**International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement**

**South East Asia Leader’ Meeting**

**A Session on the humanitarian situation in Myanmar and Migration**

**Thursday, 6 October 2022**

**Background Paper**

**Context**

As the world slowly recovers from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and in the context of ongoing situations of complex and protracted displacement, responding to the humanitarian needs of migrants and displaced people remains a global priority for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (“the Movement”).

In April 2021, a high-level internal Roundtable was held (via a virtual platform) to discuss how the Movement and affected National Societies could enhance their protection, humanitarian assistance and advocacy for migrants and displaced people in the context of the complex crisis in Myanmar.

Our collective commitment to protect, assist and advocate for all migrants and displaced people – irrespective of their status - has been captured in Statutory Meetings over the years, most recently at the 2022 Council of Delegates (CoD) during which the [Resolution](https://rcrcconference.org/app/uploads/2022/06/CD22-R09-Towards-migration-strategy_23-June-2022_FINAL_EN.pdf) ‘*Towards a Movement Strategy on Migration*´ was adopted.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Drawing on these commitments, in 2019 the Movement established a Migration Leadership Group, composed of leaders of over 30 National Societies including five from the Asia Pacific region.[[2]](#footnote-2) With the [IFRC Global Migration Strategy](https://www.ifrc.org/document/ifrc-strategy-migration-1) currently applicable until the end of 2022, the Leadership Group is now tasked with developing the forthcoming Movement Strategy on Migration, and obtained a formal mandate to do so at the Council of Delegates held in June.[[3]](#footnote-3)

**Humanitarian realities**

Many migrants and displaced people have critical and complex humanitarian needs. After more than two years of COVID-19-related movement restrictions and border closures, the causes and consequences migration and displacement remain complex and multi-faceted.[[4]](#footnote-4) Many migrants – especially irregular migrants - continue to face considerable risks during their journeys: difficult or no access to basic services including food, hygiene, health; falling prey to human traffickers; arbitrary and indefinite detention; difficult or no access to international protection for refugees, asylum seekers and stateless people; separation from family; and going missing or dying.[[5]](#footnote-5) The drivers of migration – both internal and cross-border – are interconnected and include poverty, economic instability, armed conflict and violence, and environmental degradation and climate change.[[6]](#footnote-6)

**The Movement’s response**

Across the region, Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies are at the forefront in responding to the humanitarian needs of migrants, with a local presence at key points of vulnerability along migration routes.

Many National Societies also play a key role in advocating with policy makers on the humanitarian imperatives of assisting and protecting people on the move in their respective contexts. The IFRC engages in advocacy and diplomacy on Migration at the regional and global levels. In 2021 the IFRC delivered a [joint statement](https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/IRCR%20Movement_0.pdf) on behalf of the Movement, at the Asia Pacific intergovernmental regional review of the [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_73_195.pdf) (GCM) in 2021. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is named as a key implementing partner in the text of the GCM.[[7]](#footnote-7)

The RCRC Asia Pacific Migration Network (APMN) is an informal and dynamic collective of National Societies established to exchange information and knowledge, and offer peer-to-peer support. The APMN is currently co-chaired by the Maldivian Red Crescent and the Philippine Red Cross, with Secretariat support from the Australian Red Cross, and technical support from IFRC and ICRC in their respective roles.

**Objective of the Session**

To reflect on individual and collective impact on Migration and Displacement, and to explore how to further strengthen responses and enhance impact in the future.

**Structure of the Session**

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| Chair opening remarks (5mins) | Her Royal Highness, Tan Sri Tunku Puteri Intan Safinaz Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah, Chairperson of the Malaysian Red Crescent Society |
| Presentation from Myanmar RC (20mins) | The humanitarian situation in Myanmar |
| Q&A (5mins) |  |
| Short presentation from IFRC Asia Pacific Director (5mins) | Framing the discussion on Myanmar and migration in SEA |
| Open discussion (20) | Guiding questions:   1. How can SEA National Society leaders contribute to strengthened cross-border and cross-regional cooperation in the context of migration and displacement from Myanmar? 2. What are the current and anticipated challenges facing SEA National Societies when engaging on Migration? 3. How can we maintain a principled approach in our response to the humanitarian needs of migrants and displaced people, when migration is often a highly sensitive and politicized topic? |
| Summary and close by chair (5mins) |  |

