

**Declaration of principles for international  
humanitarian relief to the civilian population  
in disaster situations**

The XXIst International Conference of the Red Cross,

noting that in the present century the international community has accepted increased responsibility for relief of human suffering in any form,

whereas human suffering in all its manifestations is of deep concern to the conscience of mankind and world opinion requires effective action for the relief of such suffering,

affirming that one of the major purposes of the community of nations as laid down in the Charter of the United Nations is to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian nature,

noting with satisfaction the improvements in the ability of the international community to provide various forms of humanitarian relief as a result of international agreements and through the International Red Cross and other impartial international humanitarian organisations,

recognising that further steps have to be taken by the international community to ensure prompt and effective relief action to civilian populations in natural or other disaster situations,

adopts the following Declaration of Principles:

1. The fundamental concern of mankind and of the international community in disaster situations is the protection and welfare of the individual and the safeguarding of basic human rights.
2. Relief by impartial international humanitarian organisations for civilian populations in natural or other disaster situations should as far as possible be treated as a humanitarian and non-political matter and should be so organised as to avoid prejudicing sovereign and other legal rights in order that the confidence of the parties to a conflict in the impartiality of such organisations may be preserved.
3. The activities of impartial international humanitarian organisations for the benefit of civilian populations should be co-ordinated in order to secure

prompt action and effective allocation of resources and to avoid duplication of effort.

4. Disaster relief for the benefit of civilian populations is to be provided without discrimination and the offer of such relief by an impartial international humanitarian organisation ought not to be regarded as an unfriendly act.
5. All States are requested to exercise their sovereign and other legal rights so as to facilitate the transit, admission and distribution of relief supplies provided by impartial international humanitarian organisations for the benefit of civilian populations in disaster areas when disaster situations imperil the life and welfare of such populations.
6. All authorities in disaster areas should facilitate disaster relief activities by impartial international humanitarian organisations for the benefit of civilian populations.

*(XXIst International Conference of the Red Cross, Istanbul, Resolution XXVI, September 1969)*