REPATRIATION GUIDELINES
FOR NATIONAL
RED CROSS AND
RED CRESCENT
SOCIETIES
The Federation and its Red Cross and Red Crescent member Societies are committed to improve the situation of the most vulnerable. This challenge, identified by the Federation's Strategy 2010, applies to refugees, displaced and other unstable peoples in a particular way. Having lost their homes and depending on the support and protection of others they are exposed to risks as long as no durable solutions are found.

The Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement is by far the largest humanitarian network working to assist refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and other moving and displaced peoples. The European Red Cross Societies, however, recognise the need to further develop co-operation particularly with regard to domestic programmes. To discuss this need, six National Societies, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Red Cross/European Union Liaison Bureau met in Copenhagen in the autumn of 1997 and established the "Platform for European Red Cross Co-operation on Refugee and Migrant Affairs," more commonly known as PERCO.

PERCO's current members are the Danish, Swedish, German, Netherlands, French, Spanish, Swiss, Finnish, Italian and Greek National Societies. The International Federation and the Red Cross/EU Liaison Bureau are observers. The Platform seeks to improve Red Cross/Red Crescent services to refugees and migrants; to promote the exchange of know-how and the pooling of resources.

In pursuit of their objectives, PERCO, with the assistance of the Federation, intends to produce a series of papers and guidelines to assist National Societies and delegations in their work with unstable people. These guidelines in relation to government repatriation projects are the first in this series.

The Federation wishes to extend its profound thanks to all those, particularly the members of the PERCO steering group, who contributed to the production of these guidelines.

George Weber
Secretary General

Geneva, December 1999
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1. introduction

Even the character of post-cold-war refugee situations, including complex humanitarian crises, the repatriation of persons who have had their asylum application examined in a fair procedure and have been rejected or who are no longer in need of international protection acquires new dimensions. Returning home may not only fulfill the aspirations of those once forced to flee, but also generally constitutes a positive outcome of an abnormal situation caused by involuntary displacement. Furthermore, return, if carried out in strict compliance with the rule of non-refoulement, is an important element in maintaining the availability of asylum for those who may still need to resort to it. If systematically executed, it can discourage spurious claimants from entering asylum channels. Repatriation is, however, a complex mechanism, interlinked with the thorny issues of security, human rights, peace and reconciliation, and care must be exercised in order for it to actually lead to a sustainable durable solution. Clear policy and guidelines can therefore be helpful in addressing this issue.

Refugee law has always envisaged refugee status as a temporary phenomenon which should find its best solution in either repatriation, integration or resettlement. The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement's role in the context of refugee assistance and return operations derives primarily from Resolutions of the XXVth and XXVIth International Conferences of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (Geneva 1986 and 1995) and recommendations of the governing bodies. While the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have an auxiliary role in regard to their governments and a traditional partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the mission to assist refugees or people in a refugee-like situation is actually rooted in the Fundamental Principles of the Movement and in its mandate. This has been acknowledged by the UNHCR who underline the National Societies' major operational role in the field of repatriation.

1. Support material is provided in the Annexes, where more practical issues related to repatriation will be dealt with; reference should also be made to the documents and literature mentioned in this paper. The conclusions reached reflect the best practice of several European National Societies.

2. The Movement is encouraged "to step up its own information and training activities and to take a greater part in providing information aimed at better understanding and mutual acceptance between refugees and their host communities"; governments are reminded "in a spirit of humanity, of their legal and moral obligations regarding refugees, in particular that of respect for the principle of non-refoulement," and encouraged to "...do everything possible to accelerate the procedures for consideration of asylum applications while maintaining fundamental legal safeguards."

3. Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity and Universality, the seven Fundamental Principles were proclaimed by the XXth International Conference of the Red Cross, Vienna (1965). The revised text is contained in the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, adopted by the XXVth International Conference of the Red Cross, Geneva (1986).