**ANNEX 1**

**STATUTORY DOCUMENTS**

[**Resolution 8 of the 2019 Council of Delegates**](https://rcrcconference.org/app/uploads/2019/12/CD-19-R8_Adopted_Movement-Declaration-on-Migration_EN_clean.pdf)

**Adopting a Movement Statement on Migrants and our Common Humanity**

* Prepared by the IFRC and ICRC in consultation with National Societies.
* Includes elements on preservation of humanitarian space in the field of Migration
* Calls upon States to respect the Movement's impartiality, independence and neutrality, including in relation to migration management
* Calls upon States to ensure that assistance of a strictly humanitarian and impartial character is never considered unlawful.

[**Resolution 3 of the 2017 Council of Delegates**](https://rcrcconference.org/app/uploads/2017/08/CD-17-R3_clean.pdf)

**Movement Call for Action on the Humanitarian Needs of Vulnerable Migrants**

* Co-drafted by the IFRC and the ICRC and structured as a call to action by States.
* Highlights that despite States’ previous commitments, many migrants are still suffering and in need of protection.
* Calls upon States to do more.
* Recalls work done by the Movement, notably the specific role of National Societies as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field.
* Stresses that States bear the primary responsibility to address the protection and assistance needs of migrants.

[**Joint ICRC-IFRC pledge, Plenary Session on Migration at the 32nd International Conference**](https://collab.ext.icrc.org/sites/TS_MOUV/_layouts/15/DocIdRedir.aspx?ID=TSMOUV-13-20720)

**Turning commitments into further action to implement Resolution 3 Migration (2015)**

* Reasserts the importance of implementing Resolution 3 (2011), reminding States of their obligations and commitments.
* Submitted at the end of the plenary session of the 32nd International Conference.

[**Resolution 7 of the 2015 Council of Delegates**](https://rcrcconference.org/app/uploads/2015/03/CoD15-R7-migration_EN.pdf)

**Movement Statement on Migration: Ensuring Collective Action to Protect and Respond to the Needs and Vulnerabilities of Migrants (2015)**

* Adopted with the co-sponsorship of over 40 National Societies from all regions.
* Is also mentioned in the *Omnibus Resolution of the Conference*.

[**Resolution 3 of the 31st International Conference**](https://collab.ext.icrc.org/sites/TS_MOUV/_layouts/15/DocIdRedir.aspx?ID=TSMOUV-13-20503)

**Migration: Ensuring Access, Dignity, Respect for Diversity and Social Inclusion (2011)**

* Reminds States of their obligations
* Recognises the need for more coherent, comprehensive, and better coordinated approaches by components of the Movement to address the humanitarian needs of vulnerable migrants and host communities, particularly with respect for diversity and social inclusion.

1. See Annex 1 for details of the Movement’s statutory documents on Migration. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Movement Migration Leadership Group members include Palang Merah Indonesia (Indonesian red Cross) and Myanmar Red Cross Society. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For reference, see the [Quick Guide to the IFRC Global Migration Strategy for Asia Pacific National Societies](https://www.rcrc-resilience-southeastasia.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/2020-Quick-Guide-Global-Migration-Strategy.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. In 2021 the Movement raised concerns over the disproportionate impact the COVID-19 pandemic was having on migrants in the public report [*Locked out and left out?,*](https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/EN-RCRC-Global-Migration-Lab-Locked-down-left-out-COVID19.pdf) containing contributions from eight National Societies including the Philippine Red Cross. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. In 2017, Asia Pacific National Societies, together with sister National Societies from other regions, the IFRC and the ICRC called for [collective action on the humanitarian needs of migrant workers](https://apmigration.ilo.org/resources/bangkok-call-for-action-on-labour-migration). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [IOM, 2022 World Migration Report](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WMR-2022-EN.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See [the Movement’s advocacy messages](https://www.ifrc.org/document/movement-messages-global-compact-migration) during the negotiation of the GCM. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)