



# LAW AND PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES

*Underpinning every emergency response operation, whether in response to natural hazards or public health emergencies, is a complex network of laws, regulations and policies which determine when, how and by whom emergency response activities can be carried out. In fact, laws and regulations underpin nearly every aspect of emergency preparedness and response.*

## What is the Law and Public Health Emergencies Project?

The current COVID-19 pandemic has further shone a light on the need for clear laws and policies for multi-hazard preparedness and response. Capitalising on its longstanding experience and leadership in disaster law, IFRC is embarking on a research project designed to provide guidance on best practice for domestic laws relating to public health emergencies.

The guidance will be developed through an extensive review of global literature and more than 30 country case studies. It will focus on how to strengthen law and policy for public health emergencies, in particular how to ensure synergies with other emergency laws and institutions at the domestic level.

Guidance will be provided on the following specific topics:

- a) domestic legal and institutional frameworks for public health emergencies;
- b) the role of law in mitigating secondary impacts of public health emergencies, specifically impacts on shelter and housing and human mobility;
- c) the role of law in mitigating impacts of public health

- emergencies on vulnerable groups; and
- d) legal facilities for humanitarian actors and other first responders during public health emergencies.

With respect to domestic legal and institutional frameworks, a major area of focus will be the relationship between the frameworks for public health emergencies and other types of disasters, and what it might mean, in practical terms, to achieve the 'integration' of disaster risk management and public health emergency response recommended by the Bangkok Principles for the Implementation of the Health Aspects of the Sendai Framework.

The outputs of the project will include

- Global Literature Review
- Multi country synthesis Report
- Law and Public Health Emergencies Checklist.

## How and where will the research be conducted?

The research will look at countries' legal responses to the current COVID 19 pandemic and also other public health emergencies that may have been experienced in that particular country (such as Ebola, Zika, SARS, Dengue, Measles outbreaks etc).

Initially the research will be undertaken through desktop reviews undertaken by pro bono legal and academic partners. The country research will then be validated by country level stakeholder interviews and consultations, where possible.

Desk top review from the following countries will be included:



*Special thanks to our research partners: Allens Linklaters, Legal volunteers for the British Red Cross, White & Case, and University of Canterbury (New Zealand).*

## Who is it for?

The research and the ensuing tools will provide useful guidance for:

- Lawmakers and government officials, at all levels, responsible for the development and implementation of emergency preparedness and response laws
- National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and other organisations that support with emergency response

## Disaster Law Programme

The IFRC Disaster Law Programme provides expert guidance to support development, revision and implementation of Disaster Law and Policy. Informed by global research and best practice, IFRC has

developed guidance on Disaster Risk Reduction and the Law and Legal Preparedness for International Disaster Assistance (IDRL), and Disaster Preparedness and Response Law. Across all thematic areas is a focus on protection, inclusion and community engagement.

Please refer to <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/what-we-do/disaster-law/> for further information on the programme.

### Further information

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