



# Power of humanity

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

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## 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 mission of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement), the centrality of its Fundamental Principles, and the principle of “do no harm” to its approach to protection work,

*noting* that the specific and unique nature of the Movement’s protection work is founded on the Fundamental Principles in the following manner: humanity and impartiality, which guide the substantive nature of the Movement’s protection work; neutrality and independence, which guide 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* at the same time 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 means protecting people affected by, or at risk of being affected by, violations of relevant bodies of law<sup>1</sup> in contexts such as disasters, conflicts, crises and other emergencies, other situations of violence, and persistent poverty, deprivation or inequality.

We aim to prevent or stop such violations by addressing their causes and contributing circumstances, and to alleviate the suffering they cause by addressing their consequences.

We seek to ensure that duty bearers fulfil their obligations to uphold the rights of individuals without discrimination in order 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”.<sup>2</sup>

*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 from violations or risks of violations (referred to as “protection risks”) not linked to any particular crisis,

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<sup>1</sup> IHL, IHRL, and IRL, and the regional and domestic legislation that applies the provisions of these international legal frameworks.

<sup>2</sup> Refer to the definition of “do no harm” in the annexed Movement Protection Framework.

*equally concerned* about the new and evolving challenges of increasing numbers of people on the move, unplanned urbanization and risks within the digital sphere; and the crises of growing poverty and inequality, and climate change; as well as the increasing politicization of humanitarian aid – each presenting distinct aspects of protection risks,

*emphasizing* the profound influence of gender and all aspects of diversity<sup>3</sup> and related power relations on people's lived experience of protection risks; the intersectional and changing nature of vulnerabilities; and the importance of an inclusive, adapted, participatory and people-centred approach that ensures we “leave no one behind” when addressing protection risks,

*reaffirming* the primary responsibility of duty bearers<sup>4</sup> to protect people in their territory or under their power, 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, on the Statutes of the Movement, and on key statutory documents,<sup>5</sup> 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,

*recalling also* the Movement statutory documents and strategies related to protection, in particular the Protection, Gender and Inclusion Policy (PGI Policy) of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC),<sup>6</sup> and the Protection Policy of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC),

*highlighting* the complementarity and synergies with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement Migration Strategy 2024–2030; the extension until 2030 of the Restoring Family Links Strategy for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement 2020–2025; and Resolution 7 of the 2019 Council of Delegates on internal displacement, Resolution 5 of the 2019 Council of Delegates and Resolution 2 of the 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent on mental health and psychosocial support, and Resolution 3 of the 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent on sexual and gender-based violence,

*recognizing* that better coordination on protection efforts will support a more cohesive approach and common understanding internally across the Movement, and consequently 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,

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<sup>3</sup> “Diversity” as defined in the Protection, Gender and Inclusion Policy of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies: “the full range of different social backgrounds and identities that make up populations”. See <https://pgi.ifrc.org/resources/ifrc-pgi-policy-english> for the full definition.

<sup>4</sup> The State bears primary responsibility for protecting the people within its jurisdiction. In addition, *de facto* authorities or non-State armed groups that exercise government-like functions and control over territory are increasingly expected to respect international human rights norms and standards when their conduct affects the human rights of people under their control. See Chapter 6 of the Professional Standards for Protection Work.

<sup>5</sup> See [Protection within the Movement Mapping Exercise](#), which maps all protection-related resolutions from 1993 to 2019.

<sup>6</sup> Adopted by the 2022 IFRC General Assembly as binding guidance for the IFRC and National Societies.

