

REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS

RESOLUTIONS

Selected resolutions of the 2024 Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*

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Weapons and international humanitarian law

Call for respect and support for principled humanitarian action

Reaffirming the role of the Movement as a factor for peace

War in cities: A solemn appeal from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference

* For an overview of all resolutions adopted by the 2024 Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, see: <https://rcrcconference.org/council-of-delegate/2022-council-of-delegates/documents-2024-council-of-delegates/>.

Weapons and international humanitarian law

(CD/24/R3)

The Council of Delegates,

recalling previous resolutions on the high human cost of the use and proliferation of certain types of weapons and the response of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement) to these humanitarian consequences, in particular Resolution 7 of the 2013 Council of Delegates “Weapons and international humanitarian law”, Resolution 7 of the 2009 Council of Delegates “Preventing humanitarian consequences arising from the development, use and proliferation of certain types of weapons” and Resolution 2 of the 2005 Council of Delegates “Weapons and international humanitarian law”, as well as numerous other resolutions on landmines, cluster munitions, arms transfers, nuclear weapons and war in cities, and *reaffirming* the commitments undertaken in these resolutions,

recalling that, under international humanitarian law (IHL), the right of parties to an armed conflict to choose means and methods of warfare is not unlimited and that any new weapon, means or method of warfare must be capable of being used and must only be used in compliance with IHL, in line with the requirements for rigorous legal review set forth in Article 36 of Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions,

recognizing that women, men, girls and boys of different ages, disabilities and backgrounds can be affected differently by the use of weapons, and that these differences need to be considered when implementing and applying IHL, in order to safeguard adequate protection for all,

convinced that IHL remains as relevant today as ever before in international and non- international armed conflict, while *reaffirming* the need to continue codifying and progressively developing the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict to respond to evolving humanitarian concerns, changes in the nature of armed conflict and advances in weapons technology,

recalling that, even in cases where a weapon, means or method of warfare, or the use of such a weapon, means or method, is not covered by an international agreement, civilians and combatants remain under the protection and authority of the principles of international law derived from established custom, from the principles of humanity and from the dictates of public conscience,

reiterating its long-standing and deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and about the lack of any adequate humanitarian response capacity in the event of their use, *condemning* any threats to use nuclear weapons, *expressing deep alarm* about the

trend towards a new nuclear arms race and the growing risk that nuclear weapons will be used again with intent or by miscalculation or accident, *emphasizing* that it is extremely doubtful that nuclear weapons could ever be used in accordance with the principles and rules of IHL, and *welcoming* the work of the Movement Support Group, efforts made to date to implement the 2022–2027 Action Plan on the Non-Use, Prohibition and Elimination of Nuclear Weapons and the results of the 2022 and 2023 meetings of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons,

recalling the absolute prohibitions on biological and chemical weapons and the December 2021 decision by States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the

Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention) that the aerosolized use of central nervous system-acting chemicals is inconsistent with law enforcement purposes under the Convention, *appreciating* the efforts of the public authorities who prepare for and respond to deliberate or accidental release of chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear materials (CBRN), including from civilian facilities, and *recognizing* the inherent difficulties of responding to such events at scale, and the inadequacy of existing assistance and response capacities in the event of the deliberate or accidental release of CBRN materials, including from civilian facilities containing such materials,

expressing ongoing concern about the impact in humanitarian terms of the inadequately controlled and widespread availability of conventional arms during and in the aftermath of armed conflict and other situations of violence, and *recalling* that all States, even if not party to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) or regional arms transfer agreements, are obliged, at a minimum, to respect and ensure respect for IHL, and respect international human rights law, when making decisions about arms transfers,

concerned about the indiscriminate effects of landmines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war, the ongoing grave threat to civilians posed by these weapons during and after armed conflict, and the disturbing trend of continuing high levels of civilian casualties from them, including alarming new instances of the use of anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions,

commending the long-term commitment and efforts of all the components of the Movement that have implemented the Movement Strategy on Landmines, Cluster Munitions and other Explosive Remnants of War: Reducing the Effects of Weapons on Civilians, adopted by Resolution 6 of the 2009 Council of Delegates, *emphasizing* the need to strengthen the Movement's efforts to prevent and respond to the civilian harm caused by these weapons, and, in this regard, *highlighting* the consultations held with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (National Societies), in particular, in the Africa region,

expressing ongoing deep concern about the devastating humanitarian impacts of war in cities, including as a result of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, as emphasized in Resolution 7 “War in cities: A solemn appeal from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement”, to be adopted at this Council of Delegates,

cognizant of the potential for new technologies to help save and improve lives, including during armed conflict, yet *concerned* about the potential human cost of new technologies of warfare that are being developed or deployed, including autonomous weapon systems (AWS), cyber capabilities, military space capabilities and other military capabilities that incorporate artificial intelligence,

