

11 March 2011

Movement Position Statement on vulnerable people fleeing the violence in Northern Africa

The *International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement* wishes to express its grave concern for the deteriorating humanitarian situation as a result of the escalation of violence and the plight of the civilian population affected by the crisis in Libya and events in neighboring countries. The National Red Crescent Societies of Libya, Tunisia and Egypt have been working tirelessly to provide vital services to the people most in need. We are deeply concerned about recent attacks on Libyan Red Crescent personnel and ambulances in the course of their duties and recall that Red Crescent and Red Cross personnel and assets must be protected and respected at all times.

We welcome the stated commitments that have been made by a number of States to provide humanitarian assistance, protection, and other services to those affected by the crisis, particularly those that have been forced to flee into neighbouring countries as well as to Europe, mainly to Mediterranean countries. We call on States to respect the rights of vulnerable migrants under international human rights and refugee law.. All those fleeing for survival must be allowed to reach areas of safety. As regards migrants, States should also ensure that their basic needs are met, that they are treated with dignity, are not the subject of discriminatory treatment, and have access to basic services such as health, food and education.

The Red Cross Societies of several countries in Europe, such as Italy, Malta, France, Spain, Greece have engaged important resources and personnel to assist incoming “migrants” or prepare for a likely influx. Given the very volatile situation in North Africa, it is very likely that thousands of people might seek refuge in European countries. This is an exceptional situation, with a regional dimension that needs important support not only from individual European States but also from the European Union. The organizations of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement stand ready to fulfil their mission within their responsibilities and competences, but will need substantial support.

We commend the timely response of host countries to date in both North Africa and Europe to the enormous humanitarian challenge of receiving large numbers of people fleeing from various countries in North Africa and call for additional international recognition and support for these receiving countries.

The Red Crescent Societies of Libya, Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria are fully mobilized with the support of the Movement to respond to the crisis presently unfolding in North Africa. According to their humanitarian mission, they should be supported to provide vital humanitarian assistance to all persons in need (civilian population, migrant workers, refugees, IDP's and host communities) irrespective of their legal status and without discrimination.



ICRC



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies