



Disaster Law

FACT SHEET

The Treaty on the Protection of Persons in Disasters: Enhancing the Auxiliary Role of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

The Treaty on the Protection of Persons in Disasters

In 2024, States agreed through United Nations General Assembly resolution [A/RES/79/128](#) to 'elaborate and conclude a legally binding instrument on the protection of persons in the event of disasters' (PPED) based on the International Law Commission's [Draft Articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters](#) by the end of 2027.

The General Assembly resolution calls on Governments to submit to the Secretary-General, no later than 31 December 2025, proposals for amendments to the Draft Articles, with a view to preparing the consolidated text that will form the basis of the treaty.

In 2025, IFRC developed detailed [proposals for amendments on the Draft Articles for the consideration of States](#), aimed at strengthening the Draft Articles ahead of the upcoming negotiations on a global treaty on the PPED based on extensive research, experience and IFRC tools such as the [Guidelines for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance](#) and the [Disaster Risk Governance Guidelines](#).

The Rationale

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies occupy a unique and indispensable space in humanitarian action. Operating in accordance with the seven Fundamental Principles of Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity, and Universality, they serve as auxiliaries to their public authorities in the humanitarian field.

National Societies are often the first to respond when disaster strikes—mobilizing volunteers embedded in affected communities—and remain engaged long after international actors have departed. Their proximity to communities and trusted relationship with authorities allow them to deliver assistance that is both principled and locally grounded, in line with the vision of humanitarian action that is “as local as possible and as international as necessary.”

The PPED treaty provides an opportunity to reaffirm the strong legal base of the unique auxiliary role of National Societies in the humanitarian field, as recognized in international and domestic law and mandated by the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and resolutions of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

How the Treaty on the Protection of Persons in Disasters can Help

The PPED treaty offers a critical opportunity to affirm and operationalize the auxiliary role of National Societies in the humanitarian field in international law. Building on the [Draft Articles](#) and IFRC's [proposals](#), the treaty could:

- Explicitly recognize the auxiliary role of National Societies in the humanitarian field, ensuring that National Societies can best support the primary role of States in DRM and DRR.
- Promote national ownership and localization of DRM, consistent with the principle of making humanitarian action “as local as possible and as international as necessary.”
- Strengthen cooperation and coordination mechanisms between States and international and domestic partners, including National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, thereby enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of DRM.
- Safeguard the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality, ensuring that humanitarian action remains principled, people-centred, and responsive to needs.

By embedding these commitments, the PPED treaty could bolster the effectiveness and integrity of humanitarian action in disasters worldwide—empowering National Societies to act within the authority of their mandate as auxiliaries to their public authorities in the humanitarian field and guided by the seven Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

IFRC's Key Messages: The Treaty on the Protection of Persons in Disasters

Objective 1: The treaty must prioritize disaster risk reduction across all sectors before, during and after disasters.

Objective 2: The treaty must ensure all people are protected in disasters, especially those in vulnerable situations.

Objective 3: The treaty must address the facilitation of fast, effective and coordinated humanitarian assistance to save lives after a disaster.

Objective 4: The treaty should recognize National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as auxiliaries to their public authorities in the humanitarian field.

Objective 5: The treaty should provide a role for IFRC in accordance with its mandate on disaster risk governance /disaster law received from States.

