



JOINT STATEMENT

by the Red Cross of Benin,

the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

and

the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

regarding

the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's collective response to the humanitarian needs of people affected by violence in northern Benin

22 June 2026

CONTEXT AND NEEDS

The security situation in Benin is deteriorating as attacks become more frequent, and hostilities intensify. The northern departments of Benin, in particular – specifically Alibori, Atacora and Borgou – are the scene of incidents involving non-state armed groups who are carrying out repeated attacks against defence and security forces, threatening the civilian population and using improvised explosive devices, resulting in people being continually displaced.

The deteriorating situation has had serious humanitarian consequences for people in the north of the country (host communities, refugees and asylum seekers and internally displaced people). The areas where needs are greatest are as follows: protection of civilians, emergency assistance, access to water, hygiene and sanitation, health and psychosocial support. According to the IOM's estimates from November 2025, there are 39,000 internally displaced people in Alibori and Atacora, and 5,000 in Borgou, in addition to thousands of refugees and asylum seekers from neighbouring countries.

There are further challenges related to humanitarian access, the acceptance of principled humanitarian action and the security of the Movement's operations.

THE MOVEMENT'S COLLECTIVE RESPONSE

Given these challenges, we agree that the prevailing insecurity in northern Benin calls for collective action by the Movement to ensure that swift, coordinated and sustainable assistance can be provided to those affected. We therefore commit to the adoption of a common position and the implementation of a comprehensive response that is well structured and organized.

We reaffirm the importance of effective, well-coordinated and principled humanitarian action to meet the needs of affected people in the departments of Alibori, Atacora and Borgou.

The Movement's partners operating in northern Benin are currently stepping up their support for communities affected by violence.

In accordance with the spirit of the Seville Agreement 2.0, we are committed to drawing on our respective mandates, expertise and capacities in order to provide more effective support to those in need of humanitarian protection and assistance and to strengthen the collective impact of the Movement's sustained response.

Since 2023, the Red Cross of Benin has been carrying out humanitarian activities to assist displaced people and host communities in the country's violence-ravaged northern departments, working in cooperation with the authorities and with the support of its Movement partners and its own local bodies (the departmental committees of Alibori, Atacora and Borgou and local committees).

The National Society, which provides services across the country, is underpinned by a network of volunteers and local committees, which are well established in Benin's northern departments. The National Society is also supported by the ICRC, the IFRC, the French Red Cross, the Swiss Red Cross, the Luxembourg Red Cross and the Flemish section of the Belgian Red Cross (the latter two support programmes in northern Benin).

The ICRC, through its mission in Benin which opened at the end of 2024, implements programmes in the areas of protection (visits to places of detention, advocacy for the protection of civilians and the re-establishment of family links); assistance (physical rehabilitation, economic security, water and sanitation, and support for health facilities); prevention (promoting and disseminating international humanitarian law, including raising awareness among the armed forces and security forces); and cooperation (consolidating partnership mechanisms with the Red Cross of Benin, strengthening the Red Cross of Benin's operational and organizational capacities, and Movement coordination). It is steadily strengthening its presence in northern Benin in partnership with the National Society.

The IFRC is supporting the Red Cross of Benin in a number of ways: mobilizing emergency funds (DREF, emergency appeals); providing expertise in emergency shelter and cash assistance programme management; and mobilizing other funds to strengthen the National Society organizationally and in terms of infrastructure. The IFRC has also played a key role in coordinating the Red Cross of Benin's development initiatives, to which it has contributed directly: drafting administrative and financial procedure manuals; providing guidance on volunteer management; digitalization; recruiting staff to support these changes; and assisting with the process to finalize the Red Cross of Benin's new statutes and internal regulations.

COORDINATION WITHIN THE MOVEMENT

We are committed to coordinating our humanitarian operations in a spirit of cooperation, inclusion and mutual support that recognizes the central role played by the Red Cross of Benin, and draws on

the respective and complementary mandates, expertise and capacities of the Movement's partners working in Benin, with a view to strengthening our collective impact and common position.

At the mini-summit held on 23 April 2026, the Red Cross of Benin, the ICRC and the IFRC decided to apply the provisions of the Seville Agreement 2.0 relating to the temporary establishment of the convener/co-convener mechanism and, consequently, to define the respective roles and responsibilities of the convener (the Red Cross of Benin) and the co-convener (the ICRC).

As part of the response to meet the needs of affected people in northern Benin, the Movement's coordination mechanisms will ensure the participation of all relevant components and that platforms at the strategic, operational and technical levels are established, where required. Guidelines for the Movement's public communications on the situation in Benin have been drawn up and are currently being finalized. The ICRC, in close coordination with the Red Cross of Benin, will draw up a security framework for Movement partners operating in the north of the country, taking into account their various operational and programming realities. The IFRC will play a proactive role in coordination mechanisms, and provide emergency preparedness and response support to the Red Cross of Benin in the country's northern departments, which will complement the ongoing and future activities of the ICRC and the Red Cross of Benin. It will also play a key role in coordinating the National Society's development efforts. The participating National Societies present in Benin that are supporting the Red Cross of Benin will be included in the various coordination mechanisms, and their work will be facilitated by the tools implemented by the convener and co-convener.

We are committed to drawing up a Movement coordination agreement for Benin as quickly as possible.

President

Date

Red Cross of Benin

Head of Delegation

Date

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Head of Regional Delegation in Abidjan

Date

Loukas Petridis

International Committee of the Red Cross