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Council of Delegates 2011 Resolution 7 – National Societies Preparing for and Responding to Armed Conflict and Other Situations of Violence

IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

**Document prepared by
the International Committee of the Red Cross in consultation/cooperation with
National Societies and the International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

Geneva, October 2013

**Council of Delegates 2011 Resolution 7 – National Societies Preparing for and
Responding to Armed Conflict and Other Situations of Violence**

IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

Executive summary

Several National Societies reported advancement in their efforts to adopt appropriate operational security risk management systems primarily through the local adaptation and application of the Safer Access Framework as well as other security training and briefings for staff and volunteers and the development or revision of security policies, plans and guidelines.

National Societies report an increase in their provision of insurance for their staff and volunteers, which is an important achievement. Globally, the ICRC and the International Federation are working together to support National Societies in acquiring insurance coverage for both staff and volunteers.

Building on the fact that Movement coordination is strong in certain regions, the ICRC, the International Federation and the National Societies need to strengthen their efforts in the area of context-specific complementary contingency planning for armed conflict and other situations of violence.

There is scope for National Societies to further define their mandate, roles and responsibilities in situations falling below the threshold of international humanitarian law (IHL) application. To the same end, opportunity exists for National Societies, as part of their permanent dialogue with their respective governments, to strengthen the domestic legislation governing their statutes, policies, agreements and plans in order to establish the required framework to enable them to provide effective assistance and protection for populations affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence.

National Societies and the International Federation continue to work with the ICRC on the development of a practical guide to support National Societies in preparing and responding in armed conflict and other situations of violence.

Introduction

Resolution 7, “National Societies Preparing for and Responding to Armed Conflict and Other Situations of Violence”, was adopted at the Council of Delegates on 26 November 2011 in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Resolution states that “to enhance access to people and communities affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence and to respond effectively to their needs, it is essential that all the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement) work together in preparedness, response and recovery, to maximize their respective capacities and competencies.”

Within the Resolution, there are eight decisions on which all components of the Movement were requested to act where relevant and which, if implemented, would strengthen the ability

of National Societies to carry out their mandate to respond to armed conflict, natural disasters and other emergencies, including internal strife and other situations of violence. National Societies were requested to consider the decisions in their strategies, plans and objectives where relevant.

As required in section V of the Resolution, this report was prepared to document progress made by Movement components in support of the eight decisions and is based on feedback from 28 National Societies, as well as a number of ICRC delegations and International Federation country offices¹ and their associated headquarters.

Note: The use of the terminology “armed conflict and other situations of violence” in this report is in line with the wording that was agreed for Resolution 7 at the 2011 Council of Delegates. All contributions from Movement components received in the development of this report reflect the terminology submitted by each contributor. Further information on this topic can be found under Decision 7 in this document.

Progress achieved and challenges encountered

Decision 1 – *Encourages National Societies to intensify their commitment and efforts to adopt appropriate security/risk management systems, and to take other concrete measures to increase their safer access in armed conflict and other situations of violence. This includes the need to enhance the operational application of the Fundamental Principles and other relevant Movement policies as well as to obtain insurance coverage for staff and volunteers working in crises, to adequately compensate them for possible injury, including psychological trauma/stress, or death in the line of duty.*

Although two National Societies reported that they had not yet adopted a security/risk management system, most National Societies indicated that efforts to intensify their adoption of relevant security/risk management systems were under way. They reported undertaking the following activities to be developed further in this area: training (security, safety, Safer Access); security briefings; development/revision of security guidelines, tools, plans and procedures; evaluation, review and analysis of past National Society responses to identify gaps in security.

The British Red Cross noted that, as a voluntary sector emergency planning and response organization supporting statutory authorities in the UK, it is required by law to maintain emergency response plans for all national risks, prioritized by likelihood and impact. At an Area level, the British Red Cross uses and interprets those plans on the basis of local circumstances and in conjunction with local communities and may consider developing its own risk register as part of its Community Emergency Plan.

The feedback received gave a number of examples where Movement components have worked together on strengthening security management systems, as indicated below.

¹ In April 2013 the ICRC sent a questionnaire to all National Societies, ICRC delegations and International Federation focal points requesting an update on progress made with regard to the eight decisions listed in the Resolution.

In Colombia, a framework agreement for coordination and cooperation has been signed by the Colombian Red Cross Society (CRC), the ICRC and the International Federation. A clause in the framework agreement provides for the creation of a security committee responsible for ensuring the application and implementation of the multilateral agreement on coordination and security, with a view to reducing security risks in humanitarian work carried out by the Movement in Colombia.

In Colombia, there is also a coordinated system of notifications every two weeks of ICRC/CRC/PNS movements to armed actors.

The ICRC, the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) and the International Federation have established a Security and Access Working Group to share information and analyses of security related developments, to map accessible and non-accessible areas for the provision of humanitarian assistance, to develop common assessments, to determine the root causes of security incidents, to develop protocols and procedures and to support the ARCS in conducting its own risk assessment and plan of action to strengthen its safer access when providing responses in its challenging context.

