



THE IMPACT OF A
GLOBAL TREATY ON THE PROTECTION
OF PERSONS IN DISASTERS:

Case studies from around the world





Jagan Chapagain

SECRETARY GENERAL, CEO
International Federation of Red Cross
and Red Crescent Societies

Disasters are getting more frequent and more intense. They wreak havoc on communities and their livelihoods. International disaster law is a way of pushing back - and we now stand at a pivotal moment in its development. In late 2024, the United Nations General Assembly resolved, by the end of 2027, to elaborate and conclude a legally binding instrument based on the International Law Commission's Draft Articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters.

This decision reflected recognition by States of the importance of protecting people affected by disasters. The development of a binding instrument presents a significant opportunity to advance global cooperation and solidarity in disaster risk management. Such an instrument can generate vital momentum in disaster risk reduction efforts globally. It can ensure all people are protected in disasters, especially those in vulnerable situations. And it can address the longstanding challenges encountered in external disaster assistance, paving the way for more efficient, effective, and coordinated international humanitarian assistance- saving lives after a disaster.

The full impact of such an instrument will only become evident once it is adopted and implemented. But the case-studies below aim to illustrate the potential of the instrument to support governments - who hold the primary responsibility - in their efforts to manage disaster risks in practice. Each case-study highlights progress made, challenges encountered, and lessons learned in strengthening disaster risk governance in an increasingly hazardous world. Each demonstrates how a binding instrument could further empower governments, with the support of their National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society (governments' auxiliaries in the humanitarian field) to strengthen the protection of people in disasters.

Disaster risk governance has been a key focus of the IFRC for over two decades. We strongly support the development of a binding instrument on this topic. The IFRC and its member National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies stand ready to work closely with governments to ensure that this instrument safeguards those most at risk and supports safer, more resilient communities.



The impact of a global treaty on the protection of persons in disasters: Case studies from around the world

1. Introduction

“The proposed PPED treaty is pivotal for strengthening the safety and dignity of everyone, ensuring the focus is always on those most at risk from protection threats prior to or during a crisis, and most vulnerable to being left behind, unseen or ignored. We must also seek to ensure adequate consideration and meaningful participation of at-risk populations within preparedness efforts. We must all work together to ensure no one is left behind, especially as disasters increase in frequency and intensity globally. The World Food Programme welcomes this global effort to harmonise legal standards and reinforce state responsibilities during times of crisis. Importantly, the treaty offers a vital tool to clarify roles and responsibilities, and coordination mechanisms for the facilitation of international relief, ensuring that appropriate procedures are in place ahead of a disaster response, and to operationalize rights-based disaster response and enable timely, dignified, and equitable support for affected communities.”

*-Andrea Breslin,
Protection & AAP Global Lead,
World Food Programme, Rome, Italy*

In late 2024, the United Nations General Assembly agreed to elaborate and conclude a legally binding instrument on the protection of persons in the event of disasters (PPED) based on the International Law Commission's (ILC) Draft Articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters by the end of 2027. The decision to elaborate a treaty on this topic underscores a concrete commitment by States to enhance the protection of disaster-affected persons. A treaty based on the Draft Articles has the potential to:

- Ensure all people are protected in disasters, especially those in vulnerable situations;
- Ensure disaster risk reduction (DRR) is prioritised across all sectors; before, during and after disasters;
- Address the facilitation of fast, effective, and coordinated international humanitarian assistance to save lives after a disaster; and
- Enhance cooperation amongst States and between States and other assisting actors in disaster risk management (DRM).

This document has been developed in support of [IFRC's proposals on strengthening the Draft Articles](#), developed for the consideration of States ahead of the upcoming PPED treaty negotiations. It outlines specific challenges and opportunities encountered by States around the world with respect to each topic above, to illustrate the relevance of a globally binding agreement in today's increasingly complex humanitarian landscape. This is followed by a set of four case studies from around the world, further highlighting the potential impact of a global treaty to support States in the management of disasters and disaster risks.

