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Building the Movement's strategic and operational preparedness to address harmful information in humanitarian settings

DRAFT ZERO RESOLUTION

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DRAFT ZERO RESOLUTION

Building the Movement's strategic and operational preparedness to address harmful information in humanitarian settings

The Council of Delegates,

recalling that “harmful information” is an umbrella term referring to any instance in which the spread of information, online or offline, has the potential to cause harm, including: misinformation (false information spread by individuals who believe it to be true), disinformation (false information disseminated intentionally for specific gain), malinformation (true information spread with malicious intent to cause various effects, including harm), and hate speech (all forms of expression that spread, incite, promote or justify hatred or violence based on identity traits including gender, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation),

reaffirming that the Fundamental Principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality underpin all action of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement), and *recognizing* that the spread of harmful information directly threatens the Movement's ability to uphold and communicate these principles, eroding public understanding of and confidence in principled humanitarian action,

recognizing that the spread of harmful information, online and offline, polarizes the information environment, leading to humanitarian consequences, by creating divisions, amplifying tensions, propagating societal harm, and undermining trust within and between communities, which further exacerbates their suffering,

expressing alarm that the spread of harmful information is affecting the Movement and its staff and volunteers by compromising their safety and hindering humanitarian access, and *recognizing* that it can also harm individuals and communities, particularly vulnerable people, by undermining social cohesion, trust and coping mechanisms during crises,

emphasizing that the spread of harmful information has the potential to disrupt the Movement's core humanitarian work, overwhelming its capacities and putting pressure on critical resources, especially if it lacks the necessary tools, capacities and preparedness, and *acknowledging* that this may decrease operational capacity significantly, with serious consequences for people affected by armed conflict, disaster or other crises or emergencies,

acknowledging that harmful information affecting any single component of the Movement puts the integrity, reputation and credibility of the entire Movement at risk, undermining public trust in the humanitarian nature of its activities and Fundamental Principles, and further *highlighting* that its impact threatens operational continuity, public support and fundraising capacities,

recalling that the Movement's response to the spread of harmful information does not consist of narrative control or censorship – any Movement response must be consistent with fundamental rights as well as the Fundamental Principles – and further *reaffirming* that its actions are based on preserving the space for principled humanitarian action, preventing harm, protecting dignity, and providing trusted and reliable humanitarian information,

recognizing the community-led efforts that National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (National Societies) are currently undertaking to address the impact of harmful information,

including volunteer-led risk analysis, information environment monitoring, rumour-tracking, trust-building efforts and localized responses, and *acknowledging* that these efforts build on existing frameworks, and approaches – such as the Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC), the Safer Access Framework (SAF), the preparedness for effective response (PER) approach, community engagement and accountability (CEA) approaches, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) mechanisms, and volunteer protection mechanisms – and should remain the foundation for any Movement-wide response,

recognizing also that harmful information manifests differently in different contexts, such as in armed conflict, disaster or other crises or emergencies, and that it can encourage hatred and discrimination, particularly against marginalized and vulnerable groups, and *highlighting* that responses must therefore be adapted to the applicable legal frameworks and to local realities, including the political environments, media landscapes, community trust levels, and cultural norms, and to the specific dynamics of armed conflict, disaster or other crises or emergencies,

recognizing further the essential role of staff and volunteers as trust brokers who represent the Movement while working in proximity to communities at all times, and *reaffirming* that their role is key to bridging the gaps between institutional messaging and community realities, and that their unique position in their communities makes them both particularly valuable and particularly vulnerable to the impact of harmful information,

expressing concern that the rapid expansion of digital connectivity, the widespread use of social media and messaging applications, and the rise of generative artificial intelligence have fundamentally transformed the scale and reach of harmful information and the speed of its spread and have made it all the more urgent for the Movement to address this issue,

acknowledging that National Societies face significant political challenges when operating in today's complex and polarized information landscapes, and therefore play a vital role in designing and implementing localized, culturally sensitive and community-based approaches to address harmful information, guided by global Movement coordination and aligned with the Fundamental Principles as well as domestic legal frameworks and international law,

