishing escalation pathways and protection focal points
  - externally, to a relevant protection actor
- **respond to the case or issue** by:
  - bringing the issue to the attention of the authorities, where possible and appropriate
  - directly meeting individuals' needs arising from protection concerns through service provision.

### **Type of action 2: Specialized protection activities**

In some contexts, a Movement actor has the intention and the capacity to comprehensively and proactively seek out and address protection concerns – this characterizes the second type of action. Specialized protection activities may be carried out in different ways – integrated into other programmes (such as health or livelihoods) or they can be “standalone” programmes that are designed with the sole objective of ensuring protection outcomes.

Specialized protection activities directly address the causes, circumstances leading to, and consequences of violations of international humanitarian law, international human rights law, refugee law and national legislation implementing such bodies of law.

These activities should only be carried out by trained staff and volunteers with the necessary resources. Like all Movement actions, they must also be grounded in the principle of “do no harm” and supported by protection mainstreaming, as described above. These may include immediate responses to alleged violations of relevant bodies of law or norms, as well as ways of addressing the consequences of conflict, other situations of violence, crises, persistent poverty, deprivation or inequality.

Movement components also engage in activities to reduce protection concerns, vulnerabilities and the exposure of individuals to risks, and to increase individuals' capacities to respond to these risks. This often involves confidential dialogue with the authorities and relevant non-state actors at different levels, which may include advice or recommendations.

Engagement in specialized protection action requires active assessment and analysis of protection concerns,<sup>18</sup> and developing a strategy to address them. This consists of actions to prevent, mitigate or stop the threats – by addressing the behaviour of those causing the threat and/or by engaging with the affected community to support their own actions to reduce the threat.

### **Type of action 3: Efforts to influence standards, norms and laws**

This type of action builds on the first two types. Here, the Movement strives to promote an enabling environment that is conducive to the protection of people at risk or in a vulnerable situation by influencing normative frameworks and their application by advocating for the effective application of relevant legal obligations at state and at community levels – including at the broadest level – regardless of any particular crisis.

This includes a broad range of actions described, under “environment building” in the [ICRC's protection policy](#), as “*all efforts to establish or foster a social, cultural, institutional and legal environment in which the rights of individuals might be respected*”. The advocacy section of the IFRC's [PGI policy](#) similarly focuses on humanitarian diplomacy to amplify diverse voices and

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<sup>18</sup> Experience shows that protection concerns are always present in conflict, disaster and crisis situations; the aim of assessment and analysis is to establish the specific concerns in a particular situation.

address specific needs and rights, and on persuading leaders to consistently prioritize the rights and equal access to humanitarian services for people at risk.

Specific actions include advocating for humanitarian principles and protection elements to be integrated into states' policies, practices and legislation, as well as into international law and guidance. It also includes the extensive work of National Societies to influence communities to avoid behaviours that may diminish the dignity or safety of themselves or others, or may limit their access to, or participation in, humanitarian services.

## **Complementary protection action by Movement components**

### **Activities carried out by National Societies<sup>19</sup>**

National Societies commonly ensure that protection concerns are mainstreamed throughout their programmes and operations (type 1 above). Furthermore, many National Societies have developed in-house expertise on different protection fields in line with the Professional Standards for Protection Work and other relevant protection standards. In some circumstances, these activities are supported by the IFRC, ICRC and peer National Societies.

In many cases, National Societies' protection activities are defined by what is the most appropriate activity to ensure protection outcomes for groups at higher risk. Although an analysis of the specific protection risks in each context is vital, there are some groups which are commonly identified as being at higher risk and in need of protection by a National Society's actions. This identification should always be based on the people-centred approach described above.

Some of the most commonly identified groups at higher risk include:

- children in need of protection
- survivors and people at risk of sexual and gender-based violence
- people with disabilities who are at risk of, or survivors of, violence or exclusion
- people separated from their families
- people at risk of being trafficked, or who have been trafficked
- people at higher risk of other forms of violence.

Some of the most common specialized activities to support at-risk groups include:

- mapping, designing and monitoring referral pathways to ensure access to safe and reliable protection services
- providing mental health and psycho-social support
- providing legal assistance
- establishing a safe space where at-risk individuals can share disclosures or concerns regarding risks
- engaging in protection dialogue on individual and/or systemic issues with relevant authorities
- designing and implementing a community-based project to address violence in the community.

### **IFRC protection activities**

The IFRC's activities under its protection, gender and inclusion (PGI) approach (based on its constitution and PGI policy) are focused on providing guidance, research, training and operational support for the main protection activities carried out by National Societies.

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<sup>19</sup> Surveys carried out in 2018, 2020 and 2023 provided data illustrating these core specialized protection activities of National Societies, supported by the IFRC and ICRC.