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, to commit to their individual responsibilities, and to work together through complementary actions related to protection, and *requests* them to share feedback on lessons learned from this engagement. The main common commitments are:
  - (a) increasing and improving protection work throughout the Movement by developing effective measures that lead to better protection outcomes,<sup>7</sup> based on a thorough analysis of risks and context, incorporating people-centred considerations of gender, diversity and inclusion, and employing one or more of the three types of action outlined in the MPF, as appropriate to each context;
  - (b) investing in strengthening the capacity of each Movement component to carry out protection work, including analysing new and emerging protection risks (particularly in the digital sphere) and adopting innovative methods to address protection risks;
  - (c) ensuring the annexed MPF and other protection-related internal policies and guidance are disseminated, mainstreamed and applied in all Movement actions, integrating the principle of "do no harm"<sup>8</sup> and a victim- and survivor-centred approach;
3. *requests* Movement components to promote increased cooperation, coordination and partnership in relation to protection, based on existing statutory agreements (in particular the relevant provisions of the Seville Agreement 2.0 when pertinent); their respective expertise, skills, knowledge and resources (including existing networks and communities of practice) and the annexed MPF and policies mentioned therein, to ensure that protection efforts are coordinated, effective and efficient;
4. *promotes* cooperation and coordination with State authorities at all levels and other external partners to ensure complementarity of action between the Movement and other actors – based on the specific mandates and role of Movement components and adherence to the Fundamental Principles;
5. *requests* National Societies, in accordance with their auxiliary role, to carefully consider the appropriate ways in which they can engage in locally led protection action, by assessing which protection risks they can effectively address, guided by the annexed MPF, and by their safeguarding and other commitments contained in the IFRC PGI Policy;
6. *requests* National Societies working internationally to assume their primary responsibility to ensure protection risks are addressed within their own countries, and in addition – when requested to do so, and based on existing domestic expertise – to consider providing technical, financial and peer support to strengthen the protection capacity of other National Societies;
7. *requests* the IFRC to fulfil its stated commitments based on its constitutional role, particularly strengthening the capacity of member National Societies in the area of protection, gender and inclusion, as set out in the IFRC PGI Policy, which includes supporting the scaling up of their operational capacities in protection, and ensuring that

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<sup>7</sup> "Protection outcomes" are defined in the annexed MPF.

<sup>8</sup> The "do no harm" principle is defined in the annexed MPF.

protection is at the centre of the actions of the IFRC membership at national, regional and global levels;

8. *requests* the ICRC to fulfil its commitments 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 right of initiative, and to continue to work with National Societies to strengthen their capacity in key protection matters specific to armed conflict and other situations of violence, where necessary and appropriate;
9. *encourages* the leadership of 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 activities, as appropriate based on the differing circumstances of each National Society;
10. *thinks* the existing advisory group for developing this resolution and framework, and *requests* the ICRC and IFRC, together with interested National Societies, to ensure that these commitments are integrated into the working culture and processes of the Movement by:
  - (a) working towards establishing a roadmap that will elaborate on the annexed MPF, and thereby ensure the full implementation of the commitments made above, including relevant provisions for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on progress – in a manner that is feasible and appropriate and that is accessible to all Movement components
  - (b) establishing appropriate consultation mechanisms to support the development and implementation of the roadmap.

## ANNEX: THE MOVEMENT PROTECTION FRAMEWORK

### INTRODUCTION

This framework sets out the scope of all International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement) work in relation to protection, building on previously adopted documents and in line with the most commonly agreed definitions of protection.<sup>9</sup>

The Professional Standards for Protection Work defines “protection risk” as “actual or potential exposure to violence, coercion or deprivation (deliberate or otherwise)”.<sup>10</sup> This framework aims to clarify how action by Movement components can collectively and individually achieve more and better “protection outcomes” (meaning the protection risk to affected people is reduced) through minimizing threats and vulnerability and enhancing the capacity of affected people and primary duty bearers, including through concrete preparedness and preventive measures, and greater fulfilment of rights.<sup>11</sup>

This framework highlights each component’s specific mandate, role and expertise in protection. For National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (National Societies), this includes leveraging their proximity, knowledge and expertise 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>12</sup> strengthening their protection role enhances the Movement as a whole. Their role is 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).

This framework 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>13</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>14</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.

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<sup>9</sup> This framework was developed on the basis of earlier drafts by the Protection Advisory Board. It builds on previously adopted documents, as cited in the preambular paragraphs of the resolution “Protection in the Movement: Improving our collective impact in protecting people”.

