

Bulletin

Letter from the Chair



Dear friends,

It is a pleasure, as always, to share our news with you in this Bulletin.

Over the year, we have remembered the timeless values that guide our work – the seven Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. *The principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality*, which were proclaimed 60 years ago at the 20th International Conference in Vienna, are more than guiding values; they are the backbone that supports the Movement's humanitarian action throughout the world. The Fundamental Principles are the ethical basis of everything we do and serve as the moral compass that guides us in our tireless quest to alleviate human suffering and promote peace.

The world has changed, but our Fundamental Principles have not. While there are voices in favour of updating the Fundamental Principles to adapt them to present-day realities, I think that now is not the right time. Today's complex international environment poses significant challenges for their implementation and continues to put their application and resilience to the test. The Movement must constantly reaffirm that humanitarian action transcends politics and that it is always on the side of humanity.

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Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent
19 Avenue de la Paix, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland
E-mail: standing.commission@standcom.ch
Website: www.standcom.ch

The dedication of Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers and staff to upholding humanitarian principles, even in the most dangerous environments, is proof of the power of humanity, compassion and respect for human dignity. This year continued to prove difficult in this respect. We have received sad and painful news about volunteers, staff and others who work with the Movement losing their lives in the line of duty. I would like to pay tribute to those who are no longer with us and remember their valuable contributions to making the world a better place.

The 19th Session of the Standing Commission was formed just over a year ago at the 34th International Conference in Geneva. Over the past year, as leaders of the Movement with a responsibility to fulfil the many expectations placed on us by the 193 Movement components and States, we have remained unwavering in our collective commitment to working to serve the Movement and uphold its values.

The Standing Commission is a statutory body with a remit to promote harmony, unity and strategic alignment within the Movement. It is regarded as and is a key Movement forum for high-level decision-making, and we will remain committed to ensuring a clear vision and strategic coherence among its 193 components.

In 2025, we held three formal and several informal meetings at which we worked on important issues and examined the critical economic situation facing the humanitarian sector and the impact it is having on all Movement components. Other matters addressed included preparations for the 2026 Council of Delegates which, as you know, will take place in Geneva on 3 and 4 December 2026, immediately after the General Assembly of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

The draft elements of resolutions proposed, for now, for the Council of Delegates have already been sent out to the Movement components. The information and consultation process has also been launched through online seminars, which will continue throughout next year, with a view to providing you with updates on the progress made and hearing your ideas and suggestions to ensure that the Council of Delegates is a success and achieves its goal. We are grateful for the feedback received so far on the Concept Note and encourage you to continue participating actively in all the consultations between now and December 2026.

The Movement's highest distinctions are awarded at the Council of Delegates to recognize and reward outstanding service to the Red Cross and Red Crescent cause, namely the Henry Dunant Medal and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Prize for Peace and Humanity. The call for nominations was published on 19 November, and I strongly encourage you to propose candidates who have demonstrated inspiring and exceptional humanitarian achievements, meet the award criteria and requirements and whose nomination will contribute to fostering diversity, inclusion and integrity within the Movement.

Finally, I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to all those who have been kind enough to contribute to this issue of the Bulletin, with a special thanks to Azra Numanovic, the Norwegian Red Cross Youth President, for her article in which she shares her insights, with a young, modern-day take on the Fundamental Principles and their application among the younger generations.

I take this opportunity to wish you all the very best for 2026.

Best regards,

Mercedes Babé
Chair



Thank you for your contributions in 2025

The Standing Commission is deeply grateful to those who responded to its call for contributions in 2025. This year, more than ever, we appreciate the efforts of all members of the Movement who have supported the Standing Commission's 2025 budget amid the current complex global financial circumstances. Our special thanks go to the 58 National Societies listed below as well as to the IFRC and the ICRC for their contributions. We also extend our sincere appreciation to the National Societies that have provided funding for the first time, and to the Swedish Red Cross for the secondment of a project manager since September 2024 to support the Movement Policy Framework project.

The Standing Commission is fully aware of the financial and operational challenges faced by all components of the Movement as they carry out their respective missions, which is why this year's support is especially meaningful.