In line with its PGI policy, the IFRC provides this support to National Societies in the domain of institutional development, programme and operations, and partnerships and advocacy. The main activities include:

- 1) providing technical support to National Societies on prevention, risk mitigation and response to protection issues within mainstreaming or specialized protection work. This work may be carried out in the context of ongoing service provision to marginalized and at-risk groups in any context, as well as in disaster, crises and other emergencies, contributing to a culture of non-violence and peace
- 2) organizing, coordinating and directing the protection, gender and inclusion aspects of international relief actions in accordance with the Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief<sup>20</sup> – including providing technical guidance on protection mainstreaming and specialized protection activities in disaster response
- 3) when appropriate, and in coordination with the host National Society, providing direct support to people at risk or who have experienced violations of relevant bodies of law.
- 4) supporting National Societies to consistently implement safeguarding protocols at community level.

### ICRC protection activities

Protection is the core of the organization's mandate, mission<sup>21</sup> and identity, and is the motivating force for its activities that aim to protect lives and human well-being and secure respect for the individual.<sup>22</sup>

The organization distinguishes two major categories of activity: activities targeting those responsible for violations, and activities developed directly to benefit affected individuals and communities. Some of the main activities include:

- protection of people deprived of their liberty
- protection of the civilian population and persons *hors de combat*
- the work of the Central Tracing Agency – restoring family links and clarifying the fate of the missing
- limiting the use of force in accordance with the applicable legal framework
- protection of the wounded and sick, and of medical personnel, facilities and vehicles
- designing, disseminating, persuading various states to adhere and abide by IHL
- enhancing data protection

The ICRC convenes the development of overall guidance on core standards for protection work for humanitarian and human rights actors.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> IFRC constitution: [https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/01\\_IFRC-Constitution-2019-EN.pdf](https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/01_IFRC-Constitution-2019-EN.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Its mission is to “protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance”.

<sup>22</sup> ICRC protection policy.

<sup>23</sup> The Professional Standards for Protection Work outline a set of minimum requirements that humanitarian actors should fulfil when carrying out protection activities – the ICRC ensures these standards are disseminated and known within the Movement.

## Enabling factors

### Building institutional capacity for protection work

To allow for the full implementation of the Fundamental Principles of impartiality, unity and universality,<sup>24</sup> Movement components need to be fit for the purpose of implementing protection activities in operations, and addressing protection issues through advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy. This includes fostering understanding and support at the leadership level, knowledge of and the capacity to carry out protection work at all levels of the organization, and sufficient resources for protection work.

To be fit for this purpose, it is equally essential that we foster an institutional environment which is safe, inclusive, effective, efficient and accountable. A key measure is ensuring that leadership, staff and volunteers reflect the diversity of the society they work in, to better understand the diverse needs of all those we aim to support – as described in the Statement on Integrity of the Movement<sup>25</sup> at the Council of Delegates 2019.

Establishing this environment is a crucial enabling factor for comprehensive protection work. It is also paramount for supporting the integrity and ethical behaviour of each component of the Movement at an individual and institutional level.

These are all essential factors for preventing, mitigating and appropriately responding to any misconduct or to violations of our Fundamental Principles, and as such are directly relevant for all Movement action. They are particularly relevant for protection work, to ensure coherence between our external and internal actions.

### Partnerships and learning for protection work

Protection risks and related needs are multidimensional by definition; therefore, working in coordinated partnerships is the most effective way for the Movement and other actors to comprehensively meet those needs.

The Movement is uniquely positioned to address protection risks by making full use of the complementarity of each component's specific mandate, expertise and capacities, and by learning from one another to strengthen our overall impact.

Each component's specific mandate and statutory role, as it relates to protection, needs to be widely understood and respected in order to facilitate complementarity and avoid any overlap of action or any sense of competitiveness or tension that would reduce our efficiency and ability to help affected people.

This framework will facilitate coordinated engagement by Movement actors on the basis of solidarity between components, including respect for and promotion of each component's unique value and role.

It will similarly support the coherent and consistent demonstration of the unparalleled reach and capacity of the Movement components in protection, facilitating effective collaboration with actors external to the Movement, including inter-agency coordination mechanisms, and increased and improved collaborative action with protection actors outside the Movement.

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<sup>24</sup> All seven principles are vitally and entirely relevant to protection work. Here we focus on those principles which guide the inclusiveness of Movement institutions. The idea in the unity principle that National Societies must be "open to all" is an application of the principle of non-discrimination at the institutional level. This is why recruitment of staff, volunteers and members in any component of the Movement must have no barriers to anyone based on any aspect of their person, in order to reflect the community's diverse membership and composition – called "multitudinism" by Jean Pictet in his [commentary on the Fundamental Principles](#).

<sup>25</sup> See Statement on Integrity of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement: [https://rcrcconference.org/app/uploads/2019/12/CD19\\_R2-Integrity-statement-draft-EN\\_clean.pdf](https://rcrcconference.org/app/uploads/2019/12/CD19_R2-Integrity-statement-draft-EN_clean.pdf).