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Call for Respect and Support for Principled Humanitarian Action

(Resolution 5 of the 2024 Council of Delegates)

&

Statement on Integrity of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

(Resolution 2 of the 2019 Council of Delegates)

PROGRESS REPORT

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PROGRESS REPORT

Call for Respect and Support for Principled Humanitarian Action & Statement on Integrity of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a combined report presenting progress on the implementation of Resolution [CD/24/R5](#) “Call for respect and support for principled humanitarian action” and the final reporting on Resolution [CD/19/R2](#) “Statement on Integrity of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement”.

Despite an increasingly challenging environment, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement) has made meaningful progress in promoting respect and support for principled humanitarian action by intensifying dialogue with States and other stakeholders, strengthening legal and policy frameworks, enhancing dissemination and practical application of the Fundamental Principles and reinforcing integrity through stronger prevention, detection and response mechanisms as well as through learning and peer exchange processes.

The report also identifies remaining challenges and lessons learned, highlighting the importance of sustained leadership, institutional culture, continuous learning and operational experience in translating the Fundamental Principles into practice while maintaining the trust of affected communities, authorities and other stakeholders. Overall, it confirms that principled humanitarian action and integrity are mutually reinforcing and that continued collective investment in both is essential to preserve the Movement’s ability to deliver trusted, effective, safe and principled humanitarian action.

INTRODUCTION

Humanitarian action has always taken place in a politicized environment and been subject to political instrumentalization. Yet the current geopolitical landscape is placing increasing pressure on principled humanitarian action. Over the past two years, challenges such as political and societal polarization, the politicization of aid, restrictions resulting from administrative and bureaucratic impediments, sanctions and counter-terrorism measures and the spread of dehumanizing rhetoric and harmful information have further intensified.

There are more than 130 armed conflicts now taking place around the world that are having devastating effects. The consequences for civilian populations are so profound that it is not possible to mount an adequate humanitarian response. Threats and attacks against humanitarian personnel continue to increase at an alarming rate. Other situations of violence, disasters, epidemics, the effects of climate change and other humanitarian crises continue to exacerbate vulnerabilities, humanitarian needs and operational risks. Together, these trends only reinforce the relevance of the resolution “Call for respect and support for principled humanitarian action” and underscore the importance of States respecting and supporting principled humanitarian action to enable humanitarian organizations to operate safely and effectively.

Against this backdrop, ongoing transformations of the aid sector (including humanitarian reform/reset, localization and funding cuts) have renewed debates about the continued relevance, effectiveness and limitations of humanitarian principles in an environment of scarce resources and shrinking humanitarian space, which increasingly focus on how humanitarian organizations can preserve the trust, acceptance and legitimacy needed to reach people in need.

These wider debates highlight the importance of preserving the Movement's own identity, ensuring a common understanding and consistent application of the Fundamental Principles and safeguarding principled humanitarian action, as also emphasized in the IFRC Renewal and the ICRC Institutional Strategy 2024–2027. In 2025, the 60th anniversary of the proclamation of the Fundamental Principles provided an important opportunity to reflect on their relevance today and reaffirm their central role in guiding collective action. These reflections have also informed preparations for the 2026 Council of Delegates (CoD).

1) BACKGROUND

This progress report combines reporting on two resolutions, recognizing their inherent interdependencies: “Call for respect and support for principled humanitarian action” and “Statement on Integrity of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement”. Taken together, they represent two mutually reinforcing dimensions of the same objective; the protection of vulnerable people depends as much on the integrity of the organizations that serve them as on the environment in which those organizations operate.

The findings are based on a review of measures undertaken across the Movement since the 2024 CoD. They draw on information provided by National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (National Societies), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) through a dedicated survey, bilateral consultations and a review of relevant documentation, data and key event outcomes. In addition, the analysis reflects key achievements and lessons learned from the implementation of Resolution CD/19/R2 since its adoption in 2019.

2) PROGRESS

The analysis of progress is structured according to the resolution on principled humanitarian action (CD/24/R5), which calls on the ICRC, the IFRC and National Societies to take action in four key areas. It describes progress achieved across the Movement, remaining challenges, lessons learned and areas requiring further collective action, illustrated by practical examples from different operational contexts.

A) ADVOCATING FOR RESPECT FOR PRINCIPLED HUMANITARIAN ACTION, SAFETY AND ACCESS THROUGH EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

Building public understanding of the Fundamental Principles

The period since the adoption of Resolution CD/24/R5 has seen sustained efforts across the Movement to promote principled humanitarian action and strengthen respect for the Fundamental Principles among States, civil society and other stakeholders. The 60th anniversary of the Fundamental Principles in 2025, together with the Appeal to States, provided an important framework for coordinated advocacy, dialogue, research and policy work, and reflection at the local, national, regional and international level.

The anniversary was leveraged through public communication campaigns, including World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day in 2025 and 2026, to reaffirm that the Fundamental Principles remain the ethical and operational foundation of the Movement's humanitarian action while drawing attention to increasing pressures on humanitarian actors and calling on States to respect and support principled humanitarian action.