We count on the continuation of such collaborative support in 2026. All National Societies are encouraged to contribute, in line with their capacity, so that the Standing Commission, statutory body of the Movement and trustee of the International Conference, can continue to fulfil its mandate.

At the time of the closure of this Bulletin issue in 2025, voluntary contributions had been received from National Societies in the following countries:

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|--------------|------------------|
| • Afghanistan | • Colombia | • Ethiopia | • Italy | • Mali | • Romania |
| • Andorra | • CookIslands | • Finland | • Japan | • Monaco | • SanMarino |
| • Antigua and Barbuda | • CostaRica | • France | • Jordan | • Montenegro | • Serbia |
| • Austria | • Croatia | • Germany | • South Korea | • Myanmar | • Spain |
| • Bahrain | • Cyprus | • Greece | • Kuwait | • NewZealand | • Sweden |
| • Belgium | • CzechRepublic | • Grenada | • Latvia | • Nigeria | • Tchad |
| • Bulgaria | • Denmark | • Guinea | • Liberia | • Norway | • Thailand |
| • Cambodia | • Dominica | • Honduras | • Liechtenstein | • Palau | • Türkiye |
| • China | • Ecuador | • Iraq | • Luxembourg | • Poland | • United Kingdom |
| | • Estonia | • Israel | • Malawi | • Qatar | |

Thank you so much for supporting our work!

35th International Conference and Council of Delegates 2026

Next milestones in the consultation process for the 2026 Council of Delegates

The Standing Commission extends its sincere thanks to all National Societies that shared feedback on the Concept Note of the 2026 Council of Delegates. Your valuable input is helping shape the agenda and programme, to be circulated in June 2026.

The next phase of consultation focuses on the draft elements of resolutions, open since mid-December. National Societies are strongly encouraged to participate in this phase, which aims to gather diverse perspectives and insights to guide the development of the resolutions to be adopted at the 2026 Council of Delegates.

Mark your calendars for the Regional Webinars scheduled on 19 and 20 January 2026. These sessions will provide an opportunity to share feedback and ask questions on the draft elements of resolutions.

Elements of three proposed resolutions are now available on the [2026 Council of Delegates webpage](#) and open for consultation:

- Humanitarian accountability in technology: Ensuring humanitarian principles guide our use of ICTs.
- Strengthening the resilience of urban communities: Principles of Action.
- Building the Movement's strategic and operational preparedness to address the spread of harmful information in humanitarian settings.

Feedback can be submitted by email until 6 February 2026 to: conferences@rcrcconference.org

A fourth proposal of resolution is subject to an ad hoc consultation process with National Societies on the following topic:

- Reinforcing the mandates and capacities of National Societies through strengthening their legal base and mandate (Model Law).

Additional resolution proposals may be reviewed by the Standing Commission while preparing the Council of Delegates agenda and programme.

Movement Awards 2026 - Call for nominations

The Standing Commission reiterates its call of 19 November 2025 to all components of the Movement to submit nominations for the **Henry Dunant Medal** and the **Red Cross Red Crescent Prize for Peace and Humanity** by March 1, 2026.

It strongly encourages the nomination of individuals whose contributions are truly exceptional and reflect the values of diversity, inclusion, and integrity.

Nominations should be prepared with careful consideration of the relevant regulations, guidelines and documents available on the [Standing Commission's website](#).

Walk the talk: From resolutions to action

In 2024, the 34th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent adopted [six resolutions](#). The resolutions were supplemented by voluntary commitments from participants in the form of over [115 pledges](#). The Council of Delegates adopted [nine resolutions](#) in 2024 and [13 resolutions](#) in 2022. The resolutions and pledges call for members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to take action for humanity. This section highlights the progress they have made so far.

Principled humanitarian action: The call we must answer

The 2024 Council of Delegates adopted the resolution [Call for respect and support for principled humanitarian action](#), urging the Movement to work with the general public, States and local authorities to enhance respect and support for principled humanitarian action. It also called on all Movement components to strengthen their knowledge and application of and adherence to the Fundamental Principles. The 60th anniversary of the Principles has reaffirmed their continued relevance, strength and value, highlighting their contemporary, human-centred nature at a time when trust in shared values and respect for the law, including international humanitarian law, are increasingly challenged. These developments underscore why the Principles matter now more than ever and why sustained follow-up to the resolution is essential.

Since the adoption of the resolution, a series of key activities have illustrated what the Fundamental Principles make possible in practice and how the resolution is being implemented across the Movement. For the 60th anniversary, events have been organized for Movement partners and the diplomatic community, hosted by the Austrian Red Cross and the Swiss embassy in Vienna, at the European Parliament in Brussels and at the United Nations in New York. For the general public, joint online campaigns and initiatives took place around World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day. Within the Movement, a Global Think Tank has developed tools to enhance

contemporary knowledge and application of the Principles, and an IFRC-led regional initiative on principled humanitarian action has been launched in Europe with the support of the ICRC and several National Societies. Joint country-level initiatives have also taken place. Movement-wide webinar series, internal dialogues and updated training materials further demonstrate concrete follow-up to the resolution.

As principled humanitarian action continues to be challenged and restricted amid record attacks on humanitarian personnel, including Movement staff and volunteers, it is more important than ever to sustain and deepen implementation of the 2024 resolution and to amplify our collective call for respect and support for principled humanitarian action in the lead-up to the 2026 Council of Delegates.

By **Valpuri Saarelma**

Senior Officer, National Society Policy Development,
IFRC

valpuri.saarelma@ifrc.org

and

Julien Chaliar

Movement Cooperation Applied Policy Adviser, ICRC
jchaliar@icrc.org

Learn more:

- [Sixty years on: why the Fundamental Principles must be lived, not just remembered](#)
- [Statement by the Governing Board of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies on the 60th Anniversary of the Fundamental Principles](#)

Update on the Movement Policy Framework – One Year on from the 2024 Council of Delegates

One year on from the adoption of Resolution 9 at the 2024 Council of Delegates, the Standing Commission continues to drive forward its Movement policy framework (MPF) initiative. Dr Helen Durham, who chairs the Standing Commission's dedicated working group, outlined the ambition behind this effort in the previous issue of the Bulletin (19/02, June 2025). The initiative is steadily gaining momentum, with growing engagement and support from National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC.

The aim of the MPF initiative is to provide clear and accessible guidance on the lifecycle of resolutions adopted by the International Conference and the Council of Delegates. This year, the Standing Commission has prioritized improving access to them, with the launch, in 2026, of a user-friendly, multilingual online platform serving as a reference point for accessing, analysing and searching decisions adopted at Red Cross and Red Crescent Statutory Meetings. Beyond preserving memory, the platform will transform decades of humanitarian decisions, recommendations, positions and policies – embodied in hundreds of resolutions – into accessible knowledge that fosters practical use and effective implementation.

In line with the resolution's emphasis on a collaborative and consultative process, a reference group has been formally established. It brings together representatives from five National Societies, selected to ensure regional diversity, and from both the ICRC and the IFRC. This structure is designed to foster broad engagement on ideas and projects emerging from the MPF initiative and to ensure they reflect the perspectives and operational realities of the Movement's components.

As part of ongoing consultations, a questionnaire will soon be circulated to all National Societies to gather additional insights on perspectives, expectations and needs related to Movement-wide policies and resolutions. These contributions will inform the continued development of the MPF initiative.

The Standing Commission remains committed to presenting progress on the MPF at the 2026 Council of Delegates and welcomes continued engagement, comments and suggestions from all components of the Movement.

Want to learn more about the MPF initiative?
Contact the project team at:
standing.commission@standcom.ch

Standing Commission members' corner

A talk with Mr. Georges Kettaneh

Georges Kettaneh was elected to the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent by the 34th International Conference in October 2024. He has dedicated over three decades of service to the Movement and the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC). Since 2013, he has served as the Secretary General of the LRC. Over the course of his tenure, he played a key role in developing the Emergency Medical Services system, oversaw major emergency relief operations, and previously held the position of Director of Operations and Disaster Management, deepening his experience in humanitarian response, disaster preparedness, and enhancing the capacities of local communities.



How can we more effectively reinforce our Movement's culture of Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values?

Amid an increasingly crisis-driven global landscape, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement faces growing operational pressures to sustain its humanitarian action and reinforce the resilience of crisis-affected communities. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is further challenged by its commitment to the Fundamental Principles that guide its mandate and operational conduct. Therefore, embedding and promoting these principles and

humanitarian values must remain central to our collective priorities. The following reflections are offered in this regard:

The Fundamental Principles of the Movement serve not as rhetorical labels but as an operational framework that governs all our actions. Strengthening the culture of these principles requires sustained investment in specialized capacity-building programs that span all organizational tiers, from volunteers to senior leadership, ensuring that humanitarian principles are embedded in training modules and operational practices, thereby enhancing comprehension of their

ethos and their critical role in our dynamic world. Digital and direct outreach campaigns can also be launched to highlight genuine success stories that embody the core principles of Humanity, Neutrality, and Impartiality, while maintaining Operational Independence. This approach helps build community trust, acceptance, and respect, and protects the secure operational pathway of our Movement in life-saving response efforts. Leadership at all levels must also model these principles through transparent governance, principled decision-making, and maintaining messaging that consistently advances humanitarian ethics.

Which priority areas do you, in your capacity as a member of the Standing Commission, seek to champion or promote within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement?

1. Advancing inclusivity and upholding diversity: By adopting explicit institutional policies that guarantee non-discriminatory participation across all segments, in a manner that upholds the Principle of Humanity in its fullest scope.

2. Humanitarian action innovation: By integrating technological solutions that accelerate response mechanisms, and strengthen coordination and interoperability among Movement components, while ensuring ethical data governance and safeguarding the confidentiality of each constituent entity within the Movement.

3. Cooperation and partnerships: By broadening cooperation with academic partners and the local community to facilitate knowledge exchange and co-develop sustainable solutions. This contributes to the sustainability of humanitarian operations amid

intensifying crises, while creating mechanisms and instruments to advance a society that upholds values, supports principles, and engages with them.

4. Unified collective voice: We belong to an international Movement bound by noble Fundamental Principles and a steadfast commitment to humanitarian work. Therefore, we must strive to speak with one voice; through our unity, our actions will resonate more strongly. Additionally, it is essential to work closely with our governments to address challenges while maintaining our independence. Our united presence strengthens our resilience in overcoming crises and mitigating their impact on individuals. We must view the challenges faced by people around the world as our own, acknowledging that events occurring in any country concern us all.

5. Operationalizing Collaboration and Adherence to Fundamental Principles: Institutionalizing humanitarian efforts through robust mechanisms, organizational structures, and coordinated frameworks is essential to achieving the desired outcomes. Activating partnerships and strengthening performance lead to satisfactory results, while emphasizing adherence to the seven Fundamental Principles in all circumstances.

6. Volunteer Retention and Improved Volunteer Protection and Management: Recognizing the ongoing need to attract and retain volunteers, priority is given to establishing clear volunteer-management mechanisms, supported by incentives that encourage continued engagement and ensure the highest protection measures. Volunteers must also be empowered through training and professional opportunities, in addition to establishing a comprehensive database and analyzing attrition factors to ensure continuous improvement.

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What are the major challenges that currently raise concern and should be prioritized by the Movement's components and its statutory bodies?

1. The proliferation of armed conflicts and climate-induced as well as natural disasters is amplifying humanitarian needs and testing our capacity for rapid response.
2. Upholding Fundamental Principles in highly complex settings, where neutrality and independence face mounting political and security pressures, requires fortified internal compliance frameworks and external advocacy instruments to uphold our principles.
3. Financial and human-resource sustainability, through the need to secure adequate funding and retain qualified staff, necessitates innovative plans to mobilize support and develop capacities.
4. Implementing International Humanitarian Law to ensure the protection of personnel, health workers, and essential facilities is fundamental to preserving life and human dignity.

