

# Common legal problems in International Operations

While the law might be one of the last things that comes to mind when we think of disasters, there are many common legal problems that hinder international disaster response operations. The IFRC Disaster Law team supports National Societies; IFRC Operations, Logistics and other colleagues; as well as governments to avoid these common problems.



## Initiating international assistance

If the law does not provide clarity about the process for requesting or accepting international assistance, this can delay international assistance.



## Quarantine

People and animals may be subject to quarantine requirements. This applies especially to search and rescue dogs.



## Visas

The law may establish complex and time-consuming visa approval processes. This prevents foreign relief personnel from entering the country quickly.



## Vehicles

The law may require foreign or imported vehicles to be registered before they can be used (including issuing of new license plates). This can be costly and time consuming.



## Professional qualifications

The law may prohibit foreign professionals (e.g. doctors, nurses, engineers) from practicing in the country unless they re-qualify or apply for accreditation.



## Telecommunications and IT equipment

Licenses may be required to import and/or use telecommunications and IT equipment. Obtaining licenses can be costly and time consuming.



## Relief consignments

The law may not provide for relief consignments to be prioritised for customs clearance or for planes and ships carrying relief consignments to have priority landing or docking rights. This leads to delays.



## Medication and medical equipment

The law may impose strict standards and time-consuming administrative processes for imports of medication and medical equipment.



## Customs duties

The law may impose significant customs duties, tariffs or taxes on imports. This can be a big financial burden for international actors.



## Restrictions on cash transfers

The law can impede international cash transfers and the use of cash in programmes, creating overly-burdensome procedures and hampering its effectiveness.

Through supporting the development of efficient laws, emergency decrees and procedures, the IFRC Disaster Law team can help National Societies; IFRC Operations, Logistics and other colleagues; as well as governments to navigate these regulatory barriers and support effective and speedy international relief. For more information, please contact [stella.ngugi@ifrc.org](mailto:stella.ngugi@ifrc.org).