recalling that any new weapons or means and methods of warfare, including those of the future, must be capable of being used – and must only be used – in compliance with IHL,

deeply concerned, in particular, about the serious risks posed to both civilians and combatants by the unconstrained development and use of AWS, in particular ethical and escalation risks and the challenges to ensuring compliance with the fundamental rules of IHL, and *acknowledging* the important contribution of international and regional conferences and initiatives, the adoption of Resolution 78/241 “Lethal autonomous weapons systems” by the United Nations General Assembly and the ongoing work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems established under the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons),

deploring the disruption of medical and humanitarian relief efforts as a consequence of the use of digital means and methods of warfare and the consequences of these disruptions on the civilian population, *recalling* the legal and protective value of the distinctive emblems and signals in identifying and signalling specific protections for medical units and transports, medical and religious personnel and components of the Movement, and *welcoming* the research and consultations conducted by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in collaboration with academic institutions, experts and other components of the Movement, on the purpose, parameters and feasibility of a “digital emblem”,

Nuclear weapons

1. *recalls* Resolution 7 of the 2022 Council of Delegates, and *reiterates* the calls to all States to sign, ratify or accede to and faithfully implement the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, as well as other mutually reinforcing instruments of international law that seek to achieve the goal of a world

- without nuclear weapons, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and regional treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones;
2. *calls upon* States to fully implement the commitments made at the NPT review conferences, to take immediate and concrete steps to reduce the risk of nuclear weapons being used and to condemn any threats to use nuclear weapons;
 3. *calls upon* all components of the Movement to redouble their efforts, to the extent feasible, to encourage States to take these actions, in particular through the implementation of the 2022–2027 Action Plan on the Non-Use, Prohibition and Elimination of Nuclear Weapons;

Biological and chemical weapons

4. *calls upon* States to uphold the prohibitions and obligations set out in the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention) and in the Chemical Weapons Convention and to limit the use of toxic chemicals as weapons for law enforcement to riot control agents only;
5. *encourages* States and the Movement to reflect on their response capacities and existing risks in their operating contexts and to identify and communicate their response capacities, plans and needs;
6. *invites* the ICRC and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to cooperate and, in line with their respective mandates and competencies, to continue guiding, coordinating and supporting the Movement, as appropriate, in the development of assistance and response capacities to meet needs in the event of the deliberate or accidental release of chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear materials;

Arms transfers

7. *calls upon* all States to promptly sign, ratify or accede to the ATT and, in any event, to adopt stringent and transparent national control systems and legislation to ensure compliance with the ATT's rules, including submitting to the ATT Secretariat an annual report on arms exports and imports;
8. *also calls upon* all States to place greater emphasis on the humanitarian impacts of arms transfer decisions, make compliance with IHL and international human rights law an explicit criterion for assessing transfers, take practical steps to facilitate assessment of the risk of IHL violations, refrain from transferring arms where there is a clear risk that this would contribute to the commission of IHL violations, faithfully implement effective risk mitigation measures in all circumstances in which arms transfers are not prohibited, and, with a view to promoting transparency and good practices, share information on

related challenges and lessons learnt, as well as the criteria for evaluating export authorizations;

9. *encourages* the ICRC and National Societies to support States to these ends, in accordance with their respective humanitarian mandates and the Fundamental Principles;

Anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war

10. *calls upon* all States to promptly sign, ratify or accede to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention), the Convention on Cluster Munitions and Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons;
11. *urges* all components of the Movement, in light of the ongoing high numbers of civilian casualties, to renew their efforts and commitment on implementing the 2009 Movement Strategy on Landmines, Cluster Munitions and other Explosive Remnants of War, including by promoting the universalization of the above-mentioned conventions and protocols and implementing the Movement's guidelines *Increasing Resilience to Weapon Contamination Through Behaviour Change*, published in 2019, to the fullest extent possible;
12. *calls upon* all components of the Movement to encourage political leadership by States Parties and better donor coordination to meet treaty deadlines and fulfil commitments, in particular with regard to clearing contaminated areas and destroying stockpiles as soon as possible;

War in cities and explosive weapons in populated areas

13. *emphasizes* Resolution 7 "War in cities: A solemn appeal from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement", to be adopted at this Council of Delegates;

New weapons, means and methods of warfare

14. *calls upon* States to increase their understanding of and, where necessary, to address the humanitarian, legal and ethical risks posed by new weapons, means and methods of warfare, including AWS, cyber and digital information operations, the use of artificial intelligence in weapon systems and other means or methods of warfare, and military operations in or in relation to outer space;

15. *also calls upon* States to ensure that the development and use of any new weapons, means or methods of warfare relying on new or emerging technologies complies with IHL, and to subject them to a rigorous legal review in accordance with the obligation set forth in Article 36 of Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions and in light of the obligation to respect and ensure respect for IHL in all circumstances;

