



# Power of humanity

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

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## Migration Strategy for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement 2024–2030

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

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Document prepared by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross in cooperation with the other members of the Migration Leadership Group (23 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) and in consultation with the Global Migration Task Force (including 43 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies)

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

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# Migration Strategy for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement 2024–2030

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An increasing number of people are leaving their homes and countries in search of safety or better prospects. Migrants, including refugees, may face specific and heightened risks of harm whether travelling by land or sea, stranded at border points, living in transit or destination countries, in camps or in detention or, in some cases, upon their return. As States turn to more restrictive migration-related policies and practices, there are concerns that this may lead to increasing humanitarian needs among migrants and undermine their safety, dignity and rights.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement) has a long-standing practice of responding to the humanitarian needs of migrants as part of its core mission to alleviate human suffering, protect life and health and uphold human dignity. The Migration Strategy annexed to this resolution was born out of a need to adopt a shared perspective and set of priorities to strengthen the effectiveness of the Movement's principled humanitarian action with and for migrants, leveraging the power of its complementary mandates and collective competencies. Recognizing this need, at the 2022 Council of Delegates, the Movement adopted Resolution 9 "Towards a Movement strategy on migration", mandating the Movement Migration Leadership Group to develop the first ever Movement Migration Strategy for adoption in 2024, with the support of the Global Migration Task Force, the regional migration networks and the Global Migration Lab.

This Migration Strategy identifies three strategic objectives for the Movement: 1) the safe, dignified and effective access of migrants to essential services, including through humanitarian assistance, at all stages of their journey; 2) support to strengthen the resilience and inclusion of migrants to enable them to improve their preparedness and adaptation to shocks and crises and contribute to inclusive communities and societies; and 3) protection of the rights, safety and dignity of migrants, with special attention to specific vulnerabilities. The Strategy calls for consistent engagement with States and other stakeholders and direct action by the components of the Movement across all three objectives.

The Migration Strategy is the result of a thorough consultative and participatory process. It seeks to enhance cooperation, coordination and the harmonization of practices among the components of the Movement. To this end, the proposed resolution calls on all components of the Movement to promote knowledge and understanding of the Strategy, to incorporate its content into their own strategies, plans and programmes as relevant, based on their respective mandates, roles, responsibilities, areas of expertise, capacities and specific contexts, and to mobilize the resources needed to support its implementation.

### 1) INTRODUCTION

In line with its core mission to alleviate human suffering, protect life and health and uphold human dignity, the Movement has long been active in addressing humanitarian needs that arise in the context of migration, including in relation to the safety, well-being, dignity and empowerment of migrants. Many migrants, regardless of the reasons for leaving their home and country (whether in search of safety, opportunities or better prospects), endure great hardship and face risks, harm, discrimination and exclusion in the course of their journey. This includes when travelling along land- and sea-based routes, in transit and destination countries and, in some cases, upon their

return to their country of origin. It is these migrants in situations of vulnerability, along with their families and communities, that are at the heart of the Movement's engagement on migration.

The Movement's contribution in the field of migration lies in its presence across countries around the world, particularly through its unparalleled network of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (National Societies), whose local branches and volunteers are embedded in communities, and in its first-hand understanding of humanitarian needs related to migration. This enables the Movement to provide expertise and contribute to the continuity of protection and humanitarian service delivery along migration routes in countries of origin/return, transit and destination. Furthermore, in addition to the wide range of assistance provided by National Societies – from health care and relief to shelter and information – the Movement has significant capacity and expertise in the protection of family links and can therefore provide valuable support to migrants and their families, with migrants increasingly at risk of getting separated, losing contact or going missing. This is reflected in the Movement's Restoring Family Links Strategy 2020–2025 and the decision to propose its extension to 2030.