2. The potential impact of a treaty on the PPED

2.1 Ensuring all people are protected in disasters, especially those in vulnerable situations

“The protection of persons is at the heart of the CDM Strategy and echoes the intent of the PPED to place human dignity at the centre of disaster response. The strategy acknowledges that the Caribbean’s vulnerability to multiple hazards demands a coordinated approach that safeguards individuals as much as it protects infrastructure. It calls for operational readiness that anticipates the protection needs of diverse communities, including women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.”

*Kester Craig,
Deputy Executive Director,
Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA)*

Disasters have far-reaching impacts on human rights, deepening existing vulnerabilities and inequalities while also creating new ones.¹ At the same time, violations of human rights can heighten vulnerability and exposure, thereby increasing disaster risk.² Moreover, disasters discriminate. Women and girls, children, older people, people with a disability or chronic illness, migrants, racial and ethnic minorities, indigenous groups, and sexual and gender minorities may be disproportionately impacted by disasters.³

The Draft Articles place central importance on the protection of persons affected by disasters, including the dignity of the human person and human rights,⁴ and provide a good starting point for the development of a treaty on the PPED. The case studies of Fiji, Lebanon and Madagascar below highlight some of the challenges faced by States in ensuring the protection of vulnerable groups in disasters and further underscore the potential impact of a binding agreement in this area. In particular, the treaty can ensure that the protection of persons, including persons in vulnerable situations, their dignity and human rights are firmly placed at the centre of international law regulating the management of disaster risks.

2.2 Ensuring DRR is prioritised across all sectors before, during and after disasters

Although the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction \(2015-2030\)](#) and its predecessors have undoubtedly catalysed stronger action in prioritizing DRR at the domestic level, several gaps in the implementation of the Sendai Framework have been identified, and countries are not on track to realize the Framework’s expected outcome and goal by 2030.⁵ The case studies of Belize, Fiji, Madagascar and Lebanon below similarly outline progress made in this area while also highlighting existing gaps and challenges faced. These case studies underscore the potential of a global treaty on the PPED to ensure DRR is prioritised across all sectors before, during and after disasters.

“The treaty on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters represents a significant step forward in the field of disaster management in Lebanon. By elevating disaster risk reduction to a binding international commitment, the treaty defines the roles of National Societies, authorities, relevant stakeholders, and all first responders. It also strengthens coordination and ensures that national and international assistance is delivered promptly, transparently, and in a timely manner.

The treaty can also address the gaps revealed during past disasters, provide legal clarity, and enhance both national and global partnerships. It enables us to move from a reactive to an anticipatory approach to response and protection—ensuring that every community, regardless of its situation or circumstances, is better prepared, supported, and remains vigilant in times of disaster. All of this is carried out with the ultimate goal of protecting people, saving lives, and safeguarding human dignity.”

*Mr. Georges Kettaneh,
Secretary General, Lebanese Red Cross*

The Draft Articles recognise the importance of strengthening DRR and include an obligation on States to reduce disasters risks by taking appropriate measures to prevent, mitigate, and prepare

for disasters. The creation of a similar duty in a treaty on the PPED could accelerate domestic efforts to reduce disaster risk and support States in addressing some of the challenges identified in implementing the Sendai Framework.

2.3 Addressing the facilitation of fast, effective, and coordinated international humanitarian assistance to save lives after a disaster

“Solidarity is at the heart of effective humanitarian action. An international treaty would strengthen cooperation beyond borders, foster trust among nations, and help bridge critical gaps to ensure assistance of consistent quality. By upholding the sovereignty of States while enhancing collective capacity, such a framework would enable humanitarian aid to reach people in need more swiftly and effectively.”