The Philippine National Red Cross, in coordination with the ICRC and the International Federation, has developed “Safety and Security Guidelines” for its staff and volunteers. The Guidelines will be used when responding to armed conflicts in the area.

Through the work of a Joint Committee on Emergency Preparedness and Response, the Sudanese Red Crescent, in cooperation with the ICRC and the International Federation, developed three draft documents: Field Security Guidelines, Identification Policy and Code of Conduct, which are to be finalized in English by the end of June 2013.

The ICRC has prioritized the importance of considering the operational security risk management concerns of the host National Society as well as of National Societies working internationally in the contexts in which it is operating. It has also recognized the advantages of having complementary and coordinated Movement approaches to operational security risk management, while recognizing distinct and separate responsibilities and liabilities. With this in mind, discussions have progressed with National Societies and the Federation Secretariat to further explore the advantages and challenges of working together in this important area.

In addition to the International Federation’s work on developing new security tools, shared with all National Societies, it has also:

1. Translated the Minimum Security Requirements and Security Framework – the document establishing the International Federation’s security baseline – into the official International Federation languages and shared it with all National Societies;
2. Sent a message² to all National Societies on the theme of security that highlighted the importance of continuing to focus on actions that support the safety and security of all staff and volunteers.³

² Sent to all National Society Presidents and Secretary Generals by the International Federation Secretary General on 20 November 2012.

³ Further actions recommended to be undertaken by National Societies: nomination of a security focal point responsible for training, sharing and promoting security awareness at all levels within the National Society; to

As outlined in that communication, in recent years the International Federation has developed a number of security initiatives and tools under the “Stay Safe” concept. Those tools are available to all National Societies in a number of different languages and include:

- “Stay Safe” online security training which is mandatory for all Federation staff;
- “Stay Safe” security manuals for delegates, nationals staff and managers;
- “Stay Safe” security booklet for volunteers, with training material and lesson plans;
- Electronic security incident database;
- Federation Minimum Security Requirements and self-assessment tool.

On a global level, since 2011 the International Federation has produced a number of relevant documents including, “Protect, Promote, Recognize. Volunteering in emergencies.”

Many National Societies indicated that enhancement of the application of the Fundamental Principles was an activity embedded within the full scope of their operations and activities. Additionally, they promote among governments and partner agencies the importance of carrying out their activities in full compliance with the Fundamental Principles. The Australian Red Cross, for instance, provides comprehensive training for all staff and volunteers, key partner agencies and the government and the broader public on the Fundamental Principles as they relate to its work.

As related to insurance coverage for National Society staff and volunteers, the International Federation reports that approximately 28 National Societies have their own insurance for volunteers.⁴ As of June 2013, 58 National Societies insured volunteers using the International Federation’s global volunteer accident insurance,⁵ which covers almost 45,000 volunteers and thus represents a 62% increase since the beginning of 2012.⁶

Many National Societies raised money locally to fund the insurance costs of the International Federation global insurance plan. They included the National Societies of Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Indonesia, Mali, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Peru, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay. In other countries funding support was received from International Federation projects or the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF).

record security incidents through the use of International Federation and National Society electronic databases; to include insurance for volunteers as a National Society priority.

⁴ Most of these National Societies are Partner National Societies in Europe, Asia and the Americas, but also include the National Societies of Mexico, Colombia and Argentina.

⁵ The Secretariat of the International Federation established an insurance scheme for volunteers to assist member societies following a decision at the 2005 General Assembly: “*To encourage National Societies to make sure that they have adequate accident insurance coverage for volunteers, when they carry out Red Cross and Red Crescent activities.*” The global accident insurance scheme is intended to be used by National Societies which do not already have insurance and will cover volunteers carrying out activities on behalf of their National Society. For the cost of only CHF 1 a year, this insurance provides some basic coverage in case of death or disability.

⁶ In 2011, 32 National Societies insured their volunteers using the International Federation insurance scheme.

As of June 2013, the French Red Cross was the only known Partner National Society that was partly financing the acquisition of insurance for volunteers in Congo, Mauritania and Myanmar.

In the feedback received for this report, the majority of National Societies reported that their staff and volunteers were covered by an insurance scheme. In a number of cases, National Societies reported that they had insurance but that coverage was limited to staff members only, while those making use of the Federation's global insurance only had cover for their volunteers. Two National Societies reported that they did not have an insurance scheme to cover staff or volunteers. In one case this was attributed to the cost involved.

The Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) reported that its insurance coverage system is applicable to PRCS staff and has only limited coverage for volunteers. The PRCS has made use of the global insurance coverage of the International Federation for its volunteers, mainly those who are actively involved in the technical programmes. In 2013 it insured 2,000 volunteers using the International Federation global scheme.

Globally, the ICRC and the International Federation are committed to working together to support insurance coverage for a greater number of National Societies.