Engaging States and international partners

The anniversary also provided opportunities for high-level engagement with key stakeholders. In October 2025, the Austrian Red Cross and Switzerland co-organized a commemorative event in Vienna with the diplomatic community, bringing together the vice-presidents of the ICRC and the

IFRC and academic experts to examine the continued relevance of the Fundamental Principles in the digital age. In November 2025, a high-level event organized in Brussels brought together European policy-makers, international organizations, and civil society and private-sector representatives to discuss the practical relevance of principled humanitarian action in today's humanitarian environment. In December 2025, Colombia, Switzerland, the ICRC, the IFRC, the Mali Red Cross, the United Nations (UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) convened a panel discussion during UN Humanitarian Week in New York to promote the Appeal to States.

Through its Global Cyber Hub in Luxembourg, the ICRC continued to raise awareness of the humanitarian implications of cyberspace, including the application of the Fundamental Principles in the digital sphere, and to engage with governments, diplomats, academics, think tanks and technology companies on the impact of geopolitical and technological developments on principled humanitarian action.

These efforts were further complemented by the global and regional launch events for the [World Disasters Report 2026: Truth, Trust and Humanitarian Action in the Age of Harmful Information](#). The report highlights the importance of understanding and addressing harmful information and dedicates a chapter to upholding humanitarian principles in this era. It also provides practical recommendations on strengthening information resilience, safeguarding humanitarian principles and rebuilding trust. To further equip the Movement components for the age of harmful information, the resolution "Building the Movement's strategic and operational preparedness to address harmful information in humanitarian settings" will be presented to the CoD in 2026.

Protecting humanitarian personnel and humanitarian space

As highlighted in the Appeal to States, the lack of respect and support for principled humanitarian action puts humanitarian personnel at increased risk while carrying out their work. National Societies have been particularly affected; since 2023, more than 100 staff and volunteers have lost their lives, over 90 of them as a result of armed conflict and violence. In response to this alarming trend, States adopted the [Declaration for the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel](#) in August 2025 and established the associated Group of Friends, whose Secretariat is hosted by the IFRC. Several high-level diplomatic initiatives held in 2026, including the one-year anniversary of the Declaration during the UN General Assembly, a high-level conference hosted by Ireland and the European Union (EU) in October and a special event hosted by the IFRC in December with States and National Societies, have helped maintain momentum. The protection of humanitarian personnel will also feature prominently at the 2026 IFRC General Assembly through workshops and at the CoD through a dedicated spotlight session. In addition, the proposed CoD resolution "Restoring humanity: Our collective efforts to uphold international humanitarian law" places strong emphasis on the protection of humanitarian personnel while reaffirming the need for greater respect for international humanitarian law (IHL) more broadly.

These efforts are complemented by the [Global IHL Initiative](#), launched in September 2024 by Brazil, China, France, Jordan, Kazakhstan and South Africa in partnership with the ICRC to foster a collective global commitment to strengthening the implementation of and respect for IHL. At its core, the Global IHL Initiative is guided by the principle that the rules of war are fundamental to preserving humanity in times of armed conflict. These rules must be upheld universally, impartially and consistently. The initiative, which is neutral and impartial, also emphasizes that the primary responsibility for implementing and upholding IHL lies with States.

Strengthening national engagement

Many National Societies organized domestic public communication campaigns, public events and other outreach activities, both in preparation for and during operations and emergencies, to demonstrate the continued relevance of the Fundamental Principles and their practical contribution to humanitarian access, community trust and the protection of humanitarian action.

“The Viet Nam Red Cross has found it effective to mainstream the Fundamental Principles into major nationwide campaigns and movements organized annually, such as *Tet Nhan ai* (Lunar New Year of Humanity), Month of Humanity, voluntary blood donation and other community-based humanitarian activities.” **Viet Nam Red Cross**

Movement components intensified their collective and bilateral humanitarian dialogue with State authorities, armed forces, community and religious leaders, the media, academic institutions, local and international partner organizations, diplomatic missions, donors and other stakeholders on the importance of respecting and protecting principled humanitarian action as part of their conflict preparedness efforts. In its bilateral protection dialogue with authorities and weapon bearers, the ICRC also sought to ensure safe access to communities in need and foster acceptance of principled humanitarian action.

Lessons learned

Some Movement components reported common challenges in promoting and protecting principled humanitarian action. These included increasingly complex political and security environments, polarized societies, the spread of harmful information that distorts public perceptions, misuse of the emblem, limited financial resources, external pressures from donors, authorities and communities and increasingly restrictive legal and regulatory frameworks.

Reported good practices highlighted the importance of sustained and proactive engagement and emphasized the value of mainstreaming the Fundamental Principles across all areas of work, making them tangible through individual stories, operational examples and academic research and demonstrating their practical relevance.