*Gina Bonne,
Head of the Sustainable Environment and Climate Department /
Acting Director at the IOC Secretariat*

While there have been significant developments in international law related to external assistance over the past two decades,⁶ regulatory barriers remain a major challenge in international disaster response operations. For example, the process of initiation and termination frequently remains fraught with difficulty; and perennial challenges are also faced with respect to the entry and operation of goods, equipment and personnel. The case studies below highlight some of the challenges which have been experienced, and in some cases mitigated, in practice in this regard.⁷

A significant portion of the Draft Articles already address external disaster assistance and provide a good starting point for a treaty on the PPED. Such provisions, if enshrined in a binding agreement and in particular if strengthened as outlined in [IFRC's proposals](#), would save lives by reducing administrative barriers that too often delay relief through clearly defining when and how aid should be offered, accepted, facilitated, coordinated, and terminated and by ensuring that sovereignty is respected while preventing it from being misused to block life-saving support.

2.4 Enhancing cooperation amongst States and between States and other assisting actors in DRM

In the face of increasingly complex and variable disaster risks, cooperation both within and across borders and between and

amongst both States and other assisting actors is critical to address mounting challenges. Key international instruments such as the Sendai Framework,⁸ regional instruments,⁹ resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly,¹⁰ and resolutions of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent,¹¹ recognise the significant importance of cooperation in DRM.

While it is recognised that each State has the primary responsibility for managing disaster risk, the efforts of other assisting actors are indispensable in ensuring effective DRM efforts.¹² Local actors, including National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies which are auxiliary to their public authorities in the humanitarian field, play a critical role across all elements of disaster risk management by bringing essential contextual knowledge, trusted community relationships, and sustained presence before, during, and after crises. Their invaluable support ensure that interventions and activities are timely, culturally appropriate, and responsive to the needs and capacities of communities.¹³ Global, regional and sub-regional organizations also play a critical role in complementing government efforts in DRM around the work.¹⁴

The importance of cooperation amongst States and other assisting actors, included National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in enhancing DRM efforts in an increasingly hazardous world is highlighted across all of the case studies below and is also recognised in the Draft Articles themselves.¹⁵ As cooperation is a critical element of effective DRM, similar commitments should be retained in the future treaty. The case studies below outline how their inclusion would transform cooperation in the context of disasters from a voluntary practice into a binding legal duty and enhancing global solidarity in DRM.

3. Case studies

3.1 Reducing disaster risk and facilitating external assistance in Belize

3.1.1 Summary

Belize is a coastal nation in Central America that sits in the path of most storms in the Atlantic.¹⁶ Due to the increasing impacts of climate change, urbanisation, and land usage, the country is particularly vulnerable to severe flooding.¹⁷

Belize has taken steps to enhance DRM, including through leveraging available resources and partnerships, such as strengthening relationships with regional bodies like the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) through its Regional Response Mechanism, and the Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPRENAC) through its coordination mechanism known as the Central American Mechanism of Mutual Aid Before Disasters (MecReg). Additionally, Belize participates in the International Disaster Response Law (IDRL) Working Group and has strengthened legal and policy arrangements for DRM, such as



© Belize Red Cross
Forest fires affected Belize, particularly within the Toledo and Cayo Districts, during the summer of 2024.



© Belize Red Cross
The Belize Red Cross Society hosted a workshop May 8-12, 2023, to train its volunteers and staff to be technicians and assessors for its wheelchair project, funded by the Church of the Latter-Day Saints

developing the Disaster Preparedness and Response Act (DPRA) and the Foreign Assistance Response Plan (FARP), to strengthen partnerships and coordination.

Nevertheless, the most recent tropical storms, Sara (2024) and Lisa (2024), as well as recurring floods in certain geographical areas such as the Belize River Valley, provide evidence of the challenges involved in responding to disasters, in particular with respect to assessing damage and coordination between stakeholders, highlighting the need to further enhance disaster preparedness.

This case study explores how the PPED treaty could support Belize in the management of disasters and disaster risks, in particular through strengthening preparedness and response, DRR, coordination and the facilitation of external disaster assistance.