Decision 2 – Urges National Societies, where necessary, to engage in a dialogue with all concerned governments on the need for access to all populations affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence and to exert influence, where possible, on all those who can influence access to beneficiaries to respect the National Societies' role to provide neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian services, (as defined by the Fundamental Principles), with the support and involvement of the ICRC as appropriate.

Most National Societies reported that they are able to engage in a dialogue with their governments through their participation in various relevant national committees, which gives them opportunities to express the need for access to all affected people and communities as well as to discuss key issues of humanitarian concern.

For instance, the Australian Red Cross has a National International Humanitarian Law (IHL) Committee with representatives from all major government departments, which provides a prime opportunity for dialogue on a number of fronts. Generally, this type of commitment can also be used to promote the role and principles of the Movement as well as international humanitarian law.

Other circumstances can present unique opportunities. For example, the ongoing dialogue conducted by the Australian Red Cross with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has recently also included correspondence aimed at influencing Australia's position on certain issues of relevance in its role as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (such as urging humanitarian access to all people and communities affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence). The "Guide for Parliamentarians" that has been produced in several languages (available on the Australian Red Cross website) is an effective support tool for such dialogues

The Bulgarian Red Cross has representatives that participate as members of the National Coordination Commission and its headquarters is engaged in dialogue with all relevant

governmental structures on the need for humanitarian access to all people and communities affected by armed conflict or other situations of violence.

The Canadian Red Cross takes part in training with various branches of the Canadian Armed Forces. This includes training sessions on the Movement and its different components as well as the Movement's relationship to and interest in international humanitarian law (IHL). Similarly, the Australian Red Cross provides a four-day pre-deployment training programme on IHL and the Movement for the Australian Armed Forces, which takes place twice a year. It also participates in various military exercises that demonstrate the role of a National Society in a conflict scenario.

National Societies generally report that the means through which they exert influence on all those who can influence access to beneficiaries is through promotion and dissemination of the role of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the importance of applying the Fundamental Principles.

The Danish Red Cross has issued operational guidance on humanitarian diplomacy that emphasizes access to people and communities as an objective for its humanitarian diplomacy. Through its legal framework courses, the Australian Red Cross is able to influence non-governmental organizations and other key stakeholders, who can in turn influence access to beneficiaries in locations where they work.

Since 2011 the British Red Cross Northern Ireland Area has been working with the ICRC to further its understanding on how to apply the Fundamental Principles – particularly neutrality and impartiality – more fully in its provision of services to ensure it is perceived as complying with those Principles. Additionally, it is applying the Safer Access Framework, which has helped it to ensure that the most vulnerable in Northern Ireland have access to humanitarian services.

Decision 3 – Urges National Societies, the ICRC and the International Federation to continue to explore and analyse emerging trends and challenges to humanitarian action during armed conflict and other situations of violence, with a view to making such shared analyses the basis of coordinated contingency planning for the provision of rapid, effective and coherent response to the humanitarian needs of people and communities affected, while also strengthening their resilience.

National Societies reported the following means through which they explored and analysed emerging trends and challenges to humanitarian action:

- Regular meetings involving all Movement components to share information, identify incidents, analyse trends and coordinate activity, e.g. in Azerbaijan, the ICRC reports that it exchanges its humanitarian situation analysis with Movement partners operating in that country;
- Risk assessment: While some National Societies indicated that risk assessments were completed on an ongoing basis, others indicated that it was a challenge to ensure that they were carried out systematically;
- Incident monitoring and media tracking.

Another approach, taken by the Canadian Red Cross, was to create a standing Conflict and Ad-hoc Humanitarian Response Working Group to undertake ongoing contextual analysis.

The International Federation reported using the Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change (YABC) initiative to analyse relevant trends among young people and promotes the mapping of relevant incidents using “Stay Safe” tools. Moreover, it includes relevant information every year in the World Disaster Report.

While a few National Societies indicated that they had a comprehensive contingency plan in place within their National Society, most indicated that their plans were at an intermediate stage of development.

In order to enable coordination and contingency planning for the provision of rapid, effective and coherent response in such situations, the Bulgarian Red Cross maintains special funds which are available when needed.

While in relatively few cases, a complementary and coordinated Movement approach to contingency planning has been implemented, most National Societies which responded did not report following this approach.

Moreover, with regard to external coordination and contingency planning, some National Societies reported that they maintain a dialogue with relevant government authorities and as a result of these linkages they were able to respond effectively to various humanitarian needs in affected communities.

With regard to employing contingency planning to meet the needs of people and strengthen resilience of affected communities, many National Societies reported seeking to meet this objective by training volunteers to serve in their own communities, involving the communities in decision-making related to programming and response activity as well as developing projects with community resilience objectives.

The Serbian Red Cross reported that it conducts simulations, desk-top exercises and training courses at all levels of the National Society, together with local branches and local communities.

The Nicaraguan Red Cross involves the community, community leaders and local institutions in the coordination of field activities. The National Society reports that as a result, the beneficiaries help to ensure that aid materials are stored and distributed safely; it also supports the people involved in managing the provision of assistance. Also with regard to meeting humanitarian needs and promoting community resilience, two National Societies reported that they had hosted events related to the Health Care in Danger project.