4. See International Workshop on Red Cross and Red Crescent Cooperation in Repatriation, Volume 1, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Geneva, December 1992, p. 5: "Local NGOs and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies often have networks and knowledge which are inaccessible to international agencies. ... When international organisations cannot reach regions or villages of origin, local Red Cross or Red Crescent staff can and do take into account the degree of social, economic and environmental deterioration which returning refugees, displaced persons and demobilised soldiers will face. Also, the Red Cross and Red Crescent, even more than local NGOs, have a tradition of impartiality in their support activities."
The indefinite presence of rejected asylum seekers or people who no longer qualify for international protection constitutes one of the greatest challenges faced by states and the international community in their efforts to establish an effective migration system in full respect of fair asylum procedures. The situation prevailing in many transit and destination countries may undermine the whole concept of asylum, can pose a costly burden on society and be detrimental to internal and, sometimes, regional stability. An appropriate response is to establish a **coordinated framework between humanitarian and governmental actors** to ensure, on the one hand, that those in need of protection continue to obtain it and, on the other, that those in an irregular situation, who do not qualify, can be assisted to return. This approach can create conditions for a predictable and durable system, consistent with respect for the human dignity and well-being of affected individuals, whose interests can be met in the best possible way.

In engaging in repatriation programmes, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies can rely on some **distinct advantages** proper to their specific mandate and experience. With their **unique global network**, many of the 175 National Societies are especially well placed to provide assistance during all stages of the repatriation process. Their presence, both in countries of asylum and in countries of origin, and their capacity to mobilize local branches represent a considerable strength and enable them to cover areas in a way few other organizations can. On many occasions, "when a large-scale refugee exodus took place with dramatic suddenness, the Red Cross, with its historic impartiality, could act long before concerted intergovernmental action could be undertaken", UNHCR observed.

Another distinct advantage is the **structured cooperation and support** that exists between National Societies and the assistance they can receive from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (International Federation). Their well-established tradition of **shared principles and values** endows them with the humanitarian mission to assist and act vigorously in favour of refugees, displaced people and returnees. Moreover, National Societies pursue numerous complementary activities which, when combined with their experience in the field of social and psychological counselling, as well as their unique network in the tracing field, lend further support to becoming involved in repatriation projects.

Each National Society reserves the right to examine existing conditions prior to taking a stand and it is always solely responsible for the decision whether to get involved in a repatriation project.

Conversely, National Societies are responsible for the decisions taken and are duty-bound to challenge efforts which attempt to induce returns by instituting pressure (e.g., withdrawal of assistance to individuals still in need of international protection). In some cases, the situation to which refugees return may not be a stable one. In such situations, National Societies have to assess whether their resources would be better directed either at informing returnees about possible alternatives to repatriation and the consequences

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5. See *The Red Cross and The Refugees.* published by UNHCR on the occasion of the centenary of the Red Cross, Geneva. 1963.

6. This mandate was fully recognized by the XXVIth International Conference which appealed to National Societies to continue to respond to the needs of refugees and returnees in cooperation with governments, UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations. The Council of Delegates has repeatedly encouraged National Societies “...to implement, whenever necessary, programmes for refugees, asylum-seekers and displaced persons which provide emergency assistance as well as long-term solutions.” ...to establish networks for regional cooperation — in particular through the organization of regional workshops in cooperation with the ICRC and the International Federation — in fields such as voluntary repatriation, tracing activities aimed at restoring family links and preparation for emergency situations.”
there of or at protesting cases of refoulement. It may also occur that, after repatriation, former returnees may be in need of protection and assistance because they are forced to flee once again upon arrival. Although it is not always possible to predict exactly who will repatriate and who will remain and eventually be assimilated into the host country population, as a fundamental working principle National Societies should always respect the returnee’s final decision. Repatriation remains an issue of extreme importance for local communities, repatriates and governments alike. National Societies are therefore advised to weigh interests carefully, but to actively consider engaging in this field.

This paper offers practical guidelines and working principles based on the Movement’s policies, which National Societies may adopt when deciding whether to commit themselves to offer support to those who are to be repatriated. It also suggests how to deal with governments and other relevant actors and what actions to undertake in order to ensure that the repatriation effort is successful. In applying these guidelines, each National Society should consider the needs of returnees as well as the national context, taking into account the demographic, socio-economic and political characteristics of the particular situation in which they are working.

The objective has not been to produce a legally binding text but rather to provide a checklist on the main issues to be borne in mind by a National Society either involved in, considering involvement, or facilitating, voluntary return. The paper has been developed in the European context and may require adaptation for other situations.
2. Red Cross Red Crescent guidelines on repatriation'

**Fundamental and working principles**

In their involvement in refugee-related activities, National Societies consider of particular importance four of the seven fundamental principles (Humanity, Independence, Impartiality and Neutrality). Services should be provided in the light of the following working principles:

- work in the best interest of the beneficiary;
- freedom of choice: National Societies provide their services with respect for an individual's free choice to avail him- or herself of its services or not.
- confidentiality: personal data and related information concerning the beneficiary is divulged to third parties only if the individual gives his/her consent;
- free services: no charge is levied; and
- free decision whether to get involved in repatriation related activities.