<sup>10</sup> As defined in the 2024 revision of the Professional Standards for Protection Work.

<sup>11</sup> This is also captured in the “protection risk equation”, which is: protection risk arises when the threat and the vulnerability (of an individual or a community) are greater than the capacity to prevent, respond to and recover from that specific threat.

<sup>12</sup> [Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement](#), Article 3.1.

<sup>13</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>14</sup> Preamble of the [Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement](#).

It is the primary role and responsibility of duty bearers<sup>15</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.

This framework outlines the variety of means employed by Movement actors to achieve the best protection outcomes for people affected by disasters, conflicts, crises and other emergencies, other situations of violence, and persistent poverty, deprivation or inequality. In addition to working with the authorities, this 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 (IASC) 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>16</sup>

This definition supports a common understanding by humanitarian actors, covering a range of different types and modes of protection action. 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 means protecting people affected by, or at risk of being affected by, violations of relevant bodies of law<sup>17</sup> in contexts such as disasters, conflicts, crises and other emergencies, other situations of violence, and persistent poverty, deprivation or inequality.

We aim to prevent or stop such violations by addressing their causes and contributing circumstances, and to alleviate the suffering they cause by addressing their consequences.

We seek to ensure that duty bearers fulfil their obligations to uphold the rights of individuals without discrimination in order 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”.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The State bears primary responsibility for protecting the people within its jurisdiction. In addition, *de facto* authorities or non-State armed groups that exercise government-like functions and control over territory are increasingly expected to respect international human rights norms and standards when their conduct affects the human rights of people under their control. See Chapter 6 of the Professional Standards for Protection Work.

<sup>16</sup> This is the definition adopted in the IASC [Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2016](#), taken from the ICRC-led workshop on professional standards for protection work, as recorded in [Strengthening Protection in War](#).

<sup>17</sup> IHL, IHRL, IRL, and the regional and domestic legislation that applies the principles of these international legal frameworks.

<sup>18</sup> See the explanation of “do no harm” below.

## THE OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES IN PROTECTION

In all situations, the following **main principles** established as central to all humanitarian work<sup>19</sup> also apply to the Movement's protection work:

- To adopt a people-centred approach that puts the **affected population, communities and individuals at the centre** of the response to ensure accountability towards affected people. This means Movement components should strive for meaningful participation of affected people in shaping the protection response, including guaranteeing a victim- and survivor-centred approach.
- To respect the **principles of humanity and impartiality**<sup>20</sup> – 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 unintentional 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.

“Do no harm” also encompasses actively fulfilling the organization's duty of care by establishing mechanisms and processes to safeguard individuals and communities by preventing, mitigating and responding to harmful actions by individuals working for Movement components (the internal dimension of protection, such as preventing sexual exploitation and abuse).

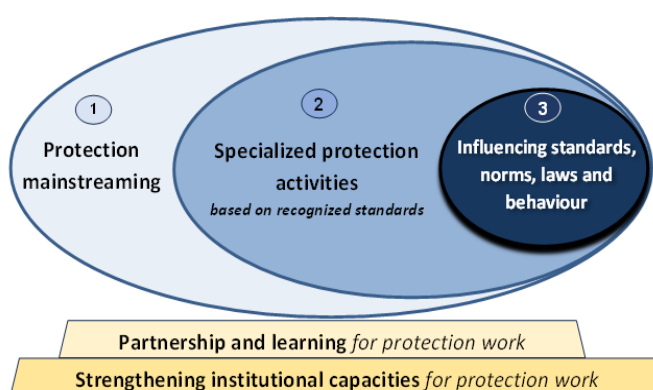
This principle also includes adhering to established data protection principles and frameworks to ensure the safe, ethical and effective management of personal and non-personal data so that the handling of such data does not harm individuals or communities.

These principles must inform, and be respected throughout, 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 types of action identified and the enabling factors which support them. All the key principles described above should be integrated into and respected throughout each type of action.



<sup>19</sup> This is a summary of Chapter 2, “Principles in protection work”, of the Professional Standards for Protection Work, widely adopted by the humanitarian community.

<sup>20</sup> Refer to preambular paragraph 2 of the 2024 Council of Delegates resolution “Protection in the Movement: Improving our collective impact in protecting people”, which outlines how all seven of the Fundamental Principles are relevant to protection work.



### **Type of action 1. Mainstreaming protection in all our work**

“Protection mainstreaming” is the process of incorporating protection principles into humanitarian and development action, thus ensuring that protection risks are minimized by promoting dignity, access, participation and safety for affected people.<sup>21</sup>

It includes providing support to ensure that all teams know how to recognize protection risks and how to safely refer cases to internal or external protection specialists. Protection mainstreaming is therefore relevant to all humanitarian actors – whether they are “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.

It is mandatory for Movement actors to ensure that they “do no harm” and mainstream protection in all their activities.<sup>22</sup> The enabling factors illustrated in the diagram (and detailed below) ensure that our organizations are fit for that purpose.

### **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<sup>23</sup> into other programmes (such as health or livelihoods) or they can be stand-alone programmes designed with the sole objective of achieving protection outcomes.

Specialized protection activities directly address the causes, circumstances leading to, and consequences of violations of IHL, IHRL, IRL and national legislation implementing such bodies of law.

These specialized protection activities should only be carried out by staff and volunteers with the required training and 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 activities may include immediate responses to alleged violations of relevant bodies of law or norms or ways of addressing the consequences of disasters, conflicts and crises, etc. in order to minimize the risk of further violations.

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, such as reinforcing individuals’ and communities’ positive coping mechanisms. 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 actively assessing and analysing protection concerns<sup>24</sup> and developing strategies to address them. Such strategies consist of

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<sup>21</sup> This definition is based on the Global Protection Cluster’s definition, also quoted in the IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action 2016, which further notes that some humanitarian actors use the terminology of “safe [and inclusive] programming” as synonymous with protection mainstreaming.

<sup>22</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 work. 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>23</sup> Defined in the IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action 2016 as: “Protection integration involves incorporating protection objectives into the programming of other sector-specific responses (i.e. beyond the protection sector response) to achieve protection outcomes.”

<sup>24</sup> Protection concerns are always present in situations of armed conflict, disaster and crisis; the aim of assessment and analysis is to establish the specific concerns in a particular situation.

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. These activities include influencing communities or authorities on specific issues, but are distinct from the broader ways of influencing on broader protection issues described in the third type of action.

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

This type of action builds on the first two types. In this type, if a Movement actor has the intention and the capacity to do so, they engage in efforts to promote an enabling environment that is conducive to the protection of people at risk 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 [Protection Policy of the ICRC](#), 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 Protection, Gender and Inclusion Policy ([PGI Policy](#)) similarly focuses on humanitarian diplomacy to amplify diverse voices and address specific needs and rights, and on persuading leaders to consistently prioritize the rights of people at risk and their equal access to humanitarian services.

Specific activities include advocating for humanitarian principles and aspects of protection 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.

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## **THE MOVEMENT’S “MINIMUM PROTECTION APPROACH”**

The minimum protection approach (MPA) is an approach to addressing protection risks that goes beyond “do no harm” and bridges mainstreaming and specialized activities.

In some contexts, a Movement actor may be focused on service provision (while always meeting the mandatory requirements of “do no harm” and protection mainstreaming) and may choose to build in further measures to reactively address any protection concerns identified by staff, volunteers, community members and affected people in the course of service provision. The key elements are to:

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

The MPA thus combines some key elements of protection mainstreaming (a, b and c) with a key element of specialized protection activities (d). This reactive approach allows Movement actors to ensure a basic level of reactivity to protection concerns, but does not engage them in designing a full protection programme, which would involve specialized, trained staff and volunteers proactively monitoring and addressing protection risks.