recognizing the significant role of actors outside the Movement – such as technology companies, media platforms, detection and provenance agencies, media literacy and media development organizations, local groups, think tanks, policy organizations, academic institutions, and investigative organizations – in influencing and helping to mitigate the scale and reach of harmful information and the speed of its spread, further *underscoring* the need to have stronger humanitarian dialogue, advocacy and other external engagement, in line with Resolution 2 of the 34th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, "[Protecting civilians and other protected persons and objects against the potential human cost of ICT activities during armed conflict](#)",

acknowledging the fundamental role of the Movement Hub on Harmful Information, created in 2026 and hosted by the Swiss Red Cross, in spearheading coordination efforts, development of capacities and sharing of resources and tools to address the impact of harmful information on humanitarian action, and *recalling* that the Movement Hub is structured around workstreams dedicated to crisis management, capacity development, thematic alignment and external engagement,

1. *calls* for a multidisciplinary, Movement-wide approach to addressing harmful information, and *recognizes* that it is not solely a communications challenge but requires the active engagement of all parts of each organization, including the leadership, operations, human resources, humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy, community engagement teams, and others, as needed;

2. *also calls* for co-ownership and leadership of National Societies in the response to harmful information, and *emphasizes* the need to foster community-rooted approaches that respect cultural contexts, comply with domestic regulations, and uphold the Fundamental Principles;
3. *calls* on the Movement components to actively engage with the Movement Hub on Harmful Information to ensure it can fulfil its objective of supporting the Movement in addressing the impact of harmful information, in order to preserve the necessary space for principled humanitarian action, deepen the Movement's awareness of harmful information risks, and strengthen capacities, collaboration and synergies within the Movement;
4. *calls* for harmful information to be addressed through existing frameworks and approaches – such as the OCAC, the SAF, the PER approach, the CEA approach, MHPSS mechanisms, and others – and for a comprehensive response across all Movement operations;
5. *also calls* for specific measures to support staff and volunteers and build their resilience and capacity as trust brokers and front-line responders to harmful information, including the development of staff and volunteer-specific guidance and other resources;
6. *calls* on the Movement components to enhance risk awareness through the development and implementation of training programmes and preparedness and contingency planning exercises tailored to diverse audiences, including leadership, staff and volunteers, covering media literacy, digital risk awareness, critical thinking skills and the capacity to detect, assess and respond to harmful information;
7. *also calls* on the Movement components to build on existing mechanisms to support the safety and well-being of staff and volunteers, including duty of care frameworks, volunteer insurance and protection mechanisms, MHPSS resources (including through the Movement MHPSS Hub), safeguarding policies, referral pathways, and security and operational risk management guidance;
8. *further calls* on the Movement components to keep communities at the centre of the design of all measures to detect and address the spread of harmful information, by embedding trust-building and community engagement measures into humanitarian communication and action;
9. *further calls* on the Movement components to collaborate on early warning responses and processes, and where possible, share detection, provenance, and trust-monitoring tools (like the Community Trust Index) and other relevant mechanisms;
10. *urges* the Movement components to build internal consensus and foster stronger collaboration on addressing harmful information through peer exchanges and communities of practice within the Movement;
11. *calls* on the Movement components to foster partnerships with academic institutions and research organizations to deepen understanding of harmful information, including its dynamics and dissemination and strategies for mitigation, and to develop innovative tools and evidence-based approaches to address this growing challenge, building on existing Movement research, including the 2026 [World Disasters Report](#) by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the 2025 framework by the International Committee of the Red Cross, [Addressing Harmful Information in Conflict Settings](#), and several National Society studies and initiatives, and further *calls* for mechanisms such as the Red Cross Red Crescent Research Consortium (RC3) to

be leveraged to ensure there is coherent, evidence-based and collaborative research on this topic across the Movement;

12. *recommends* that the Movement components explore the development of a shared framework that sets out common principles, commitments and methods for Movement responses addressing harmful information;
13. *calls* on the Movement components to prioritize harmful information and its impact on humanitarian action as a key agenda item for the 35th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and foster engagement with States and other stakeholders on mitigating the impact of harmful information, through strengthened humanitarian diplomacy, to further ensure it is addressed as a critical humanitarian priority.