3.1.2 Background

Located in Central America, Belize is an ethnically and linguistically diverse country with a population of almost 420,000 people.¹⁸ Due to its geographic location on the Atlantic coast, Belize is prone to

“This Treaty can serve as a catalyst for Governments to meaningfully prioritize an all-of-society approach to DRR across all sectors and levels of governance, not just within specialized DRM Ministries. We need to think about the DRM system as cross-cutting and cross-sectoral and come together to implement the system effectively to avoid exhausting limited resources”

Daniel Mendez,
Coordinator, Belize NEMO

natural disasters, as it sits on the direct path of most storms in the region and is prone to severe flooding.¹⁹

Belize City, the country’s largest city, is particularly vulnerable to storm surges and floods due to its location on the coastline, which also contributes to a concentration of both population and infrastructure in the city.²⁰ When disasters strike, families can lose not only their homes but also access to clean water, health services, and livelihoods. The cumulative effect of repeated disasters places a heavy burden on communities, erodes resilience, and can leave many people trapped in cycles of vulnerability. As disasters become more frequent and intense, they are becoming more costly for the people of Belize.²¹

In recent years, the country has experienced several disasters.²² In 2022, Hurricane Lisa caused widespread destruction in Belize District and the Cayes, affecting nearly 15,000 people and causing damages of more than BZ\$130 million.²³ Total damage in the housing sector was estimated at BZ\$54.4 million, and many families were left without safe shelter for months. In 2024, Tropical Storm Sara triggered catastrophic flooding in the Belize River Valley, submerging sugarcane fields, damaging critical roads and bridges, and leaving communities cut off.²⁴ The flooding, intensified by climate change, urbanisation, and land usage, was part of a regional disaster that displaced more than 120,000 people across Central America.

Belize has developed strong disaster management institutions, led by the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO),²⁵ and grounded in the Belize Disaster Preparedness and Response Act of 2000 (DPR Act).²⁶ District and Village Emergency Management Organizations extend preparedness and coordination to the local level.²⁷ Belize also developed a Foreign Assistance Response Plan (FARP) in 2025, which defines specific roles and responsibilities for international disaster relief supporting actors.²⁸ Through this plan, the Government aims to

support preparedness and response activities by streamlining relief coordination, and to set standards and requirements relating to international goods.²⁹

At the regional level, Belize is an active member of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and participates in the Central American Mechanism of Mutual Aid Before Disasters (MecReg). These bodies provide important frameworks for collaboration and solidarity among neighbouring States.³⁰ A future global treaty on the PPED could complement and reinforce these regional mechanisms, helping to align domestic, regional, and international legal frameworks and providing greater clarity and consistency on roles and responsibilities, and coordination mechanisms, for actions to be taken to reduce disaster risks and to prepare for and respond to disasters.

Belize's recent experiences show both the strengths and the limits of its current system. Regional and national frameworks provide important tools, but gaps remain — particularly in ensuring that DRR is fully integrated into all sectors and that cooperation with international partners is clear and efficient. A global treaty on the PPED can help close these gaps, ensuring that the people of Belize receive the protection and support they need when facing increasingly severe and frequent disasters.

3.1.3 How a treaty can strengthen DRM in Belize

As outlined above, Belize has taken important steps to build a strong foundation for DRM, including through national legislation such as the Disaster Preparedness and Response Act and the Foreign Assistance Plan, as well as institutions like the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO).³¹ Yet recurring hurricanes, floods and wild fires, have shown that additional action is needed by the Government of Belize and its partners to reduce risks, strengthen preparedness, and protect vulnerable populations from the growing increase in disaster risks.³²

The proposed PPED treaty could support Belize's efforts in three key ways. First, it could establish a binding obligation for all

governments to take concrete steps to reduce disaster risks.³³ For Belize, this could mean stronger legal frameworks for land use planning to curb deforestation, investment in resilient housing and infrastructure, and expanded early warning systems in flood-prone areas. It could also encourage measures such as contingency planning, training and drills, natural resources management, and the use of nature-based solutions to protect communities. These commitments would help ensure that DRR is consistently prioritised, both nationally and regionally, and that Belize is supported by evolving best practices from across the globe.

“The DRR article in the PPED Treaty is essential to retain and strengthen in the treaty, because in many ways, risk reduction and preparedness are part of disaster response.”

