

The Treaty on the Protection of Persons in Disasters: Ensuring All People Are Protected in Disasters, Especially Those in Vulnerable Situations

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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

Disasters and human rights are deeply interconnected. Disasters can both expose and worsen existing vulnerabilities and inequalities, while violations of human rights can, in turn, increase vulnerability and exposure.

In many crises, the impacts of disasters are not felt equally. Women and girls, children, older people, people with a disability or chronic illness, migrants, racial and ethnic minorities, indigenous groups, and sexual and gender minorities may be disproportionately impacted by disasters. For example, women and girls may face heightened risks of gender-based violence or loss of livelihoods; persons with disabilities or chronic illnesses may be unable to access shelters or evacuation routes; and migrants and minority groups may experience discrimination in aid distribution.

These realities reveal a critical gap: the protection of persons, in particular those in vulnerable situations, is not consistently integrated into disaster risk management systems. An explicit legal framework to safeguard human rights and the humanitarian principles in disasters can ensure no one is left behind in the management of disasters and disaster risks.

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

The Draft Articles already place the protection of persons, human dignity, and human rights at their core. Building on this foundation, a binding global treaty on the PPED could:

- Affirm and clarify that existing human rights obligations apply before, during, and after disasters, ensuring they are consistently upheld in all disaster risk management efforts.
- Ensure that human rights are central to the management of disasters by recognising the right to humanitarian assistance.
- Recognize and protect persons in vulnerable situations by requiring States to adopt inclusive and non-discriminatory measures before, during, and after disasters.
- Ensure people centred, principled humanitarian action by underscoring that efforts to manage disasters and disaster risk must take place in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality.

By anchoring the protection of persons affected by disasters and their human rights in a binding international instrument, the PPED treaty would help ensure that no one is left behind when disaster strikes.

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.