The Movement's purely humanitarian approach, in line with its Fundamental Principles, leads it to prioritize action for migrants who are most vulnerable and in need of support, irrespective of why they moved, where they are or what their status is. Adherence to the Fundamental Principles allows the Movement to navigate an increasingly politicized operating environment and focus on responses that are prompted by migrants' specific needs and vulnerabilities and that are also informed by and seek to ensure respect for migrants' rights and the corresponding legal obligations. This principled approach further allows the Movement to be a trusted contact that is well-positioned to engage in dialogue with States and relevant stakeholders on the protection of migrants and the need to preserve the space for humanitarian action in the field of migration.

In line with its principled humanitarian approach, the Movement uses a broad description of the term "migrant" which encompasses all people who flee or leave their home or habitual place of residence to seek safety or better prospects, usually abroad, and who may be in distress and need protection or humanitarian assistance, irrespective of their status. This includes, among others, refugees, asylum seekers, stateless migrants, labour migrants and migrants deemed irregular by the authorities. This description was adopted in the 2009 Policy on Migration of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and reaffirmed in key Movement policy and strategy documents, such as the IFRC Migration Strategy 2018–2022, the Movement's Restoring Family Links Strategy and the IFRC Strategy 2030.

The Movement provides support for migrants during peacetime, in armed conflict and other situations of violence and in other large-scale humanitarian emergencies, where affected individuals and communities may be displaced both within and across borders. The Movement also works to help create the conditions for migrants to be included in and make a positive contribution to communities and societies in countries of origin, transit and destination. The complementary mandates, roles, responsibilities and areas of expertise of the Movement's components, specifically the role of National Societies as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field, enable it to enhance strong collective action and support States in fulfilling relevant legal obligations and commitments. Furthermore, the Movement can contribute to the implementation of the humanitarian objectives of global frameworks relevant to migration, such as the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the Global Compact on Refugees and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

## **2) BACKGROUND**

The commitment and added value of the Movement in the field of migration have been repeatedly affirmed through resolutions and high-level dialogues at past Statutory Meetings. At the 2022 Council of Delegates, recognizing the need to ensure a shared vision and a clear focus across the Movement to address pressing humanitarian priorities in the field of migration, the Movement adopted Resolution 9 "Towards a Movement strategy on migration", mandating the Movement

Migration Leadership Group to develop the first ever Movement Migration Strategy for adoption in 2024. The text submitted to this Council of Delegates is the result of a transparent, inclusive and participatory process benefitting from the Movement's collective experience and expertise.

Between February and September 2023, a broad consultation process, comprising two rounds of global, regional and thematic consultations, was carried out under the overall lead of the Migration Leadership Group to discuss and gather input on the content and structure of the future Movement Migration Strategy. The process was facilitated by the Global Migration Lab and supported by the Global Migration Task Force and the regional migration networks. The Strategy development process also benefitted from the technical expertise of a Movement Strategy Working Group and the advice provided by a Lived Experience Advisory Committee bringing together National Society staff and volunteers involved in migration-related activities and with a lived experience of migration in situations of vulnerability.

Furthermore, the Strategy and its priorities were also informed by research on the future of migration and humanitarian action conducted by the Global Migration Lab. It was based on a strategic foresight approach and involved consultation with experts from academia, international organizations (including humanitarian organizations), government, civil society and the media.

### **3) ANALYSIS**

The following subsections outline the reasoning behind the choices made in the development of the Strategy, its objectives and the underpinning approaches.

#### **A) DESIGN**

The Strategy was designed as a high-level statement of collective intent setting the direction and establishing shared priorities for the Movement's engagement with and for migrants for the period 2024–2030.

The Strategy sets out a Vision – the “ideal future” the Movement aspires to and towards which it is committed to working in cooperation with States and other actors; Strategic Objectives and corresponding priority actions, outlining where the Movement will focus its efforts and what it will do to contribute to achieving the Vision; and Enablers which reflect the cross-cutting approaches, capabilities and resources that are vital to delivering on the Strategy and in which the Movement will invest.