*Rhea Marie Pierre,
IFRC Operations Coordinator*

Second, a global treaty on the PPED would reinforce regional and global cooperation.³⁴ As mentioned above, Belize is a member of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and cooperates with the Mechanism of Mutual Aid Before Disasters (MecReg). These bodies are vital for sharing resources and expertise in a region where disasters often cross borders. Importantly, many regional mechanisms address the support provided by Member States of the region but do not regulate the support provided by other assisting actors. A global treaty could address this gap and complement these efforts by aligning domestic and regional frameworks with universal standards, ensuring that cooperation is predictable, effective, and focused on protecting people.

Third, while Belize does not usually depend heavily on external assistance, past operations have revealed challenges when external aid is needed. For example, after Hurricane Lisa in

The auxiliary role of the Belize Red Cross Society

As auxiliary to its public authorities in the humanitarian field, the Belize Red Cross Society is a key actor in supporting the government's humanitarian interventions and has been legally recognised in Belize since August 1983. The Belize Red Cross Society supports DRM in Belize in the following ways:

- 1) Supporting communities with disaster response, including emergency medical care and relief supplies;
- 2) Supporting community resilience-building, with initiatives for health, water, sanitation, and food security;
- 3) Disseminating early warning messages for disasters; and
- 4) Providing vulnerable populations with social welfare services, aiding persons with disabilities, and supporting families impacted by fires and other emergencies.

2022 and Tropical Storm Sara in 2024, relief operations faced bottlenecks at entry points. Customs delays slowed the arrival of food, medicine, and shelter materials, while some unsolicited donations created confusion and strained local logistics. In practice, this meant that families in shelters waited longer for essential supplies, and emergency responders had to divert time and resources to sorting and clearing inappropriate goods instead of focusing on life-saving assistance.

These challenges illustrate why clearer legal frameworks are necessary. At present, Belize has mechanisms such as its foreign assistance plan, but procedures for customs clearance, tax exemptions, and quality control are not always streamlined. Despite significant steps taken by Belize to facilitate and reduce national and administrative processes for external assistance, other assisting actors sometimes encounter uncertainty and delays, which can make it more difficult to ensure timely and effective assistance to affected communities.

The PPED treaty could help address these problems by setting out common rules for how external assistance should be requested, accepted, and facilitated.³⁵ This includes ensuring fast-track customs and tax exemptions, defining quality standards for relief items, and clarifying roles and responsibilities of domestic and international actors. By reducing confusion and delays, such measures would help ensure that when the next disaster strikes, assistance reaches the people who need it most – quickly, safely, and with respect for their dignity.

Taken together, Belize’s legal and operational progress shows commitment and leadership, but it also underscores the limits of working in isolation. As disasters increase in scale and frequency

across Central America and the Caribbean, no country can face these risks alone. A global treaty could strengthen Belize’s domestic laws, reinforce its regional commitments, and ensure that international cooperation is reliable, efficient, and truly centred on protecting people.

3.2 Stronger together: Fiji and the case for a global disaster treaty

3.2.1 Summary

The Republic of Fiji is vulnerable to disasters, with particularly high exposure to tropical cyclones due to its location in the South Pacific. Disasters such as Tropical Cyclones Winston (2016) and Yasa (2020) highlighted gaps in the legal and institutional frameworks for DRM. The government of Fiji has used these experiences as opportunities to address these gaps through developing a robust legal infrastructure around DRM, by passing a new DRM law in 2024 and initiating National DRM simulation exercises to support preparations for disasters and enhance interoperability between first responders and stakeholders.

The proposed PPED treaty, to be negotiated by States presents an opportunity to build on these positive practices while addressing the remaining gaps. To this end, it could provide a framework to strengthen mechanisms to protect persons in vulnerable situations and enhance cooperation between the government and humanitarian actors, both with respect to external assistance as well as DRM more broadly.

This case study narrates Fiji’s journey in disaster law and governance, highlighting both its achievements and specific ways a treaty on the PPED could support lasting progress in strengthening DRM.

3.2.2 Background

The Republic of Fiji, made up of over 300 islands and home to around 900,000 people, and is extremely vulnerable to disasters,

“Today, there are challenges where it is not that facilities don’t exist, but there is a lack of awareness of the law itself. Insufficient understanding leads to confusion. A treaty on the protection of persons in disasters can initiate discussions on our existing DRM laws and policies, raising awareness and understanding about existing roles and responsibilities. A treaty can also support us in identifying strengths and gaps in our existing systems, as well as find solutions to continually strengthen these systems, including through the enhanced cooperation of local and external actors.”

Lily Bowman,
Director General, Belize Red Cross Society



Fiji Red Cross Society volunteers are visiting communities and conducting awareness on how to prevent dengue fever.

with a particularly high exposure to tropical cyclones.³⁶ Its location in the South Pacific exposes it to frequent and increasingly intense tropical cyclones, as well as floods, landslides, and rising sea levels linked to climate change.³⁷ Since 1969, 33 Tropical Cyclones have passed within 10 kilometers of Fiji, with 16 making landfall.³⁸ The devastation is often immense: in 2016, Tropical Cyclone Winston, a Category 5 storm, impacted more than 60% of the population, destroyed close to 82% of homes in affected areas, and caused losses equivalent to 31% of Fiji's GDP.³⁹ More recently, in 2020, Tropical Cyclone Yasa, a category 5 storm and one of the strongest tropical storms to ever hit Fiji,⁴⁰ caused widespread destruction of homes, crops, and infrastructure.

“Facing the realities of a changing climate, it has been interesting to see that while casualties may be decreasing from disasters, economic losses continue to mount. The upcoming treaty negotiations provide an opportunity for States to voice their DRM needs and concretely enhance international cooperation in DRM. This is especially crucial for countries that rely on external resources to support risk reduction efforts. A focus on DRR will also help us to draw attention to important resource needs by signifying a global mindset shift towards preparedness.”

*Napolioni Boseiwaqa,
Director, NDRMO*

These disasters revealed gaps in Fiji's DRM framework. During Winston, affected communities faced significant delays in restoring access to shelter, clean water, and food. While the government did what it could at the time, for weeks, families lived in overcrowded temporary shelters, children were unable to return to school, and rural villages struggled with disrupted supply chains. These experiences underlined the need for stronger preparedness, clearer coordination between national

and international actors, and dedicated protection measures for those most at risk.

Fiji has since made significant strides. In 2024, it adopted a comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Act, which covers prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery.⁴¹ The law integrates climate change adaptation, recognises the rights of indigenous communities, and codifies humanitarian principles such as humanity and neutrality.⁴² It also establishes a dedicated unit — the Single Window International Facilitation Team — to manage external assistance, including expedited customs clearance and tax exemptions.⁴³ Fiji has invested in early warning systems, evacuation centres, and multi-level DRM plans, while its National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO) regularly conducts simulation exercises for earthquakes, tsunamis, and cyclones.⁴⁴

Despite this progress, challenges remain. Fiji's economy is highly exposed: the government estimates that by 2050, over 6.5 per cent of GDP could be lost annually to disasters, and disaster-related shocks are expected to push 25 per cent more people into poverty each year.⁴⁵ These figures alone highlight the urgency of stronger global action and justify the need for a binding treaty that compels States to reduce disaster risks and better protect their populations. Communities in low-lying islands face increasing risks from sea-level rise and coastal erosion, while housing, sanitation, and livelihoods remain vulnerable to repeated shocks. International support following Tropical Cyclones Winston and Yasa was critical, but also highlighted coordination challenges, with delays in customs clearance, difficulties in tracking incoming relief goods, and duplication of efforts between national and international actors.

Fiji's experience demonstrates both the importance of strong national legislation and the reality that no country can face such risks alone. As a member of regional organisations such as the Pacific Islands Forum and the Pacific Community, Fiji has been active in shaping regional disaster resilience initiatives.⁴⁶ A future treaty on the protection of persons in the event of disasters could complement these efforts by making DRR, protection of persons, and effective international cooperation binding obligations for all states.