“One challenge is how to make people other than ourselves care about the Fundamental Principles. Communicating about them is one thing, and mobilizing support for them is another. The attention economy is such that something like the Fundamental Principles does not break through easily unless it is tied to a piece of news that gets attention. Globally speaking, we are in a totally different situation in terms of perception; we control even less how we are perceived because of social media and the lack of control we have over what information is spread about us, including whether we adhere to the Principles. Lastly, humanitarian principles and ideals seem to have lost traction as the world has become more polarized and calcified. People are expected to take a position, not to remain neutral.

The communication campaign on neutrality aims to be relatable in terms of the local context and asks questions like ‘would you help the big boy who continuously bullied you at school... if he was in isolation in a prison cell?’ or ‘would you help the person who swindled your grandmother over the phone... if he was shot in the leg?’. Internally, we try to stay focused on the importance of ‘perception’ to explain that it is not enough to say that we are principled; it is not even enough to BE principled. We need to go the extra mile to make sure that we are actually perceived as such.” **Norwegian Red Cross**

B) ENABLING PRINCIPLED HUMANITARIAN ACTION THROUGH STRONGER LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND THE AUXILIARY ROLE

Strengthening National Societies’ legal frameworks and dialogue with authorities

Resolution CD/24/R5 calls on Movement components to further the dialogue with public authorities with a view to strengthening the Movement’s independent humanitarian action and

decision-making, including by strengthening the legal base of National Societies in domestic law, in particular in relation to their role as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field.

To support these efforts, the IFRC and the ICRC developed a Revised Model Law on the Recognition of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as part of the 2026 CoD resolution “Reinforcing the mandate and capacities of National Societies through strengthening their legal base”. This Revised Model Law is intended to serve as a benchmarking tool for those National Societies aiming to work with their public authorities to develop or update their recognition instrument. It also supports National Societies in continuing to comply with the Statutes of the Movement, particularly Article 4 on the ten conditions for recognition of National Societies. To reinforce the requirement that National Societies must be able to operate in accordance with the Fundamental Principles, the Revised Model Law now incorporates the full text of the Principles as set out in the Statutes of the Movement.

Complementing this work and to further support dialogue with public authorities, a guide for parliamentarians is being developed to provide practical recommendations for strengthening a National Society’s legal base. The guide will include provisions safeguarding the Fundamental Principles and explain the National Society’s auxiliary role in the humanitarian field. It complements the existing [Guide for Parliamentarians to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement](#), which introduces the Movement and its three distinctive emblems and explains ways in which parliamentarians can support its humanitarian mandate.

The auxiliary role in practice

In addition to legislative reform, sustained engagement with public authorities is essential to ensure that legal and policy frameworks are translated into operational practice. Some National Societies reported using memoranda of understanding and other formal cooperation arrangements with public authorities not only to clarify roles and responsibilities, but also to strengthen the latter’s understanding of the Movement, its distinct mandates and the Fundamental Principles. Beyond facilitating operational cooperation, these agreements have also proven to be valuable tools for humanitarian diplomacy, helping safeguard National Societies’ neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian role while reinforcing an enabling environment for principled humanitarian action.

Remaining legal and regulatory obstacles

Bureaucratic and administrative requirements continue to restrict the space for principled humanitarian action, and counter-terrorism measures remain a significant challenge for impartial humanitarian organizations. The adoption of [UN Security Council Resolution 2761](#) in December 2024 further consolidated humanitarian exemptions as a default component of UN financial sanctions regimes. Likewise, most EU and United States financial sanctions programmes now include standing humanitarian exemptions or general licences. Nevertheless, challenges remain in their practical implementation, and many national counter-terrorism laws still lack well-framed standing humanitarian exemptions for the exclusively humanitarian activities of impartial humanitarian organizations carried out in accordance with IHL. Continued engagement with States therefore remains essential to ensure that counter-terrorism and sanctions frameworks do not impede principled humanitarian action.

Ultimately, strengthening legal frameworks depends on sustained dialogue with public authorities, which can be particularly challenging in politically polarized or conflict-affected environments. Some National Societies nevertheless reported successfully addressing these

challenges through humanitarian diplomacy and sustained engagement, emphasizing their humanitarian mandate, auxiliary role and principled way of operating.

“One important lesson learned is the value of proactively engaging with new political actors and decision-makers through humanitarian diplomacy. Early dialogue helps ensure a common understanding of the Red Cross mandate, Fundamental Principles and operational independence. Promoting the principle of impartiality has also required careful management in a politically polarized environment. Situations involving political parties seeking to organize blood donation campaigns or other civic initiatives have required the Hungarian Red Cross to maintain a clear and visible commitment to neutrality and impartiality while continuing to engage constructively with diverse stakeholders.