An extensive set of pre-conditions must be met for the MPA to be implemented effectively, as outlined in the guidance document.<sup>25</sup> National Societies should ensure that they have the necessary capacity to meet these pre-conditions and carry out the four main activities.

The MPA is fully compatible with protection, gender and inclusion (PGI) programming<sup>26</sup> and can and should be incorporated within it, for example using the PGI minimum standards to comprehensively meet individual's needs, ensuring consistent use of referrals.

It is equally compatible within the context of activities linked to the ICRC's protection mandate, for example ensuring referrals are included in the programming of National Societies working in immigration detention.

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## **BREADTH AND COMPLEMENTARITY OF MOVEMENT PROTECTION ACTION**

Each Movement component engages in the three types of protection action according to their mandate and expertise. Some roles are clearly assigned to a single component by its mandate.<sup>27</sup> In all other cases, Movement components should coordinate through dialogue, both within operations and in longer-term planning, to ensure their activities are complementary.<sup>28</sup>

The aim is not only to avoid duplication and potentially conflicting activities, but above all to leverage the strengths of each Movement component to achieve a greater overall impact through complementary action.

Movement components should also ensure complementarity between protection activities and related areas of work, in particular, mental health and psychosocial support services, community engagement and accountability, and whenever providing assistance to affected people.

### **National Societies' activities in protection**

National Societies commonly ensure that protection principles are mainstreamed throughout their programmes and operations (type 1 above). Furthermore, many National Societies have trained professional staff and volunteers providing dedicated, specialized services that aim to proactively prevent or respond to violations of rights, in line with the Professional Standards for Protection Work and other relevant protection standards (see type 2 above). In some circumstances, these activities are supported by the IFRC, ICRC and peer National Societies.

National Societies determine what protection activities to carry out based on what would be most appropriate for achieving protection outcomes for groups at higher risk. Although some groups are commonly identified as being at higher risk, it is vital that the specific protection risks in each context are analysed to identify the groups and individuals in greatest need of protection by a National Society's actions.<sup>29</sup> This identification should always be based on the people-centred approach described above.

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<sup>25</sup> Refer to the MPA guidance document available at: <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/protection-movement>.

<sup>26</sup> The [PGI Operational Framework](#), which implements the [PGI Policy](#) provides more detailed information on the complementarity between the MPA and PGI tools and approaches.

<sup>27</sup> For example, National Societies' role as auxiliaries to public authorities in the humanitarian field, the IFRC's role organizing, coordinating and directing international relief actions in accordance with the Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief, and the ICRC's role in armed conflicts under the Geneva Conventions.

<sup>28</sup> The roadmap to be developed will provide guidance on coordination issues specific to particular contexts.

<sup>29</sup> Surveys carried out in 2018, 2020 and 2023 provided data on the core specialized protection activities of National Societies, supported by the IFRC and ICRC. The most commonly identified activities targeted

Some of the most common specialized activities to support at-risk groups include (this list is illustrative, not exhaustive):

- providing comprehensive, victim- and survivor-centred support services through case management for victims/survivors of violations of fundamental rights, aiming to minimize risk of further violations
- mapping, designing and monitoring referral pathways to ensure access to safe and reliable protection services
- providing legal assistance to people at risk and victims/survivors
- establishing a safe space where at-risk individuals can make disclosures or share concerns regarding risks
- engaging in protection dialogue on individual and/or systemic issues with the relevant authorities
- designing and implementing a community-based project to address violence in the community.

### **IFRC activities in protection**

The IFRC's activities under its 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.

In line with its PGI Policy, the IFRC provides this support to National Societies in the areas of institutional development, programme and operations, and partnerships and advocacy. Some of the main activities include (this list is illustrative, not exhaustive):

- organizing, coordinating and directing the PGI aspects of international relief actions in accordance with the Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief<sup>30</sup> – including providing technical guidance on the three types of protection action described above, and ensuring operations are appropriately resourced.
- providing technical support to National Societies on prevention, risk mitigation and response with regard to protection issues in mainstreaming or specialized protection activities, both in emergencies and long-term programmes and services. This includes supporting National Societies in areas such as, but not limited to:
  - mainstreaming protection principles in their health services and other assistance to affected people
  - incorporating protection services into Humanitarian Service Points to assist migrants
  - consistently implementing safeguarding protocols at the community level.
- providing, when appropriate, and in coordination with the host National Society,<sup>31</sup> direct support to people at risk of or having experienced violations of relevant bodies of law.

