



Delegation of the International Federation of Red Cross
and Red Crescent Societies to the United Nations

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ON BEHALF OF
THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS & RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

Agenda item 86: Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters
Sixth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly
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Mr. Chair,

On behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and its 191 National Societies, I congratulate you on your election as Chair of the Sixth Committee.

In the first half of 2023 alone, over 200 climate and weather-related disasters were recorded, impacting over 75 million people. Unfortunately, the frequency, intensity, and compounding nature of disasters is only expected to increase in the coming years. Impacts from disasters can no longer be overlooked. As in Libya after Storm Daniel or amid a multi-country cholera outbreak, disasters are already threatening lives, uprooting livelihoods, destroying homes, hospitals, and schools, and limiting food and safe drinking water.

Mr. Chair,

In the last twenty years, the states parties of the Geneva Conventions have mandated the IFRC and its National Societies through five resolutions of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to advise and provide technical assistance to governments that are creating, updating or reviewing their disaster laws. Since then, the IFRC has worked with 95 governments and led research on topics ranging from risk reduction to the protection of persons in disasters to preparedness, response, and recovery.

The IFRC strongly supports the development of a treaty based on the International Law Commission's Draft Articles on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters (PPED). As outlined in our position paper, the IFRC considers the Draft Articles to be a good starting point to negotiate a treaty, for the following reasons:

First, despite a better understanding and some progress, most governments remain widely unprepared for a disaster. A treaty could provide a degree of certainty about what governments can expect from other governments and humanitarian organizations following a disaster and clarify the facilitation measures for such external assistance – relieving domestic authorities and protecting lives.

Second, a treaty would generate vital momentum for disaster risk reduction – aiming to better prevent and prepare governments and communities ahead of a disaster. While the Sendai Framework has undoubtedly catalyzed stronger action in this area at the national level, there is still a need for

many governments to strengthen their laws and policies in this area. The creation of a duty for disaster risk reduction (DRR), as is contemplated by the Draft Articles, would accelerate national efforts to reduce disaster risk and develop important legal and policy reforms at national and sub-national levels.

Finally, the international community lacks a clear and comprehensive legal framework to regulate disasters, with existing provisions being scattered across many different instruments of varying status. A universal, hard law instrument on PPED would serve to clarify and consolidate states' obligations with respect to DRR and the management of disasters.

In closing, Mr. Chair, the IFRC looks forward to briefing at tomorrow's Working Group on PPED. As governments, the protection of its persons - whether it be from disasters, conflict or an economic crisis - is its number one responsibility. The next disaster is a matter of when not if, and IFRC network stands ready to support.

Thank you.