

Annual Report 2023



Intense Tropical Storm “Freddy” made landfall in Madagascar on Tuesday 21 February 2023. After landfall, Malagasy Red Cross supported on-sites initiatives such as assessments and sensitizations about WASH and PGI.

Overview

During the 2023 reporting period, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Disaster Law (IFRC Disaster Law) continued its work promoting legal preparedness for disasters. Pursuant to the mandates assigned to the IFRC at the [28th](#), [30th](#), [31st](#), [32nd](#) and [33rd](#) International Conferences of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, IFRC Disaster Law focused on supporting Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies (National Societies) to meet the following main goals:

1. National Societies, the IFRC, and key partners **gain greater capacity and tools** for their work in disaster law;
2. **Technical legal advice and tools** from the IFRC and National Societies support the development and implementation of climate-smart Disaster Risk Management (DRM) laws, policies and/or procedures;
3. **Legislative advocacy** by the IFRC and National Societies influences outcomes of inter-governmental, inter-agency and academic for a, and builds greater visibility and partnerships; and
4. **IFRC produces high-quality research** that informs legislative advocacy.

Summary of Disaster Law activities:

3 new instruments which include IFRC recommendations on disaster law were adopted in 2023: the Tripartite Pre-Disaster Agreement between Croix Rouge Malagasy, Bureau National de Gestion des Risques et des Catastrophes (BNGRC), and IFRC; the new Malawi DRM Act was signed into law in November 2023; and the Law on International Emergency Assistance which was adopted by the Kyrgyz Parliament on 29 June 2023 and signed into law by their President on 11 August 2023.

1 Draft elements of the resolution [Strengthening disaster risk governance through comprehensive disaster laws](#) were proposed for the 34th International Conference in 2024. The resolution proposes to encourage States to strengthen disaster risk governance as an indispensable element for effectively managing disasters and disaster risk. It also proposes to endorse new state-of-the-art recommendations – [the Guidelines on Disaster Risk Governance: Strengthening Laws, Policies and Plans for Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management](#).

62 National Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies (National Societies) supported on enhancing their capacity in the area of **disaster law and legislative advocacy** including capacity strengthening and development of advocacy strategies to advocate on issues at the national level with their public authorities (Bahamas, Belize, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Colombia, Cook Islands, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Comoros, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Jamaica, Kiribati, Italy, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Malaysia, Malawi, Mexico, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Palau, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Portugal, Rwanda, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Seychelles, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Mozambique, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu, Uganda, Vanuatu, Zambia, Zimbabwe).

38 Governments supported in the awareness on the need for legal preparedness and the drafting of **DRM related laws, policies and agreements** including those related to public health management (Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Cook Islands, Comoros, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eswatini, Fiji, FSM, Guatemala, Kiribati, Honduras, Italy, Madagascar, Malawi, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Nepal, Niue, Nigeria, Palau, Panama, Philippines, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Timor Leste, Tokelau, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Zimbabwe). IFRC also continued to closely engage with United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) international discussions concerning the future of the United Nations International Law Commission's (UN ILC) [Draft articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters](#) (Draft Articles). IFRC published a [Position Paper](#) expressing strong support for the development of a treaty based on the Draft articles, which was circulated to Permanent Missions in New York.

Major research outputs include finalizing a multi-year, multi-country research project on [law and disaster recovery](#), and consolidating 20 years of IFRC research and recommendations on disaster law into a single guidance document: the [Guidelines on Disaster Risk Governance](#).

Summary of Auxiliary Role activities:

24 National Societies supported on how to strengthen their **auxiliary role** through the revision of their constituting acts, revision DRM related frameworks and negotiation of Memorandums of Understandings (MoUs) and Pre-Disaster agreements (Botswana, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Comoros, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Eswatini, Fiji, Ghana, Jamaica, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Nigeria, Panama, PNG, Samoa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Thailand, Uruguay, Vanuatu and Zimbabwe). Auxiliary Role and Humanitarian Diplomacy Sessions were also delivered as part of National Societies' Leaders Meetings and courses.

3 New instruments recognizing RC auxiliary role adopted: Malawi National DRM Policy 2023 – 2028; Tripartite Pre-Disaster Agreement between Croix Rouge Malagasy, Bureau National de Gestion des Risques et des Catastrophes (BNGRC), and IFRC; Marshall Islands MoU with Government for activities in humanitarian health and social field, reviewed and updated in 2023.

1. Africa



1.1 Regional level

The Disaster law team engaged at the **African Union Workshop** on the *Second bi-annual report (2019 – 2020) on the programme of action for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Africa*.

In March of 2023, the Disaster Law team facilitated a workshop in Zimbabwe on Community Health and Care which supported an increased understanding of laws and policies as an enabling approach to strengthening community health and care, and support the alignment of disaster risk and public health emergency (PHE) management. Participants of this workshop included health focal points from Burkina Faso, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Malawi, South Sudan, Central Africa Republic and Eswatini. Moreover, to build on the momentum of collaborative engagement with local actors, the Disaster Law team supported the development of a **Model Agreement on Community Health and Care** to encourage continued engagement with the National Society as a key partner in community-level disaster risk management.

In 2023, IFRC Disaster Law continued to engage with our **Disaster Law Champions Group**, recalling that the Champions Group comprises of relevant Disaster Law focal points from African National Societies from across the region. In April 2023, the Disaster Law team hosted a virtual Town Hall for the Disaster Law Champions group. The Town Hall focused on the role of Disaster Law in Emergency Operations. Through this Town Hall, the Disaster Law team gathered valuable peer-to-peer exchange on the role of legal and policy frameworks in disaster management, including public health emergencies. Through these exchanges, participants were able to identify lessons learned and best practices between countries that can support better disaster preparedness.

IFRC Disaster Law Champions Group supported the engagement and advocacy of National Societies at climate events. As Disaster Law continues to support the Champions Group, the team

will be looking to undertake more climate-related research to support messaging at various events and will do so with the technical support of other relevant IFRC teams, in particular for preparation around COP engagement and attendance.

To further increase the understanding and importance of legal facilities for international disaster assistance, on 26 April 2023, the disaster law team facilitated a presentation on legal frameworks and lessons learned from the Law and Public Health Emergency Guidance at the **Humanitarian Partnerships Week during a session hosted by Importation and Customs Clearance Together (IMPACCT)** on *"enhancing the movement of medicines and medical equipment, as humanitarian assistance, in Africa"*. A specific focus was placed on the importation of medicines and medical equipment in emergencies. Participants in this session included representatives from international organisations, governments and academia.

In April 2023, the Africa Disaster Law team's journal article was published in the **Yearbook of International Disaster Law, Volume 4, Issue 1**. The title of the Article is "[Legal Preparedness for International Disaster Assistance in the SADC Region: An Analysis of the Incorporation of International Disaster Response Laws, Rules and Principles \(IDRL\) in Domestic Disaster Risk Management Legal and Policy Frameworks](#)". The article analyses the extent to which international treaties and global tools have influenced the development of DRM legislation at domestic level in Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, and South Africa and assesses the legal preparedness of the selected states to facilitate international assistance if a disaster exceeds national capacities to cope. Furthermore, the article makes recommendations as to how the countries' disaster risk management frameworks could be strengthened to enhance legal preparedness for international disaster assistance.

In May 2023, the Disaster Law team facilitated a session on Law and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), & Legislative Advocacy during an **Advocacy and DRR Webinar**, as well as in the **Africa Region DRR/CCA Learning retreat** which was held in June of 2023. The retreat was focused on supporting DRR focal points in the region better equipped with skills to engage with policy discussions at national and regional level. Participants in these sessions included National Societies from: Burundi, Cameroon, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Mauritius, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Sudan, Seychelles, Mozambique, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

On 12 May 2023 the Disaster Law team collaborated with the IFRC Health team of the Southern African Cluster Delegation and co-hosted a **webinar on Effective Tools for Health Advocacy**. This webinar was aimed at training participants on legislative advocacy and equipping them with relevant tools that can support their advocacy efforts in developing health policies in practice. Consequently, participants were trained on key aspects of legislative advocacy, including how to develop an advocacy strategy and elevator pitch, developing an opposition matrix, understanding the theory of change and effectively using the "But Why" technique. The webinar included facilitation support from the Botswana Red Cross Society. Participants included National Societies from: Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The [8th International Disaster Law Course](#) was held from 25 -29 September 2023 at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in Sanremo, Italy. It was attended by members of the Disaster Law team, as well as government and National Society representatives from several

countries, including **Nigeria**. The **Disaster Law Africa team** facilitated an online presentation on Disaster Law in Africa and relevant updates from the field.

In strengthening our working partnerships within the Red Cross Movement, in 2023, the Disaster Law team supported the [International Committee of the Red Cross \(ICRC\)](#) in several projects. The teams worked together in mapping national legislative frameworks for medicolegal and forensic structures in the region. In addition, the Disaster Law team was requested to provide a brief lecture on 5 December 2023 during an annual consortium hosted by the ICRC on the role of disaster law concerning the management of dead bodies in the region. In this lecture, the Disaster Law team provided a brief overview of IFRC Disaster Law and the work in the region and explained to participants the importance of developing comprehensive legal frameworks to properly prepare and respond to the impact of disasters and emergencies.

On **6 December 2023**, IFRC Disaster Law hosted a webinar on the Pilot [Guidelines on Disaster Governance – Strengthening Laws, Policies and Plans for Effective Disaster Risk Management](#) and the UN ILC [Draft Articles](#). The webinar was targeted at **African Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies**. During the webinar, the facilitators shared key topics covered in the Pilot Guidelines and explained how the tool can be used to support National Societies as they support their governments to strengthen disaster risk governance and become legally prepared for disasters and the effects of climate change. The webinar also guided participants on current discussions on the development of a new instrument based on the Draft Articles, explored the key features of the Draft Articles, as well as recommendations on areas where the Draft Articles could be strengthened, based on the IFRC's [position paper](#) on the Draft Articles. The webinar also offered an opportunity for participants to advance their views on the Pilot Guidelines and Draft Articles and explore the next steps concerning their implementation.

The Disaster Law team continued its efforts to map the legal and policy frameworks for disaster risk management (DRM) in the region. In late 2023, the team conducted DRM mappings of **Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Member States** which include climate risk-related laws and policies. These mappings will be a valuable tool in identifying areas of the legal and policy framework which could be strengthened; and can be used by National Societies to identify key areas to focus their Disaster Law advocacy efforts.

1.2 Country level

1.2.1 Botswana

The Disaster Law team continued to provide technical support to the **Botswana Red Cross Society** (BRCS) with respect to strengthening BRCS's legal preparedness for disasters and the review of the Red Society of Botswana Act. In addition, the Disaster Law team supported technical engagements with BRCS and the Netherlands Red Cross Society (NRCS) concerning the disaster law elements of an upcoming project aimed at supporting community-based DRM within Botswana. This project is expected to be implemented during 2024. Moreover, during a webinar on **Effective Tools for Health Advocacy** co-hosted by the Health Department of the IFRC Pretoria Delegation (CCD), the Disaster Law team in collaboration with the BRCS, shared how advocacy can serve as a tool for effective preparedness and response to Public Health Emergencies (PHE). The

webinar also highlighted that a good knowledge of the external environment is paramount for an effective advocacy and communication strategy.

1.2.2 Cameroon

To further support Disaster Preparedness and Response operations and our IFRC and National Societies colleagues in the African region, the Disaster Law team developed and disseminated an [IDRL Fact Sheet](#) for Cameroon in March to support the response to the Marburg Virus outbreak. This fact sheet acts as a summary of relevant laws in the country relating to international disaster assistance and provides key information on regulatory and policy frameworks that can be used by IFRC, the National Society and government officials to support decision-making processes to optimize international disaster assistance.

1.2.3 Comoros

The Disaster Law team was requested to support the Comoros Red Crescent in the review of the **Comoros DRM Bill** and **National Strategy for DRR**. In February of 2023, the Disaster Law team reviewed both draft instruments and shared relevant comments with the Comoros Red Crescent. The Comoros Red Crescent has commenced discussions with its government regarding the revised versions of the Comoros DRM Bill and National Strategy for DRR.

1.2.4 Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

In June 2023, the Disaster Law team supported the DRC Red Cross Society in the development and review of an auxiliary role in health mapping in the DRC as part of the Community Epidemic and Pandemic Preparedness Programme (CP3).

1.2.5 Djibouti

The Disaster Law team continued its efforts to map the legal and policy frameworks for DRM in the region. As mentioned above, in late 2023, the team conducted DRM mappings of IGAD Member States, which included Djibouti. This mapping will be a valuable tool in identifying areas of the legal and policy framework which could be strengthened.

1.2.6 Equatorial Guinea

To further support Disaster Preparedness and Response operations and our IFRC and National Society colleagues in the African region, the Disaster Law team developed and disseminated an [IDRL Fact Sheet](#) for Equatorial Guinea in March to support the response to the Marburg Virus outbreak. This fact sheet acts as a summary of relevant laws in the country relating to international disaster assistance and provides key information on regulatory and policy frameworks that can be used by IFRC, the National Society and government officials to support decision-making processes to optimize international disaster assistance.

1.2.7 Eswatini

The Disaster Law team was formally requested to support the **review of the Eswatini National Disaster Management Act of 2006**. The Disaster Law team reviewed the Disaster Management Act, as well as the Draft DRM Bill that had been developed, and provided comments to the **Baphalali Eswatini Red Cross Society (BERCS)**. Consequently, The Disaster Law team held a two-day working session with the Eswatini Deputy Prime Minister's Office and BERCS in June to reflect on the revision of the Disaster Management Act. In this

working session, the participants discussed the comments to the DRM Act and exchanged ideas on valuable provisions to be included in the revised law and developed a Plan of Action going forward. The Disaster Law team also took the opportunity to sensitize the participants on key areas of Disaster Law, including the importance of a Pre-Disaster Agreement. Recalling the plan of action, it is expected that the final draft DRM Bill will be shared with the Attorney General's Office in 2024, before issuing it to the Cabinet.

1.2.8 Ethiopia

In late 2023, the team conducted mappings of IGAD Member States, including Ethiopia. This mapping will be a valuable tool in identifying areas of the legal and policy framework which could be strengthened and can be used to support the Disaster Law advocacy efforts of the National Society.

1.2.9 Gabon

In February of 2023, the Disaster Law team supported the **Gabon Red Cross Society** in providing proposed comments to the draft **Gabon DRR/DRM Bill**. The comments were shared with the Gabon Red Cross for consideration in their advocacy and engagement with the government. The comments were centred around express recognition of the auxiliary role, regulation of international assistance and cash, and legal facilities for assisting actors. As a result, the Gabon Red Cross Society has begun advocacy and held engagements with its government in support to the development of the revised draft of Gabon DRR/DRM Bill. To further support disaster preparedness and response operations, the Disaster Law team developed and disseminated an [IDRL Fact Sheet](#) for Gabon in February. This fact sheet acts as a summary of relevant laws in the country relating to international disaster assistance and provides key information on regulatory and policy frameworks that can be used by IFRC, the National Society and government officials to support decision-making processes to optimize international disaster assistance.

1.2.10 Ghana

The Disaster Law team supported the revision of the **Ghana Red Cross Act** through engagements and consultations with the National Society. Subsequently, the **Ghana Red Cross Society** held technical engagements with its Government regarding the review of the Ghana Red Cross Act.

1.2.11 Guinea

In June 2023, the Disaster Law team supported the **Guinea Red Cross Society (GRCS)** in the development and review of an auxiliary role in health mapping, which was carried out as part of the CP3 programme. This mapping will be a valuable tool in identifying areas of the health framework in Guinea that can be strengthened. Additionally, this mapping can be used by the GRCS to support their government in health policy review processes or identify key areas to focus their advocacy efforts.

1.2.12 Kenya

In 2023, the Disaster Law team with **Kenya Red Cross (KRCS)** reviewed the DRM Bill and provided comments to the Bill during the stakeholder consultations process following a first reading in parliament. The Bill is expected to continue the development process ahead of being brought back to the floor of the House in 2024. In addition, the team conducted Disaster Risk Management mappings of IGAD member states, including Kenya. This mapping will be a valuable tool in identifying areas of the legal and policy framework which could be strengthened, it is expected to be used by the KRCS to support their government in ongoing DRM law development processes.

1.2.13 Madagascar



As part of the ECHO PPP, the Malagasy Red Cross Society (MRCS), Bureau National de Gestion des Risques et des Catastrophes (BNGRC) and IFRC co-organized a **workshop on Disaster Law in Antananarivo** from 17-19 October 2023. This workshop provided a better understanding of Disaster Law's key thematic areas and their relevance in the local context to public authorities and key stakeholders of DRM in Madagascar. Moreover, the event served as a platform to pull learnings from the 2022-2023 cyclone season to prepare for the

upcoming season and beyond. The pinnacle of the event was the [signing of a pre-disaster agreement](#) between BNGRC, MRCS and IFRC, strengthening their cooperation in disaster preparedness and response, including during public health emergencies. This agreement is the continuation of MRCS's work with IFRC Disaster Law in improving legal preparedness and contributing to create an enabling environment for effective DRM in Madagascar.

1.2.14 Malawi

In November 2023, the country **passed the Disaster Risk Management Act 2023** and the **Disaster Risk Management Policy 2023-2028**. Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS) was a key stakeholder in advocating for and supporting the development of these instruments. These two frameworks go a long way in enhancing the DRM governance framework in Malawi, seeing improved coordination with key stakeholders including the MRCS. Notably the DRM Act provides for a comprehensive approach to DRM and includes the Malawi Red Cross in the National Disaster Risk Management Committee; one of the apex DRM institutions in the country. To further support Disaster Preparedness and Response operations stemming from Tropical Storm Freddy in Malawi, the Disaster Law team developed and disseminated an [IDRL Fact Sheet](#) for Malawi in March. This fact sheet acts as a summary of relevant laws in the country relating to international disaster assistance and provides key information on regulatory and policy frameworks that can be used by IFRC, the MRCS and government officials to support decision-making processes to optimize international disaster assistance.

1.2.15 Mozambique

To further support Disaster Preparedness and Response operations stemming from Tropical Storm Freddy in Mozambique, the Disaster Law team developed and disseminated an [IDRL Fact Sheet](#) for Mozambique in March. This fact sheet acts as a summary of relevant laws in the country relating to international disaster assistance and provides key information on regulatory and policy frameworks that can be used by IFRC, the National Society and government officials to support decision-making processes to optimize international disaster assistance. In continuing to develop high-quality research in the field of Disaster Law, in 2023, the Disaster Law team finalized an evidence-based research study on the role of **law and disaster recovery** to support the Mozambique Red Cross Society in their national and regional legislative advocacy efforts. This study for [Mozambique](#) has been published on our website. The study focuses on the experiences in disaster recovery from Cyclones Idai, Kenneth and Eloise which struck the country between 2019 and 2021.

1.2.16 Namibia

To further support Disaster Preparedness and Response operations stemming from heavy floods experienced in Namibia, the Disaster Law team developed and disseminated an [IDRL Fact Sheet](#) for Namibia in February. This fact sheet acts as a summary of relevant laws in the country relating to international disaster assistance and provides key information on regulatory and policy frameworks that can be used by IFRC, the National Society and government officials to support decision-making processes to optimize international disaster assistance.

1.2.17 Nigeria

In 2023, the Disaster Law team supported the **Nigeria Red Cross Society (NRCS)** in their advocacy efforts for the negotiation of a [pre-disaster agreement](#). As a first step, a [high-level stakeholders meeting](#) was held on 7 August 2023 in Abuja and hosted by the NRCS. This meeting created the platform for relevant stakeholders and public authorities to engage on the importance of a pre-disaster agreement and the need for a legal framework for coordination with respect to disaster preparedness, response and management. Participants to this meeting were able to map a way forward and further engagements concerning the signing of the agreement will be held in 2024.

1.2.18 Sierra Leone

In continuing to develop high-quality research in the field of Disaster Law, in 2023, the Disaster Law team finalized an evidence-based research study on the role of **law and disaster recovery** to support the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society in their national and regional legislative advocacy efforts. The [case study conducted for Sierra Leone](#) has been published on our website. This case study focusses on the recovery process from the severe landslide and flooding that impacted parts of Freetown in 2017.

1.2.19 South Africa

Following the **South African Red Cross Society's (SARCS)** Preparedness for Effective Response self-assessment, held in Johannesburg from 27 February to 2 March 2023, the Disaster Law team facilitated session with SARCS on the scope and relevance of negotiating a **Pre-Disaster Agreement** in April 2023. The adoption of the agreement would greatly contribute to strengthening localization in disaster preparedness within South Africa. At this session, a plan of action was developed for promoting the Pre-Disaster Agreement within South Africa. SARCS has made progress in communicating with its government regarding the adoption of a Pre-Disaster agreement to be entered into between the South African Government, National Society and IFRC.

To further support Disaster Preparedness and Response operations stemming from heavy floods experienced in South Africa, the Disaster Law team developed and disseminated an [IDRL Fact Sheet](#) for South Africa in February. This fact sheet acts as a summary of relevant laws in the country relating to international disaster assistance and provides key information on regulatory and policy frameworks that can be used by IFRC, SARCS and government officials to support decision-making processes to optimize international disaster assistance.

1.2.20 South Sudan

Following a request by the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs (MHADM) and **South Sudan Red Cross (SSRC)** to support the development of a national DRM Bill in South Sudan in 2022, the Disaster Law team continued to support the development of the **South Sudan DRM Bill** in 2023. Following several state-level consultations aimed at strengthening the content of the Bill and ensuring that it is reflective of the diverse needs of the different areas of the country, the Bill was revised by the consultant supporting the process and additionally shared with key international partners in country. The Bill was also reviewed by the Disaster Law team who worked with the South Sudan Red Crescent to provide additional comments. The draft of the bill was presented to the technical working group which included the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management (MHADM) and the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC). The working group concluded that it was necessary to have an annex to the Bill that further elaborated the mandates of RRC and MHADM to ensure enhanced coordination and collaboration between the two agencies. The draft Bill and annex are expected to undergo final review to ensure conflicts of existing legislations has been addressed before being handed over to the Ministry of Justice. As lead Ministry for development of legislation, the Ministry of Justice will present the final Bill to Cabinet and the MHADM will subsequently kick off advocacy with Parliamentarians after cabinet approval.

1.2.21 Somalia

In late 2023, the team began DRM mappings of IGAD member states, including **Somalia**. This mapping can be a valuable tool in identifying areas of the legal and policy framework which could be strengthened.

1.2.22 Togo

Following the legal mapping carried out, in 2023 the **Togo Red Cross Society (TRCS)** successfully advocated for the development of the national DRM Bill in Togo. The TRCS was appointed as key partner in supporting this process, demonstrating the government intention to ensure localized support for the development of this law is prioritized to ensure an appropriate contextual outlook. The process is expected to continue in 2024.

1.2.23 Uganda

In 2023, the Disaster Law team continued to provide technical support to the **Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS)** through the development of an Advocacy Strategy and Advocacy Training Manual. Moreover, the URCS continued to engage with their government on the development of the national DRM Bill. To support this process, the Disaster law team in carrying out mappings for the IGAD region, carried out a mapping for Uganda to get a better understanding of the related disaster governance frameworks that exist in the country and what gaps the new Bill could be looking to cover.

Furthermore, on 12 May 2023, the URCS participated in the third session of the Global Webinar series on the Auxiliary Role hosted by IFRC Disaster Law. In the session, the URCS shared how laws and policies contribute to strengthening their auxiliary role. The URCS has been continuously engaging with its public authorities to advocate for a seat at the table and is now present in DRM committees at all levels and is a member of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework.

1.2.24 Zambia

To further support Disaster Preparedness and Response operations in Zambia, the Disaster Law team developed and disseminated an [IDRL Fact Sheet](#) for Zambia in February. This fact sheet acts as a summary of relevant laws in the country relating to international disaster assistance and provides key information on regulatory and policy frameworks that can be used by IFRC, the Zambian Red Cross society and government officials to support decision-making processes to optimize international disaster assistance.

2. Americas



2.1 Regional Level

The Disaster Law Team continues to collaborate closely with the **Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA)** to advance IDRL in the region, specifically through the establishment of the Regional IDRL Working Group. Through the initiatives of the Working Group, the Disaster Law Team will partner with CDEMA to advocate for the domestic implementation of IDRL provisions in CDM laws and policies in CDEMA Participating States. With support from CDEMA, the Civil Defence Commission of Guyana has already indicated its interest to implement the IDRL Working Group’s recommendations, as part of its process to develop a new CDM Bill in Guyana.

The National Societies of Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Belize have continued to serve in the [Regional IDRL Working Group](#), which was established in September 2022 as a joint initiative between the CDEMA and the IFRC. In April 2023, it was formally established as a Working Group of one of the Sub-Committees of the CDEMA Technical Advisory Committee and operates under the leadership of the Director of the Civil Defence Commission of Guyana as Chair and the Director General of the **Belize Red Cross Society as Deputy Chair** and receives technical guidance from IFRC and CDEMA. It is mandated to provide Caribbean-specific perspectives, insights and recommendations for improving the regional regulatory framework for the facilitation and coordination of international disaster relief within the context of Comprehensive Disaster Management. This Working Group is specifically contributing to the development of IDRL provisions to enhance the **Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Model Legislation and Policy**, which will be used as tools to develop CDM laws and policies in all CDEMA Participating States.

An Auxiliary Role and Humanitarian Diplomacy Session at the Movement Induction Course (MIC) was held in Panama in March 2023 and attended by 23 participants, including presidents and general directors of the Red Cross-National Societies from North America, Central America, Latin Caribbean, Andean Community, and the Southern Cone. During the course, IFRC Disaster Law co-facilitated the Auxiliary Role and Humanitarian Diplomacy Sessions with ICRC colleagues. The sessions concluded with express requests for support from the **Colombian Red Cross** (technical support in expressing and communicating a petition to public authorities), **Paraguayan Red Cross** (in developing and Auxiliary role study), **Uruguayan** and **Panamanian Red Cross** (in developing a Legislative Advocacy Toolkit training course).



In April 2023, the Disaster Law team, with support from the POS Country Cluster Delegation (CCD), continued discussions with **University of the West Indies (UWI), Open Campus**, in relation to developing a short course in disaster law. This partnership is being supported through the Capacity Building Initiative (CBI) Project Phase 5. A Partnership Agreement was drafted and will be finalized in 2024, with implementation also projected for 2024. This course will be targeted to National Societies and DRM professionals in the region, to build capacity in disaster law and enable an increase in research and advocacy in the Caribbean in disaster risk management issues.

In May 2023, IFRC and French **Red Cross (PIRAC)** entered into a new partnership to implement the Ready 360 Project. The disaster law component of the project will seek to enrich collaboration between key regional institutions and actors, as well as the development of dedicated legislative frameworks, allowing for greater regional coordination in disaster management. The Ready 360 project is supporting the implementation of the Regional IDRL Working Group's work plan which include the development of an IDRL Gap Analysis for the region, the facilitation of the Second Caribbean IDRL Workshop in November, and a Red Cross Virtual Exhibition, showcasing the work of National Societies in disaster law.

The Americas Disaster Law team also participated in the Year 2 planning session of ECHO PPP, specifically in the sessions on the program's scope in thematic areas and the sessions reviewing each National Societies' activities to be included in Year 2. The workshop was attended by 75 participants, representing regional EU National Societies, IFRC Centro de Referencia en Preparación Para Desastres (CREPD), DH ECHO, IFRC Geneva, PRD, **Salvadoran Red Cross, Honduran Red Cross, Panamanian Red Cross, Ecuadorian Red Cross, and Guatemalan Red Cross.**

In May 2023, the **Regional IDRL Working Group** completed the development of its work plan for 2023-2024, which was endorsed by the CDEMA Technical Advisory Committee. Three key outputs and achievements of the work plan for 2023, were: (i) the development of a Regional IDRL Gap Analysis Report which identifies key recommendations to enhance international humanitarian assistance in the Caribbean; (ii) a proposal for new IDRL provisions for the CDM Model Policy and Legislation; and (iii) the facilitation of the Second Caribbean IDRL Workshop.

America Legislative Advocacy Champions Network of National Societies: In June 2023, at the 22nd Red Cross Inter-American Conference held in The Bahamas, the Disaster Law Team facilitated five sessions including two plenaries that allowed for peer to peer exchanges between CDEMA, Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPRENAC) and National Societies from across the Americas. At the regional level, CDEMA and CEPREDENAC shared key policy developments in regional mechanisms that facilitate disaster management. At the national level, National Societies shared insights and lessons learned in leveraging their auxiliary role, overcoming challenges in accessing international disaster assistance and strengthening legal positioning and disaster-related laws and policies. These discussions culminated in the adoption of the [Nassau Accord](#) in terms of which National Societies committed, among other things, to strengthening their diplomacy capacities by increasing efforts to collaborate on peer to peer work to share best practices and create alliances for engaging with key actors on disaster law related issues.

In keeping with this mandate, the Disaster Law team supported National Societies to facilitate a virtual peer to peer exchange in legislative advocacy in December 2023. National Societies from Columbia, Ecuador and Mexico shared their learnings and experiences in building their capacities in legislative advocacy following their trainings in the Legislative Advocacy Toolkit. These exchanges included discussions around best practices and lessons learned in advocacy with reference to specific advocacy activities, the development of advocacy strategies and commitments to implement next steps.

In June 2023, the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Belize, supported by the Belize Red Cross Society and the Disaster Law Team, proposed an amendment to an **Organization of American States (OAS)** resolution for adoption at its General Assembly. This amendment sought to highlight the importance of the Red Cross as a humanitarian organization in 191 countries, with a mandate to prevent and alleviate human suffering, thereby contributing to the promotion and maintenance of human dignity and peace in the world.



In August 2023, a Disaster Law session was presented as part of the 'Disaster Management Development' Program- Gender Equity in Emergency Operations Leadership Project funded by AECID, to enhance the capacities of personnel from National Societies and the IFRC engaged in disaster management, equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively handle emergency situations. Participants included personnel from **Costa Rica**

Red Cross, Dominica Red Cross, Ecuador Red Cross, German Red Cross, Guyana Red Cross, Mexico Red Cross, Panama Red Cross, Argentina Red Cross, and IFRC PoS.

IFRC Disaster Law provided **technical support to SICA-CEPREDENAC** during the **III CEPREDENAC Regional Simulation** held in Panama, promoting the harmonization of national manuals and the Regional Mechanism for humanitarian assistance in disasters (Mec-Reg/SICA), ensuring consistency and alignment in procedures and guidelines. Our activities included:

- Conducting interviews with representatives of national civil protection systems, USAR teams, and key actors from participating countries to gather inputs regarding the transit of international humanitarian assistance;
- Raising awareness about the practical implementation of legal facilities in all four phases of the Mec-Reg/SICA;
- Actively involving staff and volunteers from the Panamanian Red Cross, Costa Rican Red Cross, and Salvadoran Red Cross, which enhanced visibility and collaboration;
- Advocating for the express recognition of the auxiliary role of Red Cross National Societies in the SICA-CEPREDENAC Mec-Reg; and

- Providing technical support to promote the harmonization of national manuals and the Mec-Reg/SICA, ensuring consistency and alignment in procedures and guidelines.



Key achievements included:

- Interviews completed with participating countries representatives of national civil protection systems, USAR teams, and key actors focusing on technical support and experiences during the transit of international humanitarian assistance;
- Awareness raising about the practical implementation of legal facilities in all four phases of the Mec-Reg/SICA;
- Active involvement of staff and volunteers from the Panamanian Red Cross, Costa Rican Red Cross, and Salvadoran Red Cross, which enhanced visibility and collaboration;
- Advocacy efforts for recognition of the auxiliary role played by Red Cross-National Societies; and
- Technical support provided to promote the harmonization of national manuals and the Mec-Reg/SICA, ensuring consistency and alignment in procedures and guidelines.

Between September and December 2023 and in collaboration with the German Red Cross, IFRC Disaster Law worked in the development of six **Strategic Studies on Integrating Anticipatory Action (AA) into National Disaster Risk Management Legal Frameworks**. These studies were developed as a team and included a validation workshop with the participation of CEPREDENAC,

Civil Protection Systems, and Red Cross-National Societies from **Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama**, and the **Dominican Republic**.

In October, during the **MITCH +25** and **5th AA regional Platform events**, events with more than 200 participants from various entities (Meteorological Institutes, Red Cross Movement, CEPREDENAC, UN Agencies, regional and national governments), IFRC Disaster Law facilitated the session "Integration of AA in National Risk Management Systems," officially launching six "Strategic Studies for the Integration of AA into Legal Frameworks of Risk and Disaster Management Systems." The session highlighted findings, recommendations, and general proposals. The session was attended by over 40 participants, including Red Cross personnel, World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and representatives from public entities in **Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama**. Following the presentation, a "Coffee Around the World" dynamic was held, featuring discussions on subnational normative frameworks, disaster risk management planning, strategies and policies, laws and regulations, and access to finances, gathering valuable contributions from participants.



In November 2023, the **Regional IDRL Working Group** in collaboration with IFRC and CDEMA facilitated the [Second Caribbean IDRL Workshop](#) (virtually), under the theme, "*Re-engineering the Caribbean regulatory framework for international disaster relief and humanitarian assistance in the context of comprehensive disaster management- A Call to Action!*" This workshop brought together over 100 DRM stakeholders from across the 19 Participating States of CDEMA including Red Cross National Societies, National Disaster Offices, and regional organisations responsible for management of ports, customs and security. At this workshop, the findings and recommendations of the Regional IDRL Gap Analysis Report were presented as well as proposed guidelines for expanding the CDM Model Policy and Legislation on international humanitarian assistance. These recommendations received significant endorsement and interest from states, with indications from the National Disaster Offices of **Belize, Guyana** and **St. Vincent and the Grenadines** that they would be working on updating their DRM laws and incorporating the IDRL recommendations of the workshop into their policy and legislative review processes. In this regard, IFRC Disaster Law, through the IDRL Working Group will have the opportunity in 2024 to work with these National Societies and their governments in their respective disaster law reform processes.

In November 2023, the Disaster Law team conducted a **consultative webinar on the Draft Articles** with members of a regional technical committee convened for strengthening regulatory frameworks in international disaster management. The participants were sensitized specifically on the rationale behind the Draft Articles and the issues it seeks to address as an international legal framework. Participants included National Disaster Offices, National Societies and regional organizations responsible for ports, customs, and security from within the Americas.

In December 2023, the Disaster Law team held a virtual regional consultation on the pilot version of the "**Disaster Risk Governance Guidelines**", where participants were sensitized to the Guidelines as a comprehensive tool to support law and policymakers in developing and revising

DRM laws, policies, plans and procedures. Specific topics covered in the Guidelines were highlighted for discussion, including institutional arrangements, mainstreaming risk reduction into sectoral laws, early warning and early action, disaster recovery and legal facilities for disaster-related actors. During the consultation, many participants indicated via poll that they believed that the Guidelines would be a useful tool for reviewing and strengthening disaster laws, policies and plans in their country. There were approximately 50 participants from the Americas, including National Societies, National Disaster Offices, international partners including the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and World Food Programme, and government agencies such as Attorney General Offices, immigration departments and port authorities, among others.

In December 2023, a [Red Cross Virtual Exhibition](#) was launched for the Caribbean, under the theme, “*Prepare, Be Ready, Respond: Advocating for effective disaster laws*”. This exhibition, the first of its kind, features the work of National Societies in communities in relation to reducing risk, preparation for, and responding to disasters. It aims to sensitize DRM stakeholders on the connection between the work that National Societies do on the ground and the role of laws and policies to empower communities to increase their resilience to respond and recover from disasters. Through various interviews and presentations from National Societies, IFRC and other stakeholders, the virtual exhibition covers a wide range of topics including an introduction to disaster law; disaster risk reduction in Dominica post-Hurricane Maria; Legal facilities for humanitarian actors during La Soufriere volcanic eruption in St. Vincent; Recovery after Hurricane Dorian in The Bahamas; Optimizing the auxiliary role of the Jamaica Red Cross, among other topics.

2.2 Country Level

2.2.1 Bahamas

In light of the new DRM framework being implemented under the recently passed Disaster Risk Management Act, 2022, IFRC Disaster Law conducted sensitization sessions with **The Bahamas Red Cross Society** to analyze and examine the impact of the new legislation on the auxiliary role of the National Society. In that regard, IFRC Disaster Law will support the National Society to advocate for express recognition of the auxiliary role in national disaster risk management policies and plans that will emanate from the new DRM Act. In March 2023, a new Disaster Law Report was finalized and published: [Disaster Recovery in The Bahamas – A Legal and Policy Survey](#). This Report examines the strengths and gaps in the legal and policy frameworks for disaster recovery in The Bahamas. It illustrates the challenges faced during the recovery from Hurricane Dorian and extracts good practices and lessons learned, including an examination of the new Disaster Risk Management Act. Soft and hard copies of this report were shared with the National Society to equip them with the evidence-based recommendations needed for advocacy to their public authorities.

2.2.2 Brazil

Within the framework of the desk study "[Recuperação de Desastres no Brasil: Uma Pesquisa Legal e Política](#)" (Disaster Recovery in Brazil - A Legal and Policy Survey) a virtual meeting was held with the participation of the Southern Cone CCD, the Brazilian Red Cross General Director, the DRM Coordinator, the International Affairs Coordinator, and the consultant, to formally present the final version of the report, its findings, recommendations and next steps.

2.2.3 Colombia

A Legislative Advocacy Toolkit Training was developed for 23 participants, focusing on understanding the auxiliary role, and developing three advocacy strategies, including strengthening the auxiliary role, influence of the impartiality and neutrality principles in DRM and promote effective communication and accountability in DRM and disaster laws. In addition, the **Colombia Red Cross** Disaster Risk Management Lead participated in the 8th International Disaster Law Course, held from September 25 – 29 at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in Sanremo, Italy.



2.2.4 Costa Rica and El Salvador

The Disaster Law team provided technical support through an advocacy promotion project to strengthen advocacy efforts for their Red Cross Law, which was presented to the National Congress. In addition, Costa Rica Red Cross, German Red Cross and IFRC Disaster Law held a workshop with strategic actors for the **'Integration of AA within the legal framework of the country's Disaster Risk Management System'**. The workshop aimed to identify practical needs and job opportunities, with participation from various organizations such as the National Emergency Commission, the National Meteorological Institute, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Costa Rican Institute of Aqueducts and Sewers, among others.

2.2.5 Cuba

IFRC Disaster Law participated in the **XI International Congress on Disasters in Havana**, showcasing the International Red Cross Movement's experience in 'Legal Preparedness for the International Response to Disasters.' The presentation covered cases in the region and tools available for mutual support, such as the IDRL Guidelines, Model Decree and Model Act, Legislative Advocacy Toolkit, and legal framework studies on AA, DRM, among others.

2.2.6 Dominican Republic

In the framework of a consultation session held with strategic actors, the findings and recommendations of the **'Strategic Study on Integrating AA into National Disaster Risk Management Legal Frameworks'** was showcased to the Civil Defense Director and President of the National Emergency Commission, the.

2.2.7 Ecuador

Ecuador Red Cross (CRE) and IFRC Disaster Law provided technical support and legal revision during the review process held for the Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Draft Organic Bill. The Law was formally [approved](#) in January 2024. As part of this process, a workshop was conducted on "Legal preparedness to face pandemics, epidemics, and endemic diseases" and "Disaster law with emphasis on early warning systems and financing" for sixteen key actors from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Assembly, the Ministry of Health, and the National Disaster Response Agency.



2.2.8 Honduras

IFRC Disaster Law worked in the development of the **"Strategic Study on Integrating AA into National Disaster Risk Management Legal Frameworks"** which included a study in Honduras.

2.2.9 Jamaica

Through the support of the **Capacity Building Initiative (CBI) Project**, IFRC Disaster Law is supporting the **Jamaica Red Cross** to advocate for a new Red Cross Act that better defines and optimizes its auxiliary role. In November 2023, as part of its advocacy strategy, Jamaica Red Cross met with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to initiate discussions around reforming its Red Cross Law and also with the Ministry of Finance to increase the subvention of the National Society. In 2024, IFRC Disaster Law will support the Jamaica Red Cross to update and submit its recommendations and policy brief for a new Red Cross that will be advanced through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

2.2.10 Mexico

A Legislative Advocacy Toolkit Training was held and attended by **22** participants, resulting in the development of four advocacy strategies focussed on the auxiliary role, a Civil Protection Law Initiative, financial sustainability and pre-hospital care.

2.2.11 Netherlands Red Cross Overseas Branches (Sint Maarten, Curacao, Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, Saba)

The **Netherlands Red Cross Overseas Branches** are being supported by the Netherlands Red Cross and the Disaster Law Team to conduct policy assessments in disaster law, against IFRC's

benchmarking tools, to strengthen the capacities of the overseas branches in Humanitarian Diplomacy/Policy Advocacy, to harness their auxiliary role to more systematically and confidently advocate for better laws, regulations and policies for comprehensive DRM. As part of this project, workshops were held with the overseas branches in June and July to sensitize on the findings of the disaster law research and to validate the recommendations of the report. In 2024, the overseas branches will be trained in legislative advocacy to support their advocacy efforts.

2.2.12 Panama

In March 2023, a high-level meeting was held between **Panama Red Cross** representatives, the IFRC Under Secretary and the Interior Minister. In January 2024, the Red Cross Law was formally passed by the National Assembly and the National President, following advocacy efforts in the previous years. In addition, a Legislative Advocacy Toolkit (LAT) training was held for sixteen Panama Red Cross representatives, focused on the Red Cross Law, the migration crises and the auxiliary role.



2.2.13 Trinidad and Tobago

In March 2023, the **Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross Society (TTRCS)** with support from the Disaster Law Team provided comments and recommendations with respect to the Draft Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Policy which were submitted to the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM). IFRC Disaster Law also submitted additional research, as requested by ODPM, to support recommendations that would allow for TTRCS to have its auxiliary role more clearly outlined in the new CDM Policy and Legislation. In 2024, IFRC Disaster Law and TTRCS will support ODPM to finalize its CDM Policy for submission to the Minister of National Security for approval of Cabinet.

2.2.14 Uruguay

During the **Uruguay Red Cross** Annual Assembly held on 30 September 2023, the advocacy strategy and route map developed through the [auxiliary role study](#) were revised and validated.

The National Society included this work as part of their 2024 planning and has also been lobbying for the update of its Red Cross Law.



3. Asia-Pacific

3.1 Regional Level

The inaugural [Pacific Week of AA](#) was held in Nadi, Fiji from 28-30 March 2023. It brought together over 80 participants across the region, representing 15 Pacific Island Countries and regional partners, to discuss how to better prepare for and act before disaster strikes. The week consisted of three separate but connected workshops: The Pacific AA Sensitization Workshop, (28-29 March 2023); *Law and Institutional Frameworks for AA in the Pacific* (30 March) and the Pacific Climate Risk Early Warning System (CREWS) Steering Committee (31 March).

The workshop was held under the banner of the Pacific Resilience Partnership with the support of UN agencies in partnership with IFRC, Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) Climate Centre and CREWS, with Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Pacific Community (SPC) and Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) also providing technical input. Country delegations comprised mostly of National Disaster Management Offices (NDMOs), National MET services and National Societies. Country delegations were from: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI), Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Nauru, Niue, Palau, PNG, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Tokelau and Vanuatu. In addition, partners from the Pacific Disability Forum, DFAT, MFAT and the Green Climate Fund also attended. IFRC Disaster Law supported facilitation of the workshop and led the workshop on Law and Institutional Frameworks. An overview of Disaster Law thematic areas was provided before moving onto country-level groupwork which focused on an analysis of the country level relevant legal frameworks against questions in the IFRC's Disaster Preparedness and Response Checklist to assess the legal enabling environment for AA. The day ended with the identification of key strengths and weaknesses in legal frameworks and Disaster Law was requested to be part of the Pacific AA Working group to support AA implementation in the Pacific.

The Disaster Law team ran a thematic session on ***"Institutionalizing AA into Law and Policy" at the 7th Annual Asia Pacific Dialogue Platform on AA*** in collaboration with FAO and WFP with government representatives from the Philippines, Bangladesh, and Vietnam as speakers. The session was attended by governments and partner agencies both at the national and regional levels and included an exercise which used elements of the IFRC Disaster Preparedness and Response Checklist to demonstrate ways that AA could be incorporated into existing law and policy. As a result of the thematic session (and several discussions over the course of the event), participants expressed the need to establish a sub-Working Group under the Asia Pacific AA Technical Working Group (TWG) specifically on Institutionalizing AA into Law and Policy, which will be led by the IFRC Disaster Law team to bring together all parties interested in strengthening their AA legal frameworks, provide technical guidance and support, and also provide a platform for peer learning and exchange. Disaster Law also had Marketplace sessions and operated a Disaster Law booth during the workshop. Disaster Law was invited to the AA Global Dialogue Platform in Berlin,

October 2023 to present the innovative approach between Disaster Law and AA to see how this may be replicated in other regions.

The **UNESCAP Commission** was held on 15-19 May and was represented by the IFRC office in Bangkok and Disaster Law. Disaster Law supported a side event on **Disaster Resilience: Early Warnings for All in Asia and the Pacific** help in partnership with UNESCAP, UNDRR, Government of Fiji and Government of Mongolia. Speakers included the Under Secretary-General for UNESCAP, UNDRR, the Deputy Prime Minister of Mongolia, the Assistant Minister, Prime Minister's Officer in Fiji, Secretary General (SG) of Maldivian Red Crescent, WMO, ITU, UK Met Office and IFRC. Disaster Law also supported a further side event on Climate Change, Air Pollution and Health Impacts in collaboration with UNESCAP and the RCRC Climate Centre. Speakers included UNESCAP, Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, RCRC Climate Centre and the Ministry of Public Health of Thailand.

The [Regional Workshop on Strengthening Engagement with National and Subregional Disaster Risk Management Systems](#) was conducted in Kuala Lumpur for Asia Pacific and Central Asia for the ECHO PPP. The workshop provided a platform for peer-to-peer discussions to explore the successes and challenges when engaging in national and regional law and policy making processes and the operationalization of them – including the identification of best practice.

On 19 June 2023, the **Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) RCRC Network** from Asia Pacific and the Indian Ocean/Africa met online to discuss the logistics of the Network moving forward. A draft Terms of Reference based on recommendations from the Network was shared with the group and discussed with further amendments made by the Network. During this meeting Network members confirmed the governance structure (a Steering Committee comprised of three representatives from each SIDS region will lead the work of the Network) and the content in the TORs and the subregions voted for their Steering Committee representatives which resulted in the Maldives, Cook Islands and Tuvalu being chosen to represent the Asia Pacific in the SIDS RCRC Network Steering Committee. To meet the request of Network members for a platform upon which to engage, IFRC Geneva were able to develop a SIDS RCRC Network Community of Practice which is open to all SIDS RCRC Network members to register and join and will alleviate the current difficulties with time zones. The Network provides an advocacy platform for SIDS to consolidate key messages when engaging in regional and international fora as well as a vehicle to foster ongoing peer exchange between regions.

In June 2023, the **Asia Champions Network** and the **Africa Champions Network** met online to discuss cooperation. IFRC Disaster Law developed an online RCRC Network Community of Practice which is open to all RCRC Network members to register and join and will alleviate the current difficulties with time zones. The Network provides an advocacy platform to consolidate key messages when engaging in regional and international fora as well as a vehicle to foster ongoing peer exchange between regions.

The **Asia Pacific Technical Working Group on AA** met on 14 July 2023. On the agenda was the potential for a Law and Policy Sub-working group. IFRC Disaster Law attended the meeting and presented on the need, due to government demand, for a dedicated sub working group on law and policy which was subsequently adopted by the group appointing Disaster Law as lead for the subgroup.

The **UNESCAP Fourth Disaster Resilience Week** was held on 24-27 July 2023 and was attended by government and regional representatives, including the IFRC and National Societies from Cambodia, Lao, Nepal, Maldives, Myanmar and Thailand. During the Disaster Resilience Week, the Disaster Law team facilitated a session on Thematic Session 4: Preparedness and Response Capabilities where Disaster Law presented on Strengthening AAs and Legal Governance addressing the institutionalization of outcomes from global/regional processes, such as early warning systems, into legal and policy frameworks.

In August, the Coordinator for Protracted Crises and Recovery collaborated with Disaster Law to present on the work of IFRC including Disaster Law thematic areas to **Medecins San Frontieres (MSF)** in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The [8th International Disaster Law Course](#) was held from September 25 – 29 at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in Sanremo, Italy. It was attended by the Disaster Law team, as well as a government representative from Bangladesh and national society representatives from the Philippines and Bangladesh. The Disaster Law team gave presentations on Disaster Law in Southeast Asia and South Asia and the work with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and SAARC, as well as the Disaster Law work in the Pacific with regional organizations.

The **11th Global Dialogue Platform on AA** was held in Berlin from 10 – 13 October 2023. IFRC Disaster Law facilitated a session together with the AA Regional Coordinator on legal frameworks for AA titled: The Good, the Bad, and the Law. Panelists featured speakers from Sri Lanka Red Cross, the African Union, South Sudan NDMO and UNDRR. Facilitators shared the Disaster Law/AA activities taking place in the Asia Pacific region and how the team is supporting institutionalizing AA into domestic legal frameworks. Disaster Law also piloted the Disaster Law snapshot on Legal Frameworks for Early Warning Early Action with participants through interactive groupwork. In addition to the session, Disaster Law also presented at the final plenary session on Institutionalizing AA, highlighting the collaboration between Disaster Law and AA in Asia Pacific and providing an overview of available disaster law tools to support institutionalizing AA into law and policy.

The Disaster Law team in collaboration with Fiji NDMO, Fiji Red Cross and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, and under the banner of the Pacific Resilience Partnership, facilitated the convening of a week-long [Pacific Peer Exchange](#) from 12 – 19 October 2023, bringing together Pacific National Society Representatives from Cook Islands, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu as well as National Disaster Management Offices from Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau and Samoa for Fiji's first national simulation exercise on earthquake and tsunami. The Pacific Peer Exchange occurred during Fiji's National Disaster Awareness Week and the regional Pacific Resilience Meeting, and the Pacific National Societies engaged in several activities throughout the course of the week. During the Pacific Regional Peer Exchange from 12-19 October facilitated under the Pacific Resilience Partnership, Disaster Law supported the Samoa Red Cross SG to take part in a panel discussion for the Pacific Resilience Meeting entitled "Power of Partnerships for Early Warning, Early Action in the Pacific" emphasizing the need for early warning systems to be people-centered in both the design and delivery, multi-hazard, end-to-end and inclusive so that early warnings result in early

action for all in the Pacific. The event was organized through collaboration with the Pacific Community (SPC), IFRC and UNDRR. Similarly, Disaster Law facilitated the inclusion of Tuvalu Red Cross SG as a speaker on the UNDRR's High-Level panel on Pacific Resilience, titled "The Pacific Resilience Journey: Are we sailing together in the right direction?". The event was hosted by the Forum Secretariat, UNDRR, the Pacific Community and the University of the South Pacific and included the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for DRR, the Hon. Minister for Rural, Maritime Development and Disaster Management of Fiji, the CEO of the Pacific Disability Forum and the Director of Geoscience, Energy and Maritime Division, SPC. IFRC Disaster Law held a separate briefing for Pacific National Societies providing an overview of Disaster Law thematic areas, including the opportunity to hear National Society priorities for the Peer Exchange. Pacific National Societies were then briefed by host Fiji Red Cross in a regional peer exchange session and overview of the upcoming simulation exercise.

The simulation exercise was attended by approximately 2,500 people from government, civil society, regional and international organizations, private sector and academic institutions. Pacific National Societies took part in the SIMEX, the tabletop exercises, the technical sessions and the After-Action review. All representatives had the opportunity to participate and provide feedback on national emergency plans and standard operating procedures and share experiences from their own country contexts, participate in processes for requesting and deploying international emergency response teams and provide feedback on the overall event. During the After-Action review, Fiji Red Cross and Samoa Red Cross presented on the Auxiliary Role and the Fiji NDMO spoke on the support provided by Disaster Law in strengthening their laws and policies and in particular the Checklist on Disaster Preparedness and Response. Finally, Disaster Law gave a presentation to over 300 participants on IDRL at the Academic Session for Fiji's National Disaster Awareness Week. Immediately after the Pacific Peer Exchange, Samoa and Tuvalu SGs traveled to Vanuatu to support Vanuatu Red Cross and IFRC Suva Office in receiving the SG of the IFRC, Mr. Jagan Chapagain and to present an overview of Pacific priorities and support in Humanitarian Diplomacy engagement.

On 27 October 2023, the Disaster Law team gave a presentation on the Introduction to Disaster Law with a focus on International Disaster Response Law (IDRL) for the **AHA Centre Executive Leadership in Emergency and Disaster Management for ASEAN Programme (ACE LEDMP) 2023**. Twenty-five participants from ASEAN Member States (AMS), including individuals from the IFRC Jakarta CCD as well as from the Philippines Red Cross attended the session.

In November the Disaster Law team presented the "Institutionalizing AA into law and policy" component of the AA Technical Working Group roadmap to the **"All-In" Asia Pacific AA meeting** which included the APTWG and several national TWGs and relevant stakeholders. Discussions are already underway with the Pacific Community of Practice on AA and UNDRR Pacific on how Disaster Law and AA can support the follow-up to the AA and Disaster Law workshop held in Fiji earlier in the year.

Disaster Law supported IFRC's engagement at the **Asia Pacific Climate Week** which took place from 13-17 November in Johor, Bahru, hosted by the government of Malaysia. Disaster Law supported Malaysian Red Crescent and World Wildlife Fund Malaysia in their side event on **Multistakeholder cooperation for locally led adaptation in Malaysia**.

The conference on “**The Role of Disaster Law in Mitigating Disasters and Strengthening Climate Resilience**” held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 29-30 November, was a collaborative effort by the Disaster Law team, the **New Zealand Institute of Law, Emergencies and Disasters (LEAD)**, **Sphere India**, the **NAPSIPAG Disaster Research Group (NDRG)** and the **Institute of Social Sciences, India**. This conference focused on the urgent need for improved coordination and cooperation in disaster risk reduction, preparedness, and response and sought to build stronger relationships with key academic and research institutions. Key topics included the crucial role of disaster law in combating climate change, the specific challenges faced by Small Island Developing States, and the interplay between Disaster Law and International Humanitarian Law. The conference featured a range of speakers from governments, academic circles, and regional and international organizations across the Asia-Pacific region, covering many subjects. The report is available [here](#).

The conference featured several sessions and discussions on various aspects of the Draft Articles on the Protection of Person in the Event of Disasters. UNDRR Asia Pacific Regional Chief, including leading academics and practitioners from the regions exchanged views on the importance of the Draft Articles and Disaster Law and its potential to provide much needed authority in this area. A highlight of the event was the discussion on the unique challenges faced by SIDS and the interplay between disaster law and International Humanitarian Law. These sessions underscored the importance of legal preparedness in effective disaster management. The conference also shed light on the broader implications of climate change across Asia Pacific. Participants engaged in in-depth discussions about the need for comprehensive disaster law frameworks that are adaptable to the varied and complex nature of climate-induced disasters. These frameworks are crucial for mitigating the immediate impacts of disasters and for building long-term resilience in communities increasingly vulnerable to climate change. The Conference began with the launch of the [International Handbook of Disaster Research](#) which provides a comparative analysis of key case studies from across the world, highlighting recommendations to improve risk governance and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Disaster Law contributed to its development, and it was launched by IFRC, UNDRR and the Network of Asia Pacific Schools and Institutes of Public Administration and Governance (NAPSIPAG) Disaster Research Group at the Asia Pacific Disaster Law Conference. The Conference concluded with the establishment of the **Asia Pacific Disaster Law Network**. The Network will be an informal platform for practitioners and academics to collaborate on disaster law thematic areas, research topics and in particular the development of academic courses and trainings on disaster law. The next Asia Pacific Disaster Law Conference will be hosted by the New Zealand Institute of Law, Emergencies and Disaster in Christchurch, New Zealand in 2024. UNDRR has expressed interest in co-hosting.

At the **Regional Workshop on Preventing, Managing, and Finding Solutions to Disaster and Climate-Induced Displacement** held in Bangkok in December 2023, the Disaster Law team along with the IFRC AA team, with the support of the IFRC Migration and Community Engagement and Accountability teams presented on the IFRC Guidance for Planned Relocation and the community engagement work providing concrete examples from the region. The workshop was convened by UNDRR, International Organization for Migration and supported by IFRC and was attended by government representatives from Mongolia, Bhutan, Vietnam, Maldives, Philippines, Laos, Timor Leste, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Pakistan.

Also in December, the Disaster Law team delivered a presentation during the session on Pacific Humanitarian Talanoa at the **Regional Humanitarian Partnership Week (RHPW) 2023**. The event, organized by the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), Asian Disaster Risk Reduction Network (ADRRN), Community World Service Asia (CWSA), and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), focused on the theme "Putting Theory into Practice: Locally-led solutions in Humanitarian Action." The event aimed to facilitate collaboration and innovation among various stakeholders in the humanitarian sector, including Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Civil Society Organisations, academia, think tanks, and international bodies such as the UN and financial institutions like the Asian Development Bank and World Bank. This was the first time for the Pacific to host a session at the Regional Partnership Week, which was facilitated by the Pacific Islands Association of NGOs (PIANGO) and the IFRC Disaster Law with speakers from Vanuatu and Fiji governments. Overall, the event served as a platform for networking, sharing best practices and challenges, and fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders in the humanitarian sector, with a focus on practical, locally-led solutions.

The **Asia Pacific Technical Working Group on AA (AP TWG on AA)** organized a **Donor Roundtable** in December 2023, to discuss and plan for the next five years. They presented a region-wide mapping of ongoing initiatives. To address the expanding landscape of AA actors and initiatives, the Asia Pacific TWG on AA conducted a roadmap exercise to identify key activities for the next five years. These activities aim to advance the AA agenda, addressing opportunities and gaps. The roundtable served as an opportunity for the donor community, including development banks like the Asian Development Bank, World Bank, and Green Climate Fund, private sector representatives, and practitioners, to engage in a frank conversation about a joint 5-year vision for AA. The objective was to achieve a shared understanding of priorities, needs, and gaps, fostering better alignment and coordination. The Asia Pacific Disaster Law team is the lead agency for the AA sub-working group on Law and Policy, Institutionalization, and Coordination and presented the key activities for 2024.

Throughout the reporting period, the Disaster Law team continued to work on the **ASEAN Disaster Law and Public Health Emergency (PHE) Mapping and Guidelines**. A consultation with ASEAN Member States was held in May in collaboration with the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) to share the revised draft of the ASEAN Disaster Law and Public Health Emergencies Mapping and Guidelines. The consultation was attended by all ASEAN member states, and the inputs received will be added to the current draft for further circulation. This project involved both IFRC and ASEAN to map ASEAN and ASEAN member states' laws and policies related to the COVID-19 response and to develop ASEAN guidelines for public health emergency legislation. The guidelines will serve as a non-binding framework for ASEAN member states to guide the development and/or review of their disaster laws and policies relevant to public health emergency preparedness and response and coordination mechanisms between disaster risk management and public health actors, supplementing existing ASEAN public health emergency guidelines and other relevant regional mechanisms. The draft report was endorsed by the Working Group on Prevention and Mitigation (WG P&M) and is set to be published early 2024.

Through the IFRC Asia Pacific Regional Office Joint Task Force, Disaster Law contributed to IFRC's response to Cyclone Mocha in **Myanmar** and Tropical Cyclone Lola in **Vanuatu**, and via in-country support to the Karnali Earthquake in **Nepal**.

3.2 Country Level

3.2.1 China

The China IDRL Study Report was edited with technical inputs and recommendations by Disaster Law in June 2023 and was subsequently submitted to IFRC Beijing for finalization.

3.2.2 Fiji

The Disaster Law team provided support to **Fiji Red Cross** on the revision of the Fiji Red Cross Act through technical drafting as requested by FRCS line ministry. In addition, Disaster Law met with the Permanent Secretary of the Fiji NDMO in Suva to present an overview of the major changes contained in Fiji's Draft DRM Bill. The team further supported the NDMO in drafting the Cabinet Paper and making amendments to the Draft Bill as per the Permanent Secretary's request which was subsequently submitted to Cabinet. Disaster Law also supported the Fiji NDMO in the facilitation of national consultation workshops in the development of Fiji's Humanitarian Policy in September.

3.2.3 Indonesia

The research, [Disaster Recovery in Indonesia](#) – A Legal and Policy Survey was finalized and published on the Disaster Law website.

3.2.4 Malaysia

Throughout 2023, Disaster Law provided support to the **Malaysian Red Crescent Society** (MRCS) with the Auxiliary Role Mapping Project. A consultant was hired to lead this piece of work and key informant interviews were conducted with IFRC, ICRC and MRCS colleagues. Interviews were also scheduled with relevant government ministries. The outputs of the mapping will include a completed auxiliary role mapping template for Malaysia and a country snapshot of the Malaysian Red Crescent Auxiliary Role. This analysis will be used to support the revision of the Red Crescent Act and the project will continue to 2024. In September, the Disaster Law team supported capacity building for Malaysian Red Crescent in an AA workshop with a presentation and support for exploring enabling environments for AA through law and policy.

3.2.5 Marshall Islands

In June 2023, Disaster Law supported the IFRC North Pacific Sub-Office in the review of the draft DRM Bill for the Marshall Islands and the review of the MoU between the Marshall Islands Red Cross Society and the RMI government for activities in humanitarian and social fields, providing technical input and recommendations.

3.2.6 Nepal

Disaster Law reviewed and provided collective inputs on the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Strategic Action Plan 2023 drafted by National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDMA). The inputs

included in the plan reflected previous consultations with community vulnerable groups and provided a platform to promote their meaningful participation in relation to design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of DRR including the requirement for all emergency responders to participate in training on Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and the requirement that post-disaster shelters be designed and managed in a manner that prevents and mitigates SGBV. Disaster Law further supported the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA) to revise and finalize the Municipal Disaster Risk Governance Assessment (MDRGA) tool. The tool was submitted to the Secretary of MoFAGA for official endorsement. The tool was revised based on feedback received from municipal representatives to simplify the indicators under six thematic areas and to translate into Nepali language. The revision process followed with participatory and technical consultative meetings with the representatives from Ministry of Home Affairs, National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority, Ministry of Forest and Environment, National Planning Commission (NPC) and different divisions and sections of the MoFAGA. The Disaster Law team also provided input on the Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Get Ready Facilitation Guidebook drafted by MoFAGA in cooperation with Atullya Foundation Private Limited and USAID's Tayar Nepal. The inputs centered around inclusive early warning systems, as everyone should be protected from early warnings. The most at-risk group including people with disabilities should be put at the centre in risk assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of disaster preparedness and response plans.

Disaster Law also supported the MoFAGA to organize the Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) Platform Partners' consultative meetings held on 18 July, 12 October and 5 November 2023. The meetings were focused on response and recovery initiatives carried out by the CBDRM Platform Partners and how to provide efficient early recovery to the Bajhang earthquake affected people. The meeting was chaired by the Secretary of MoFAGA and attended by the representatives from Government Ministries, UN agencies, International Non-Governmental Organisations, NGOs, IFRC, Nepal Red Cross Society, network organizations and academia.

3.2.7 Pakistan

A disaster law workshop was held in Pakistan on 7 November 2023, hosted by the National Society and German Red Cross and facilitated by IFRC Disaster Law. The workshop was open to RCRC colleagues and external partners and provided an overview of the auxiliary role of the National Society, the thematic areas of disaster law including the disaster law work undertaken by the National Society to date and opportunities in disaster law. Following the national disaster law workshop, a Legislative Advocacy workshop was conducted for the National Society and Movement partners from 8-9 November and brought together government, management and staff from both National Society headquarters and branches to discuss key legislative advocacy issues for the National Society which included strengthening of the auxiliary role and progression of the 2014 Pakistan IDRL Study. Participants then developed an advocacy strategy and 5-year action plan to guide their work moving forward.

3.2.8 Philippines

During the AA Dialogue Platform in Nepal in June, Disaster Law met with the Philippines Government representatives currently drafting the AA Bill to discuss guidance on institutionalizing

AA into law and policy. The senior officials requested copies of the disaster law tools, in particular the Disaster Preparedness and Response Checklist to support them in the ongoing drafting of bill which they estimated would take at least another 12-months to finalize. Disaster Law maintains ongoing contact with the Philippines government offering continued support in drafting and technical input.

In July 2023, Disaster Law provided technical support on the Philippines Draft Bill for Declaration of Imminent Disaster. This request came from the IFRC Philippines Country Delegation on behalf of the **Philippines Red Cross**. This bill aims to ensure that government actions and fund release occur before the impact of imminent disasters.

Disaster Law also supported the Philippines Red Cross in a Disaster Law Workshop that was held from 13 to the 15 December 2023. During the workshop, IFRC Disaster Law facilitated the four sessions on IDRL, DRR, Disaster Preparedness and Response and Strengthening the Auxiliary Role through Law and Policy.

3.2.9 PNG

IFRC Disaster Law met with IFRC PNG and **PNG Red Cross** in June to discuss the review of the PNG Red Cross Act and an advocacy strategy for proceeding with the review simultaneously with the government's review of the Disaster Risk Management Act. A roadmap on next steps was developed and shared with the IFRC office and National Society who have already begun engagement with their government and will revert when further support is required.

3.2.10 Samoa

In October the Disaster Law team provided technical input to Samoa's final drafts of the National Disaster and Climate Risk Management Plan and the Samoa Disaster Climate Risk Management Policy at the request of the Samoa National Disaster Management Office (NDMO).

3.2.11 Sri Lanka

At the request of the **Sri Lankan Red Cross Society**, the IFRC AA (AA) and Disaster Law provide a 1-day AA induction to Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) staff from headquarters and branches on 18 September. Around 25 SLRCS members participated, including one IFRC CCD New Delhi member. The aim was to familiarize participants with the AA concept and achieve a mindset change from reaction to anticipation. The induction also included a session on AA and Disaster Law, as well as a basic overview of the requirements of a simplified Early Action Protocol. The following day, SLRCS organized a [National AA workshop](#) that brought together over 50 participants from Government, United Nations, NGOs, and donors. The aim was to increase the understanding of the AA approach by government counterparts and humanitarian partners. The workshop featured a panel discussion to outline which AA elements already exist in Sri Lanka, presented by panelists from the NDMO and the National Building Research Organization (both under the Ministry of Defence), World Vision Sri Lanka and IFRC. A session on AA and Disaster Law laid the groundwork for group discussions to identify entry points for AA into the existing DRM framework, current humanitarian coordination structures, and forecasting and financing mechanisms. The AA workshop culminated in the drafting of a national AA roadmap that includes a Plan of Action with concrete activities, lead partners, and a timeline. It provides a framework for how to take AA further in the current national context. The participation of various Government agencies was particularly useful, as they were part of the discussion on leadership, ownership, and

coordination. A very concrete outcome was the formation of a national multi-stakeholder AA Working Group led by the government. The event was also covered by two national media outlets [Sri Lanka Business News](#) and [The Island Online](#).

3.2.12 Thailand

The Disaster Law team drafted a concept note on Disaster Law Mapping research in Thailand. Through this project, the Disaster Law team will support the **Thai Red Cross Society's (TRCS)** disaster law development by researching and mapping existing International Disaster response laws in Thailand. The Disaster Law team support encompasses a comprehensive compilation of pertinent laws, tools, and stakeholders essential for disaster management. The team will provide the TRCS with an informative report detailing findings and recommendations. Additionally, a knowledge-sharing session between TRCS youth volunteers and law students involved in the project is proposed to promote collaborative research and the dissemination of Disaster Law.

3.2.13 Timor Leste

In August 2023, the Disaster Law team provided technical input into the Timor Leste AA Roadmap on the legal framework components for AA which has since been finalized.

3.2.14 Vanuatu

The Disaster Law Team supported the **Vanuatu Red Cross Society (VRCS)** with an Auxiliary Role and Legal Base session for the VRCS SG and staff to provide capacity building for the National Society and identify entry points for engagement with the government in September 2023. In addition, IFRC Disaster Law attended two meetings with the National Society President and Board members to discuss the development of a Humanitarian Diplomacy forum. IFRC Disaster Law also met with the Attorney-General's office and the Department of Internal Affairs to review the progress of legal frameworks that IFRC Disaster Law had been supporting the government on including the Recovery Bill which was tabled before parliament.

4. Europe and Central Asia



4.1 Regional Level

IFRC Disaster Law presented updates in Disaster Law at the **European Legal Support Group** Spring meeting held in Lisbon in May 2023. The presentation provided an overview of the Disaster Law support available to European National Societies and provided updates on the **Draft Articles**.

A [webinar on the Draft Articles](#) was held on 18 July in collaboration with the Italian Red Cross and with the support of the Red Cross EU Office which provided an overview of key aspects of the draft articles and outlined the IFRC's position with respect to them.

The Disaster, Climate and Crisis Department in close coordination with IFRC Disaster Law has worked closely with the EU Red Cross office on the revision of the Civil Protection Operational

Guidance for EU National Societies. The operational guidance is providing new elements that allow National Societies to strengthen their auxiliary role with their respective governments and Civil Protection Mechanisms and draw on lessons learnt from Ukraine and Türkiye.

IFRC Disaster Law is working with the **Central Asia Center for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction to conduct an IDRL mapping** for the region to be presented to the annual Regional Forum of Emergency Management Authorities this year. The aim of the research is to support the enforcement of the Central Asia Regulation on Emergency Response Coordination at the domestic level.

In continuing our support and strengthening partnerships with academia, in August of 2023, the Disaster Law Team facilitated a [Lecture on International Disaster Response Law at Istanbul University's Faculty of Law](#). This lecture formed part of the University's 2023 Summer School entitled "Legal Problems in Natural Disasters". In this lecture, students were trained on IDRL and relevant trends from the Africa region. In addition, they were also provided knowledge of the various Disaster Law Tools and the way that our program works globally.

4.2 Country Level

4.2.1 Italy

The Italian version of the IFRC-CRI Report on '[Law and Disaster Reconstruction in Italy](#)' was held in Rome in April. The report launch was attended by Rosario Valastro, President of the Italian Red Cross, Fabrizio Curcio, Head of the Italian Civil Protection Department, Guido Castelli, Senator and Commissioner for the post-earthquake reconstruction of Central Italy, Giulio Bartolini, Full Professor of International Law at Roma Tre University, Marco Coletti, Head of the Central Italy Earthquake Project unit of the Italian Red Cross. The Disaster Law Team also undertook advocacy for the adoption of a new law outlining how to deal with reconstruction after catastrophic events such as earthquakes and floods. In Italy, the lack of a systemic and comprehensive legal framework on post-disaster reconstruction has serious consequences for the timelines, methods of intervention and rights of those affected, putting the future of entire communities and towns at risk. To fill this gap, Italian national authorities are currently discussing the adoption of a Reconstruction Code.

A public consultation [event](#) on the new **Italian Law on Post-Disaster Reconstruction was held in Rome** on 15 June and was attended by the Minister for Civil Protection, the Governmental Commissioners for Reconstruction and numerous parliamentarians and high-level governmental officers, within the framework of the **#Sicuriperdavvero** advocacy campaign launched by ActionAid in 2019. During the event, the Italian Red Cross-IFRC Disaster Law Focal Point for Europe presented the results of a research he led on this topic and consolidated in a thematic [Report](#) including specific recommendations. The presentation highlighted the importance of adopting a law mandating for a process involving the committees and associations representing the affected communities. The presentation also stressed the importance of considering specific vulnerabilities of affected persons due to factors such as age, gender, socio-economic conditions and physical or mental health status and disabilities. The third element highlighted concerned the importance of safeguarding social and cultural aspects of reconstruction in the new legal framework, giving the right importance to the infrastructure aimed at restoring the community life in affected territories.

4.2.2 Kyrgyzstan

The Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan influenced the amendments to the **Law on International Emergency Assistance** which was adopted by the Kyrgyz Parliament on 29 June 2023 and signed into law by their President on 11 August 2023.



5. Global Level

5.1 Capacity strengthening and dissemination

IFRC finalized the world's first free disaster law course, [Law and Policies for the Protection of the Most Vulnerable](#) to increase knowledge of disaster law and how it can help save lives and keep communities safe in disasters. The course known as a MOOC - a Massive Online Open Course, was developed by IFRC

Disaster Law in partnership with the International Disaster, Emergency and Law Network (IDEAL) a global group of disaster law academics and experts, and with the support of the Italian Red Cross.

In 2023, IFRC Disaster Law continued to collaborate with the academic sector to support disaster law teaching and research. IFRC jointly organized the [8th International Disaster Law Course](#) held at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in Sanremo in close collaboration with the Italian RC.

An International Humanitarian Assistance Lecture was delivered to bachelor students from **Panama's Technological University**, focusing on the legal framework and response mechanism of the IFRC. The presentation was specifically aimed at students in the Sanitation and Environment program.

Furthermore, in the reporting period, IFRC conducted a series of [three webinars on the Auxiliary Role for National Societies](#). The webinars allowed National Societies to gain a better understanding of the nature of the auxiliary role and how it defines National RCRC Societies' identity; learn from colleagues who have engaged in a dialogue with their authorities and have successfully strengthened their auxiliary role through law and policy; and cement knowledge on the topic through playing the new interactive and fun 'Fingerprint' auxiliary role game. Sessions on the auxiliary role also continue as part of the MIC for Presidents and Directors.



5.2 Research and Publications

In 2023, IFRC Disaster Law consolidated its 20 years of research and recommendations on disaster law into a single guidance document: the [Guidelines on Disaster Risk Governance](#). The Guidelines are designed to support states in their efforts to strengthen disaster risk governance and become legally prepared for disasters. They are a benchmarking tool that can be used to guide

the development and review of domestic instruments. The Guidelines consolidate and supersede

IFRC's existing four key guidance documents. They will be presented for endorsement by the International Conferences of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in October 2024. Consultations on the Guidelines were held in both Africa and the Caribbean in late 2023. The Guidelines were disseminated widely through IFRC Disaster Law's communications channels and feedback was received through an online form.

IFRC Disaster Law published the [Handbook on Disaster Law Reform: A Guide for Domestic Authorities](#). The Handbook provides guidance on how to run an effective and inclusive legal review process, which harnesses the knowledge and experience of a broad range of actors and stakeholders to develop strong legal arrangements for disasters. The Handbook has been designed for government decision-makers and parliamentarians who are planning or engaging in a review of existing disaster laws and regulations. The Handbook builds on IFRC's two decades of experience in disaster law and includes three case studies showcasing successful, government-led disaster law reform processes.

IFRC Disaster Law published the [National Society Guide to Supporting Disaster Law and Policy Reform](#). The Guide outlines the key steps that National Societies should take to support their public authorities in reforming disaster law or policy. It draws on lessons learned from a range of countries where National Societies have supported their public authorities and includes many real-life examples.

In 2023, IFRC Disaster Law finalized its multi-year, multi-country research project on law and disaster recovery. The project culminated in the publication of a final report analyzing the findings from the literature review and eight country reports. The report, entitled [Laws, Policies and Plans for Disaster Recovery: Multi-Country Synthesis Report](#), provides detailed recommendations to domestic decision-makers about how laws, policies, plans and institutional arrangements can be developed in advance of disasters to underpin a comprehensive recovery system and ensure readiness for recovery. The report analyses the information contained in a [Literature Review \(2020\)](#) and eight country reports completed and published on IFRC Disaster Law website in the first half of 2023 ([Australia](#) (the 2019-2020 Black Summer Bushfires); [Brazil](#) (the 2019 Brumadinho dam collapse); [Italy](#) (the 2016-2017 Central Italy Earthquakes); [Indonesia](#) (the 2018 Sulawesi Earthquake and Tsunami); [Mozambique](#) (Cyclones Idai, Kenneth and Eloise, which occurred in 2019 and 2021); [Sierra Leone](#) (the 2017 Freetown landslide); [Spain](#) (the 2019 Cold Drop); and [The Bahamas](#) (Hurricane Dorian, which occurred in 2017)). Each of the Country Reports comprehensively maps the legal, policy and planning framework for disaster recovery in the selected country and examines how that framework has operated during the recovery from a recent, major disaster. In addition, in 2023 IFRC partnered with the World Bank and UNDP to conduct a **survey of recovery practitioners** focused on the role of law, policy and planning in supporting effective recovery. The survey received 97 responses from persons with experience in 84 countries. In 2024, a brief report analyzing the findings of the survey will be published.

The [Yearbook of International Disaster Law - regionalization and localization of international disaster law](#), Volume 4 was published. IFRC contributed with articles and as part of the YIDL Steering Committee. Additionally, IFRC Disaster Law contributed two articles to [Volume 5 of the Yearbook of International Disaster Law](#), one focused on [the role of the Red Cross and IFRC in integrating international guidelines into the domestic legal system](#), and the other analyzing disaster law developments in South Sudan. Finally, IFRC contributed a chapter to the **forthcoming *Research Handbook on Disasters and International Law*** to be published by

Edward Elgar in 2024. The chapter presents a history of IFRC's work in disaster law and demonstrates that IFRC has made a significant normative contribution to international disaster law.

With respect to the Auxiliary Role, as highlighted above, IFRC Disaster Law provided support in the development and **review of Auxiliary Role** in health mappings in DRC, Guinea, Kenya, and Uganda in line with epidemic and pandemic preparedness with respect to the Auxiliary role in community health and care. Reviews on the auxiliary role were published on IFRC Disaster Law Database for the Southern Cone (Argentina, Chile and Uruguay) and Andean countries (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru). IFRC Disaster Law is also providing support to the review of the Auxiliary Role of selected National Societies implementing the Ukraine and Impacted Countries Crisis emergency appeal (i.e. Ukraine, Croatia, Georgia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia). The review focuses on laws, policies and agreements relevant to the operations, and seeks to provide the evidence base for the advocacy strategy to strengthen the National Society Auxiliary Role during and after the crisis.

Also on the auxiliary role, IFRC Disaster Law prepared a proposal for a **revised Model Red Cross or Red Crescent Law**. The proposed revised Model Law provides a modern and ambitious benchmark for the review and amendment of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Laws. In 2024, IFRC Disaster Law will work towards having the revised Model Law adopted by an appropriate governance body.

5.3 Inter-Governmental Advocacy, Communication and Partnerships



In 2023, IFRC Disaster Law continued to engage closely with international discussions concerning the future of the UN ILC's [Draft Articles](#). In May 2023, IFRC co-hosted an Expert Meeting on the Draft Articles with the Permanent Missions of Colombia, Croatia, Italy and Jamaica. The meeting brought together experts from governments, international organisations, and academia for a timely discussion of the Draft Articles ahead of the 78th session of the UNGA. In total, 58 Permanent Missions, two intergovernmental organizations, and eight international organizations attended the meeting. Following the meeting, IFRC published a [Position Paper](#) expressing strong support for the development of a treaty based on the Draft articles, which was circulated to

Permanent Missions in New York. In October 2023, a Working Group of the UNGA's 6th Committee was convened to discuss the future of the Draft Articles. The head of IFRC Disaster Law attended the Working Group meetings and delivered a statement in support of the development of a new treaty. In addition to the foregoing activities, IFRC organized webinars for National Societies on the Draft Articles. Further, it developed a Briefing Note and template letter for National Societies to support their domestic advocacy efforts in relation to the Draft Articles.

Disaster Law has formed a partnership with **AA** to support the institutionalization of AA into DRM laws and policies. Although informal at first, this has quickly materialized into a concrete need for governments and National Societies and the AA Technical Working Group in Asia Pacific (which has been formally adopted into the IASC Regional Network) has requested the *Disaster Law team to head a sub-working group on Institutionalizing AA into Law and Policy*. The Anticipation Hub in Berlin has also requested that this partnership between Disaster Law and AA be showcased at the global Dialogue Platform on AA as a best practice example which they hope to see replicated in other regions. Disaster Law also currently sits on the Pacific AA Working Group. Following a fruitful discussion with the Asia Pacific AA coordinator, it was decided to host an online webinar for the Asia Pacific AA community to develop messaging for the upcoming COP this year. IFRC Disaster Law will support this initiative, tentatively scheduled for November.

IFRC Disaster Law has supported the newly established **RCRC SIDS Network** in collaboration with the IFRC New York for the engagement and advocacy of SIDS in preparation for the 4th UN Conference of SIDS and subsequent climate events. This is linked to the RCRC SIDS Network that was established after the “Enhancing Climate Resilience through Disaster Law” workshop in Seychelles in 2022 and is also linked to the Climate Champions group that has been established by Geneva colleagues. The proposed “secretariat” for the *RCRC SIDS Network* will be looking to undertake more climate-related research to support SIDS messaging at various events and will do so with the technical support of the Health, Disasters, Climate and Crisis team and colleagues in Geneva, in particular for preparation around COP engagement and attendance. The Terms of Reference (ToRs) were approved at the meeting and the steering committee was nominated. This network holds particular importance as the first of its kind within the Movement and has the potential to become a formidable advocacy group.

Communications and media support has been provided to activities under the Disaster Law programme. All materials produced are shared on [IFRC Disaster Law’s website](#), home to the world’s largest collection of resources on disaster law and has excellent traffic and engagement. In addition, stories and news are shared on our social media channels, [X / Twitter](#) and LinkedIn, and humanitarian websites, PreventionWeb and ReliefWeb.

Examples of coverage from the regions include stories on [Nigeria’s pre-disaster agreement](#), legislative advocacy training in [Mexico and Colombia](#), and [AA in the Pacific](#). Further case studies on AA have also been developed. Examples of coverage of reports and research include the launch of the [Guidelines on Disaster Risk Governance](#), [research on recovery governance](#) and the [Handbook on Disaster Law Reform](#). Other global coverage included the [Sanremo Disaster Law Course](#) and wide coverage of the UN ILC’s [Draft Articles](#).

With regard to the Auxiliary Role, IFRC launched a new initiative and started to fundraise to support National Societies to strengthen their auxiliary role. The initiative focuses on strengthening governments’ awareness and understanding of the critical auxiliary role of National Societies in responding effectively to evolving crisis and disasters through (1) capacity strengthening of National Societies and governments; (2) representations to public authorities; (3) dissemination and communication; (4) coordination of network’s efforts; (5) development of new tools to support National Societies’ engagement efforts.

How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations](#) (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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Saving lives, changing minds.



The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2030 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of nonviolence and peace.

Learn more about IFRC's Strategy 2030 at <https://future-rcrc.com/>

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