National Societies are also duty-bound to respect relevant international human rights and standards pertaining to people who have claimed to be in need of international protection.

**Voluntariness of repatriation**

National Societies should as a rule be involved only in voluntary, accepted or mandatory repatriation because this is the only form of return which sufficiently takes into account the person's decisions, allows the returnee to prepare for the return and avoids, to the extent possible, the stigma of deportation. Voluntariness is also a corollary of non-refoulement, creates the necessary preconditions to avoid negative repercussions and facilitates reintegration. This in itself does not rule out the eventuality that returnees, who had been deported by force, eventually become beneficiaries of a humanitarian assistance project in the country of origin. In the eventuality of a forced repatriation, National Societies may witness the process and, in adherence to the principles of humanity and neutrality, may even offer certain services (e.g., first aid) without compromising on the fact that they disagree with the process itself. In such cases, they should also offer to remain a main point of contact for returnees.


Cooperation

Prior to involvement in a particular repatriation operation, a National Society should seek to reach an agreement, namely with the government, on the formulation of a number of fundamental conditions which would allow it to address inherent problems (e.g., measures to ensure the restoration of full national protection). Cooperation also entails contacts with or through the International Federation with sister Societies in sending, transit and receiving countries.

In their cooperation with UNHCR, National Societies can act as experienced operational partners whose activities, like those of the High Commissioner, are inspired solely by humanitarian considerations, a partner capable of deploying considerable resources in a given area and in a minimum time, and who can operate a relief programme effectively and with imagination. The accumulated experience of joint action and the mutual understanding of each other's potentialities can therefore be of untold benefit to the life and happiness of countless individuals.

Repatriation in safety, with dignity and with prospects for the future

Safety

Repatriation projects supported by National Societies must be carried out in full respect of repatriates' safety as defined by the UNHCR Handbook on Voluntary Repatriation."

A favourable decision with regard to safety, that has been taken before the actual repatriation, is subject to reassessment in the light of objective conditions which, in turn, implies acting on accurate and verifiable information about the receiving country. This may lead a National Society to carry out its own assessments or to coordinate its decision with government agencies or relevant NGOs.

Dignity

Repatriation projects supported by a National Society must be carried out in full respect of repatriates' dignity as defined by the UNHCR Handbook on Voluntary Repatriation." The basic premise must be the universal right for an individual to return to his or her country and that no conditions may be imposed which limit the returnee's fundamental rights or that are not at the same time imposed on the local population.

Prospects for the future

Prospects for a new life only exist if, in addition to safe and dignified repatriation, realistic material conditions are met. However, they do not constitute a precondition for

9. See footnote 5.
10. Return in safety: return which takes place under conditions of legal safety (such as amnesties or public assurances of personal safety, integrity, non-discrimination and freedom from fear of persecution or punishment upon return), physical security (including protection from armed attacks, and mine-free routes or demarcated settlement sites), and material security (access to land or means of livelihood).
11. Return with dignity: return in which repatriates are not manhandled, they can return unconditionally and conditionally return (e.g., reintegration into society), and they are returned spontaneously, they can do so at their own pace; they are not arbitrarily separated from family members; they are treated with respect and full acceptance by their national authorities, including the full restoration of their rights.
getting, or not getting, involved in a repatriation project. The existence of prospects for
the future is contingent upon the availability of adequate funding and structures in the
country of origin, as well as upon the capacity of the National Society in the country of
origin to contribute to provide services in the form of material assistance, emergency
aid and financial, technical or psychological support to repatriates. Training and
education are important factors in providing repatriates with realistic prospects for the
future in the receiving country. Here again, accurate and reliable information is
indispensable, particularly with regard to the social and economic situation in the
country receiving repatriates and the opportunities for the individual repatriate to make
a living upon his or her return. It is imperative that repatriates are not discriminated
against and that they have, for example, the same opportunities to find housing or a job
as the local population in order to avoid tensions.
3. Target group

