



JOINT STATEMENT

BY

THE SYRIAN ARAB RED CRESCENT (SARC)
AND
THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS (ICRC)
AND
THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT
SOCIETIES (IFRC)

ON

THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT OF RED CROSS RED CRESCENT HUMANITARIAN
RESPONSE IN SYRIA

Background

Syria remains in a severe humanitarian crisis after 13 years of conflict, marked by economic collapse, displacement, and infrastructure destruction. Over 12 million people face food insecurity, with critical shortages in healthcare, water, sanitation, and shelter services. Recent challenges include health issues, general services infrastructures, and post-earthquake recovery, all hindered by funding gaps and access restrictions.

The past weeks have brought colossal changes in political, security and humanitarian terms. A new chapter has opened with opportunities for Syria - a country severely affected by years of conflict and sanctions – and with risks if the transition does not bring the needed stability and safety for the Syrian population. Years of conflict, sanctions and a devastating earthquake have taken a deep toll on the critical infrastructure providing water and electricity to the population. The massive displacement of population in several directions and across frontlines since 27 November 2024 has reached to date around 1 million people displaced (OCHA). This is in addition to the millions displaced since the conflict in 2011, bringing the number of IDPs to 7.2 million according to OCHA. In addition, there are 6 million refugees who continue to live in neighbouring countries and beyond. The displaced are amongst the most vulnerable with the onset of the winter. Further, critical services such as health facilities are overloaded and understaffed, making an emergency response necessary.

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of families are in search of news from relatives gone missing during the conflict, and due to very high levels of weapon contamination, Syria still ranks first – for the third consecutive year – as the country with the highest numbers of mine victims and other remnants of war.

Movement Collective Response

On 20 December 2024, the SARC, the ICRC and the IFRC participated in a Mini Summit during which it was confirmed that in line with the Movement Coordination for Collective Impact Agreement (MCCIA, Seville Agreement 2.0), the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) assumes the role of Convener, and the ICRC has the role of Co-convener of the collective Movement response.

The SARC, ICRC, and IFRC defined the general objectives and priorities of the Movement collective response focus as follows: Emergency Response & Access to Essential Services; Protection (Migration & Displacement, Missing, PFL, Legal Support and Detention); Humanitarian Diplomacy (Advocacy and Representation) & IHL Dissemination; and SARC Development & Sustainability. The ICRC and the IFRC will support SARC in its auxiliary role to public authorities in the humanitarian field, and promote unity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence in all operations ensuring compliance and integrity.

The SARC, the ICRC and the IFRC continue to assess the needs of the affected population in Syria to inform strategic Movement coordination meetings and to refine the Movement's collective response. In particular, the information gathered will allow the formulation of the SARC response plan, to which the Movement and external partners can contribute.

The SARC, in its auxiliary role to the new Syrian Administration in the humanitarian field, is providing humanitarian assistance to the affected and displaced population. The SARC through its branches across the country will assist and support returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), while advocating for durable solutions in collaboration with the ICRC and the IFRC. The Movement partners will support the SARC in addressing the emerging needs of people on the move, potential returnees, and affected host communities, ensuring that their return is safe, voluntary, and dignified.

The SARC, the ICRC and the IFRC are in regular contact with the relevant government bodies and local authorities, as well as with other humanitarian organizations and donors to discuss the Movement's support for the anticipated humanitarian response to the needs of affected communities.

The ICRC and the SARC work on bringing answers to the families of the missing persons and offer the Protection of Family Links (PFL) services as per the Statutes of the Movement and the Restoring Family Links Strategy. The SARC staff and trained volunteers are providing Emergency medical services, PSS, relief, Water and Rehabilitation, and community services.

To strengthen the Movement collective response, the ICRC deployed a Movement Security Advisor, a Movement Coordination Specialist, a Movement Communication Coordinator, and a Movement Information Management Coordinator. The IFRC has deployed a Senior Advisor, an Operations Manager, a Membership Coordinator, Communication Coordinator, a Supply Chain delegate, a Finance Officer, and an Assessment Cell.

Discussions will continue to secure additional resources, enabling the SARC to scale up its operations and deliver a greater impact through a variety of humanitarian services to the affected population.

Movement Coordination

Guided by our individual mandates, unique roles, the Red Cross and Red Crescent's Fundamental Principles, Statutes, and the Geneva Conventions, the Movement's response in Syria aims to provide protection and assistance to millions of people affected by the 2024–2025 developments through a coherent, sustainable approach that prioritizes transparency, accountability, and the central role of the SARC as the Convener of this collective effort.

The SARC, the ICRC and the IFRC are committed to joining forces, with creativity, flexibility and reliability to leverage their complementary strengths, and work together for people in need of neutral, impartial, and independent humanitarian protection and assistance.

Movement strategic, operational, and technical coordination meetings are held regularly as the situation evolves. Relevant Technical Working Groups have been established in line with the Movement collective response priorities.

As foreseen in such a situation, and in line with the endorsed Movement Security Framework Agreement (MSFA) in Syria, the SARC and the ICRC share security advisories with Movement Partners. The ICRC in coordination with the SARC will offer additional security services to Movement partners.

Way Forward

The Movement partners are closely monitoring developments and will continue to refine their approach to addressing the humanitarian needs of the affected population in the short, medium and long term as the situation evolves.

Given the sensitivities, we urge all Movement partners to ensure alignment on public communication around this situation to ensure a coherent and unified Movement narrative. Movement public communication guidelines, humanitarian diplomacy and communications key messages will be shared with Movement partners and will be regularly updated as needed.

We also emphasize that unsolicited goods or personnel should not be sent until specific needs are clearly identified and agreed upon by the SARC, in consultation with the ICRC and IFRC. The SARC will advise on the support required to address immediate and medium-term needs effectively.

Representing the Movement, we express our concern and solidarity with the affected population and commit to do our best to answer their needs. We would like also to thank all the Movement partners for their support and solidarity.

Damascus, Syria, 28 January 2025

Signatures:



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on behalf of



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