The ICRC is continually improving its own contingency planning approach and has identified the importance of establishing practices that consistently include the National Society as well as other Movement components operating in the context in a collective process that is particularly, but not exclusively, related to armed conflict, internal disturbances and tensions.

The International Federation has produced a revised contingency planning guide that builds on Movement-wide experience. The simple steps outlined in the guide are the distillation of years of good practice. The revised guide provides support for disaster management practitioners in developing joint scenarios on the basis of shared understanding and contingency plans which are simple, participatory and supported by preparedness actions that have been identified as a result of the contingency planning.

The International Federation reported that National Societies use the Federation's Vulnerability Capacity Assessment (VCA) tools and integrate Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities. It promotes Prevention of Violence programmes with National Societies.

Decision 4 – *Encourages National Societies to further define their mandates, roles and responsibilities in armed conflict and other situations of violence within their statutory and legal base instruments, as appropriate, and to promote their role broadly, both within their National Society, and with external actors and communities.*

While some National Societies cited the finalization of their Statutes, the passage of the Red Cross Act and emblem legislation as examples of progress made in support of this decision, for many other National Societies who provided feedback for this report, these initiatives remain work in progress.

In a number of instances, National Societies cited ICRC support in the development or revision of their statutes and legal base tools. In Sudan, the ICRC provided support for the Sudanese Red Crescent in the development and refinement of a reference document on the National Society's role in armed conflict and other situations of violence.

In South Sudan, the process of establishment of the South Sudan Red Cross Society (SSRC) was marked by formal recognition of the new National Society's roles and mandates in armed conflict and situations of internal disturbances and tensions. Of particular significance were the 2012 South Sudan Red Cross Society Act, signed by the President of the Republic on 9 March 2012, and the SSRC Constitution adopted by the National Society's first General Assembly on 5 October 2012.⁷

With regard to the internal and external promotion and dissemination of their roles and responsibilities in armed conflict and other situations of violence, several National Societies reported the training of staff and volunteers, as well as the holding of regular meetings with relevant stakeholders (government representatives, media, community leaders) to clarify and promote their mandate, roles and responsibilities in such situations.

For example, the Central African Red Cross Society promotes awareness of its role among the general public and civilian authorities at special events, as well as among the armed forces and through its first-aid work with weapon bearers.

The German Red Cross (GRC) reported that in 2012/13, several one-day in-house training courses were conducted on its auxiliary role and the Fundamental Principles. The workshops were part of a broader approach to interpreting the GRC's auxiliary role and to operationalizing the Movement's Fundamental Principles. They were not designed to define the GRC's mandate, role and responsibilities in armed conflict and other situations of violence as its mandate, role and responsibilities are defined in the Statutes of the Movement, particularly in Article 3. By the end of March 2013, a total of seven workshops had been successfully implemented at the national headquarters, addressing senior staff and subject-matter experts from all departments, the Presidential Committee and the Presidential

⁷ By decision of the ICRC Assembly of 18 June 2013, the South Sudan Red Cross Society was recognized as the 189th National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in the Movement.

Council, the National Society's management and regional dissemination officers. Follow-up procedures (including processes for further interpreting both concepts and for integrating them into the GRC's federative structure) are currently under way.

The Australian Red Cross trained more than 13,600 people in international humanitarian law, the role of the various components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and key areas of humanitarian concern in 2011-2012, with 312 sessions and 74 public events taking place across the country. The Australian Red Cross also conducts compulsory training on the mandate, role and responsibilities of the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and international humanitarian law for all Australian Red Cross staff and volunteers across the country.

Decision 5 – *Invites the ICRC and the International Federation to work closely with National Societies to define how the mandates, roles and responsibilities of National Societies in armed conflict and other situations of violence may best be reflected in National Societies' statutory and legal base instruments and to advise National Societies engaged in revising their statutes accordingly.*

During the reporting period from November 2011 until June 2013, the Joint ICRC/International Federation Statutes Commission⁸ (Joint Statutes Commission) has worked with nearly 50 National Societies that are engaged in revising and strengthening their legal and statutory base instruments.

Since its establishment as an autonomous Society, the newly recognized South Sudan Red Cross Society (SSRC) has been faced with ongoing armed conflict and ethnic violence in different parts of South Sudan. The ICRC and the International Federation, as well as the Joint Statutes Commission were intensely involved in the development of the new National Society's legal and statutory base instruments, which are intended to reinforce its mandate and role to respond in such contexts.

The Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) operates in a State affected by armed conflict. A significant effort to revise the National Society's constitution has been made by the ARCS in the past two years. Working in close dialogue with the ICRC Delegation in Kabul and with the Joint Statutes Commission, its new constitution was adopted in December 2012. A dialogue is currently ongoing between the ARCS and the relevant public authorities, the aim being to support the adoption of a new Afghan Red Crescent Society law, which is expected to further contribute to the creation of a legal environment conducive to reinforcing the ARCS's mandate and safer access by the National Society.

