

The Treaty on the Protection of Persons in Disasters: Prioritizing Disaster Risk Reduction Across All Sectors Before, During and After Disasters

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 Issue

The [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction \(2015–2030\)](#) has driven major progress in raising awareness and strengthening national systems for disaster risk reduction (DRR). Many countries have adopted new legal, policy and institutional frameworks as a result. However, implementation remains uneven, and [the world is not on track to achieve the Framework's goals by 2030](#).

In practice, gaps persist in integrating DRR across all sectors and levels of government around the world. For example:

- Development and land-use planning often overlook disaster risk, leading to housing or infrastructure being built in hazard-prone areas.
- Insufficient investment in prevention and mitigation, preparedness and resilience means that response efforts still dominate over these critical areas.
- Fragmented institutional responsibilities and weak coordination between agencies and partners lead to the duplication of efforts in some cases, and gaps in implementation in others.
- In some contexts, limited funding, data, or technical capacity further constrain national and local authorities.

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

The Draft Articles already emphasize the critical role of DRR. They recognize that States have a duty to prevent, mitigate, and prepare for disasters through appropriate measures.

The PPED treaty could translate these principles into globally binding obligations, thereby:

- Creating stronger legal incentives for States to invest in DRR.
- Embedding DRR responsibilities across all sectors, ensuring that the authorities responsible for disaster risk management, climate, housing, health, agriculture, and environment work together to manage risks.
- Encouraging stronger cooperation in DRR to help States overcome financial and technical barriers.

By elevating DRR from a policy commitment to a global legal duty, the PPED treaty could build on the commitments made under the Sendai Framework and ensure that DRR becomes a core national and international priority — before, during, and after disasters.

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.

