



MESSAGE ON WORLD RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT DAY

8 May 2021

Every year, 8 May marks World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, a day to celebrate the principles, values, history and impact of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

This date is the anniversary of Henry Dunant's birth in 1828, the founding father of the Movement. He documented the terrible suffering at the Battle of Solferino, in Italy in 1859. His book *A Memory of Solferino*, gave rise to his humanitarian vision and led to the formation of voluntary relief societies for the purpose of having care given to the wounded in wartime without any distinction. This eventually evolved into today's Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

In over a century and a half since Henry Dunant's initiative to establish voluntary relief societies in each country, the nature of wars and other disasters have changed. But human suffering remains unbearable. These many years have not brought more peace to humankind. On the contrary, we continue to see suffering on an ever larger scale. The past year has shown the vulnerability of the whole world to a pandemic. At the same time, however, it has highlighted the extraordinary commitment and achievements of our Movement's volunteers and staff.

The scale of today's global challenges can feel overwhelming at times. But in the midst of a global pandemic, the climate emergency, and the dangers faced by communities at risk of disaster and scarcity, there is hope. This hope is built through countless acts of kindness from one person to another in communities large and small across the world.

Wherever there is a crisis, there is a Red Cross or Red Crescent volunteer ready to support the people affected, and ensure they recover quickly and can live with greater resilience and dignity. Their commitment never wavers, and their compassion has no limits.

On this World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, we pay tribute to the millions of volunteers, members and staff who work every day to prevent and alleviate human suffering all over the world. They work on the front line of every crisis, often in difficult circumstances and at risk to their own safety. They deserve our deep gratitude.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact the world and reinforces the importance of our entire Movement – National Societies, IFRC and ICRC – in aiding vulnerable

people. We have reached millions of people hard hit by the pandemic in nearly every country of the world and continue to respond to disasters, armed conflicts and other crises. We do so by working with local communities, public authorities and civil society to ensure a more effective and coordinated response to this unprecedented crisis.

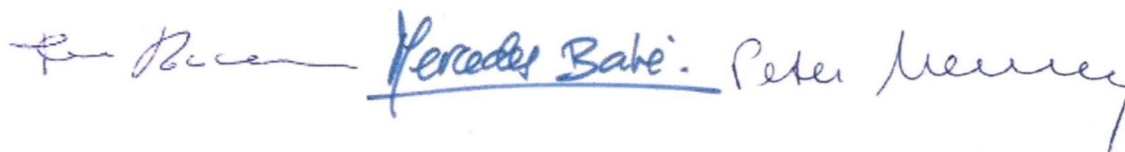
The world will always face new crises and challenges. Throughout our more than 150 year-long history we have responded to the challenges of every era and continue to do so today.

Our network is needed more urgently than ever and we continue to strive for sustainable and effective National Societies, supported by the IFRC and ICRC, able to reach those most in need.

On this World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, we celebrate our long journey and reaffirm our commitment to our humanitarian mission.

Together we are #unstoppable!

Happy World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day to all!

Three handwritten signatures in blue ink are displayed horizontally. From left to right: Francesco Rocca, Mercedes Babé (with the name underlined), and Peter Maurer.

Francesco Rocca
IFRC President

Mercedes Babé
Standing Commission Chair

Peter Maurer
ICRC President