Apart from a few National Societies that indicated that their statutory and legal base instruments had been in place for some time, many National Societies reported that their work in this area was ongoing, in a number of cases with the involvement and support of other Movement components and of the Joint Statutes Commission.

⁸ To help National Societies carry out their mandates, the Joint Statutes Commission for National Society Statutes (JSC) provides support for National Societies by ensuring that they work efficiently and adhere at all times to the Fundamental Principles by strengthening their legal and statutory base instruments. In this process, the JSC makes reference to agreed standards within the Movement, which are formulated respectively in the Model Law on the recognition of National Societies and in the guidance document for National Society Statutes.

The International Federation reported providing support for National Societies in this area by providing guidance on the development of an enabling environment for volunteers using the Volunteering Policy and Resolution 4 of the 2011 International Conference as well as “Legal issues related to volunteering: Toolkit for National Societies.” It also indicated that it provides advice and direct support through its Zone offices and regional and country delegations using existing tools.

In 2013 the International Federation will commence a project in cooperation with five National Societies in the Middle East and North Africa to review national laws and procedures for regulating international humanitarian assistance in situations of crises that do not amount to armed conflict. Several workshops at the country level and one at the regional level are also planned to discuss the findings and potential next steps.

Decision 6 – *Recommends* that National Societies, as part of their permanent dialogue with their respective governments, work towards strengthening domestic legislation, policies, agreements and plans in order to establish the framework required to enable them to provide effective assistance and protection to populations affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence.

Many National Societies who reported on this decision again cited actions taken in support of decisions 2, 4 and 5. Most respondent National Societies indicated that they maintain a dialogue with relevant government authorities or did so when an issue arose that needed to be addressed. An example of this was provided by the Australian Red Cross, which has included in its dialogue with government issues surrounding the Health Care in Danger campaign, domestic terrorism legislation, the implementation of cluster munitions legislation and the promotion of United Nations Security Council Resolutions relating to gender and conflict.

Specific references, particularly to strengthening policies, agreements and plans, were not elaborated on by the National Societies that responded to the questionnaire.

Decision 7 – *Invites* the components of the Movement to continue to develop a practical guide, to further clarify the term “other situations of violence” and to strengthen the capacity of all National Societies to prepare for and respond to armed conflict and other situations of violence – based on the Fundamental Principles, the Statutes of the Movement, relevant Movement policies and current National Society experience, as a valuable contribution towards building a Movement approach in this area.

In late 2011 the ICRC began involving National Societies and the International Federation Secretariat in the development of a practical guide, as referred to in this decision. Extensive consultation processes and engagement strategies with over 50 National Societies took place through direct mailings to National Society leadership, through ICRC delegations or as a result of numerous National Societies attending specific events that featured discussions on safer access.⁹ Through these processes and on the advice of the Project Advisory Team, it was decided to focus the guide on the Safer Access Framework and its application. The

⁹ Health Care in Danger expert workshops were held in 2012 and 2013 (to date) in Egypt, Mexico, Oslo and Tehran; Seminar on Communication 2012; Global Communication Forum 2011.

practical guide now takes the form of a Safer Access Practical Resource Pack comprising a number of print, electronic and audio-visual products. Some of these products have already been completed, while others are still being developed and will be finalized in 2014. To complement the resources and as part of its ongoing capacity-strengthening commitment to National Societies, the ICRC will commit its technical expertise and invite some of its operational partner National Societies and others with experience of responding in armed conflict and other situations of violence to work together to strengthen National Societies' capacity to operate in such contexts.

Many National Societies reported that they continued to contribute to the development of the practical guide. National Societies also reported that their contribution to supporting this decision lay in the development, implementation or revision of actions identified in their respective contexts to apply the Safer Access Framework elements (e.g. context and risk assessment, the development of context-specific contingency plans, security guideline development, etc.).

The Safer Access Project Advisory Team (PAT), which consists of representatives from the Canadian, Colombian, Nepalese and Ugandan Red Cross Societies, the Palestinian Red Crescent and the Federation Secretariat have provided close consultation on the progress and focus of the practical guide and given specific input on a wide range of issues related to its development. They represent National Societies operating in an array of contexts, which has been helpful for the further refinement of the Safer Access Framework and the development of the practical guide on how to apply it.

On a broader level, approximately 20 National Societies have participated in the Movement Reference Group on Safer Access since it was established in May 2011. The Group has provided broad advice on several project issues.

Moreover, a number of National Societies have contributed "Selected Experiences," two-page documents outlining how they have applied the Safer Access Framework. Other National Societies (Afghanistan, Lebanon, Nepal and South Africa) have participated in the development of National Society case studies, which highlight how they have incorporated the Safer Access Framework into their activities (e.g. Principles in action in Lebanon). Colombia plans to submit a case study in 2014.

At a national level, several National Societies have produced nationally adapted versions of the Safer Access Framework and associated training packages adapted to their local operational contexts.