Autonomous weapon systems

16. *urges* all components of the Movement to take urgent and collective action to address the risks posed by AWS, that is, weapon systems that select and apply force to targets without human intervention;
17. *calls upon* States to negotiate and adopt, as soon as possible, new legally binding international rules including to prohibit unpredictable AWS and those designed or used to target humans and to restrict the development and use of all other AWS;

Digital emblem

18. *welcomes* the findings of the ongoing research on and testing of a digital emblem and *encourages* the ICRC to continue its research and testing, in consultation with States and components of the Movement, in order to further clarify the specific purpose and technical feasibility of a digital emblem, and to consult with States on the potential processes for incorporating the digital emblem into national and international law;

Reporting

19. *invites* the ICRC to report, in cooperation with the Movement, to the Council of Delegates on relevant developments under the resolution, as necessary.

Call for respect and support for principled humanitarian action (CD/24/R5)

The Council of Delegates,

expressing alarm at the magnitude of human suffering caused by the increasing number of armed conflicts and other situations of violence, the effects of climate change, disasters and other humanitarian crises worldwide, with the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance and protection more than doubling in the last decade and reaching record levels, *expressing deep concern* for the safety and well-being of all people affected and for their ability to access life-saving assistance, and *expressing sorrow* for the number of lives of humanitarian workers and volunteers lost in the service of humanity,

expressing deep concern about the greater impediments to the ability of principled humanitarian actors to deliver assistance and protection to people who most need it, owing to increasing political and societal polarization, the politicization of aid, false characterization of the humanitarian principles of impartiality and neutrality as furthering the interests of an adversary, the need for improved understanding of and support for the independence of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (National Societies), restrictions on the funding of principled humanitarian actors and on their access to affected people, restrictions resulting from sanctions and counterterrorism measures that impede the capacity of humanitarian actors to operate in accordance with humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law (IHL), the spread – through social media and other channels – of misinformation and disinformation that affects the safety of humanitarian workers and the people in their care, and the persistence of threats and acts of violence directed at humanitarian workers,

expressing deep concern also about the use of dehumanizing language and rhetoric by a range of actors, including those in positions of authority, that is prevalent in many armed conflicts, other situations of violence and other emergencies where people face increasing inequalities and greater levels of vulnerability and poverty, as this dehumanizing language and rhetoric, often amplified through media and social media, contributes to an environment that endangers affected people and the impartial, neutral and independent humanitarian actors serving them, and to violations of IHL, international human rights law and basic humanitarian principles,

recalling that the Fundamental Principles are at the heart of our International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's (Movement) distinctive identity and mission, based on over 160 years of operational experience and normative developments, including the formal proclamation of the Fundamental Principles by the International Conference of the Red Cross in 1965 and their adoption in the

Statutes of the Movement by the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (International Conference) in 1986. All components of the Movement are bound by the Fundamental Principles, which are the foundation of their principled humanitarian action, and crucial to gaining and maintaining the acceptance and trust of and safe access to the people and communities they serve,

recalling also the role of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) as a specifically neutral and independent organization and intermediary, as recognized by the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the Statutes of the Movement, and its primary responsibility to maintain and disseminate the Fundamental Principles, the role of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), in collaboration with the ICRC, to disseminate the Fundamental Principles among National Societies, and the key role of National Societies in upholding and disseminating the Fundamental Principles within their own country as a critical means of fostering understanding of and promoting respect for principled humanitarian action,

recalling further Article 4 of the Statutes of the Movement, Resolution 2 of the 30th International Conference in 2007 on the “Specific nature of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in action and partnership and the role of National Societies as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field”, Resolution 4 of the 31st International Conference in 2011, “Furthering the auxiliary role: Partnership for stronger National Societies and volunteering development” and the background report to the 32nd International Conference in 2015 on *The Fundamental Principles in action: A unique ethical, operational and institutional framework*, which highlight the importance of clearly defining the auxiliary relationship between a National Society and the public authorities in domestic legislation in order to maintain the National Society’s operational independence, strengthen its humanitarian diplomacy, and formalize the commitment of States to respect the duty and ability of National Societies to abide by the Fundamental Principles,

highlighting the trust and access that National Societies and their volunteers enjoy in local communities and the key role of National Societies in promoting principled humanitarian action, and *acknowledging* the complementary actions of the international components of the Movement to amplify and support local National Societies’ voices and roles as principled humanitarian actors,

recalling the IFRC’s primary responsibility to safeguard the integrity of National Societies in accordance with Article 6 of the Statutes of the Movement, and the responsibilities of each Movement component to address integrity concerns within their respective organization, and *recalling* the collective Movement commitments to strengthen integrity, accountability and trust, such as Resolutions 1 and 2 of the 2019 Council of Delegates, the “Movement-wide commitments for community engagement and accountability” and the

