



POLICY FOR RECRUITING MEMBERS OF  
INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

ADOPTED BY THE ASSEMBLY ON 18 JUNE 2015

# Policy for recruiting members of the International Committee of the Red Cross

## Purpose

The purpose of the policy for recruiting members of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is to set out the membership criteria, both individual (characteristics that are desirable for, or incompatible with, the office of member) and collective (relating to the make-up of the Assembly as a whole).

The overriding factor determining the choice of members is the ICRC's mission, as set forth in the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement) and the Statutes of the ICRC.

## I. Individual criteria

### I(a) Swiss citizenship

Both the Statutes of the Movement and the Statutes of the ICRC provide that the ICRC must recruit its members from among Swiss citizens.

Interpreting this provision presents no difficulties when it comes to people who only have one nationality.

As for those with dual nationality, the Assembly decided, during its discussion of 27 August 1987, that dual nationals were permitted to become members, provided that their Swiss nationality was their dominant nationality.

### I(b) Positive criteria

All prospective members should possess the following qualities:

- Team spirit: The ability to work in a team within the Assembly and its commissions; be a team player.
- Humanitarian motivation: Interest in humanitarian issues demonstrated through professional or extra-curricular activities, public stances or publications.
- Availability: Willingness to devote to the ICRC, on a voluntary basis, the time required to attend meetings of the Assembly and its commissions, to prepare for those meetings and to go on any trips or assignments that may arise.
- Seeing the bigger picture: Ability to analyse problems in their entirety; an all-rounder rather than a specialist; ability to make the link between a specialism (e.g. law, medicine, finance) and the bigger picture.
- International perspective: Experience or knowledge of international relations or a proven interest in international affairs. Experience of other cultures and political or legal systems; time spent living abroad.
- Network of contacts useful to the ICRC.

- Language skills: Good command of the ICRC's two working languages (French and English); command or knowledge of other languages.
- A specific contribution to make as a result of professional or other experience; expertise in areas relevant to the ICRC's work (e.g. health, international law, management, finance, charity work).
- Positive public image.

**I(c) Negative criteria (i.e. incompatible with the office of member)**

The ICRC defines itself as a neutral and independent humanitarian organization. It is therefore advisable to avoid recruiting members whose profile does not fit with that description.

Further, Article 6 of the Internal Regulations stipulates that: "A conflict of interest exists when a member has a private financial or professional interest which may influence or be perceived as influencing his behaviour or decision-making within the framework of his office as a member. Such interests can arise from personal relationships, financial involvements, or public or private commitments on the part of a member or one of his close relations."

Based on previous experience, the ICRC deems that there is a conflict of interest that is incompatible with the office of member in the following cases:

- member of the Swiss Federal Council, cantonal government or the Geneva city council
- member of the Swiss Federal Assembly or a local parliament
- senior official for the national or cantonal authorities, unless a medical or educational role, such as a doctor or hospital director, teacher, dean or rector of an academic establishment (if the position is temporary, it will depend on the type of activity)
- official or representative of an intergovernmental organization (if the position is temporary, it will depend on the type of activity)
- leading member of an organization with an official stance in favour of a party or parties to an armed conflict
- leading member or official of an organization with which the ICRC does not wish to be confused
- member of the clergy working for a religious institution
- anyone exercising an activity that is incompatible with the ICRC's mission (in particular activities linked to manufacturing or trading in arms, tobacco or hard alcohol).

**II. Collective criteria**

In addition to the individual criteria, the recruitment policy also has to take account of objectives related to the make-up of the Assembly as a whole. This consideration should guide both the active hunt for new candidates and the selection of new members from among the candidates who meet the individual criteria.

- Gender balance: The Recruitment and Remuneration Commission is responsible for ensuring that a gender balance is achieved in the Assembly. To that end, it should first consider candidates from the under-represented gender.
- Intergenerational balance: The Recruitment and Remuneration Commission is responsible for ensuring that an intergenerational balance is achieved in the Assembly. Since it is clearly easier to recruit people who are retired or approaching retirement, the Recruitment and Remuneration Commission should focus in particular on identifying people from the younger generation.
- Balance of professional expertise: On one hand this is about ensuring a balance between the professions most represented within the Assembly (health, international law, finance and management), and on the other about ensuring that the Assembly as a whole possesses the skills required to effectively perform its ultimate oversight responsibilities.
- Political neutrality: The danger with the co-optation system is that the incumbent members might give priority to co-opting people whom they know well and who belong to the same milieu as them. It is therefore advisable to demonstrate the ICRC's openness in order to avoid the organization being identified with a particular milieu or political party.
- Geographical representation: Since the ICRC decided against making representation of all the continents, cultures and main legal systems within the Assembly a criterion, there is no question of adopting a criterion of fair geographical representation among the Swiss cantons. Nevertheless, given the close ties between the ICRC and Switzerland, it is preferable that the country's main linguistic regions be represented among the members of the ICRC, on the understanding that this aim is secondary to the preceding aims set out above.
- Co-optation of former ICRC managers: Since the long-term coherence of the ICRC's work is one of the keys to its acceptance and the trust that governments and other organizations have in its work, it is advisable – to safeguard institutional memory – for the Assembly to include one, two or three former ICRC managers. However, it is important to make sure that those put forward are in a position to set aside their former perspective as Directorate members in order to see things from the Assembly's perspective. Moreover, the co-opting of former Directorate members should not lead the other members of the Assembly to be discouraged or feel that the former Directorate members wield undue influence in the Assembly.

## **Relevant provisions in the Statutes and Regulations**

### **Statutes of the Movement**

Article 5 of the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, adopted by the 25th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (Geneva, 1986) provides that:

"The International Committee, founded in Geneva in 1863 and formally recognized in the Geneva Conventions and by International Conferences of the Red Cross, is an independent humanitarian organization having a status of its own. It co-opts its members from among Swiss citizens."

As a component of the Movement, the ICRC is bound by the Statutes of the Movement.

The provision concerning the Swiss nationality of the members of the ICRC was entered in the Statutes of the Movement before it entered the Statutes of the ICRC. This rule appeared in the Statutes of the International Red Cross, adopted by the 13th International Conference of the Red Cross in The Hague in 1928, whereas it did not appear in the Statutes of the ICRC adopted 15 November 1915, or in those adopted 10 March 1921. It was only when the Statutes of the ICRC were revised on 28 August 1930 that the ICRC incorporated this rule in its own Statutes, to bring them into line with the Statutes of the International Red Cross.

Given the events of the past, the co-opting of the members of the ICRC from among Swiss citizens was seen as the best guarantor of the ICRC's neutrality and independence.

### **Statutes of the ICRC**

Article 7 of the Statutes of the ICRC (adopted 18 December 2014) provides that:

"The ICRC shall comprise between 15 and 25 members who shall be co-opted from among Swiss citizens.

ICRC members shall carry out their functions on a voluntary basis. The president and vice-president shall constitute exceptions to this rule."

### **Internal Regulations of the ICRC**

Article 2 of the Internal Regulations of the ICRC (adopted 18 December 2014) provides that:

"Every member of the ICRC (hereafter "member") must be conscious of the responsibilities which this office involves. Members undertake to serve and to defend the ICRC's interests and the cause and Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (hereafter "the Movement") in all circumstances.

Members shall observe a Code of Conduct which they must sign at the beginning of their term of office."

Article 3 sets out the voluntary nature of the role:

"ICRC members shall carry out their functions on a voluntary basis and receive no remuneration. The president and vice-president shall constitute exceptions to this rule.

Members shall be entitled to reimbursement of actual expenses connected with their office.

If members are assigned a mandate by the president or the Assembly Council that exceeds the framework of their office, they shall be entitled to reasonable remuneration for such mandate.

The remuneration and the reimbursement procedures mentioned in paragraphs 1 to 3 of the present article shall be determined by the Recruitment and Remuneration Commission."

Article 4 deals with members' access to documents:

"During their term of office, members shall have access at all times to any documents which they need to carry out their work, in particular the records of the Assembly's meetings and those of the Assembly Council and the Directorate, as well as budgets, financial statements, and reports from ICRC governing bodies.

They shall also have access to all documents in the Archives, except for the personal files of ICRC staff.

At the end of their term of office, members shall return or destroy all working documents of a confidential nature of which they have kept copies. They are invited to place their personal documents in the ICRC Archives. Those who wish to have access to documents that are not part of the public collections and archives must submit a request to the president in this regard. Former members shall, however, retain access to their personal documents."

Article 5 covers members' participation in meetings:

"Members shall keep themselves informed about the ICRC's work so as to be able to participate actively in meetings. They shall take part in the meetings of ICRC bodies, as well as meetings of the commissions and/or thematic working groups to which they belong, except where prevented from so doing by circumstances beyond their control."

Article 6 defines a conflict of interest:

"A conflict of interest exists when a member has a private financial or professional interest which may influence or be perceived as influencing his behaviour or decision-making within the framework of his office as a member. Such interests can arise from personal relationships, financial involvements, or public or private commitments on the part of a member or one of his close relations.

Members are obliged to declare any current or potential conflict of interest in writing to the Audit Commission and to specify the nature of such a conflict as soon as they become aware that it exists, consider it likely to arise, or believe that a particular situation could be perceived as such. In the event of a conflict of interest, the Audit Commission shall be responsible for deciding on the appropriate steps to take and, in particular, for determining the member's level of participation in discussions and decisions concerning the subject on which there is a conflict of interest.

Members shall fill out a form each year in which they shall declare their public and private commitments outside the ICRC."