The National Society has successfully managed situations involving political and civic initiatives related to blood donation by maintaining clear communication and adherence to the Fundamental Principles. This experience may provide useful guidance for other National Societies operating in similarly complex political environments.” **Hungarian Red Cross**

C) REINFORCING THE DISSEMINATION, LEARNING, CULTURE AND PRACTICE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES WITHIN THE MOVEMENT

In an increasingly challenging environment, Movement components have continued to invest in strengthening internal dissemination, knowledge and application of the Fundamental Principles while reinforcing public trust in and understanding of principled humanitarian action. As observed in the survey: “A key challenge is to continuously demonstrate that the Fundamental Principles are not limitations but enablers – providing clarity, direction and legitimacy and strengthening our ability to act effectively in a complex and often politicized environment.”

Contemporary learning and dissemination

Building awareness, understanding and knowledge of the Fundamental Principles is essential to ensuring their application at all levels of each component’s organization and fostering a culture of principled humanitarian action. While dissemination, induction and training on the Principles remain core activities across the Movement, high volunteer and staff turnover means that continuous investment in dissemination is required. Movement components also recognize that, in addition to long-standing training materials that provide basic induction training in the Fundamental Principles, there is also a need for updated resources that reflect contemporary challenges faced at different levels of each organization.

“Another success factor is combining long-standing materials with new, updated content that connects the Fundamental Principles to today’s context and to different roles within the organization. The recently launched anthology is one example; it uses personal stories, historical perspectives and contemporary reflections to make the Principles tangible and relatable. The book illustrates that the Principles are not just words on paper but a shared compass.

We also recommend investing in diverse formats aimed at different audiences, such as workshops, digital learning, communication materials and targeted resources for leadership and volunteers, to reinforce understanding from multiple entry points.” **Swedish Red Cross**

To strengthen the dissemination and practical application of the Fundamental Principles, the global Fundamental Principles Toolkit (from 2015) has been updated, using modernized dissemination materials and case- and scenario-based exercises that address both traditional and contemporary challenges in applying the Principles. Its modular design enables users to integrate selected resources into existing training programmes, use the Toolkit as a comprehensive learning package or guide leadership discussions based on complex operational

dilemmas. New resources, such as an online knowledge exercise for understanding and applying the Fundamental Principles, have also been developed and will be incorporated into the Toolkit. The aim is to complement the Toolkit's core content by collecting additional learning resources and materials available across the Movement.

Leadership commitment and institutional culture

It is essential for leaders across the ICRC, the IFRC and National Societies to lead by example, demonstrating their commitment to abide by the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence in all of their words, behaviours and actions. Continuous leadership engagement has been fostered, including through the IFRC's Fundamental Principles Global Think Tank (GTT),¹ to reflect strategically on the interpretation and application of the Fundamental Principles today. Recognizing the need to strengthen understanding and practical application of the Fundamental Principles across the Movement, the GTT also developed a Fundamental Principles knowledge exercise, which was piloted with the Argentine Red Cross, the Spanish Red Cross and the IFRC Secretariat and will be made available to all Movement components. The IFRC Youth Commission has already used the exercise to explore generational perspectives on the Fundamental Principles.

With the support of the GTT, the IFRC developed two documents to strengthen understanding and application of the Fundamental Principles. The first explores the adoption of traditional and management-based approaches to the Fundamental Principles. The second, entitled "Global Polarization and the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement", is a reflection paper designed to stimulate discussion on the relevance and application of the Fundamental Principles in today's increasingly polarized global environment.

The IFRC's global leadership also reflected on contemporary challenges to principled humanitarian action through dedicated Governing Board sessions, including one on the principle of neutrality, and similar discussions were held across country and regional delegations. They helped bring to light both context-specific and cross-cutting challenges facing its membership.

Similarly, the ICRC leadership organized an all-staff discussion on the practical application of neutrality, bringing together more than 1,500 colleagues to engage in open reflection and discussion. More broadly, the ICRC Assembly² consistently placed the Fundamental Principles, and principled humanitarian action more generally, at the centre of its discussions and decisions, whether in relation to specific operational contexts, the review of institutional doctrines and policies or the evolving geopolitical, financial and humanitarian environment and its implications for the ICRC and the wider Movement.

During the European National Societies Leadership Meeting in Monaco in October 2025, more than 100 leaders discussed how to uphold principled humanitarian action, including through dedicated sessions on contemporary challenges and dilemmas arising in situations of armed conflict and migration.³ The meeting also marked the launch of a regional initiative on principled humanitarian action in Europe. This leadership dialogue provided a useful model for future leadership exchanges on the Fundamental Principles in other regions.

Experiences shared by National Societies further emphasized the critical role of leadership in fostering a principled culture. To ensure the consistent application of the Fundamental Principles, some National Societies also highlighted the importance of integrating them into institutional policies, codes of conduct and decision-making processes so that they become an integral part of organizational culture.

¹ The GTT is composed of current and former National Society and IFRC experts and leaders from across the Movement. The ICRC also participated in some of its deliberations.

² The Assembly is the supreme governing body of the ICRC.

³ See the progress report on the resolution "Migration Strategy for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement 2024–2030" ([CD/24/R2](#))

“The commitment of governance and management is crucial to fostering an institutional culture based on integrity, accountability and respect for the Fundamental Principles. Messages and decisions conveyed by leaders promote ownership at all levels of the National Society.

Reviewing or updating some internal documents, including the Code of Conduct and operational guidelines, has helped ensure their compliance with the Fundamental Principles.” **Central African Red Cross Society**

Learning from operational practice and building contemporary knowledge

As the humanitarian environment evolves, the Movement’s understanding and practical application of the Fundamental Principles must continue to adapt. The National Societies of [Afghanistan](#), [Ethiopia](#), Lebanon, Somalia, Syria and [Ukraine](#) have shared their experiences in a series of case studies and webinars co-convened by the British Red Cross,⁴ generating valuable lessons. These experiences consistently highlighted the importance of building long-term trust with authorities, communities and all parties to conflict, including non-State armed groups, to secure humanitarian access and acceptance. They also underscored the need to balance the auxiliary role with operational independence, strengthen humanitarian exemptions in sanctions and counter-terrorism frameworks and invest in sustained dialogue, perception analysis and proactive communication to counter harmful information and protect humanitarian space.

These operational insights are echoed in the findings of the ICRC report *Delivering for Conflict-Affected People*, to be published in September 2026 and informed by research conducted with several National Societies. The report found that humanitarian practitioners across diverse contexts emphasized the value of complementary approaches while reaffirming that humanitarian principles remain essential for navigating an increasingly politicized and constrained operational environment and for assisting and protecting those most affected by conflict. The ICRC also examined how principled humanitarian action can help create conditions conducive to peace and published a [report](#) on the topic, drawing on its operational experiences in Colombia, Northern Ireland and Yemen.

“The primary challenges stem from the security and political environment, given that the country has endured deep political division for over 14 years. Despite the highly challenging political division, the National Society has preserved its neutrality, allowing it to work effectively with both authorities and local communities in all governorates.

The power of institutional unity: The overarching lesson learned for other National Societies is the vital importance of operating under one unified management, one collective plan and one voice to safeguard humanitarian space in conflict zones.” **Yemen Red Crescent Society**

The Safer Access Framework (SAF) has continued to support National Societies in translating the Fundamental Principles into operational practice. Across the Movement, many National Societies, supported by the ICRC, have further integrated the SAF into preparedness, security risk management, operational communication, community engagement and dialogue with the authorities. In the Americas, National Societies convene every two years to exchange experiences in applying the SAF. At the 2026 meeting in Costa Rica, 17 National Societies shared lessons learned from operating in increasingly complex “multi-crisis” environments. These exchanges, grounded in the Fundamental Principles, enabled participants to identify coordinated regional and cross-border approaches aimed at increasing acceptance and mitigating operational risks. They also reinforced peer learning and strengthened coordinated support among Movement partners.

⁴ Further details of the British Red Cross global research project titled “Delivering Principled, Local Humanitarian Action in Fragile and Conflict Settings” can be found [here](#).

During the 2025 presidential elections, the **Chilean Red Cross**, in its auxiliary role, was requested to take on the responsibility of providing care and support to vulnerable groups, delivering first aid and offering general guidance throughout the process. As political tensions increased, it applied the SAF by mapping key stakeholders, strengthening operational communication with authorities and security forces and reinforcing notification procedures. These measures enabled the safe deployment of intervention teams during election-related mass gatherings with no security incidents involving volunteers, demonstrating the value of proactive engagement and coordinated preparedness.

Evidence shows that maintaining trust and acceptance with affected communities and other stakeholders remains essential, particularly in this era of harmful information and increasing societal polarization. Some Movement components have therefore updated their social media policies and practice to safeguard the perception of their principled humanitarian action. [The IFRC Community Trust Index](#), an evidence-based tool for measuring and fostering trust in humanitarian action, has now been implemented by National Societies in 15 countries, providing valuable insight into community perceptions and how National Societies can maintain and improve trust. Linked to the Fundamental Principles, the Index looks at the perceived neutrality and independence of National Societies. Across these countries, National Societies received a strong average score of 8.15/10 for trust. However, the score for perceived neutrality (one of the components of the Index) was 7.31/10, indicating that there is still room for improvement in promoting understanding of the Movement's neutral and independent role. Some National Societies also reported practical initiatives to counter harmful narratives and reinforce trust and acceptance.