“Statement on integrity of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement”, respectively,

recalling also the commitment of States party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions to at all times respect the adherence by all components of the Movement to the Fundamental Principles, in accordance with Article 2.4 of the Statutes of the Movement, and *recalling* their obligations under IHL to allow National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC to pursue their activities in accordance with these principles,

welcoming the landmark United Nations Security Council Resolution 2664 of December 2022, which aims to mitigate the impact of UN financial sanctions on humanitarian activities and activities to meet basic human needs through exemptions from sanctions (“humanitarian carve-outs”) for humanitarian organizations, including Movement components,

recalling the Appeal for Respect for Neutral and Impartial Humanitarian Action (2022 Appeal) by the chair of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (Standing Commission) and the presidents of the ICRC and the IFRC, which was welcomed by the 2022 Council of Delegates in Resolution 13, and *recognizing* the need to strengthen and expand on the 2022 Appeal in order to address current and future challenges to principled humanitarian action,

1. *endorses* the new Appeal to States (annexed to this resolution) to respect impartial, neutral and independent humanitarian action, and *requests* that this Appeal be communicated to States at the 34th International Conference;
2. *reaffirms* the obligation of all components of the Movement to act at all times in accordance with the Fundamental Principles, particularly humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence, as an imperative to safely access, assist and protect people in vulnerable situations;
3. *commits* National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC, individually and collectively, to enhancing understanding of and respect for principled humanitarian action within their respective organizations, and in particular to ensuring that the behaviours expected with regard to impartiality, neutrality and independence are well known, understood and applied at all levels of their respective organizations (governing bodies, management, staff and volunteers), including through the application of codes of conduct and organizational policies (e.g. social media policies), training and peer-to-peer exchanges, bearing in mind the crucial reputational and operational importance of principled humanitarian action in enabling the safety of humanitarian workers and safe access to people in need;
4. *commits* the leaders of the ICRC, the IFRC and National Societies to leading by example in abiding by impartiality, neutrality and independence in all of their words, behaviours and actions;
5. *commits* the ICRC, the IFRC and National Societies to strengthening their work together on engagement and humanitarian diplomacy activities with

- States, local authorities, communities and other stakeholders, as well as with the general public, to promote greater understanding of and respect for impartial, neutral and independent humanitarian action, which is one of the key elements to build and maintain trust, address the misinformation and disinformation that endangers humanitarian action or actors and ensure safe and effective access to all people in need;
6. *calls on* each National Society, with the support where needed of the IFRC, the ICRC and peer National Societies, to further the dialogue with the public authorities with a view to strengthening its independent action and decision-making, including by strengthening its legal base in domestic law, in particular in relation to its auxiliary role in the humanitarian field, and in accordance with the Movement's agreed standards as defined in the Statutes of the Movement and in line with Resolution 2 of the 30th International Conference in 2007 and Resolution 4 of the 31st International Conference in 2011;
 7. *also calls on* each National Society to regularly review, and if necessary, revise, its statutes or constitution to ensure that they conform with the Movement's agreed standards as set out in the *Guidance for National Society Statutes 2018*, including the commitment to abide at all times by the Fundamental Principles and the requirements of principled humanitarian action;
 8. *reaffirms* the commitment of each component of the Movement to build and maintain trust with the people we serve, communities, governments and local authorities, donors, external partners and the wider public by demonstrating integrity, transparency and accountability in all our actions and through continuous dialogue and engagement, as reflected in relevant Movement commitments;
 9. *reaffirms*, in accordance with Article 14 of the Movement Coordination for Collective Impact Agreement (Seville Agreement 2.0), that each component of the Movement must address any integrity concerns through its respective internal mechanisms, that National Societies are supported, as required, by the IFRC and in accordance with the IFRC's *Policy on Protection of Integrity of National Societies and Organs of the International Federation*, and that the IFRC and the ICRC consult each other, as required, when there are concerns related to respect for the Fundamental Principles, in dialogue with the National Society concerned;
 10. *calls on* National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC to intensify their collective efforts to share their experiences and learning on strengthening integrity and trust, *notes* the progress report on the follow-up to the "Statement on integrity of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement", *welcomes* the development of a community of practice on strengthening integrity for continued learning and improvement, and *encourages* all components of the Movement to join and contribute to it;
 11. *calls on* the ICRC, IFRC and National Societies to take action, in line with their respective mandates, to follow up on the commitments made in this resolution to increase understanding of and adherence to the Fundamental Principles, including:

- 11.1 strengthening engagement with States, local authorities, communities and other stakeholders, as well as with the general public, for example through various communications activities, to improve understanding of and respect for impartial, neutral and independent humanitarian action and to build and maintain trust and address misinformation and disinformation, with the aim of ensuring the safety of humanitarian workers and safe, sustained and meaningful access to all people in need;
 - 11.2 engaging with States on strengthening the legal base of the National Societies, including a clear definition of the auxiliary role of National Societies in the humanitarian field, to facilitate the principled humanitarian action of National Societies;
 - 11.3 strengthening knowledge and learning programmes for governing bodies, management, staff and volunteers within the Movement in order to cultivate behavioural competencies in accordance with the Fundamental Principles, including the documenting and sharing of good practice and providing operational examples of how the Fundamental Principles are used and respected in the planning and implementation of humanitarian programmes, highlighting the challenges and dilemmas that arise and the consequences for affected people when principled humanitarian action is not respected or facilitated;
 - 11.4 actively engaging with the community of practice on strengthening integrity to share their experiences and identify challenges and risks affecting integrity and trust;
12. *invites* Movement components to promote the Appeal to States and to report to the next Council of Delegates on the measures taken and the achievements and challenges faced in implementing the above actions.

Annex: Appeal to States

We are deeply alarmed by the magnitude of human suffering across the world, caused by the increasing number of armed conflicts and other situations of violence, the effects of climate change, disasters and other humanitarian crises. The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance and protection has more than doubled over the last decade and is reaching record levels. We are also dismayed and deeply saddened by the increasing number of lives of humanitarian workers and volunteers lost in the service of humanity.

At the same time, to our profound concern, principled humanitarian actors are facing greater impediments to their ability to deliver assistance and protection to the people who most need it, as a result of, in particular:

1. increasing political and societal polarization
2. the politicization of aid
3. false characterization of the humanitarian principles of impartiality and neutrality as furthering the interests of an adversary
4. the need for improved understanding of and support for the independence of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (National Societies)
5. the use of dehumanizing language and rhetoric, prevalent in many armed conflicts, other situations of violence and other emergencies, especially by those in positions of authority, which contributes to an environment that endangers affected people and the impartial and neutral humanitarian actors serving them, and to violations of international humanitarian law, international human rights law and basic humanitarian principles
6. restrictions on the funding of principled humanitarian actors and on their access to affected people
7. restrictions resulting from sanctions and counterterrorism measures that impede the capacity of humanitarian actors to operate in accordance with humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law
8. the spread – through social media and other channels – of misinformation and disinformation that imperils humanitarian workers and people in their care.
9. the persistence of threats and acts of violence directed at humanitarian workers and volunteers.

The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement are the foundation of our principled humanitarian action. In all circumstances, they are crucial to gaining and maintaining the acceptance and trust of and safe access to the people and communities we serve. Disturbingly, we live in times when respect for these Fundamental Principles is at its most critical, but also when it is the most challenged.

Before this International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (International Conference), we firmly recommit all components of the Movement

to strictly respect our Fundamental Principles in all our words, behaviour and actions, and to fulfil our respective mandates. Likewise, we reaffirm our commitment to strengthen integrity, accountability and transparency, and to build trust with the people you have mandated us to serve.

On behalf of the Movement, we now join together to respectfully appeal to States, as High Contracting Parties to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and as members of this International Conference, to safeguard the Movement's principled humanitarian action. We appeal to States to recommit to and fully implement their obligations to at all times respect the adherence by all the components of the Movement to the Fundamental Principles, as agreed in Article 2.4 of the Statutes of the Movement, in particular those of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence, and to support and facilitate the humanitarian mission and activities of the components of the Movement.

In particular:

- We appeal to States to take all appropriate measures to prevent, stop and remedy any abuse, pressure, misinformation, disinformation and dehumanizing rhetoric, through social media or otherwise, that harms the physical, psychological or reputational well-being of people in vulnerable situations and the staff and volunteers of the Movement components serving them;
- We appeal to States to work with the National Societies, with the support of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), to ensure that all levels of government and public authorities understand, respect and facilitate the mission, mandate and principled humanitarian action of the National Societies, including in their role as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field, and of the IFRC and the ICRC;
- We appeal to each State to renew its commitment to respect the ability of the ICRC, the IFRC and the National Societies, including in their role as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field, to operate in accordance with the Fundamental Principles, in particular impartiality, neutrality and independence, as a vital means to ensure unhindered and safe access to people in need. This includes strengthening the legal base of the National Societies in domestic law and refraining from requesting National Societies to perform activities that are not in accordance with the Fundamental Principles;
- We appeal to States to ensure that sanctions and counterterrorism measures do not impede the ability of impartial and neutral humanitarian organizations, such as Movement components, to have access to people in need and deliver humanitarian assistance and protection activities. We call on States to swiftly and faithfully implement the humanitarian exemptions required by United Nations Security Council Resolution 2664 of December 2022 and

include similar humanitarian exemptions in autonomous sanctions and counterterrorism criminal laws.

We are ready and willing to constructively engage with States towards the common objective of upholding impartial, neutral and independent humanitarian action, essential to enabling the Movement to fulfil its life-saving humanitarian mission.

Reaffirming the role of the Movement as a factor for peace (CD/24/R7)

The Council of Delegates,

acknowledging the changing global landscape, including the increasing complexity and interconnectedness of different challenges – such as armed conflicts and other forms of violence, disasters, displacement, public health crises and climate and other emergencies – that contribute to fragility, lack of resources, discrimination, exclusion and intolerance, including racism, all of which has contributed to an increased desire for a culture of peace,

recalling that the motto of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – “*per humanitatem ad pacem*” (through humanity to peace) – is a call to action to ensure lasting peace, including through our diverse activities at the global, national and community level,

reiterating the importance and relevance of the Fundamental Principles, which contribute to peace by promoting understanding, conciliation and recognition of the human dignity of all people,

recalling the respective and complementary mandates, roles and responsibilities of the components of the Movement, based on its Statutes, and the value of each component’s work to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found,

recalling also that the Movement, through its work and the dissemination of its ideals, promotes lasting peace, which is not simply the absence of war but a dynamic process of cooperation among all States and peoples, based on the amicable settlement of disputes, respect for human rights and the fair and equitable distribution of resources and firmly founded on respect for international law and mutual understanding,

reaffirming the long history of the Movement’s reflections on and contributions to peace, as evidenced in past Council of Delegates and International Conference resolutions, including the Programme of Action of the Red Cross as a Factor of Peace adopted in 1975 at the World Red Cross Conference on Peace,

expressing the heartfelt desire that, through sustained efforts to maintain peace, humanity may be spared new and incalculable suffering,

acknowledging that respect for international humanitarian law (IHL) during an armed conflict can contribute to an eventual return to sustainable peace and that by promoting respect for IHL the Movement can promote our common humanity,

recalling that humanitarian diplomacy is an important tool through which the components of the Movement, based on their complementary mandates, experience and the Fundamental Principles, advocate for the prevention and alleviation of human suffering, notably in contexts of conflict and violence,

recognizing the role of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) under IHL and the Statutes of the Movement and in maintaining and disseminating the Fundamental Principles and its mandate to take any humanitarian initiative which comes within its role as a specifically neutral and independent institution and intermediary,

reaffirming the role of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to inspire, encourage, facilitate and always promote the activities of National Societies, the exchange of ideas and the sharing of good practices,

reaffirming also the role of National Societies as auxiliaries to their public authorities in the humanitarian field and the role of their extensive network of local volunteers in addressing challenges faced by their communities due to situations of conflict, crises, disasters and other emergencies, including through diverse programmes (such as health, disaster management, livelihood) and through disseminating IHL, the principles and the ideals of the Movement,

recognizing the transformative power of volunteering, which enhances civic sense and responsibility, promotes inclusive societies with shared benefits and opportunities, engages diverse individuals as proactive agents of change, enables communities to strengthen their capacities and resilience, fosters deep community roots, increases understanding of persistent challenges and fuels the passion and ideas that drive positive societal transformations,

affirming unwavering support and encouragement for the engagement of young people, who make up half of all National Society volunteers, recognizing their role as agents of positive change, peacebuilders and advocates for IHL and humanitarian principles and values in an ever-changing world,

recognizing the importance of formal and non-formal education as a fundamental human right and a powerful tool for empowerment, social cohesion, behaviour change, the dissemination of IHL and the promotion of humanitarian values, including those that contribute to a culture of peace and coexistence,

1. *recognizes* that by virtue of being the world's largest and oldest humanitarian network and witness to the suffering caused by situations of conflict, disasters, crises and other emergencies, the Movement has a unique contribution and significant experience and expertise to bring to global efforts to promote peace and conciliation among all peoples;

