



**STATEMENT BY MS. KALLIE AULTMAN  
ON BEHALF OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT  
SOCIETIES**

Sixth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly  
Agenda Item 86: Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters

New York, 4 October 2024

Mr. Chair,

On behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and its 191 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, I congratulate you on your election as Chair of the Sixth Committee.

We are here today - and meeting in the Working Group on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters (PPED) next week - because of the rising frequency and intensity of disasters and, therefore, rising humanitarian needs. Last year alone, 399 disasters impacted over 93 million people. From breaking wildfires in South America to unprecedented heat waves in sub-Saharan Africa to a devastating hurricane and subsequent flooding in the southern United States, disasters are taking lives, destroying communities, disrupting food systems, impacting economies, and uprooting livelihoods.

As the IFRC and its 191 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, we have been working with States at the domestic and regional level on disaster risk governance, including the development and revision of disaster laws, for over 20 years. On this topic, hard and soft law exist, including the IFRC's International Disaster Response Law Guidelines. Unfortunately, however, the legal landscape for international disaster law remains piecemealed. Dozens of bilateral, regional, and sectoral agreements are in place, but they are insufficient to fill common international gaps and legal challenges.

Given these critical gaps, the IFRC supports the development of an international legal agreement based on the International Law Commission's Draft Articles on PPED. For the IFRC, as well as for other humanitarian actors and governments that support countries with humanitarian relief after a disaster, this new instrument is based on needs. It will support governments to be better prepared for disasters, help to deliver quality humanitarian assistance in a timely manner, and safeguard the sovereignty of States. An international legal agreement, in this case, will reduce uncertainty and expedite the approval for personnel, equipment, and aid delivery. After a disaster strikes, the search and rescue window for people is often a matter of hours. It is not an

exaggeration to say, that if this new treaty can expedite assistance by even several hours – it will save lives.

Mr. Chair,

Today and next week, we will hear from many States that, understandably, have concerns about the development of a new international legal instrument on this topic. As the IFRC, we are happy to answer any technical questions from States and provide recent and relevant examples of how this treaty could apply on the ground and how domestic law could support its implementation. In return, we urge States to focus on the needs of persons affected by disasters and the gaps and challenges this new instrument would solve rather than on the process and draft articles themselves. The IFRC believes the draft articles are a good basis to start negotiations, and negotiations should go ahead.

Let us remember that what happens in this very room can make a difference for people affected by disasters —and, ultimately, save lives.

Thank you.