



# Assurance review of Minimum-Security Requirements

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Area subject to review

1. This report covers our review of the Minimum-Security Requirements (MSR) process that has been adopted by the IFRC. This review assesses whether control objectives linked to safety and security are being met and risk is mitigated to within the organisation's risk appetite.
2. The report considers the wider frameworks of controls, policies and procedures and their impact and relationship for controlling IFRC management of security.

## 1.2. International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) context

3. The global objectives of the IFRC mean that individuals representing the organisation work or travel to all countries with a variety of contexts. Security threats vary in type, location and over time. The IFRC has a moral duty and corporate responsibility to safeguard its staff (and assets) by equipping them with the knowledge and tools to manage security and security situations in the most appropriate way for themselves, their colleagues, and the organisation.
4. 2019 will be the tenth year that the MSR process has been in operation after a directive was given by the Secretary General.
5. A Global Security Unit Geneva, based in the IFRC Secretariat, oversees the setting of minimum-security requirements for all field operations. As and where relevant, individuals fall under the IFRC umbrella (including staff, consultants, visitors and/or family). This also includes partner organisations who have entered into integration or service agreements that include a security component.
6. This Security Unit role is advisory and provides support for those responsible for security, i.e. individuals themselves and their managers. Each head of delegation or most senior executive in office is accountable for security in their remit. All delegations and offices are required to have written security regulations and must comply with the MSR as a basis.
7. These MSRs outline the key requirements that must be included in security plans, whilst reinforcing the implementation of the layered security framework that has been adopted. MSR are applicable to all IFRC operations. There are various documents relating to the Federation's security management, the MSR, individual roles related to security management, the processes involved and the importance of information management and briefings. Any security incident must be logged and then reported to the Global Security Unit Geneva.

## 1.3. Rationale for the review

8. This audit was a scheduled part of our *2019 Internal Audit Plan*, as approved by the Secretary General and agreed with the Audit and Risk Commission. This is our first formal review of the MSR process.
9. The review was included in our plan due to security risk being identified as a key area to control in the corporate risk register.
10. Our scope of work concentrated on routine management of the minimum security requirements. We did not assess critical incident management (CIM), which was under review and revision with the help of an external consultant, during our audit. Security requirements over IT data and information were also not part of the scope of our audit.

## 2. Scope of Audit

11. Our review covered the IFRC's Minimum Security Requirements (MSR) related to:
  - The governance and effectiveness of scope, coverage and depth of MSR related to risk appetite.
  - Quality and timing of communications for reminding or re-establishing policy and procedure and updating staff on the MSR.
  - The approach to managing the use and review of the application of MSR across the IFRC secretariat, including collection of data and information linked to clear mapping of security in IFRC's global presence.
  - Oversight of the introduction and implementation of MSR for new sites and offices, or new members of staff/RDRT surge deployment.
  - The procedures and compliance to security requirements before, during and after travel to different offices (training requirements, briefings/de-briefings and risk acknowledgement).
  - The assessment of MSR field document returns and the adequacy of responses received to self-assessed risk. The follow up of exceptions, variations or potential differences of opinion related to MSR document responses, including records of alternative risk mitigations and resulting decisions.
  - Assurance over MSR supporting documents, such as the existence of up to date plans.
  - Focused review on specific risks relevant to selected settings for the key security themes as set under minimum security regulations: general security, travel and movement, communications, office residential and site security, medical and contingency planning and incident reporting.
  - Management of breaches of security procedures.
  - Analysis of data collected for routine reporting or escalation to management or relevant internal committees
  - Process for review, update and end of year annual appraisal of the MSR self-assessment model at the Security Unit level.
12. Our scope covered 2018 MSR management and any adjustments made or pending for 2019.
13. The scope did not include coverage of the full security management framework itself and global structure for overseeing and managing IFRC security. Testing MSR against actual arrangements is not covered in this audit as field trips were not included, but risks will be followed up later for those countries and programmes scheduled in the audit plan for 2019. Our review did not cover critical incident management procedures or compliance as this is currently being updated with help from an external consultant

## 3. Review Findings

### 3.1. Good practice identified

14. We identified the following examples of good practice:
- A minimum security requirement framework exists and is available on the IFRC intranet.
  - The layered security model is easy to follow and provides cohesion on organisation wide responsibilities and MSR.
  - MSR has a rules basis so is easy to comprehend what should and what should not be done linked to security at a benchmarked level
  - MSR covers a wide range of security aspects including personal security, premises and vehicles.
  - Security alerts are provided to staff and communication is provided.
  - Security training (linked to MSR) is mandatory.
  - Annual report is clear and concise

### Key issues and risks identified

15. The following higher risk issues / risks are identified from this review have a wider implication:
- **Risk appetites and context 'MSR' risk preparedness:** Delegations may meet the MSRs, but the context may require more review, support and specific 'local' heightened minimal security standards and procedures. This is more likely in conflict or higher risk zones, and due to their complex nature, can be cross border. There could also be differences in risk appetite between implementing organisations (dependant on the nature of their work) as this has not been assessed, which could lead to difference in security standards. This risk increases also if operations are forced to expand into other unknown territories, which has occurred recently..
  - **Security awareness and individual influence:** Information is collected in the MSR on the profile of the delegation but this is not used in any way to underscore individual or personality risk factors. There is a risk that the individual and the corporate perception may not align.
  - **Security changes between MSR review periods:** Local delegation/programme security leads fill in the MSR self-assessment at a particular point in time based on their individual views. The accompanying plans are technically validated at only one point in the year.

### Other risks / issues identified

16. The following other issues / risks have been identified during our review:
- **MSR history and the use of risk assessments:** The Global Security Unit Geneva required delegations to provide security risk registers in a new template format. This is merited, but staff have struggled with this different approach as it is a more informed tool on how standards can apply to specific or unique threats.
  - **Templates** being used for security plans encompass all security points but are not practical in times of emergency. There are standard phrases that are generic security planning considerations rather than related to the local response to the actual threats faced by a delegation.

### 3.2. Follow up

17. A follow up was not applicable as this was the first formal internal audit review since the 2009 mandate to create MSR on request of the Secretary General.

### 3.3. Summary IFRC management response

18. The Global Security Unit Geneva are aware of many of the issues that are highlighted in this document. Indeed, it should be noted that in 2018 the Manager of the GSU organised a review of the IFRC's security processes by an external expert, with Movement experience, to have an independent overview of the

security provision afforded, as part of its wider 'duty of care' obligations, to IFRC staff, delegates and those external stakeholders who fall under the organisation's security responsibilities. Several issues were highlighted in that report that have also emerged from this audit.

19. The Minimum Security Requirements have now been up and running for ten years in their current form. When they were written they were fit for purpose but since it is clear that the IFRC risk appetite has moved on. In the past years the IFRC have deployed on numerous occasions to areas that are considered to be conflict zones without really taking the time to ensure that staff and management are prepared to assume the consequences of such deployments. With this in mind reflections towards an update of the MSR process to ensure that these new realities are reflected, has begun.
20. It should be noted that any improvement in security services for the IFRC will have cost implications.
21. The GSU would like to thank the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations for taking the time to prepare this report and will work diligently in order to implement the recommendations where pertinent, that have been put forward with the continued support of IFRC Senior Management.