



International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Framework for Movement communication and coordination in large-scale emergencies

A strong Movement identity and visibility can foster better operational reach. It also enhances the Movement's influence in the humanitarian sector and ability to mobilize financial and human resources.

By working together, we are greater than the sum of our parts. It will enable us to harness the power of our collective network through coordinated initiatives and activities in priority contexts and major emergencies. It can also support Movement members to influence our respective key stakeholders including governments and donors, provide first-hand information and analysis on disaster and crisis situations, and to create a better understanding of what we do. Consequently, it will allow us to generate more support and deliver better services.

Communication in emergencies: a shared responsibility

It is critical for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to seek a coordinated and aligned approach to communication in large-scale emergencies to maintain and further strengthen our credibility and position as a trusted humanitarian service provider by leveraging our comparative communications advantage.

A coordinated approach to our communication will ensure a coherent Red Cross and Red Crescent voice, enabling us to influence key decision-makers more effectively, as well as to provide first-hand information and analysis on crisis situations to our key audiences such as affected communities, donors, governments, and the general public.

We have a shared responsibility as a Movement to further adapt, streamline and coordinate the way we communicate with each other and with the rest of the world during and around large-scale humanitarian crises. This requires going beyond long-established habits and systems and adopting a more strategic lens in the design and implementation of coordinated and joint communication plans, tools and systems.

We also need to enable every member of the Movement to participate by better harnessing complementary skills, expertise, and resources in a transparent, trustful and predictable way.

In order to achieve an *active, effective and efficient cooperation and coordination* on communication among Movement members, this document outlines:

- the **shared principles** that Movement members can align their communication strategies for large-scale emergencies;
- a **framework** outlining the communications coordination system, roles and responsibilities of the different Movement members in large-scale emergencies.

Guiding Principles for Movement communication

The Movement's footprint in large-scale emergencies can be enhanced by mobilizing our collective resources around the following key principles (based on the Principles for Emergency Communication endorsed at the IFRC Governing Board in May 2015, agenda item 6.5) :

- I. **Communicating in emergencies is part of the Red Cross Red Crescent humanitarian imperative.** Each component of the Red Cross Red Crescent has a responsibility to raise awareness of humanitarian situations and issues, to represent the most vulnerable populations, particularly in disasters and crises, by listening to their needs and feedback, giving them a voice and highlighting their needs publicly across various communication channels, thus influencing **key stakeholders and decision makers** to respond to their plight. It is our individual and collective obligation as the Red Cross Red Crescent network.
- II. **Rapid communication is a strategic part of the Red Cross Red Crescent response to large-scale emergencies.** It is crucial for the Red Cross Red Crescent to **rapidly respond** to the urgent demand for information, content, materials and positioning messages from external audiences **before a major disaster strikes when we know one is imminent and in a large-scale emergency** to position the Red Cross Red Crescent as a first responder to the needs of affected communities.
- III. In disaster or crisis, **Movement members will collectively strive to meet the communication needs of its various audiences**, including the general public, affected communities, donors and government.
- IV. **Communication in large-scale emergencies is a key component of resource mobilization efforts** in support of national and international appeals.
- V. **Communication surge capacities** should be **jointly decided** upon before or at the outset of an emergency to ensure a local and global communication response that matches the Movement's ambitions.
- VI. **Communication in large-scale emergencies impacts all Movement members' positioning and brand.** The Red Cross and Red Crescent's global brand is built upon the individual brands of each of the Movement components (ICRC, IFRC, and each of the 192 National Societies). A coordinated and cohesive communication in large-scale emergencies strengthens the Movement's positioning and brand vis-à-vis external competitors.
- VII. **In large-scale emergencies, Movement actors agree on a shared communication strategy that outlines purpose, scope, and activities as well as coordination structure and processes.** This should be integrated into the Movement operational strategy and plan of action before and during an emergency. This strategy outlines the positioning of the Movement in the immediate and critical phase of the crisis to amplify our collective voice, maximizing resource mobilization efforts, and advocating on behalf of affected populations.
- VIII. **Movement's communication actors will develop joint activities and products where and when appropriate, with the aim of speaking with a strong and unified voice.** In

a Movement wide emergency response, joint tools such as a common strategy and narrative or messaging, are instrumental in providing one and common voice for all Movement members. It is important to note that this approach recognizes the interdependency of reporting and good information management practices, which joint communication efforts are heavily dependent on.

Framework for Movement communication in large-scale emergencies

Rationale

This framework will allow us to leverage our comparative advantage and collectively deliver, in the area of communications in large-scale emergencies, on our obligations as a Movement based on the following:

- A commitment to work together towards common communication objectives based on our closely related and complementary roles within the Movement;
- Commitment to a coordinated process that makes communication capacities (competencies, material and financial resources, information, networks and other assets) available to other Movement members;
- Respect between Movement members at all levels, recognizing and valuing the distinct legal identities, structures and roles of each component while seeking to improve mutual capacities.

Objectives

The primary purpose of this framework is to:

- **Set strategic directions** for shared leadership and a joint approach
- **Clarify** roles and responsibilities for communication coordination among Movement members
- **Enable** rapid communication response and surge support as and when required
- **Enable** Movement members to communicate on issues with consistent and coherent Movement messaging.



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Roles and Responsibilities

The strategic cooperation in Movement communication is facilitated under the direction and agreement of a **Communication Leadership Group** and supported and implemented by a **Communication Task Force/ Technical Committee**.

GROUP	COMPOSITION	ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES
Communication Leadership Group	i. Leadership and Head of Communication of National Society or Societies affected by the emergency ii. Heads of Communication for the ICRC and IFRC at headquarters or designate iii. Heads of Region for the ICRC and IFRC of the affected contexts or designate iv. Other members as needed and defined by the Communication Leadership Group	i. Decisions on the development and validation of joint communication plans including online fundraising initiatives, and regular monitoring of the implementation and results ii. Decisions related to the deployment of surge capacity of communication specialists in the affected country iii. Decisions on communication messaging and priorities where Movement members might need to speak separately based on their distinct legal identities, structures and roles respectively iv. Provide advice and inputs into Movement-wide coordination structures that are established in the event of a crisis, e.g. planned 'mini summit', coordination meetings
Communication Task Force/ Technical Committee	i. Senior communication staff from the National Society of the affected context/s ii. Communication managers or coordinators at the country and/or regional level for the ICRC and IFRC iii. Communication focal points of partner National Societies operating in the affected context/s	i. Initiate and develop joint communication strategies and messaging, and coordinate the implementation ii. Develop and share context-specific Movement communication products, i.e. key messages and talking points/ holding lines, press releases and public statements, briefing notes, AV content, and products iii. Ensure day-to-day Movement communications coordination at country and/or regional level iv. Recommendation on communications capacity gaps and support needed

Activation

- i. This framework will be activated in **large-scale emergencies** where Movement components agree that coordinated communication strategies will strengthen Red Cross Red and Crescent positioning, outreach and impact. It is triggered by the mini summit.
- ii. Activation of the framework **may not necessarily** lead to joint communication initiatives or products but will serve as a coordination function.

Meetings

- i. The Leadership Group and Task Force/ Technical Committee will be triggered by mini summit upon activation of the framework, and shall **convene a meeting as needed**, at least every week during the peak of a crisis. The Task Force/ Technical Committee shall meet daily if required.
- ii. A brief report/ minutes of each meeting will be shared via email (or a common digital sharing platform if available).
- iii. The Leadership Group and Task Force/ Technical Committee will provide updates with regard to communication matters and take part in the overall Movement coordination mechanism at the country and global levels respectively, as needed.

Decisions and validation

- i. Any decision of the Communication Leadership Group made based on their agreed roles and responsibilities listed above shall be taken **by consensus**.
- ii. Any decision of the Communication Task Force/ Technical Committee is valid when there is **a consensus** between representatives of the host National Society, the ICRC and the IFRC.
- iii. To be fast and effective, any sign-off process will be limited to a **single representative from each of the entities**.