The Auxiliary Role of the Fiji Red Cross Society

As auxiliary to its public authorities in the humanitarian field, the Fiji Red Cross Society is a key actor in supporting the government's humanitarian interventions and has been legally recognized in Fiji since 1973.

The Fiji Red Cross Society works to build healthy, resilient communities by providing humanitarian aid during disasters, promoting health, and engaging in local community programs that empower volunteers and vulnerable people.

“All actors in this space share a common goal: keeping communities safe through preventing, mitigating and preparing for disasters, and ensuring that appropriate aid reaches affected communities as soon as possible when disasters strike. We have to overcome the unfortunate reality that miscommunication is a part of the human condition. This is why the themes of cooperation and DRR contained in the Draft Articles are key. Enhancing cooperation and coordination amongst local and international actors and leveraging local knowledge in DRR initiatives will continue to be a critical piece of the solution.”

*Maciu Nokelevu,
IFRC Disaster Risk Management Manager,
Pacific Country Cluster Delegation*

3.2.3 How the PPED treaty could strengthen DRM in Fiji

As outlined above, Fiji has made important progress through its new DRM law and strong regional engagement, but recurring cyclones continue to reveal persistent challenges. Risk information is often incomplete or fragmented across agencies, and coordination can be delayed, particularly when damage assessments are needed on outlying islands.⁴⁷ Funding constraints also remain a bottleneck, limiting the ability to sustain preparedness and resilience measures over the long term.⁴⁸ These gaps can mean that families wait longer for essential assistance, recovery efforts are uneven, and communities remain highly exposed to future shocks.



The proposed PPED treaty could help address these challenges by making disaster risk reduction and cooperation binding obligations for all states.⁴⁹ For Fiji, this could provide a stronger legal basis for ensuring that risk information is systematically collected and shared, that assessments are conducted rapidly and consistently across all islands, and that preparedness and long-term resilience is resourced in a predictable way. The PPED treaty would also reinforce regional and global solidarity by aligning national laws with international standards, ensuring that when disasters strike, cooperation is reliable and efficient rather than conducted through ad hoc mechanisms.

Fiji's experience also demonstrates the importance of protecting persons in vulnerable situations. Following Cyclone Winston, the government developed a Code of Conduct for humanitarian actors and expanded measures to prevent gender-based violence and protect children. The new DRM law further promotes inclusion by mandating the participation of vulnerable groups in planning and decision-making.⁵⁰ Yet challenges remain: people with disabilities still face barriers in accessing shelters and infrastructure, and risk mapping has not fully captured the needs of rural or remote communities.⁵¹

The PPED treaty could help accelerate progress in these areas by requiring States to give priority to the protection of vulnerable populations in all phases of disaster management. It could encourage governments to collect and use disaggregated data, remove barriers to access, and integrate the perspectives of those most at risk into laws, policies, and response mechanisms. Just as importantly, a binding agreement on the PPED would signal to international partners that support for vulnerable groups is not optional but a legal obligation, opening pathways for cooperation to strengthen national efforts.

Finally, Fiji's reliance on international support after major disasters illustrates the need for clearer and faster cooperation between domestic and external actors. While Fiji's new Single Window



Facilitation Team provides a promising model, international relief operations during Tropical Storm Winston and Yasa were still marked by delays, logistical bottlenecks, and overlapping efforts. The PPED treaty could provide clarity by establishing common rules for requesting, accepting, and coordinating external assistance,⁵² ensuring that customs, tax, and licensing processes are streamlined, and that assistance is delivered efficiently and transparently.

By embedding these principles into binding international law, the PPED treaty would not only strengthen Fiji's own resilience but also ensure that the lessons it has learned are shared globally. Fiji's experience demonstrates what is possible when strong national laws are in place; the PPED treaty would ensure that all countries are held to the same standard, protecting people everywhere from the increasing risks of disasters.