For the purposes of clarity and brevity and to ensure that the Strategy itself remains globally relevant until 2030, the text does not contain data or analysis for specific geographic contexts or guidance to help Movement components with implementation. Part 7 of the Strategy (Migration Strategy implementation) requires the Migration Leadership Group and the Global Migration Task Force to create three additional documents to operationalize the Strategy – a Global Action Plan, an Implementation Toolkit and a Monitoring Plan (see Section 5 below).

The Strategy is deliberately broad – it does not assign duties or identify roles among components of the Movement. This is because the Strategy has to be applied in a variety of contexts and by the different Movement components working based on different capacities and under distinct and complementary mandates and roles, which are defined notably in the Statutes of the Movement, resolutions of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and the Movement Coordination for Collective Impact Agreement (Seville Agreement 2.0). The Global Action Plan will provide details about the contributions of the different Movement components to the implementation of the Strategy, in line with their complementary mandates and roles, resources, capacities and expertise and their respective humanitarian contexts and realities.

While this Strategy focuses on the risks and vulnerabilities that arise in the context of migration, it reflects an appreciation of the links that may exist between internal displacement and cross-border

movement and the need for holistic and coordinated responses where appropriate. The present Strategy, the 2009 IFRC Policy on Migration and the Movement Policy on Internal Displacement (adopted by Resolution 5 of the 2009 Council of Delegates) provide the necessary conceptual and strategic clarity for the Movement to address the challenges that are specific to internal displacement and migration (including cross-border displacement) and the possible connections between the two.

## **B) OBJECTIVES**

The Migration Strategy focuses the Movement's future efforts on three equally important, complementary and mutually reinforcing objectives and their corresponding priority actions. The Strategy calls for consistent engagement with States and other stakeholders and direct action by the components of the Movement across all three objectives.

### **Essential services**

This objective focuses on the Movement's capacity to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants to address their urgent needs, such as food, water, sanitation and hygiene, access to information about, and safe and dignified referrals to, essential services and humanitarian assistance, including through Humanitarian Service Points. In addition, it covers the Movement's engagement with States and other stakeholders on safe access to humanitarian assistance and essential services along migration routes for all migrants without discrimination and irrespective of status.

### **Resilience and inclusion**

The Movement's actions to address essential services must be accompanied by attention to the longer-term needs of migrants and implications for communities, including host communities, as part of efforts to strengthen resilience and foster inclusion. Therefore, this objective describes support to promote the agency of migrants and their potential to contribute positively to communities and societies in countries of origin, transit and destination. It refers to actions designed to provide migrants in situations of vulnerability, including refugees and others in need of international protection, with livelihood support, vocational training and other opportunities to strengthen their skills and capacity as well as the Movement's efforts to address negative and false perceptions of migration and promote acceptance through community-based work. This objective also includes action to reduce risks linked to climate change, disasters and environmental degradation, promote preparedness and adaptation strategies and support refugees to achieve solutions adapted to their situation.

### **Protection**

The specific vulnerability of migrants exposes them to heightened protection risks throughout the different stages of their journey. To reduce these risks and mitigate the resulting harms, this objective seeks to strengthen the provision of protection services to migrants, with particular attention to the specific needs of survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, torture and trafficking in persons, detained migrants, unaccompanied and separated children and families of missing migrants. The objective further seeks to enhance Movement efforts to prevent and respond to violations of migrants' rights, including when migrants are caught in armed conflict or other situations of violence or at risk of going missing, notably through engagement with States on their obligations under international law.

## **C) APPROACHES**

As reflected in the choice of enablers, the Migration Strategy adopts the following cross-cutting approaches which are vital to delivering on its objectives:

- The meaningful participation of migrants is essential for community engagement and

accountability to affected people. This perspective is guided by the need to empower migrants and communities as agents of their own lives to enable them to define their own needs, make informed decisions, sustain their own livelihoods and improve their safety. Therefore, the Movement will implement participatory processes centred on the perspective of people with lived experience of migration and invest in creating opportunities for them to become involved in the Movement's work as leaders, staff members and volunteers, according to their aspirations and capacities.