National Societies may be confronted with a number of categories of individuals who may be best served by, and at the same time eligible for, assisted repatriation. These include:

- people whose asylum application and all possible appeals have been refused;
- asylum seekers who have renounced their pursuit of refugee status;
- people who no longer benefit from temporary protection;
- people whose refugee status ceased because they re-availed themselves of national protection (see 1951 Convention – Cessation of Status and Fundamental Changes in the Country of Origin, Article 1 C, paragraphs 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6);
- people who have not applied for asylum; and
- unaccompanied minors and family members being reunited.
4. Red Cross Red Crescent participation in repatriation

The repatriation process can be divided into three phases. Depending on their work and their level of expertise, National Societies can be involved in all three phases. It is important that the government provides clear details of the repatriation policy and what repatriation projects will involve in concrete terms. While it is generally the responsibility of the government to formulate and to follow an unambiguous and clear repatriation, given the costs involved, it is also the government which must shoulder the costs. Repatriation activities are both expensive and labour intensive.°

Phase 1: The period prior to the repatriation project - preparation and reorientation in the country of asylum for return to the receiving country

When counselling candidates for repatriation a National Society should:

• acquaint repatriates, the receiving countries and the country of asylum of its fundamental principles, objectives and methods;

• have free and unimpeded access to the prospective repatriate;

• be able to convince itself that the procedures for obtaining resident status have definitely come to an end and that the return does not violate the rule of refoulement;

• form an independent judgement about the willingness of the person concerned, as well as the safety of the situation for the person concerned in the receiving country;

• form an independent judgement about the possibility that the person concerned will be able to return with dignity and with prospects for the future; to this end he/she will have access to such information and knowledge about the community to which the person concerned is returning as is available to the government and other relevant organizations;

• be able to familiarize itself with the repatriation agreement between the country of asylum and the receiving country concerned;

• support as far as possible any plans the person concerned may have to settle in a third country and always leave the option to the individual to withdraw his/her application;

• consider preparing a repatriation plan, with the involvement of colleagues in sister Societies or the Federation with an assessment of the prospects for processing departures and arrivals, and an assessment of risk-potential for the returnees, including threats to their protection and livelihood;

12. The annual costs of the Swiss Red Cross Relocation Assistance and Immigration Office, which in 1997 benefited some 269 individuals, are in excess of CHF 600,000. Six staff are employed, three of whom specialize in counselling and three manage the secretariat and reception.
undertake fact-finding missions under Federation auspices to countries of origin to identify projects for cooperation with the respective National Societies; make a thorough assessment, planning, early installation and proper maintenance of a suitable communications network connecting capitals, refugees’ areas of residence in the host country and areas of return; and use the tracing service to create contacts between repatriates and their relatives or friends in the country of origin.

Issues to be covered in a repatriation agreement include: general conditions (voluntariness and Red Cross Red Crescent presence and access). rights and status of returnees (amnesty, access to citizenship and documentation, transfer of assets, access to land and property, choice of domicile, status of dependants) and operational matters (coordinating mechanism, responsibility for security, information campaigns, logistical arrangements (border crossing), status of aid agency staff and property, communication systems).

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**Basic premises for the Red Cross Red Crescent and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) among themselves**

*In the event of any doubts about the safety and dignity of the repatriation:*

- put the matter to the government and, if satisfactory answers do not exist, withdraw from further involvement.

*In the event of any doubts about realistic social and economic prospects:*

- put the matter to the government and make joint efforts to find alternatives; contact the Federation which may be in a position to mediate; and

- take account of the psychological and social situation of the prospective repatriate and, on this basis, make an assessment of whether repatriation can in fact be considered at all.

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**Phase 2: Counselling repatriates during their preparation for repatriation – the actual repatriation process and the initial reception in the receiving country**

During the preparatory phase National Societies should:

- set up a repatriation pathway with the person concerned, taking relevant individual factors into account;

- provide the person concerned with accurate and reliable information about:
  - the safety situation in the receiving country;
  - the social and economic situation in the receiving country;
  - the individual’s opportunities to make a living upon repatriation;
- the opportunities for training and education in the country of asylum and in the receiving country;
- the possibilities of financial support;
- the possibilities of applying for asylum in a third country or gaining admittance in some other way;
- the consequences of living in the country of asylum without a residence permit;

- offer the person concerned practical assistance in applying for financial support, education and extend assistance in making arrangements to terminate existing obligations (rental contracts, loans, etc.);
- assist the person concerned to obtain travel documents which the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) may issue when other means are exhausted;
- provide the person concerned with basic medical requirements, adequate transport and food, as well as protection during the journey, for example, by accompanying returnees;
- prepare the person concerned psychologically and socially for his/her future life in the receiving country;
- coordinate its activities with other organizations as well as legal and governmental authorities;
- maintain an information data base on repatriates with appropriate safeguards on confidentiality,
- be involved in special arrangements to allow returnees to report irregularities on return in cooperation with the government, UNHCR, International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other agencies; and
- give special attention to the needs of vulnerable groups.

