

New guidelines to strengthen legal preparedness for international disaster relief



A major disaster operation is the wrong time for **red tape**, **coordination black holes**, & **regulatory gray areas**

When major disasters strike, international assistance can mean the difference between hardship and recovery for stricken communities.

However, without well-prepared regulatory frameworks at the national level, relief operations become bureaucratic nightmares. Relief goods, personnel and projects get bogged down in paperwork and restrictions. Poor coordination and bad quality in relief efforts is neither monitored nor corrected.

The new **Guidelines for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance** (“IDRL Guidelines”) were developed to help governments to avoid these problems. States and National Societies unanimously adopted the Guidelines in 2007 at the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

Key recommendations to governments from the new Guidelines:

Reduce red tape

- Cut delays, taxes and restrictions on the entry of relief personnel, goods and equipment
- Facilitate legal operation of relief providers in affected areas

Strengthen accountability

- Set out minimum standards of coordination and quality in relief operations
- Condition legal facilities on ongoing adherence to those standards

For more information about the Guidelines, please visit our web site at www.ifrc.org/idrl.



Questions and answers about the IDRL Guidelines



How will the Guidelines improve disaster operations?

Using the Guidelines, governments can prepare themselves to avoid the common bureaucratic barriers to relief (e.g., in visas, customs clearance, overflight and landing permission, tax exemptions, and recognition of domestic legal status) while also ensuring adequate systems of oversight and monitoring of the quality and coordination of relief efforts. This will help to ensure that affected communities receive the right aid at the right time.

Are the Guidelines a treaty?

No and they are not a legally binding on states. However, they are drawn from treaties and other international standards and they are based on 7 years of research and global consultations on problem areas and best practices.

Are the Guidelines only for the Red Cross and Red Crescent?

No. The Guidelines are meant to help governments to facilitate and regulate assistance provided by foreign governments, humanitarian organizations and the private sector.

How will the Guidelines be implemented?

The Guidelines are primarily intended as a set of recommendations to governments to help them to strengthen their own national laws and policies related to international disaster assistance. They may also prove useful for the development of bilateral and regional agreements and for agreements between governments and humanitarian organizations.