“Since the escalation of the crises in the Middle East, the Italian Red Cross has witnessed the spread of harmful narratives online concerning the role of the Movement and the principle of neutrality. In March 2025, the National Society organized a webinar on ‘The Importance of Neutrality in the Current Humanitarian Landscape’. The event featured contributions from members of the Movement, academics and journalists. It was designed for all Italian Red Cross volunteers, with the aim of addressing and countering distorted narratives while deepening awareness of the operational dimensions of the principle of neutrality.” **Italian Red Cross**

Principled humanitarian action in the digital age

Movement components have given increased attention to the implications of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), and how to ensure their use remains consistent with the Fundamental Principles. These issues featured prominently during the 60th anniversary of the Fundamental Principles and will be further explored through the proposed 2026 CoD resolution on the principled and accountable use of information and communication technologies in humanitarian action, ensuring that technological innovation continues to be guided by the Movement's humanitarian values and Fundamental Principles. Individually, Movement components are also developing internal policies and strategies (such as the ICRC [AI Policy](#) and the IFRC AI strategy) and guidance anchored in the Fundamental Principles that aims to ensure the responsible use of AI in humanitarian work, in accordance with humanitarian values.

D) STRENGTHENING INTEGRITY THROUGH CONTINUED LEARNING, SHARING AND IMPROVEMENT

Against the backdrop of an increasingly challenging humanitarian environment, further compounded by funding contraction and rising humanitarian needs, maintaining strong emphasis on integrity and accountability has remained a priority for the Movement and its components. In

this context, preserving the trust of affected communities, donors and other stakeholders is more important than ever.

Community of practice and collective learning

The need to enhance exchanges, dialogue, the sharing of good practices and peer learning among Movement components on the topic of strengthening integrity was a key call to action for all National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC both in the resolution on principled humanitarian action (CD/24/R5) and the resolution on Movement integrity (CD/19/R2). Accordingly, shortly before the 2024 CoD and International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (International Conference), a [Movement-wide community of practice \(CoP\) on strengthening integrity](#) was launched. It marked an important achievement, as it provided, for the first time, a dedicated platform for staff and volunteers across the Movement to engage on integrity-related topics and to share and learn from each other. In the first year, the CoP doubled in size to over 315 members from 83 National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC. Engagement also increased through regular exchanges and the inclusion of a Fraud and Corruption Prevention sub-community with 114 members.

A total of 76 posts were published in the Strengthening Integrity CoP, and an additional 53 in the Fraud and Corruption Prevention sub-community. The posts received between 22 and 199 unique views, and the content included a balanced mix of conferences, discussion questions, policy consultations, peer-learning sessions and surveys, fostering both knowledge dissemination and collaborative learning. The draft Policy Toolkit for National Societies received 76 unique views, and webinar recordings, conference reports and safeguarding resources were also widely consulted, highlighting the CoP's role as an important repository for integrity-related guidance and practical tools. Going forward, CoP members will be encouraged to continue sharing their experiences and knowledge and to further develop activities within the CoP.

Another notable achievement was the Integrity Conference hosted by the Kenya Red Cross Society in October 2025 and supported by the Netherlands, American, Swedish, British and German Red Cross Societies, along with the IFRC and the ICRC. The conference brought together approximately 200 participants per day over the course of three days, representing 64 National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC, to address topics such as ethics, integrity and localization, leading with integrity, the role of audit, digital fraud and AI, and safeguarding. This collective learning opportunity reinforced the need to provide peer support and share expertise across the Movement. While funding constraints often limit opportunities for such in-person exchanges, Movement components are actively exploring ways to integrate integrity discussions into existing meetings and conferences.

Strengthening policy and practice to prevent integrity issues

In addition to these collective efforts, Movement components have individually made significant progress in strengthening organizational integrity, accountability and safeguarding measures since 2019. Of the 90 National Societies participating in IFRC Unified Planning reporting, 60 indicated that they had strengthened their integrity and reputational risk management mechanisms in 2025. Key initiatives include revising and adopting codes of conduct, anti-corruption and safeguarding policies and measures to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. For example, the number of National Societies with a protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) policy increased from 26 in 2021 to 76 in July 2026, and an additional 27 National Societies have such a policy in draft form. The number of National Societies with a child protection policy increased from 24 in 2021 to 66 in July 2026, and an additional 18 have one in draft form. Similarly, since the last CoD held in 2024, the ICRC has updated its child safeguarding policy (March 2025) and launched its policy on the prevention of and response to harassment, abuse of power and discrimination (June 2026). The IFRC

Secretariat adopted its revised PSEA policy in December 2024 and has undertaken roll-out and awareness-raising sessions among staff globally to ensure its implementation.

“Reviewing and updating key internal documents was not just a technical process; it required careful coordination and open dialogue between headquarters and branches. Ensuring that different perspectives, needs and day-to-day realities were fairly reflected took time and continuous engagement. Another important aspect was making sure that updated policies were not simply shared but genuinely understood and applied in practice. This meant investing additional effort in communication, explanation and follow-up across all levels of the National Society. Building a real sense of ownership among staff and volunteers was also essential. Rather than being a quick step, it was a gradual process that relied on trust, inclusion and regular interaction.” **Red Cross Society of Georgia**

To ensure that policies are effectively implemented, many National Societies have adopted or strengthened whistleblower protection mechanisms, internal accountability systems and independent oversight bodies, such as ombudspersons and ethics committees. For example, 27 National Societies have adopted the Integrity Line as their whistleblower and case management system, and a further 40 National Societies are looking into using it. Training programmes on safeguarding, diversity, inclusion and humanitarian principles have been widely conducted to enhance awareness and capacity among staff and volunteers. Additionally, financial controls, risk management and reporting mechanisms have been strengthened to address fraud, corruption and the misuse of resources.

Preventive efforts have also been supported through the [IFRC Capacity Building Fund \(CBF\)](#). Since the 2021 overhaul of the CBF, 34 National Societies have received a total of 41 integrity grants for the specific purpose of strengthening integrity, transparency and accountability management. While the ICRC and IFRC National Society Investment Alliance (NSIA) does not grant funding specifically for integrity, it has supported National Societies in strengthening integrity through funding for preventive measures, accountability, financial management, internal controls, procurement, governance, audit and management information systems. Across the portfolio, approximately CHF 1.7 million went into outputs of this kind between 2019 and 2025, with roughly CHF 280,000 used strictly for accountability and anti-fraud work, internal control and compliance frameworks, financial and accounting manuals, and anti-fraud and corruption risk management.

“In recent years, the Egyptian Red Crescent Society has made significant efforts to strengthen integrity and uphold principled humanitarian action while expanding its emergency response capacity to address growing humanitarian needs across the region. In line with the Movement’s Statement on Integrity, the Egyptian Red Crescent has implemented a National Society Development in Emergencies Plan, which includes reviewing and updating codes of conduct for staff and volunteers, providing continuous training on the Movement’s Fundamental Principles and integrating these principles into workshops and capacity-building programmes for volunteers, staff and beneficiaries alike. These efforts aim to reinforce ethical behaviour, enhance transparency and accountability and ensure that our humanitarian work continues to meet the highest standards of integrity while adapting to emerging challenges and evolving humanitarian risks.” **Egyptian Red Crescent Society**

Leadership commitment and good governance have been identified as essential to maintaining and strengthening integrity. Accordingly, emphasis has been placed on better equipping Movement leaders to lead effectively and ensure that their organizations operate with integrity. For example, the updated Movement Induction Course (MIC) dedicates one of its core sessions to governance and integrity, ensuring that new leaders are introduced to relevant concepts, practices, standards and responsibilities from the start and providing opportunities for peer

learning. Furthermore, the new IFRC certification framework, now being finalized, is based on interconnected pillars covering leadership, financial management, safeguarding and integrity. Together, these pillars support the continued strengthening of National Societies by promoting effective governance, accountability and organizational excellence. In addition, new onboarding materials for National Society governing boards and further support for the full governance cycle have been developed, with a strong focus on integrity and risk oversight as key aspects of good governance.

“The Armenian Red Cross Society has learned that strengthening integrity is most effective when embedded within broader organizational development efforts rather than addressed as a standalone compliance initiative. The combination of statutes revision, policy development, organizational assessments and Movement coordination has contributed to stronger accountability and principled action. The National Society’s recovery process also highlighted the importance of leadership commitment, coordinated Movement support and clear organizational priorities. The Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) and Branch Organizational Capacity Assessment (BOCA) processes provided valuable support in translating broad organizational challenges into practical development actions at both headquarters and branch level.” **Armenian Red Cross Society**

For the IFRC, in 2025, as part of broader work on an ethics framework, the Governing Board adopted a new code of conduct for its members. Furthermore, in 2026, a new IFRC Secretariat Ethics and Integrity Roadmap has been formulated in a process led by the new Ethics, Risk and Safeguards Department, and the Risk Management Policy and its Operational Risk Management Procedures have been updated to reflect current developments. Improvements have also been made to the conflict of interest declaration process, which has been streamlined to make it more user-friendly and easier to monitor. These efforts aim to further foster a culture of transparency, trust and institutional integrity and compliance.

The ICRC undertook various initiatives to strengthen institutional integrity. In 2025, the ICRC’s Risk and Assurance Charter was revised, clarifying roles and responsibilities, including for governance. The ICRC’s risk taxonomy was also updated and reflected in training, reinforcing a common understanding of risks for all staff. Moreover, the ICRC placed emphasis on strengthening misconduct risk assessments at delegation level (particularly with regard to fraud risks and sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment risks) and the adoption of targeted mitigation measures at programme level, which include operations implemented in partnership with Movement and other operational partners. Misconduct prevention efforts are led in the field by a network of code of conduct facilitators appointed from within delegation leadership teams. This decentralized system is supported at headquarters by the dedicated ethics team, which is part of the ICRC’s Ethics, Risk and Compliance Office, along with the deputy regional directors of the Department of Operations acting as integrity focal points – a new role created in 2026. Together, these activities reflect the ICRC’s commitment to maintaining rigorous governance and oversight standards and practices, especially in a period of significant institutional and external pressure, ensuring that its resources are used effectively and that it retains the trust of its donors and partners and the people it serves.