**Phase 3: Reception and reintegration in the country receiving the repatriates**

Timely, orderly return and reintegration in conditions of safety and dignity can make an important contribution to peace-building and help prevent any resurgence of conflict and displacement. A **long-term development perspective** should be firmly incorporated into a repatriation project.

A National Society may seek to participate in **reception and reintegration activities** in countries of origin if:

- it has access to such information and knowledge about communities to which people are returning to as are available to the authorities and if the sister Society is in a position to co-operate;
- it can undertake its activities without political pressure from the country of asylum or from the receiving country;
- the repatriation project serves the interests, in a balanced manner, of both the repatriate and the community to which he or she is returning; this is not the case if repatriates are systematically given preference over the local population or if they are systematically discriminated against;
• returning unaccompanied minors, children of exiles or other vulnerable people can be integrated into a social environment which meets the needs of these groups in an appropriate manner;

• repatriation to areas that have suffered severely from conflicts will be able to count on support for recovery, that land-mines are removed and land is made usable again;

• the country of asylum will contribute to the costs incurred by the involved National Society; and

• the country of asylum commits to lend support to efforts designed to guarantee the respect of human rights.

Special attention should be given to the **phasing out of relief and support** and to **attaining self-reliance** by promoting integration into the social and economic life of the country of origin.

**Reconstruction and reintegration activities** should be supported and implemented according to a truly non-discriminatory and impartial approach, targeting social cases along side vulnerable returnees.

National Societies should also favour the **process of reconciliation** by supporting confidence-building measures aimed at reconciliation (e.g., training in conflict resolution, education for peace and human rights, women’s involvement in the planning and implementation of projects).

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**Basic premises for National Societies include:**

• **undertaking activities for repatriation projects in countries where these have worked previously or where the sister Society has the capacity to be involved (co-operation with other NGOs is not excluded);**

• **making every effort to achieve good cooperation with local National Society branches and other local NGOs in the receiving country, respecting their policy and working methods;**

• **coordinating their work and defining their role in relation to the entire range of agencies involved to ensure that areas of work are neither overlooked nor duplicated; and**

• **cooperating in advocacy activities to promote respect for non-refoulement and voluntary returns.**
5. Evaluation of and accountability for activities undertaken by Red Cross Red Crescent

National Societies involved in repatriation projects share the responsibility for the well-being of repatriates and the general success of the operation. At the same time a National Society should not enter into an arrangement which would imply its legal or moral responsibility for safety. In order to guarantee the best success in a repatriation project, a National Society should have the following prerequisites:

- adequate preparation (training for staff and volunteers, documentation and knowledge of the situation in both the countries of asylum and of origin);
- financial means and human resources;
- precise guidelines and directives to follow;
- approval of its activities by repatriates and authorities in the country of asylum and of origin;
- training materials and bibliographical documentation.

**Evaluation of activities** helps guarantee that the people being assisted are not exposed to human-rights violations triggered by their return. National Societies are therefore advised to devise a mechanism and benchmark criteria which helps determine whether their involvement in a repatriation operation should be suspended or terminated (e.g., when it transpires that returnees are "disappearing" or when there is police involvement and pressure is exercised by governmental authorities to force repatriation). Critical evaluation can also improve future operations and increase cooperation and solidarity among National Societies through the exchange of acquired knowledge and experience.

For this purpose National Societies are advised to:

- be accountable first and foremost to the beneficiaries;
- seek cooperation with sister societies;
- engage in an active and continuing dialogue with all players involved;
- cooperate in monitoring the legal, physical and material security of returnees;
- regularly assess the needs of returnees, especially the most vulnerable; and
- analyse experiences in an evaluation report to be shared with the Federation and sister societies involved in similar projects.
Annex 1  Practical steps towards implementation

Goal: Synergetic work model between National Societies, international organizations and governments in a country, in controlled, legal departures

Based on:

• meticulous respect for the rule of non-refoulement (a National Society must not assist in cases where there is a police presence or when restraining methods are utilized);

• respect for mandates;

• regular contacts;

• open lines of communication;

• written repatriation agreement (between country of asylum, country of origin, National Societies and other operational partners) stipulating rights and responsibilities as well as the framework for cooperation; and

• adequate financial, material (food, shelter, medical supplies, logistic means, etc.) and human resources (training should be provided to Red Cross and Red Crescent personnel and returnee leaders).
Hypothesis 1

The asylum seekers, who no longer feel threatened by persecution, start to envisage a return to their country of origin when the thresholds of tolerance change.

- People's free choice, based on their personal relations with their home country, to leave the country of asylum or to prolong their stay must always be respected.
- Repatriation has to be fully accepted before the Red Cross can get directly involved in practical actions leading to the actual return movement.
- Repatriates are free to change their minds up to the last moment!

Hypothesis 2

Only those asylum seekers who have given up hope of being permanently admitted to the country of asylum cooperate actively to prepare their departure.

- People need to be helped to overcome their anger and to accept the departure, making free and responsible choices.
- Social workers, governmental authorities and police need to be trained to respect this "phase of mourning".
- Repatriates should be engaged in negotiations and plans regarding their departure (to help them become "actors" in their present situation and future life).
- The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement should not be associated with or seen as an extended arm of the security services (e.g., aliens' police).
- Involvement should be stopped if police step in or if governmental authorities exert pressure to force repatriation.

Hypothesis 3

Interventions which maintain and stimulate the feeling of belonging to the country are of vital importance for a successful return.

- Going back home has to make sense and it is not a solution for everyone!
- The future repatriate should experience positive feelings about his/her country of origin through the three sensory representation systems (visual, auditory and kinaesthetic).
- Social gatherings, where people are asked to express the culture of their countries through the traditional food, music/dances or literature, should be organized.

In the field of legal departures, interventions which develop individual resources play a decisive role.

- Steps should be taken to dissociate, from people's mind, negative experiences and to associate positive qualities/feelings (Neuro-linguistic programming method).
• People should be helped to develop their inner potential.
• Assistance should be provided in re-establishing local links and in tracing family members (family reunification) who may be in a position to assist after arrival

**Benefits provided to repatriates**

• a legal departure which will not "blacklist" the individual after a forcible removal/deportation
• psychological support
• technical help
• Relocation assistance (e.g., grants, relief from debts)
• aid to local community structures (so as to be seen by their community of origin as an asset and not an added burden on local resources)

**Psychological support 1**
- holistc approach ("counselling of mourning", search for solutions, learn to make decisions)
- counselling, decision-making and solution (active involvement of health professionals before, during and after repatriation).

**Psychological support 2**
personal resource mobilization (identify skills and capacities to organize the repatriation operation and mobilize community support for reintegration.)
- anchoring of the feelings of belonging to the country of origin (what are the best memories and the most positive aspects that could become a source of strength and hope in the repatriates' future life?).

**Technical help 1**
- obtaining refund of social security contributions
- termination of contracts
  counselling on re-establishment of legal rights and on dealing with bureaucracy in the home country (information on social and economic rights, land, etc.).

**Technical help 2**
securing travel bookings
issuing/obtaining and handling travel documents (ICRC), residence papers, immigration and/or transit visas
handling over tickets to beneficiaries at the airport (however, a National Society should withdraw if there is police involvement).
luggage handling
travel organization (e.g., transportation to the airport or to the home country). The National Society in the home country should be kept informed so that it may arrange to receive returnees at points of entry in the home country.
shipping belongings left behind.
Relocation allowance and assistance upon arrival

- On the eve of departure (if by bus) or on the day of departure (if by plane), give people the money necessary to restart their lives and survive in the home country for up to three months after leaving the country of asylum (based on the cost of living of their home countries).

- In reception or transit centres, supervise the distribution of necessary supplies (shelter, food, medical supplies) and actively involve returnees in organizing reception and/or onward move.

- Provide assistance in acquiring essential personal documentation (e.g., identity papers) and registration of residence, in order to establish data collection to facilitate tracing and reunification of family members.

- Prepare home communities to receive returnees and mobilize their support for reintegration.

- Seek to ensure that the staff of the local branch of the National Society is present at points of entry to welcome returnees and to cover immediate physical and security concerns.

- Identify representatives or leaders among repatriate communities who might be drawn upon to assess needs and to design and implement of reintegration programmes.

- Provide orientation and vocational training which might facilitate re-entry into future employment possibilities as the home country rehabilitates.

— Checklist —

Minimum standards to observe

✓ Is the return voluntary? (The individual must be free to withdraw from his/her commitment to repatriate up to the actual moment of leaving the territory of the asylum state.)

✓ Is repatriation taking place in safety and dignity?

✓ Has adequate information been provided to make an informed decision?

✓ Do the refugees have the means to repatriate?

✓ Are vulnerable groups provided for?

✓ Will returnees be granted the full status of nationals?

✓ Will amnesties and other guarantees be respected?

✓ Has help been foreseen towards rehabilitation and reintegration?
Annex 2 – Types of repatriation

Voluntary repatriation

The asylum seeker or refugee spontaneously decides to renounce his/her authorization to stay, or he/she withdraws his/her application for asylum in order to go back to the home country.

Accepted repatriation

The asylum seeker's application for asylum is rejected and, although he/she wishes to prolong his/her stay in the asylum country, he/she understands that obtaining an immigrant status is not feasible and he/she freely accepts to organize a legal departure within a certain period of time.

Mandatory repatriation

The asylum seeker's application has been refused or temporary protection has been terminated and he/she is subsequently compelled to go home within a time determined period of time given by the country of asylum. The departure, even if not freely accepted, is not forced upon him/her.

Deportation

The asylum seeker's application has been refused or his temporary protection has been lifted. Nevertheless, he/she refuses to leave the country of asylum within the given time frame, refuses to avail himself/herself of a voluntary return option and has been sent notice that a forced return/deportation will be executed.

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13. Even if it is not a subject in the current study, the repatriation of soldiers is contemplated in the ICRC mandate.
Annex 3 – Cooperation with the ICRC and international agencies

United Nations High Commission for Refugees

Apart from promoting the legal right to seek international asylum, UNHCR actively encourages repatriation programmes in the context of seeking durable solutions. Increasingly, UNHCR is establishing transnational legal instruments, such as tripartite agreements (e.g., treaties between UNHCR, the Federation and National Societies). Such contracts, which bind NGOs, non-governmental humanitarian agencies and inter-governmental organizations to common objectives, represent new and innovative forms of international cooperation. A number of organizations work to supplement the role of UNHCR in protecting refugee populations. Such coordination has much improved the overall effectiveness of NGO assistance.

International Organization for Migration

IOM is experienced in organizing return programmes and, in particular, in repatriating highly skilled personnel. In collaboration with UNHCR, it covers transport needs for voluntary repatriation; it also assists in the return of exiles, evacuation programmes and return of rejected asylum seekers (involuntary repatriation). Cooperation with National Societies may be developed in the area of South-South regional repatriation schemes. IOM also foresees that National Societies could play a role in the return of some categories of returnees.

ICRC and Federation

The ICRC is present in areas of armed conflict and in the aftermath of armed conflict. While the Federation is familiar with repatriation work and administering long-term rehabilitation programmes, it is agreed that the Federation's services are principally in non-conflict areas. Provided that all the criteria for security have been met in an area of conflict, the ICRC aims to transfer emergency operations either to other components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, or to other humanitarian agencies able to undertake long-term rehabilitation programmes. The ICRC's presence assists in raising local awareness of the mission of the Movement, thus contributing to greater understanding of, and respect for, the role of the National Society in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the country.

Cooperation at the National level

Cooperation between the various parties within countries of asylum or countries of origin should be encouraged. Identification of projects should be carried out in concert with national authorities, line ministries, components of the Movement and international and local organizations. It is important to encourage government institutions to assume their responsibilities, but also to give them the support needed to implement and

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14. For the purposes of this text, the term Non-Governmental Humanitarian Agencies (NGHAs) has been coined to encompass the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement — the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and its member National Societies — and the NGOs as defined above.
sustain needed programmes. Any National Society activity in favour of returnees must contribute directly or indirectly to promoting peace and encouraging the reconciliation process. This role clearly falls within the mandate of the Movement.
Annex 4 – Reference material on repatriation


