

Scenario Questions

Participants will each be given a copy of the IDRL Guidelines. They should read the country profile and disaster situation, consider the situations outlined below, and discuss the following questions in their groups. Time will also be allowed for them to share their thoughts / findings with the plenary.

1. What are the key issues in each situation in relation to the **facilitation** and **regulation** of **international assistance**?
2. Are these issues addressed in the **IDRL Guidelines**? Please identify the relevant provisions.
3. Are there **laws** or **procedures** in place (e.g. legislation, guidelines, SOPs, regulations etc.) in your country to address these issues? If so, what are they? What do they say?

Situation 1

It is now May 26th, and international media are sharing more and more reports about the damage created by the Ark earthquake. Images of homeless families begging on the street fill different news channels. The Ark Prime Minister has declared a state of emergency, as set out according to the Ark National Disaster Management Act. However, the Ark government has not issued a formal request for international assistance, despite hundreds of offers of assistance pouring in from around the world. In a televised statement, the Minister of Foreign Affairs insists that: “We are not interested in asking for handouts. Self-reliance and dignity are Ark’s most precious national resources.” Although he acknowledged reports that conditions were becoming difficult, he insisted that “our country will be stronger in the long term for having faced this challenge by ourselves.”

Situation 2

Immediately upon hearing the news of the Ark earthquake, the Northland Civil Defense authorities contacted Ark Civil Defence authorities and offered to send an urban search and rescue (USAR) team. However, upon arrival at the airport, a number of team members are blocked because they failed to make a prior application for entry visas. Ark Customs officials also regretfully inform the team that its specialized radio equipment cannot be granted duty-free status because they are not on the initial list of required relief items that has been prepared by the Ark Civil Defense Office. Moreover, the team learns that they require a special license to use this equipment in Ark, and that the application has a processing fee and takes several months to receive.

Situation 3

Several church groups in Eastland decide to partner with local companies to gather relief items to send to Ark. After a donation collection is announced on local radio, a convoy of 20 trucks and vans sets off from Eastland, piled high with various mixed items (including packaged snacks, used clothes, bottled water, religious texts and medications, most of them labelled only in the Eastland language). However, the road to Ark has only just reopened and they find themselves at the end of a very long line of stalled traffic, including anxious extended family members of Arkville residents as well as previously trapped commercial trucks, which customs officials are hurriedly trying to process. The leader of the convoy calls ahead to the border office and asks to be escorted to the head of the line and quickly waived through without payment of customs duties because he is bringing humanitarian relief. He apologizes for not having any documentation concerning the contents of his trucks but argues that the urgency of the situation required quick action.

Situation 4

A month has now passed since the earthquake, but it is clear that the recovery will be a long and difficult process. The IFRC has arranged for the shipment by sea of materials for the construction of temporary shelters, several 4x4 vehicles for Ark Red Cross volunteers trying to reach hard-to-access areas affected by the earthquake, hygiene and cooking kits, and other assistance items. The shipment arrives a day after the expiration of an emergency decree that was issued in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, which suspended regular customs duties and called for extraordinary measures to facilitate quick clearance. The government considers that the emergency relief period is now over and therefore does not renew the decree.

The IFRC logistics delegate is informed that a 150% tariff must be paid on the imported vehicles and that they cannot be driven until local license plates are issued, a process that usually takes several weeks. The other items will be subject to normal fees and duties and clearance will be subject to the normal processing times and documentation requirements. "This is going to be a lot more expensive than we thought," says the delegate, "and it is going to take a long time for us to put these items to use. People need them now!"