- National Societies are the key providers of services to migrants and a trusted partner to their government in humanitarian endeavours. It is therefore important to invest in strengthening the capacity of National Societies, as they have a strong local presence and act as front-line responders in the Movement.
- Humanitarian diplomacy, including advocacy, is a core component of the Movement's work for migrants. The Movement does not seek to substitute for States and therefore considers it crucial to engage with them and encourage them to fulfil their commitments to protect and assist migrants and uphold international legal obligations.
- Coordination and cooperation can improve the effectiveness of the Movement's action on the ground, particularly in the context of migration, where the Movement is uniquely positioned along migration routes worldwide. Furthermore, enhanced cooperation across borders can ensure the continuity of care across countries of origin, transit and destination.
- Maintaining personal contact and human interaction is essential to earning the trust of migrants and communities. At the same time, digital technology presents great opportunities to maintain contact and access information, particularly for migrants on the move. However, the Movement must recognize the data protection risks inherent in digital technologies. Therefore, while promoting digital inclusion, the Movement must use secure platforms and constantly review its data management to ensure conformity with applicable standards and regulations.

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

Adequate resources will be necessary to put the Migration Strategy into practice and deploy the appropriate human, technological and material resources needed to sustain the Movement's current and anticipated activities related to migration. As part of their role of overseeing the implementation of the Strategy, the Migration Leadership Group and the Global Migration Task Force will work with National Societies, the IFRC and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to harness existing and explore new funding tools and mechanisms to mobilize the financial resources needed to support the Strategy's successful implementation. Components of the Movement will also share expertise, information and/or resources to strengthen principled action and ensure the Strategy's objectives are achieved.

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

All the Movement components play a part in contributing to the Movement's migration-related humanitarian response, according to their respective mandates, roles, responsibilities, capacities and areas of expertise. National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC are individually responsible for the incorporation of the Migration Strategy into their frameworks, programmes and plans, so that it is translated into concrete action. As none of the Movement components is individually in a position to carry out every single measure of the Strategy in every country, they will each work to identify where they can be most relevant and efficient based on their respective mandates, roles, capacities and specific contexts. The implementation of the Strategy will benefit from the efforts undertaken and the lessons learnt under the various Movement workstreams that are relevant to the protection and assistance of migrants, as they all have the potential to be mutually reinforcing. In particular, synergies with the Movement's Restoring Family Links Strategy must be considered in the implementation of the Migration Strategy.

As outlined in Part 7 of the Strategy, the Migration Leadership Group and the Global Migration Task Force will oversee the implementation of the Migration Strategy and be responsible for

ensuring that it is operationalized, including by mobilizing efforts from Movement components and relevant Movement technical bodies. In particular, the Migration Leadership Group and the Global Migration Task Force will prioritize the completion of three documents:

- a Global Action Plan in which National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC will commit to specific areas of the Strategy where they can make a contribution;
- an Implementation Toolkit to provide guidance and explanations on the key concepts and definitions used in the Strategy as well as practical examples and case studies to help National Societies better understand the Strategy and translate it into action in their respective contexts;
- a Monitoring Plan to measure progress and capture the results and lessons learnt from the implementation of the Strategy at the national, regional and global level.

Finally, the Migration Leadership Group, supported by the Global Migration Task Force, will be responsible for consolidating progress reports on the implementation of the Migration Strategy to keep the Council of Delegates duly informed on the matter.

## **6) CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The adoption by the Council of Delegates of the first Movement Migration Strategy, which lies at the heart of the proposed resolution, is a crucial step towards achieving a unified perspective and coordinated engagement within the Movement on assistance and protection for migrants. As the humanitarian needs of migrants continue to grow, the Movement's contribution to addressing the challenges posed by migration is particularly relevant, owing to its long-standing commitment, global presence along migration routes, local knowledge and expertise, and principled humanitarian approach.

Implementation documents must now be completed for the Strategy to be translated into concrete action. The Migration Leadership Group and the Global Migration Task Force will play an essential role in the upcoming implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy.