

Bulletin

Letter from the Chair

Dear friends,

It is a pleasure to address you all once again through this Bulletin to inform you about various matters of interest to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

First, I want to pay tribute to and remember the thousands of Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers and staff who work tirelessly in the service of Humanity. I especially want to honor the memory of our colleagues who have died in the line of duty in recent months. These losses are unacceptable, as is the lack of respect for our emblems. The humanitarian mission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, along with its volunteers and staff, must always be protected and respected by all.

Secondly, I want to inform you that, over the past few months, the Standing Commission has reviewed the lessons learned and begun follow-up on the outcomes of the 34th International Conference and the 2024 Council of Delegates.

At the Standing Commission meeting held at the beginning of June, we decided, as established in the Statutes of the Movement, that the next Council of Delegates will be held in Geneva on the 3 and 4 of December 2026, immediately after the 25th session of the General Assembly of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.



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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

In collaboration with the ICRC and the International Federation, we are working on preparing the new cycle of Statutory Meetings of the Movement, with special focus on the upcoming 2026 Council of Delegates. A Concept Note is being developed, which will highlight the ideals of unity and purpose of the humanitarian mission of the Movement, along with more specific proposals for the 2026 Council of Delegates. This document will be sent to all National Societies for consultation. I encourage you to actively participate in this consultation, both within your National Society and through contacts with National Societies in your respective regions. Your participation and feedback are extremely important to the Standing Commission.

The Standing Commission is committed and mandated to follow up and ensure that the adopted resolutions are promoted and properly implemented. This commitment, beyond being a collective responsibility, is also an individual responsibility of each of the 193 components.

To facilitate this task, and as the last Council of Delegates encouraged, the Standing Commission continues the work initiated during its previous session to develop a Movement policy framework. This framework aims to provide guidance to all components for the drafting and implementation of resolutions and policies, and to facilitate access to them.

At the next Council of Delegates, the Henry Dunant Medal—the Movement's highest distinction awarded to an individual member—will be presented. We look forward to receiving highly meritorious nominations that are worthy this high distinction. I encourage you to already begin identifying candidates who showcase the diversity and inclusion of our Movement.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Japanese Red Cross Society for their invitation to represent the Movement on the occasion of the Special Day to commemorate World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, on 8 May 2025, during Expo 2025 in Osaka, Kansai. It was an honor to attend this great event as Chair of the Standing Commission. Both Expo 2025 and the 8 May program were exceptional and highlighted the dedication and enthusiasm of the organizers.

Finally, I would like to express my special thanks to all those who kindly contributed to this edition of the Bulletin. Special thanks to Ms. Sarah Harrison, head of the technical unit within the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Hub of the Movement.

Please do not hesitate to bring to the attention of the Standing Commission any matter you believe deserves our attention.

Warm regards,

Mercedes Babé
Chair

Mercedes Babé

Thank you for your contributions in 2024

As established by the 2007 Council of Delegates, the budget of the Standing Commission is jointly funded, on an equitable one-third principle by the IFRC, the ICRC and the National Societies. The Standing Commission relies on the support of National Societies to fulfil its statutory duties and is grateful for their trust.

The Standing Commission expresses its most sincere gratitude to the 62 National Societies able to contribute to its budget in 2024, as well as to the IFRC and the ICRC. Additionally, the Standing Commission recognizes and expresses special thanks to the Swedish Red Cross for the secondment of a project manager since September 2024.

Voluntary contributions were received in 2024 from the National Societies of the following countries:

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| • Albania | • Cook Islands | • Ethiopia | • Kuwait | • Nigeria | • Spain |
| • Andorra | • Croatia | • Finland | • Latvia | • Norway | • Sweden |
| • Antigua and Barbuda | • Cyprus | • France | • Liberia | • Palau | • Switzerland |
| • Austria | • Czech Republic | • Germany | • Liechtenstein | • Palestine | • Thailand |
| • Bahrain | • Democratic Republic of Congo | • Honduras | • Luxembourg | • Poland | • Tonga |
| • Belgium | • Denmark | • Iraq | • Malaysia | • Qatar | • Turkmenistan |
| • Bulgaria | • Dominica | • Ireland | • Mali | • Romania | • United Kingdom |
| • Cambodia | • Dominican Republic | • Italy | • Monaco | • Russia | • United States |
| • Canada | • Ecuador | • Japan | • Montenegro | • San Marino | • Zimbabwe |
| • China | • Estonia | • Jordan | • Morocco | • St Vincent and the Grenadines | |
| • Colombia | | • South Korea | • New Zealand | | |

Thank you so much for supporting our work!

35th International Conference and Council of Delegates 2026

Update on the Council of Delegates 2026

Since the 2024 Statutory Meetings, the world has only grown more complex. The shifting geopolitical landscape continues to add pressure to an already fragile global order. In moments like this, it's more important than ever for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to come together and make a real difference for people living through crisis.

The 2026 Statutory Meetings are a call for the Movement to unite with renewed focus and strengthened cohesion, to face modern and future challenges head-on and deliver principled, impactful humanitarian action. The Movement has the experience, the presence, and the

principles to lead—and this is our moment to act with determination. The world is changing fast, but our commitment stays the same: to be there, always, for those who need us most.

The Standing Commission is pleased to announce that the Council of Delegates 2026 will take place in Geneva, Switzerland, on 3 and 4 December 2026.

The Concept Note of the 2026 Council of Delegates will be available on the [Statutory Meetings](#) website in August. We encourage you to reflect on and discuss the topics in this Concept Note, and to provide your feedback.

Making our meetings matter even more

I remember the first time I attended the statutory meetings of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in Geneva in the late 1990s. It was exciting – and almost a little overwhelming – to witness the issues being discussed and see just how many Movement friends and colleagues had gathered from across the globe – not to mention the authorities and those interested in matters of concern to humanity. Resolutions, guidelines and decisions were passed and, as a young member of the Australian Red Cross delegation, it was all a bit confusing as well. Returning home, it was my job to brief the board of my National Society on what actions we needed to take from this worldwide gathering. I had come away determined and inspired, but the job was not easy.

Fast forward to 2025: I am deeply honoured not only to be elected to the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, but also to be appointed chair of its working group on the Movement Policy Framework, which has been given an exciting and timely opportunity. In [Resolution 9](#) adopted last October, the Council of

Delegates encouraged us to “continue the development of a Movement policy framework and to set up collaborative and consultative mechanisms with the components of the Movement” and invited us to “present the Movement policy framework to the 2026 Council of Delegates”. In other words, find ways to make the outcomes of our statutory meetings even more accessible and useable and new ways to continue crafting high quality, relevant resolutions that are well-known and implemented. We want the work we do when we come together to matter and have an impact on those we serve.

Looking back, the young me would be thrilled to see myself engaging as a volunteer across the Movement with a wonderful team of colleagues, asking questions and listening carefully to ensure we continue to stand with humanity and make the most of our statutory meetings.

By Helen Durham

Member of the Standing Commission

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.

The Movement's new migration strategy: Our collective vision for the future

When the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement adopted the first-ever *Movement Migration Strategy 2024–2030* at the Council of Delegates, it entered a new phase – one that seeks to deliver on its vision for all migrants to be safe, to be treated with dignity and to thrive in inclusive communities.

This strategy is more than a document – it is a clear and urgent call to action. It reflects a shared vision that is urgently needed today. In a world where millions of people are on the move, principled and locally led humanitarian action is more important than ever.

The implementation of the strategy will be driven by local National Societies. As auxiliaries to public authorities, National Societies are deeply embedded in communities, and are present in the countries of origin, transit and destination. They are crucial to making the strategy a reality by responding to migrants' needs, strengthening their inclusion, and protecting their rights and dignity.

For many National Societies, working with and for migrants is already a core part of their mandate. For others, it is a new and growing area of work. Across the Movement, we are already seeing National Societies take steps to implement the strategy by reviewing internal strategies, strengthening their positioning and seeking new ways to make their work more impactful. Some are using the strategy to engage in dialogue with partners, donors and other key parties to reinforce the visibility and resourcing of their work, and to promote the comparative and strategic advantages of their actions as local, trusted, principled and connected providers of aid.

These actions are unfolding not only at the local level, but also regionally and globally, for at the heart of the strategy lies the idea that no National Society stands alone. The Movement's strength lies in its ability to connect and coordinate programmes and operations across borders and along routes, and to share and leverage experience, evidence and expertise across regions and components to provide continuity of care and more coherent, effective action.

This work is underpinned by three important tools:

- a **Global Action Plan** aligning the Movement's efforts with clear priorities
- an **Implementation Toolkit** providing practical guidance and case studies
- a **Monitoring Plan** ensuring accountability and learning within the Movement.

It is also supported by key groups in the Movement: the **Migration Leadership Group**, which helps define the strategic direction and mobilize support across the Movement; the **Global Migration Task Force**, which provides support for technical coordination, tools and peer learning; and the **Global Migration Lab**, which supplies research, evidence and data. Together with **regional migration networks**, they form a powerful ecosystem in which knowledge is exchanged, activities are aligned and innovation can flourish.

By working collectively to deliver on the strategy's vision, the Movement is not only responding to some of the most pressing humanitarian needs of our time – it is redefining how we work together to ensure that migrants everywhere are safe, included and empowered.

By **Ezekiel Simperingham**

Migration and Displacement Manager, IFRC

ezekiel.simperingham@ifrc.org

and

Sarah Klingeberg

Regional Internal Displacement and Migration Adviser for Europe and Central Asia, ICRC

s.klingeberg@icrc.org

[Read the Movement's new Migration Strategy, adopted at the 2024 Council of Delegates](#)

Strengthening communities' trust through accountability: progress across the Movement

Since the adoption in 2019 of the Movement-wide commitments for community engagement and accountability, humanitarian organizations have faced crises of unprecedented scale, with deficits in community trust posing major challenges.

From the COVID-19 pandemic to the Ukraine crisis, the Movement has had to adapt, finding innovative ways to work alongside communities to provide effective, locally driven solutions. The commitments have served as a cornerstone for this transformation.

In 2020, a new [Movement guide and toolkit](#) was launched, laying out practical approaches for putting these commitments into action. Community engagement and accountability have also been integrated into the revised tools for assessing organizational capacity (OCAC and BOCA), making them a more systematic part of how National Societies assess and strengthen their capacities.

Building on this momentum, a new Movement plan of action was endorsed in 2023 by the IFRC, ICRC, and key National Societies investing in this area of work. 2024 saw the launch of the **Movement Community Engagement and Accountability Ambassadors Network**, bringing together National Societies from Colombia, Lebanon, Nepal, Slovakia and Zimbabwe. These ambassadors are making advances in accountability systems, participating in peer exchanges and receiving mentorship and seed funding to scale up their efforts.

To further support emergency operations, the IFRC has trained over 100 surge personnel in community engagement and accountability and developed the [Community Trust Index](#) – an evidence-based tool designed to measure community trust in humanitarian action. The ICRC has also made efforts to systematically collect and use feedback from communities to inform its operations and has established mechanisms like community contact centres in most of its operational delegations.

With fewer resources expected in the coming years, the Movement must continue to prioritize meaningful community engagement: empowering local solutions, strengthening local resilience and reducing long-term reliance on aid.

By **Indu Nepal**

Head, Accountability to Affected People Unit, ICRC

and

Alexandra Sicotte-Lévesque

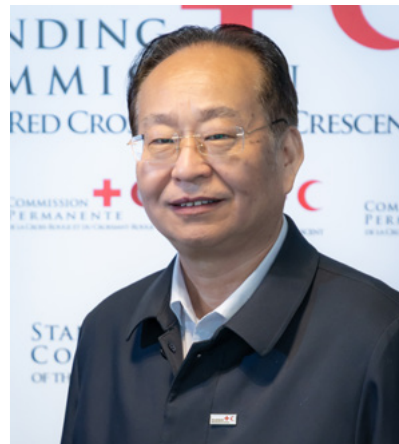
Manager, Community Engagement, IFRC

Standing Commission members' corner

A talk with Mr Wang Ping

Wang Ping of the Red Cross Society of China was elected to the Standing Commission by the 34th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in October 2024.

He has served in his National Society for more than 20 years, including as vice-president and secretary general. He has led, coordinated or overseen the responses to many large-scale emergencies in China – such as the Sichuan earthquake and the COVID-19 pandemic – and operations to support partners in the Movement in connection with disasters and armed conflicts outside of China.



What inspired you to join the Standing Commission?

I share a profound and enduring bond with the Red Cross. During my medical school years, I proudly joined the Red Cross Youth. Throughout my 40-year career spanning academic pursuits and professional engagements – as a clinical medicine student, a hospital physician, a staff member of the ministry of health and a humanitarian worker with the Red Cross Society of China – I have remained closely aligned with the mission of “saving lives, protecting health and upholding dignity.”

As a native of Shandong – the birthplace of Confucius and the cradle of Confucian philosophy – I find profound resonance between our Movement’s humanitarian principles and ancient Chinese wisdom. When visiting the International Museum of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in Geneva, I am invariably moved by how the Movement embodies humanity’s collective conscience – transcending borders, beliefs and cultural divides. Confucius’ golden rule from over two millennia ago, “Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself”, perfectly aligns with our Movement’s ethos.

Another philosophical gem from Chinese tradition states: “Supreme virtue flows like water – nurturing all without competition”. This metaphor beautifully captures the essence of humanitarianism, a shared value of humankind and a cornerstone of modern civilization: like water sustaining life, our work brings compassion to humanity’s parched landscapes. Humanitarianism offers love, care and warmth. It is selfless, enduring and ever-present and its loss would mark the collapse of civilization’s moral foundation. In times of war and disaster, it shines like a beacon in the darkness, illuminating hope. The Movement embodies this noble cause, serving all of humanity.

The Standing Commission, mandated by the International Conference, serves as a crucial platform for fulfilling humanitarian responsibilities. Membership in this body is both an honour and a sacred duty. I am dedicated to sharing my decades of experience and insights gained through humanitarian work in China, a country where ancient traditions coexist with modern challenges. I am compelled by the vision of collaboratively irrigating humanity’s deserts of suffering with compassion’s waters, illuminating our world’s darkest corners with solidarity’s light, and collectively forging a better future grounded in peace, equity and dignity for all. It is this conviction that inspired me to serve on the Standing Commission.

Which two or three matters or decisions from these or previous statutory meetings have impressed you the most and on which you are particularly hoping to see progress?

Respecting and complying with international humanitarian law (IHL) can save lives, limit destruction, alleviate suffering and prevent harm. I was deeply impressed by the adoption of the resolution “Building a universal culture of compliance with international

humanitarian law” at the 34th International Conference last year. Given today’s turbulent and complex international landscape, emphasizing genuine adherence to IHL carries extraordinary significance. The frequent violations of the rights of civilians, the wounded and prisoners of war in conflict zones, along with recurring attacks on humanitarian workers and volunteers, reveal just how fragile IHL is in practice and how urgent it is to better promote and implement it.

This compels us not only to intensify our efforts to disseminate, monitor and enforce IHL but also to enhance accountability for violations. The Movement must ensure that the distinctive protective emblems recognized under the Geneva Conventions are effectively respected during armed conflicts. It is equally crucial to enrich and develop IHL. I am confident that, as human civilization progresses, the power of humanity will continue to grow. Through the relentless efforts of all states and all Movement components, we must translate respect for and compliance with IHL into tangible actions to better protect lives, alleviate suffering and uphold dignity.

What also particularly impressed me was the role of volunteers. I can’t emphasize enough the importance of strengthening the global volunteer system within our Movement. Voluntary Service – one of the seven Fundamental Principles – is a vital force in advancing our humanitarian mission. To build on the IFRC Volunteering Policy adopted at the 23rd IFRC General Assembly and the Volunteer Charter endorsed at the 2019 Council of Delegates, I would like to see our next statutory meetings put forward concrete initiatives to recognize the extraordinary and selfless dedication, compassion, courage and enthusiasm of our volunteers, to inject fresh momentum into the growth of our Movement.

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Which specific areas do you believe should be prioritized at the Movement level in order to enhance unity, preparedness, effectiveness and relevance in responding to today's global challenges?

The scope of humanitarian work has broadened significantly in today's complex and ever changing global landscape. But that complexity and the unprecedented challenges we face as a Movement call instead for sharper focus on our core mandates, to maintain strategic coherence. By prioritizing effectively, we can cut through complexity and steadily build the Movement's capabilities, strength and influence to fulfil our humanitarian mission.

Integrating our resources and consolidating our efforts remain imperative. While the Movement's governance structure has evolved through continuous development, further progress remains possible in realizing the ideal of One Movement, One Voice, One Action. We should fully leverage the Standing Commission to strengthen unity among Movement components, in line with the original intent for establishing it. For instance, the Council of Delegates and the International Conference are critical platforms for clarifying strategic directions and dealing with the most urgent humanitarian challenges. In response to large-scale humanitarian crises, the entire Movement should be prepared to engage in a unified and comprehensive manner.

Another top priority is enhancing professional, efficient emergency response capabilities. Rapid response to armed conflicts and natural or man-made disasters is both a traditional mandate and a current operational focus for National Societies. Life-saving emergency response is the core mission of humanitarianism and draws on our extensive operational experience and material resources. Ambulance services, in particular, offer value beyond professional rescue capabilities: they connect war zones, disaster areas and communities, while integrating seamlessly with first aid programmes. They serve as a strategic platform for Movement components to pool resources, improve operational quality, build strong core brands, and strengthen cohesion. Developing policies supportive of National Societies' ambulance services should therefore be a priority, as this also reinforces their auxiliary role to governments in the humanitarian field.



Opinion

From fringe topic to focus area: 32 years of mental health and psychosocial support

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Hub was born on 1 January 2025. It marked the start of a new chapter but also represented the culmination of over three decades of activities that began with a deadly tragedy in Danish waters.

On 7 April 1990, the passenger ship MS Scandinavian Star caught fire while headed to Norway. 159 people lost their lives. Survivors described their deep despair over the absence of psychological support after the tragedy. A report by the Danish Red Cross at the time declared that there could never again be such a lack of assistance. As a result, the Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) was founded in 1993.

In January 2025, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) partnered with the IFRC and the Danish Red Cross to create a new global MHPSS Hub to replace the IFRC's reference centre. Nana Wiedemann, Director of the MHPSS Hub has been part of this three-decade journey almost from the start. She recalls how "[i]n the beginning mental health was a fringe issue among a few experts but there was a gradual awakening within the Movement that there is no health without mental health."

Over the years, as armed conflicts, mass displacements, natural disasters and health emergencies have severely impacted the mental health of people all over the world, the staff and volunteers of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have been on the front lines, providing psychosocial support and cultivating their expertise in the area.

In 2019, a joint Movement policy and a resolution with 196 states parties were adopted to address the mental health and psychosocial needs of people affected by armed conflicts, natural disasters and other emergencies. This formal commitment was followed by a Movement-wide drive to implement the resolution and policy by 2025.

MHPSS is an integral part of the humanitarian assistance provided by National Societies, including in the most challenging and volatile contexts like Gaza and Ukraine. In 2024, the MHPSS Hub collaborated with National Societies from 119 countries and its website, which contains an extensive library of resources, was visited in every country (except for one). The MHPSS Hub also initiated and facilitates a research network that brings together key experts and engages in advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy.

As knowledge on providing mental health and psychosocial support deepens within the Movement, we seek to work together and combine our efforts. For instance, the Asia Pacific MHPSS Training and Learning Collaborative grew out of a partnership between the IFRC's Asia Pacific Regional Office, the Hong Kong Red Cross Branch of the Red Cross Society of China and the MHPSS Hub. It has developed into a regional powerhouse, supporting 31 National Societies and acting as a public advocate, producing videos that generated around 30 million views last year.

As the MHPSS awakening has spread across the humanitarian sector, inter-agency coordination and cooperation has become more formalized and structured. Since 2015, the IFRC's reference centre – and now the MHPSS Hub – has been co-chairing the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Reference Group for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings alongside the World Health Organization. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee is the longest-standing and highest-level humanitarian coordination forum. The reference group supports operations and collaboration on multiple levels, including research activities to collect evidence and determine how to implement quality services.

Today, the global MHPSS community is made up of a diverse group of experts, practitioners and other key parties, including government representatives, United Nations agencies and scholars. Last year, the MHPSS Hub collaborated with more than 150 organizations, agencies, institutions and universities outside of the Movement.

32 years after the tragedy in Denmark, MHPSS is now globally recognized and firmly anchored in the Movement. But while mental health conditions account for over 10% of the global burden of disease, MHPSS services receive

less than 1% of global humanitarian health assistance. The MHPSS Hub's resources are limited and the funding landscape is unpredictable. At a time when multiple emergencies are converging, including climate and environmental crises, violent conflicts, public health crises, economic collapse and large-scale displacement, the staff and volunteers of National Societies will be at the forefront of the humanitarian response. Their efforts will shape the mental well-being of millions of people across the globe and they will need all the support that the Movement can mobilize.

by **Sarah Harrison**

Sarah leads the MHPSS technical unit within the MHPSS Hub. She is also responsible for humanitarian diplomacy, working with Movement partners, government parties, and other humanitarian agencies and organizations. She supports strategic processes within the MHPSS Hub and the wider Movement, and represents the MHPSS Hub at external forums and meetings.