2. *recognizes* that contributing to sustainable peace and community resilience requires a coordinated and sustained effort at all levels of the Movement, including capacity strengthening, starting at the local community level and extending to the national, regional and international level;
3. *encourages* the ICRC, the IFRC and National Societies to pursue their efforts – in accordance with their respective mandates – to ensure respect for gender equality, diversity and inclusion and to address discrimination, exclusion and intolerance, including racism, in line with our Fundamental Principles;
4. *calls on* the components of the Movement to further explore the specific possibilities and priorities of their contributions to prospects for peace, as appropriate and in line with their mandates;
5. *encourages* the IFRC, the ICRC and National Societies, according to their mandates, to strengthen humanitarian diplomacy efforts in a collaborative and complementary manner, in support of the Movement’s contribution towards promoting lasting peace and preventing and alleviating suffering;
6. *urges* the ICRC and National Societies to strengthen their efforts to promote, in a spirit of humanity, respect for IHL in all armed conflicts;
7. *calls on* National Societies, as auxiliaries to their public authorities in the humanitarian field, to support them in the implementation of IHL-related commitments;
8. *calls on* National Societies, as auxiliaries to their Public Authorities in the humanitarian field, to acknowledge the contribution of health programming to an environment that may be more conducive to peace and recognise that their outcomes can contribute to social cohesion, dialogue, and resilience to the impact of conflict and violence while empowering communities in the framework of reaffirming the Movement’s role as a factor of peace;
9. *urges* the components of the Movement to strengthen and scale up their work supporting Resolution 12 of the 2017 Council of Delegates and Resolution 5 of the 33rd International Conference (2019) on promoting women as humanitarian leaders, to recognize the leadership role of women in peace efforts, support initiatives that contribute to their full, equal and meaningful participation and to invest in their capacity-building so as to contribute to more comprehensive and enduring peace outcomes in humanitarian contexts;
10. *urges* all components of the Movement to strengthen their understanding of the links between effective, impartial protection work and efforts to promote lasting peace, including through implementation of the “Protection in the Movement” resolution, recognizing that an understanding of the different impacts of armed conflict, disasters and other emergencies on women, girls, men and boys and strengthened protection from harm can contribute to the promotion of peace;
11. *encourages* all components of the Movement to further strengthen their action and cooperation in tracing missing persons, protecting and restoring family links, clarifying the fate and whereabouts of missing persons, support for alternatives to immigration detention and ensuring the dignified recovery,

- identification and return of remains, recognizing the value of these humanitarian activities in promoting reconciliation and dialogue between communities and between States and the importance of the ICRC's role in situations of armed conflict in this regard;
12. *welcomes* the contribution of the Movement to advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy for disarmament, including towards the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons, anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions, and building a world free from the threats posed by such arms;
 13. *calls on* National Societies to co-create appropriate programmes with communities, with the support of the IFRC and the ICRC, where appropriate, to strengthen resilience, enhance social inclusion and contribute to prospects for peace;
 14. *calls on* National Societies to prioritize volunteer- and youth-led programming and invest in initiatives to improve satisfaction and motivation, capacity-building programmes and thematic training and qualification activities for local volunteers in areas such as non-violent communication, mediation and dialogue facilitation in order to help volunteers understand their role in ensuring neutral and impartial humanitarian action and its contribution to peace, recognizing them as front-line responders and agents of change in their communities;
 15. *urges* the IFRC to mainstream the implementation of volunteer and youth policies, along with the strategic framework for education, to strengthen formal and non-formal education activities that promote social cohesion, behaviour change and resilience-building;
 16. *urges* National Societies to prioritize and expand their efforts to support States in providing quality education on humanitarian values and IHL and in protecting and ensuring inclusive, equitable, accessible education in emergencies with the support of the IFRC and the ICRC, where relevant;
 17. *calls on* National Societies to invest in and strengthen partnerships and collaboration with local governments, civil society organizations, local and national sports organizations, the private sector, environment and climate actors, humanitarian, development and peace-building actors and other stakeholders, where relevant, in order to enhance collective efforts, develop joint strategies and share best practices in conflict prevention and peace education;
 18. *calls on* the Movement to increase collaboration on operational research and knowledge-sharing, to support evidence-based programming, considering the impacts of principled action, local leadership, women in humanitarian leadership, youth engagement and volunteering on building sustainable peace and resilience, and to promote advocacy efforts in this regard.

War in cities: A solemn appeal from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference

(CD/24/R8)

The Council of Delegates,

deeply concerned by the devastating humanitarian impacts of war in cities, experienced first-hand by the staff and volunteers of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement), including the appallingly high number of civilian deaths, the extensive and long-lasting physical and mental suffering, the consequences of weapon contamination, the destruction of homes, livelihoods and critical civilian infrastructure, the disruption to essential services, including health care, water supply, food supply, sanitation, solid waste disposal, electricity and education, the environmental damage and the widespread displacement of people that also impacts the communities hosting them, and *acknowledging* that these impacts affect women, men, girls and boys of different ages, disabilities and backgrounds differently,

concerned that, although urban warfare is not a new phenomenon, current trends in global demographics towards rapid urbanization increase the risk that cities and other urban areas will continue to be the main battlegrounds of conflicts now and in the future,

convinced that the scale of the human suffering and destruction caused by urban warfare requires all States, as well as non-State armed group parties to armed conflict, to take urgent and wide-ranging action to prevent, reduce and respond to the devastating humanitarian consequences of urban warfare, starting with strengthened compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL),

recalling Resolution 6, on “War in cities”, adopted at the 2022 Council of Delegates and all previous Council of Delegates resolutions and other Movement guiding documents of relevance for the work of the Movement’s components on war in cities,

1. *adopts* the annex below, War in Cities: A Solemn Appeal from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Solemn Appeal), to be presented at the 34th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent;
2. *calls upon* States and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to make pledges to prevent and respond to the humanitarian impacts of urban warfare, and to take concrete actions to those ends, and *calls upon* States to support the Movement’s work in this respect;
3. *welcomes* the ongoing work under the 2022–2027 Movement Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to the Humanitarian Impacts of War in Cities and Resolution 11 of the 2022 Council of Delegates, “Strengthening the resilience of urban communities: Our way forward”;
4. *encourages* Movement components to promote widely the annexed Solemn Appeal.