Addressing challenges and learning lessons

As mentioned above, greater attention has been given to preventing and mitigating integrity issues. This preventive focus and proactive approach to integrity risk management has been complemented by increased emphasis on detecting early signs of integrity issues and providing timely support when they arise.

At the IFRC Secretariat, a new procedure and coordinated system for addressing institutional issues affecting National Societies has been developed around three core pillars – analysis, steering committee and knowledge (ASK). This new approach ensures global coherence in prevention and anticipatory action to avoid potential risks of integrity situations. It addresses a

gap and complements the IFRC Compliance and Mediation Committee (CMC), which is a governance body established under the IFRC Constitution to assist IFRC bodies in taking appropriate steps to resolve integrity issues involving a National Society or any IFRC body. Since its launch in 2024, the ASK approach has been applied in 36 situations and achieved a high rate of resolution with the full involvement of National Societies. The IFRC has also included a dedicated window in the CBF to support National Societies experiencing a period of institutional crisis. Such funding has proven to be highly relevant and effective in ensuring dedicated attention is paid to reducing risks and in enabling timely intervention to prevent crisis escalation and safeguard local humanitarian capacities.

Despite the progress achieved, the implementation of integrity measures across the Movement has faced numerous challenges, including limited leadership commitment in some instances, political influence and the need for stronger support mechanisms to address gaps. Structural and contextual barriers, such as financial constraints, limited human resources, high staff turnover and complex security environments, have further complicated efforts. Additionally, cultural and logistical challenges, such as a weak reporting culture, limited trust and difficulties in disseminating and enforcing policies across vast and diverse networks, have hindered progress. Despite these obstacles, Movement components have made strides in revising policies, training staff and volunteers and fostering a culture of integrity, although consistent implementation and resource allocation remain critical areas for improvement. Efforts have also focused on improving learning and analysis by tracking recurring patterns across risk situations and generating insights into emerging trends.

“Lessons learned:

1. Policies alone are not enough: Adopting policies is an important step, but their effective implementation requires resources, committed leadership, regular training and ongoing monitoring.
2. Leading by example is essential: The most significant progress has been observed when leaders at all levels have demonstrated a visible commitment to integrity, transparency and accountability.
3. Complaint mechanisms build trust: Communities, staff and volunteers are more likely to report concerns when they trust in confidentiality, impartiality and appropriate complaint handling.
4. Integrity must be considered a collective institutional responsibility: Strengthening integrity is not solely the responsibility of control or audit functions. It must be integrated into governance, human resources, operations, finance and programmes.” **Cameroon Red Cross Society**

3) IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Implementation of the resolution “Call for respect and support for principled humanitarian action” will continue to be monitored, with enhanced data collection integrated into existing monitoring systems. Further progress will be reported to the 2028 CoD. As continued engagement with States and other external stakeholders remains essential to promoting respect and support for principled humanitarian action, the dialogue with them will continue in preparation for the 2028 International Conference.

While this is the final progress report on the “Statement on Integrity of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement”, efforts to strengthen integrity will continue. In particular, progress made through the Strengthening Integrity CoP will be reported to the 2028 CoD as part of the progress report on the resolution “Call for respect and support for principled humanitarian action”.

4) CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report shows that meaningful progress has been achieved in fostering respect and support for principled humanitarian action, both within the Movement and with States, and in strengthening integrity across all Movement components. It also acknowledges remaining challenges and identifies good practices to inform the way forward, as these efforts must be sustained and further strengthened.

In an increasingly politicized, polarized and transactional environment and a shifting humanitarian landscape, principled humanitarian action, trust, access, safety and security must remain central to the Movement's engagement with States, affected communities and other stakeholders. The Movement needs to maintain its positioning as a reference in the sector, drawing on its strong statutory and regulatory frameworks, its long history of practising these principles in very diverse contexts on a local and global scale and its ability to navigate ethical and operational dilemmas while adapting to emerging challenges.

Internally, the Movement must ensure that the Fundamental Principles continue to shape institutional culture, decision-making and operational practice. This requires continued investment in the updating of tools and mechanisms, leadership engagement, operational learning and peer support. Creating an active global network of Fundamental Principles practitioners would be key to sharing innovation and learning methodologies and co-creating tools adapted to emerging challenges.

The Fundamental Principles should continue to be understood and interpreted not only as operational guidance, but also as the Movement's shared ethical foundation and call to action, rooted in humanity. Principles such as humanity and voluntary service remain the driving force of the Movement, defining its identity, culture and ability to attract and motivate people to serve a common humanitarian purpose.

With regard to integrity, significant efforts have been made to prevent and mitigate risks, strengthen policies and systems and better detect and manage issues when they arise. Experience sharing, expertise and learning across the Movement have already improved through the Strengthening Integrity CoP and other learning events. However, maintaining and strengthening integrity is a continuous responsibility, and it must remain high on the leadership agenda and be translated into policy and practice improvements. Continued engagement in the CoP, sustained leadership and technical exchanges, including at Movement events, and, where possible, in-person peer learning should be prioritized despite the challenging funding environment.