For example, the Argentine Red Cross (ARC) has a guide for the implementation of the Safer Access Framework, which it has adapted to its community work and volunteer management in general. The guide also covers related management tools (a context analysis template, forms for contacts with actors, acceptance forms for volunteers, etc.). The ARC has developed internal training tools based on the Safer Access Framework for both specific Safer Access training and implementation in community participation processes and approaches, such as CBHFA.

As part of the process of developing the practical guide, a small group of National Society legal advisors¹⁰ was consulted on the use of the expression “other situations of violence,” as specified in this decision. As a result of this process, it was decided that the practical guide would not refer to “other situations of violence.” Preference was given to “armed conflict and internal disturbances and tensions.” Those consulted reached an agreement with the ICRC on the standard legal descriptions of those terms. This was then shared for comment and accepted by the ICRC’s Movement Reference Group. To reflect the context realities of a number of National Societies which may not be providing an active response in armed conflict and internal disturbances and tensions but still find the Safer Access Framework a useful guide, and following approval by the Project Advisory Team, the phrase “sensitive and insecure contexts, including armed conflict and internal disturbances and tensions” is used in the guide to reflect specific contextual realities faced by many National Societies today.

For information on how the ICRC is addressing its use of the expression “other situations of violence” institutionally, please refer to the paper “Other Situations of Violence: Some Clarifications Regarding Terminology” ICRC Update, 10 May 2013, Geneva, which was shared with legal advisers from over 80 National Societies who took part in the National Societies legal advisers meeting in June 2013.

The International Federation reported the following activities undertaken to support the implementation of this decision: the International Federation Volunteer Accident Insurance scheme; tools for volunteer protection and strengthening National Societies’ volunteer management and support for volunteers related to protection and its participation in the Project Advisory Team.

Decision 8 – *Encourages the International Federation to work closely with the ICRC and National Societies to develop effective mechanisms that ensure the aforementioned guide and ICRC’s programmes and capacity strengthening expertise that support National Societies to prepare for and respond to armed conflict and other situations of violence, are taken into account in the approach toward the development of strong National Societies, with a particular emphasis on incorporating relevant elements into emergency preparedness, response, recovery and organizational development initiatives.*

The International Federation is represented in the Project Advisory Team, which has resulted in input that has been useful for the development of the guide.

A meeting between the ICRC and the International Federation was held in Kuala Lumpur in May 2013 involving representatives from country, Zone and headquarters level. Discussions led to an exploration of areas in which the ICRC and the Federation can work together to better link and integrate the Safer Access Framework and the subsequent practical guide to existing platforms, tools and processes designed to support National Societies in their organizational development and disaster management. Further discussions are under way to determine how the International Federation will work with the ICRC and National Societies to take the practical guide and its contents into consideration in its work with National Societies.

¹⁰ The National Society legal advisers consulted were from the British, Canadian, Colombian, German and Swedish Red Cross Societies and the Turkish Red Crescent Society.

Resolution 7

National Societies preparing for and responding to armed conflict and other situations of violence¹

I. Background

Situations of violence can develop at anytime and anywhere, as recent events demonstrate. They often give rise to issues of humanitarian concern that require an immediate response by National Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies (National Societies). In addition, armed conflicts, chronic and sometimes protracted over several years or decades, require similar forms of humanitarian response. Demonstrations which lead to violence pose another kind of challenge to the humanitarian sector – to adapt its working procedures, designed primarily for rural settings, to urban environments as well.

To enhance access to people and communities affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence,² and to respond effectively to their needs, it is essential that all the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement) work together in preparedness, response and recovery, to maximize their respective capacities and competencies.

Converging and Complementary Movement Mandates and Capacities

National Societies have a mandate, as described in the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Statutes) to “organize, in liaison with the public authorities, emergency relief operations and other services to assist the victims of armed conflicts as provided in the Geneva Conventions, and the victims of natural disasters and other emergencies for whom help is needed.”³ A number of resolutions adopted at Councils of Delegates and International Conferences of the Red Cross and Red Crescent reinforce the mandate of National Societies to act as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field⁴ and to provide humanitarian assistance and protection to those in need, including those affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence within their own countries.⁵

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has a statutory mandate “to endeavour at all times – as a neutral institution whose humanitarian work is carried out

¹ Other situations of violence as a component of the National Societies’ overall mandate, as set out in the Statutes of the Movement.

² An ICRC description of ‘Other situations of violence’ can be found in the Background Report supporting this resolution.

³ Article 3, clause 2 of the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

⁴ Two such recent resolutions are: Resolution 2 of the 30th International Conference and Resolution 3 of the 2007 Council of Delegates on the “Specific nature of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in action and partnerships and the role of National Societies as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field.”

