

34th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT

Open Pledge on

Enhance the protection and inclusion of persons with disabilities during situations of risks, including situations of armed conflicts and disasters

A) Objectives of the pledge

Among vulnerable groups, persons with disabilities are too often in great danger and risk in situations of armed conflict and disasters arising from natural hazards or human activity. Their specific needs are not always and not sufficiently included in emergency plans and in preparedness, response and recovery efforts. Their rights are often neglected before, during and in the aftermath of situations of risk and emergencies. In the course of evacuation, transportation or delivery of health and other services, persons with disabilities encounter barriers and difficulties. Some of them may then be unable to flee a given area, with a greater risk of abandonment. These persons are usually exposed to a higher risk of death, injury and impairments, and multiple vulnerabilities – as in the case of children, women or older persons with disabilities – could represent an additional element of complexity.

Considering,

- That “**Promoting disability-inclusive interpretations and implementation of IHL in complementarity with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**” is one of the topics addressed at the 34th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, and specifically by Commission I: Building a Global Culture of Respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL);
- **Resolution 1 “Bringing IHL Home” from the 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent**, recalling that women, men, girls and boys of different ages, disabilities and backgrounds can be affected differently by armed conflict, and these differences need to be considered when implementing and applying international humanitarian law;
- **Article 11 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which** deals with situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies and requires that “States Parties take all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk”;
- **UN Security Council Resolution 2475 (2019)** on the situation of persons with disabilities in armed conflict, calling upon Member States and parties to armed conflict to protect persons with disabilities in conflict situations and to ensure they have access to justice, basic services and unimpeded humanitarian assistance;
- **UN General Assembly Resolution 78/195 (2023)**, encouraging States to take effective and appropriate steps to facilitate the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of disasters;



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- **The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030**, prioritizing the empowerment of persons with disabilities in publicly leading and promoting gender equitable and universally accessible response, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction approaches;
- **The Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action**, reaffirming the determination to take all steps to promote the protection, safety and respect for the dignity of persons with disabilities in situations of risk.
- **The Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance (2007)**, adopted by Resolution 4 of the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and specifying that assistance be provided to disaster-affected persons without “any adverse distinction (such as in regard to [among others], disability)”.
- **The International Law Commission’s Draft Articles on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters (2016) and its commentaries**, stressing how “Response to disasters shall take place (...) taking into account the needs of the particularly vulnerable”, including people with disabilities;
- That in a framework of a growing number of armed conflicts, disasters of natural or human-made origins and health emergencies, the rights, safety and needs of persons with disabilities deserve effective protection through a more determined engagement by the international community;

B) Action Plan

In order to strengthen the protection and inclusion of persons with disabilities during situations of risk, the signing parties commit to undertake the following actions by the year 2028:

- Encourage all parties to armed conflicts to take all appropriate measures, in accordance with applicable international law obligations, to ensure the protection of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including armed conflicts and disasters;
- Advocate for the inclusion of the rights, needs and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in all national plans and actions aimed at preparedness, response and recovery in situations of armed conflicts, and disasters;
- Ensure the adoption of the principle of precaution and of a disability-inclusive and human rights-based approach, including accessibility considerations, at all stages of humanitarian relief, disaster prevention and risk management, recovery and reconstruction;
- Call for non-discrimination and equality of access with regard to protection and services, including rehabilitation, mental health and psychosocial support;
- Integrate the specific barriers and risks faced by persons with disabilities in international humanitarian law and international disaster law dissemination and training activities, including in military and operational manuals, through the development of content-related models and standards;
- Organize an expert meeting/conference, at the national/regional/international level, bringing together representatives of the State armed forces, national emergency management and civil protection authorities, persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the ICRC, and the IFRC;



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- Compile the findings of the expert meeting/conference into a final report/guidance document aiming at raising awareness and illustrating how the specific barriers and risks faced by persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of disaster, may be integrated in operational training, education, doctrine, planning and conduct of military or humanitarian relief operations;
- Strengthen cooperation and institutional relations between state authorities, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the ICRC and the IFRC, aimed at providing support for people with disabilities and their representative organizations, including through their involvement in activities discussed and undertaken by National IHL Committees and/or other relevant bodies.

C) Indicators for Measuring Progress:

Proposed evaluation criteria for assessment to be held in 2028:

- Diversity of persons with disabilities participating in national plans and actions, e.g. in terms of impairments, sex, age, barriers faced, including in planning, arrangements and speaking roles (where relevant) in coordination mechanisms, platforms, forums, seminars and events etc., organized on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian and development contexts;
- Number of programs and projects that apply the IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action and other similar tools for inclusion of persons with disabilities;
- Incorporation of a disability-inclusive perspective inclusion in relevant national government policies on development and/or humanitarian action;
- Dissemination of a report, guidelines, or other types of non-binding guiding tool on the topic of the protection of persons with disabilities in contexts of armed conflict and disasters among all relevant actors in the field and in particular in the training and operational contexts of armed forces and civil protection personnel.

D) Resource implications:

N/A