



CASE STUDY

Advocacy for a new Argentine Red Cross Law

This case study looks at how the Argentine Red Cross developed an advocacy plan to enhance its role as a National Society through a new Red Cross Law.

Strengthening the auxiliary role in law

The auxiliary role of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is a truly unique and special status, enabling National Societies to engage and contribute to national humanitarian preparedness and response.

The auxiliary role is the formal relationship with the national authorities to provide humanitarian services and it needs to be recognised in a country's laws.

Often known as the Red Cross or Red Crescent law, it sets out what the National Society's humanitarian role is, and it also ensures the government respects the Red Cross and Red Crescent Fundamental Principles.

A country's laws and policies can also set out further specific roles for a National Society across sectors like disaster management, health and migration.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement recognises the importance of strong and modern Red Cross or Red Crescent laws and encourages National Societies to pursue dialogue with their national authorities to strengthen their legal base in domestic law.

For more information and resources on the auxiliary role visit:
disasterlaw.ifrc.org/auxiliary-role

Advocacy for a new Argentine Red Cross Law

Five years ago, and under a new governing board, the Argentine Red Cross engaged in an analysis of its auxiliary role and designed an action plan identifying actions to be undertaken in the short, medium and long run to enhance its capacities as a National Society.

The reform of its internal status was considered a priority in order to strengthen the Argentine Red Cross' leadership capacities, increase resources through public funding and prioritize gender-related issues, among other key topics of relevance. This led to an examination of how the Argentine Red Cross could work better with its national authorities.

The Argentine Red Cross' constitutive law dated 1893 was not considered protective enough of the Red Cross emblem, nor of volunteering or the Argentine Red Cross' assets.

The reform of the Argentine Red Cross Law was guided by three key considerations:

- What was and could be the added value of the National Society for the public authorities?
- What kind of legal facilities were needed and should be advocated for to enhance the Argentine Red Cross' capacities and auxiliary role? In this regard, a comparative analysis and a kind of 'needs assessment' of other Red Cross laws was carried out.
- The need to reflect the Argentine Red Cross' capacities as part of an international movement that can contribute to strengthening the logistical capacities of Argentina in case of an emergency.

Red Cross Law - #leycuzroja

One of the biggest challenges faced while advocating for the reform of the law was the lack of understanding of the Red Cross world by national stakeholders, who were not familiar with the humanitarian sector's culture and language.

The Argentine Red Cross undertook proactive communications and advocacy campaigns to convince presidents of both chambers of the National Congress and get traditional and social media attention through the hashtag #leycuzroja.

The advocacy efforts resulted in Argentine Red Cross obtaining 400,000 signatures, the threshold required by the Argentinian Constitution to be able to present a bill proposal initiative to Parliament.

Argentine Red Cross eventually collected a million signatures and presented the project to Parliament.

Argentine Red Cross' advocacy strategy involved an infographic of the content of the proposed law, key messages to be disseminated to the public and decision-makers and the creation of a special website that presented the signatures and messages of support from artists, Argentine Red Cross volunteers (under the banner 'I want to be protected') and partners.

All relevant forums, both within (e.g., Inter-American Red Cross Conference of 2018, 33rd International Conference) and outside of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, became an opportunity to advocate for the new law.

The new Argentine Red Cross Law was approved unanimously on 8 June 2020. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, this was the first law ever approved through a remote session of Congress.

The new Argentine Red Cross Law has many strong features including (but not limited to) provisions:

- auxiliary role formal recognition
- outlining the humanitarian activities that Argentine Red Cross conducts throughout Argentina
- recognising and protecting the emblem
- recognising and facilitating volunteering
- and exempting Argentine Red Cross from paying taxes on imports.

With respect to volunteering, the new law recognises that the Argentine Red Cross conducts its humanitarian activities primarily through voluntary work. It provides that volunteering activities for Argentine Red Cross should be considered as a 'public charge' for one's employer (up to 5 days a year for educational purposes and 10 days for emergency response).

With respect to the emblem, the new law authorizes Argentine Red Cross to use as its emblem the red cross on a white background and prohibits misuse of the emblem. The law also recognizes Argentine Red Cross's emblem and name as a trademark and prohibits the registration of any similar trademark.

Overall, the new law provides the Argentine Red Cross with a much stronger legal foundation, which will support and facilitate its auxiliary role.

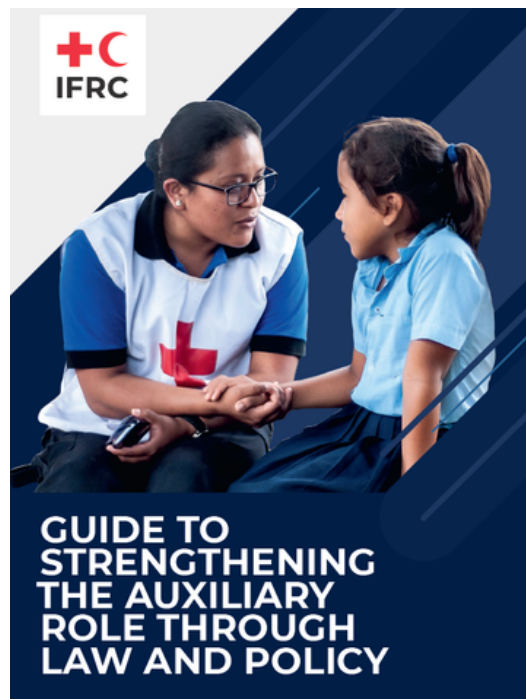


The Guide to Strengthening the Auxiliary Role through Law and Policy

The Guide to Strengthening the Auxiliary Role through Law and Policy provides practical guidance to National Societies on how to strengthen their auxiliary role through domestic law, policies, plans and agreements.

The focus of this Guide is predominantly on how laws, policies, plans and agreements can strengthen the auxiliary role in sectors such as disaster risk management, health, migration, and social welfare.

Download the Guide here.



About IFRC Disaster Law

IFRC Disaster Law works with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and governments to strengthen disaster risk governance, through the development and implementation of climate, disaster and emergency-related legislation, policies and procedures.

With 20 years of experience supporting the development and implementation of disaster law and policy around the world, we are the global leader in disaster law technical advice to governments.