War in cities: A solemn appeal from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

When wars are fought in cities, we see appallingly high numbers of civilians wounded and killed. Over and over again, we see hospitals destroyed, medical systems in crisis, medical personnel threatened and injured, and sick patients succumbing to preventable deaths. Even those fortunate enough to survive carry physical and mental scars long after the fighting abates.

When front lines move into cities, we see streets, homes, cultural property and buildings turned into battlegrounds and civilians trapped in besieged areas. Despite their resilience and ingenuity, we see the lives of civilians in urban areas become ever more precarious. Every trip to the market, to work or to school can mean a loved one is hit by a stray bullet, shrapnel or an explosive blast. We see those forced to flee lose contact with their families, sometimes never to meet again.

When explosive weapons are used in cities, we often see entire neighbourhoods turned into rubble, their residents buried underneath. Infrastructure critical for the survival of the civilian population is destroyed and damaged without adequate means for repair. We see residents run out of drinking water and food, electricity provision disrupted and communication networks break down. Civilian life grinds to a halt and takes years, sometimes decades, to rebuild.

The volunteers and staff of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement try to alleviate human suffering and protect lives whenever armed conflict breaks out, often in dangerous situations. We experience the humanitarian impacts of urban warfare every day and are all too often prevented from providing assistance. **We have seen enough.**

Our Movement was founded to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield. Decades of efforts to limit the suffering of war victims culminated 75 years ago in the adoption of the Geneva Conventions and, subsequently, of their Additional Protocols.

However, these historic achievements stand in stark contrast to the scale of devastation and suffering of recent conflicts fought in cities, where an estimated 70% of the global population will live by 2050. Current trends in urban conflicts present profound implications for the protection of civilians, for humanitarian assistance, for the fabric of international humanitarian law (IHL) and for future generations.

We, therefore, solemnly appeal to all States party to the Geneva Conventions to uphold their obligation to respect and to ensure respect for IHL in all circumstances.

We further solemnly appeal to all States, as well as to non-State armed group parties to armed conflict, to:

- ensure, where fighting in urban areas cannot be avoided, that the protection of civilians and civilian objects is identified as a strategic priority in military operations and implemented, including through full and rigorous compliance with IHL and effective civilian harm mitigation policies and practices;
- for all States, endorse the 2022 Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (Political Declaration), and, for all States and non-State armed group parties to armed conflict, adhere to and faithfully implement its commitments;
- adopt and implement policies to avoid using explosive weapons with a wide impact area in populated areas owing to the significant likelihood of indiscriminate effects, including when implementing the Political Declaration's commitment to restrict or refrain as appropriate from the use of all explosive weapons in populated areas;
- improve the capacity of armed forces to understand the location and interconnected nature of critical infrastructure that provides essential services for civilian populations, and avoid damage to such infrastructure;
- take all feasible precautions to protect the civilian population and civilian objects in attack and against the effects of attacks, uphold the requirement for combatants to distinguish themselves from the civilian population and comply with the prohibition on the use of human shields;
- respect and protect medical personnel, facilities and transport, as well as Red Cross and Red Crescent personnel, volunteers and assets, and uphold the protective value of the emblems;
- facilitate safe, rapid and unimpeded access to areas of urban conflict for impartial humanitarian organizations, civil defence, essential services providers and essential supplies;
- ensure that all armed forces are provided with adequate training and operational guidance that supports them to comply with IHL and protect civilian populations when fighting in urban areas;
- monitor compliance with IHL and ensure accountability for violations of IHL, including through prompt, independent and effective investigations and prosecutions as appropriate;
- review and improve the capacities of armed forces to understand the humanitarian impacts of their military operations, including through disaggregated data collection and analysis and seeking the views of women, men, girls and boys affected by urban warfare, in order to inform decision-making, assess compliance with IHL and respond to the needs of the civilian population.

Every one of us may, one day, have family hiding in a basement, a neighbour caught in crossfire or a friend unable to receive critical medical treatment. It is already a reality for millions of people, and together we can make a difference. Let us be guided by our common humanity and take urgent and effective action to alleviate the plight of civilians affected by urban conflicts.