

The 7 Fundamental Principles of The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

A historical perspective





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I. Origins of the 7 Fundamental Principles

✓ As early as 1875, Gustave Moynier suggested that the RC should observe the following 4 Principles:

- 1 **Foresight** = preparations in advance
- 2 **Solidarity** = Mutual ties between NS
- 3 **Centralization** = One NS per country
- 4 **Mutuality** = assistance given to wounded regardless of nationality.

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I) Origins of the 7 Fundamental Principles

In 1921, the revised Statutes of the ICRC were modified and incorporated four Fundamental Principles:

- **impartiality**, political, religious and economic **independence**, the **universality** of the Movement and the **equality** of its members.

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I) Origins of the 7 Fundamental Principles

In 1946, the League's Board of Governors confirmed the four 1921 principles, supplemented by another thirteen principles and six rules of application.

**Those Principles are known as the
"Oxford Principles"**

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I) Origins of the 7 Fundamental Principles

In 1955 Jean Pictet defined and analyzed all the values which guide the work of the Movement. He listed 17 principles in two categories:

- a. **Fundamental Principles**, which express the very reason for the Movement's existence and inspire and influence all it does;
- b. **the organic principles**, which concern the Movement's structure and how it works.

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I) Origins of the 7 Fundamental Principles

The Movement's seven Fundamental Principles as they stand today were unanimously adopted in 1965 by the 20th International Conference of the Red Cross, which also decided that they should be solemnly read out at the opening of every International Conference.

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I) Origins of the 7 Fundamental Principles

In 1986, the 25th International Conference of the Red Cross (in Geneva) reaffirmed the importance of the Principles by including them in the Preamble to the Movement's Statutes; their drafting was slightly amended, and is as follows:

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II) Full text of the Fundamental Principles

HUMANITY

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavors, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

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II) Full text of the Fundamental Principles

IMPARTIALITY

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavors to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

NEUTRALITY

In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature

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II) Full text of the Fundamental Principles

INDEPENDENCE

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

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II) Full text of the Fundamental Principles

VOLUNTARY SERVICE

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

UNITY

There can be only one Red Cross or one Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

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II) Full text of the Fundamental Principles

UNIVERSALITY

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all Societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

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End of this presentation.

**This presentation can be complemented
with the set of slides entitled “Analysis
of the 7 Fundamental Principles”**

End of Presentation