⁵ For example, the General Principles contained in Resolution XIV of the 10th International Conference in 1921, on Civil War, state: “The Red Cross (...) affirms its right and duty of affording relief in case of civil war and social and revolutionary disturbances (...) In every country in which civil war breaks out, it is the National Red Cross Society which, in the first place is responsible for dealing, in the most complete manner, with the relief needs of the victims ...”

particularly in time of international and other armed conflicts or internal strife⁶ – to ensure the protection of and assistance to military and civilian victims of such events and of their direct results.”⁷ In such situations, the ICRC works in close partnership with the National Society of the affected country as well as with participating National Societies and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (International Federation) to prepare and carry out emergency humanitarian operations.

The International Federation’s statutory mandate includes the following: “to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by the National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering and thereby contributing to the maintenance and the promotion of peace in the world”; “to act as the permanent body of liaison, coordination, and study between the National Societies and to give them any assistance they might request”; and “to bring help to victims of armed conflicts in accordance with the agreements concluded with the International Committee.”⁸

The mandates and capacities, as well as the unique positioning of each of the Movement’s components, must be taken fully into consideration when preparing for and responding to armed conflict and other situations of violence, in order to maximize the impact of the protection and assistance provided to the populations most in need. Activities should be allocated bearing these factors in mind as well as considering the level of acceptance provided to the various Movement components and whether the ICRC, the National Society or the two together would be better placed to respond. Improved Movement coordination and further discussion among the components of the Movement on the specific questions raised by ‘other situations of violence’ which results in an increased convergence of preparedness, response and recovery actions is required, in accordance with Movement agreements and mechanisms, and on the basis of context-specific circumstances and needs, to enhance access and response to the humanitarian needs of people and communities affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence.

The ICRC’s Response to a Request by National Societies

To adapt to the ever-changing environment, many National Societies have taken important measures in recent years to strengthen their response during armed conflict and other situations of violence.

Based upon the best practices of National Societies, the ICRC developed the Safer Access Framework.⁹ This Framework outlines the numerous interconnected actions that a National Society needs to carry out in order to increase its acceptance by individuals, communities, weapon-bearers and authorities and thereby gain safer access to people and communities

⁶ As defined in Part II, Article 5, clause 2 (b) of the Seville Agreement, internal strife “does not necessarily imply armed action but serious acts of violence over a prolonged period or a latent situation of violence, whether of political, religious, racial, social, economic or other origin, accompanied by one or more features such as: mass arrests, forced disappearances, detention for security reasons, suspension of judicial guarantees, declaration of state of emergency, declaration of martial law.”

⁷ Article 5, clause 2 (d) of the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

⁸ Article 6, clauses 3 and 4 (i) of the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

⁹ The Safer Access Framework is based on the concept of applying the Fundamental Principles and other Movement policies during response operations, which helps to position a National Society to secure greater acceptance and safe access to beneficiaries. Its elements include context/risk analysis, National Society legal and policy base to respond in armed conflict and other situations of violence, securing the organization’s acceptance, acceptance of the National Societies’ staff, volunteers and members, identification of the National Societies’ people, facilities and vehicles, internal and external communications and security management (guidelines and protective measures).

during armed conflict and other situations of violence.

During a plenary session at the 2009 Council of Delegates,¹⁰ National Societies requested the ICRC to develop operational guidance for National Societies working in armed conflict and other situations of violence. It was determined through a comprehensive consultation process with National Societies that the Safer Access Framework and the lessons learned from current National Society experience would be used as the foundation to develop a practical guide to strengthen the capacity of all National Societies to prepare for and respond to armed conflict and other situations of violence.

The guide will also enhance the practical application of the Seville Agreement and its Supplementary Measures, in particular by providing support for host National Societies to fulfil their mandates and play their roles in a Movement-coordinated response to armed conflict or to other situations of violence.

II. Challenges

Today, armed conflict and other situations of violence pose new, evolving challenges for the Movement's response. Some of the most significant are set out below.

Recurrent attacks against Movement personnel, including National Society staff and volunteers, their facilities and equipment, and the harm caused to beneficiaries are causing alarm.

Some National Societies are prevented, by all those who can influence access to beneficiaries, from providing humanitarian services to those in need on all sides of an armed conflict or other situation of violence, or they are challenged or even harassed when they attempt to do so. In this respect, there is, in some countries, a need to strengthen the National Society's statutory and legal instruments to better reflect its role in armed conflicts and other situations of violence. This should take into account the Fundamental Principle of independence, which balances the autonomy of National Societies with their status and role as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field.

There are many recent examples of well-coordinated Movement responses during armed conflict and other situations of violence. However, our response to the humanitarian needs of the people and communities affected could be improved. It is important to deepen our shared Movement knowledge and understanding of emerging trends in such situations and their consequences for humanitarian action, in order to improve the quality of our response and develop a uniform Movement approach. Overall, the Movement's components need to improve their level of readiness to respond to the needs of affected people rapidly and effectively in a coordinated and complementary manner, taking into account the changing environments in which they work. The ICRC and National Societies should pay particular attention to developing contingency plans that are coordinated and complement one another, to guide their responses during armed conflict and other situations of violence.