Confronting these challenges necessitates that all entities and components of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, notably the International Committee of the Red Cross, national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, formulate integrated strategies centered on strengthening coordination mechanisms and crafting adaptable policies that align with evolving global transformations without compromising the essence of humanitarian principles.

In conclusion, sustaining a culture grounded in humanitarian principles and values is a collective obligation that guarantees the Movement's continuity as a proactive agent serving humanity wherever it may be, guided solely by the imperative to address needs and preserve human dignity.



Opinion

Inherited Principles, New Realities: A Young Humanitarian's Call

We are all navigating an increasingly complex world, marked by economic instability, climate change, protracted armed conflicts, inequality and huge health challenges, including mental health. In such a landscape, the question for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is not only how we respond to these challenges, but also how we uphold humanitarian values as efficient tools in our response.

For me, this is ultimately one story: the future of the Movement, the enduring relevance of the Fundamental Principles and the role that young people must play in carrying them forward.

Regardless of age, Red Cross and Red Crescent staff and volunteers all over the globe know the Fundamental Principles by heart. Humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality are not abstract ideals; they constitute the humanitarian compass that helps us all navigate complexity and polarization, enabling us to act where others cannot or will not. And at a time when humanitarian action is increasingly politicized and misinformation spreads quickly, the clarity, legitimacy and direction the Principles provide is probably needed more than ever.

A question I often hear is whether the younger generation believes we need to develop 'Principles 2.0'. My response is that in the course of their 60-year history, there have been several younger generations, and the Principles have survived the test of time and generations precisely because they were shaped gradually, through real experience, intergenerational wisdom and interpretation within the Movement. They are indeed under growing pressure, but this is not the time to reinvent or dilute them; it is the time to strengthen the way we understand them, practise them and defend them.

So, the question should rather be how we can ensure that most people understand the relevance of the Principles in a world that looks very different from the one in which they were formulated. What does universality mean in a hyperconnected digital age? What forms of voluntary humanitarian service will define the next decades? How do we safeguard humanitarian access based on a principled approach, when the perception of Movement actors is more and more frequently defined by others?

These are not abstract debates – they are practical questions about the future of principled humanitarian action. And I believe young people must be central in answering them.

Across the world, young people are already living with the long-term consequences of today's crises. Yet even in these circumstances, they consistently show extraordinary resilience and creativity. They rebuild communities, support their peers and find new ways to provide assistance and protection in accordance with humanitarian principles. Their leadership is not theoretical – it is lived.

This lived leadership is precisely why youth empowerment must be real – not symbolic, occasional or confined to youth-focused spaces. Young volunteers and leaders are not merely vulnerable victims of global challenges; they are essential contributors to addressing them in an efficient manner. We do not seek to replace the generations before us but to stand alongside them in protecting and renewing the Movement's humanitarian mission.

As a young humanitarian leader, I am often expected to have all the answers to these complex questions. I do not. But empowered youth can help create them. When given the platform, young voices are bold and constructive. When we discuss “what comes next”, part of the answer must be ensuring that young people remain engaged, trusted and central to the Movement’s work.

If we are serious about safeguarding principled humanitarian action in a changing world, then intergenerational cooperation is not optional – it is essential. The Fundamental Principles will endure only if every new generation chooses them again.

Young people are not only the future of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, we are vital partners in shaping its present and safeguarding its compass for the world and new generations to come.

by **Azra Numanovic**

Azra currently serves as Youth President of the Norwegian Red Cross, where she works to strengthen youth leadership and foster a culture in which young people have real influence and meaningful participation across the Movement. She has led both specific initiatives and long-term efforts to empower emerging leaders. She recently completed her master’s degree, focusing on how the Movement’s humanitarian diplomacy is changing.





Georges Kettaneh



Wang Ping



Helen Durham



Sven Mollekleiv



Mirjana Spoljaric



Mercedes Babé



Kate Forbes



Olivier Ray



Lucie Laplante

Happy new year and best wishes
Bonne année et meilleurs vœux
Feliz año y mejores deseos
سنة جديدة سعيدة وأطيب التمنيات