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the following groups considered at risk: children; victims/survivors and people at risk of sexual and gender-based violence; people with disabilities who are at risk of, or have experienced, violence or exclusion; people separated from their families; and people at risk of being trafficked, or who have been trafficked.

<sup>30</sup> Based on the [IFRC's constitution](#).

<sup>31</sup> Appropriateness is established on the basis of the IFRC's constitution and the mechanisms set out in Seville 2.0. More specific guidance will be provided in the roadmap and on a case-by-case basis.

### **ICRC activities in protection**

Protection is the core of the ICRC's mandate, mission<sup>32</sup> and identity, and is the motivating force for its activities that aim to protect people's lives and well-being and secure respect for the individual.<sup>33</sup>

The ICRC divides its activities into two major categories: activities aimed at those responsible for violations, and activities designed to directly benefit affected individuals and communities. Some of its main activities include (this list is illustrative, not exhaustive):

- protection of people deprived of their liberty
- protection of the civilian population and persons *hors de combat*
- protection of the wounded and sick, and of medical personnel, facilities and vehicles
- the work of the Central Tracing Agency<sup>34</sup>
- persuading States and other actors to limit the use of force in accordance with the applicable legal framework and to adhere to and abide by IHL
- disseminating and preparing any development of IHL.

The ICRC also organizes and leads the development of overall guidance on core standards for protection work for humanitarian and human rights actors.<sup>35</sup>

### **ENABLING FACTORS**

#### **Strengthening institutional capacities for protection work**

To fully respect the Fundamental Principles, Movement components need to be fit for the purpose of implementing the types of protection action described above. This requires: (a) understanding and support at the leadership level, (b) the technical knowledge and capacity at all levels of the organization to carry out protection work, (c) sufficient human and financial resources to support this work.

It is equally essential that we foster an environment in each of our institutions which is safe, inclusive and accountable. This includes ensuring that the leadership, staff and volunteers reflect the diversity of the society they work in.<sup>36</sup>

While these factors are relevant for all Movement action, they are particularly relevant for comprehensive protection work – ensuring coherence between what we say and what we do.

#### **Partnership and learning for protection work**

The diversity of the Movement makes it uniquely positioned to address protection risks comprehensively. By taking full advantage of the complementarity of each component's mandate, expertise and capacities, and by learning from one another, we can achieve a greater overall impact.

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<sup>32</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>33</sup> Protection Policy of the ICRC.

<sup>34</sup> Restoring family links and clarifying the fate of the missing.

<sup>35</sup> The Professional Standards for Protection Work outline the minimum requirements that humanitarian actors should fulfil when carrying out protection activities. The ICRC ensures these standards are disseminated and known within the Movement.

<sup>36</sup> The statement in the Principle of Unity that National Societies must be “open to all” is an application of the principle of non-discrimination at the institutional level: meaning that there cannot be any barriers to recruitment in any components of the Movement, in order to reflect the community's diverse membership and composition – called “multitudinism” by Jean Pictet in his [commentary on the Fundamental Principles](https://international-review.icrc.org/articles/fundamental-principles-red-cross-viii) (<https://international-review.icrc.org/articles/fundamental-principles-red-cross-viii>). See also the 2019 [Statement on Integrity of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement](#).

The protection-related aspects of each component's mandate and role need to be widely understood and respected throughout the Movement in order to facilitate complementarity, and avoid any duplication, competitiveness or tension that would reduce our efficiency and ability to help affected people.

By establishing a common understanding of protection work, this framework aims to facilitate partnership and collaboration on protection issues between Movement components, and by extension also facilitate effective external collaboration on protection issues.