Adherence to the Fundamental Principles, and fostering respect in others for our adherence to the principles, are permanent challenges for all Movement components and are vitally

¹⁰ 2009 Council of Delegates, Workshop 5 (Improving our Combined Output by Fostering Collective Responsibility and Partnerships) and the plenary linked to the discussion of the Seville Agreement and its Supplementary Measures.

important in increasing the degree of acceptance that is required to secure safer access to the people and communities affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence. The Statutes of the Movement and relevant Councils of Delegates resolutions¹¹ emphasize this point.

III. Decisions

Recognizing the mandate of National Societies as per the Statutes of the Movement to operate and respond to armed conflict, natural disasters and other emergencies including internal strife and other

situations of violence and in order to strengthen the Movement's response to armed conflict and other situations of violence, the 2011 Council of Delegates:

1. *encourages* National Societies to intensify their commitment and efforts to adopt appropriate security/risk management systems, and to take other concrete measures to increase their safer access in armed conflict and other situations of violence. This includes the need to enhance the operational application of the Fundamental Principles and other relevant Movement policies as well as to obtain insurance coverage¹² for staff and volunteers working in crises, to adequately compensate them for possible injury, including psychological trauma/stress, or death in the line of duty;
2. *urges* National Societies, where necessary, to engage in a dialogue with all concerned governments on the need for access to all populations affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence and to exert influence, where possible, on all those who can influence access to beneficiaries to respect the National Societies' role to provide neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian services, (as defined by the Fundamental Principles), with the support and involvement of the ICRC as appropriate;
3. *urges* National Societies, the ICRC and the International Federation to continue to explore and analyse emerging trends and challenges to humanitarian action during armed conflict and other situations of violence, with a view to making such shared analyses the basis of coordinated contingency planning for the provision of rapid, effective and coherent response to the humanitarian needs of people and communities affected, while also strengthening their resilience;
4. *encourages* National Societies to further define their mandates, roles and responsibilities in armed conflict and other situations of violence within their statutory and legal base instruments, as appropriate, and to promote their role broadly, both within their National Society, and with external actors and communities;
5. *invites* the ICRC and the International Federation to work closely with National Societies to define how the mandates, roles and responsibilities of National Societies in armed

¹¹ For instance: 2009 Council of Delegates, Resolution 8, Respecting and protecting health care in armed conflict and other situations of violence; 30th International Conference, 2007, Resolution 1, Annex Declaration: Together for humanity; 2005 Council of Delegates, Resolution 7, Relations between the components of the Movement and military bodies; 2003 Council of Delegates, Resolution 9, Promote respect for diversity and fight discrimination and intolerance – clause 4 (f) of the annex to the Resolution.

¹² Ideally, insurance coverage should be provided to all volunteers, particularly those involved in emergency response operations, by the National Society through a national insurance company that provides insurance appropriate to the context and adapted to local realities. To deal with situations where this is not available, the Secretariat of the International Federation has put in place global accident insurance available through the headquarters of all National Societies.

conflict and other situations of violence may best be reflected in National Societies' statutory and legal base instruments and to advise National Societies engaged in revising their statutes accordingly;

6. *recommends* that National Societies, as part of their permanent dialogue with their respective governments, work towards strengthening domestic legislation, policies, agreements and plans in order to establish the framework required to enable them to provide effective assistance and protection to populations affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence;
7. *invites* the components of the Movement to continue to develop a practical guide, to further clarify the term 'other situations of violence' and to strengthen the capacity of all National Societies to prepare for and respond to armed conflict and other situations of violence – based on the Fundamental Principles, the Statutes of the Movement, relevant Movement policies and current National Society experience, as a valuable contribution towards building a Movement approach in this area;
8. *encourages* the International Federation to work closely with the ICRC and National Societies to develop effective mechanisms that ensure the aforementioned guide and the ICRC's programmes and capacity strengthening expertise that support National Societies to prepare for and respond to armed conflict and other situations of violence, are taken into account in the approach toward the development of strong National Societies, with a particular emphasis on incorporating relevant elements into emergency preparedness, response, recovery and organizational development initiatives.

IV. The Background Report and Annex

The Background Report and Annex are for information purposes only and are not a part of decisions.

V. Follow-up

All the components of the Movement are requested to consider including the decisions listed above in their strategies, plans and objectives, where relevant.

Progress in implementing the decisions listed above will be included in the report to the Council of Delegates on the Implementation of the Seville Agreement and its Supplementary Measures in 2013 and 2015.

The ICRC, with the continued involvement of National Societies and the Secretariat of the International Federation, will develop the practical guide, which will address many of the challenges identified in this resolution, and more. It will be completed by the end of 2012 and will be introduced to Movement partners in 2013.

Resolution co-sponsors:

The Canadian Red Cross Society
Colombian Red Cross
Jamaica Red Cross
Nepal Red Cross Society
Red Cross Society of Panama

CD/13/11.5

Paraguayan Red Cross
Red Cross Society of Saint Lucia
The Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross Society
Tunisian Red Crescent
The Uganda Red Cross Society