3.3 Strengthening DRM efforts through cooperation in Lebanon

3.3.1 Summary

Lebanon is an Eastern Mediterranean state with a climate that varies by region. Although Lebanon does not demonstrate the same natural disaster risks as many other coastal nations, prevailing regional instability presents unique challenges to advancing DRM efforts. The Beirut Port Explosion (2020) provides evidence of the need for a comprehensive DRM framework, and the important role of internal and external cooperation and coordination in providing necessary assistance to vulnerable communities.

Lebanon has made significant strides in critical areas such as international cooperation and mobilizing resources to support a comprehensive approach to DRM, including looking to international guidance such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which provides a reference to the Government on planning, implementing, and coordinating DRR approaches. Nevertheless, more can be done.



With the support of the People of Japan and the IFRC, emergency kits for women are distributed to residents, and hygiene promotion sessions are delivered.

This case study focuses on how the PPED treaty could amplify the efforts of the Lebanese Government to enhance DRM, including through cooperation with both internal and external partners.

3.3.2 Background

Lebanon, situated in the Eastern Mediterranean, benefits from the sea's temperature-moderating effects, resulting in diverse climatic conditions throughout the country.⁵³ The country also has unique forest ecosystems that play an important role in biodiversity, as well as providing a variety of environmental goods and services. However, these forest ecosystems are under threat. Extreme weather events such as heatwaves, torrential rainfall, and drought periods with strong windstorms, have led to over 20,000 hectares of burnt area between 2008 and 2021 across over 2,200 wildfires.⁵⁴

The majority of the population of Lebanon lives in towns and cities where there are challenges due to urban informality and poverty, which creates dense concentrations of affected persons in the event of a disaster in these areas.⁵⁵ Since 2019, the country has experienced a series of complex economic and financial challenges, deterioration of social stability, and additional internal and external shocks by way of disasters. Overlapping crises have impacted the availability and affordability of basic services such as healthcare, education, clean drinking water, and

The Auxiliary Role of the Lebanese Red Cross

As auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field, the Lebanese Red Cross is a key actor in supporting the government's humanitarian interventions. The Lebanese Red Cross has played a particularly significant role since the humanitarian crisis began and has been a key provider of humanitarian aid in Lebanon.

The Lebanese Red Cross supports its public authorities in several ways, including but not limited to:

- 1) the efficient distribution of resources to evolving circumstances, including emergency medical and social services, pre-hospital care, mobile medical care, relief items, and 50% of all blood services; and
- 2) operating its ambulance services with close to 300 vehicles at zero cost to affected persons.

In addition, the Lebanese Red Cross focuses on a community-centred disaster risk management approach that complements the efforts of several ministries to map risks for vulnerable groups. This is conducted in coordination with the DRM unit at the Presidency of Council of Ministers and the governorates' operation rooms.

sanitation services.⁵⁶ Women, children, the elderly, people with chronic illnesses, and people with disabilities continue to be at increased risk and may require access to specialized health and protection services.

We have seen the impacts of these circumstances manifest, most notably in the Beirut Port Explosion of 2020, where seismic waves equivalent to a 3.3 magnitude earthquake devastated the capital of Lebanon when a large stock of ammonium nitrate stored at the Port of Beirut exploded.⁵⁷ The explosion caused not only significant loss of life, but also severe destruction to homes and infrastructure within a 5-kilometre radius, which then led to widespread protests due to public frustration.⁵⁸

3.3.3 Positive practices and lessons learned

Lebanon's investment in comprehensive DRM has been in progress for well over a decade, and manifests through collaborative efforts with first responders and international partners. For instance, in 2010 the Lebanese Government, with technical and financial support from the United Nations Development Programme, established the Disaster Risk Management Unit (DRM Unit) at the Presidency of Council of Ministers. The DRM Unit's mission is to strengthen DRM capacities for the Government of Lebanon across all levels, including but not limited to national, sub-national, sectoral, and local levels. It also serves as the National Emergency Operations Center during emergencies as well as the central information hub for all disaster risks within Lebanon.

At the community level, the country has a wealth of experience responding to recurrent and cumulative disasters, and this can be observed with recent small-scale disasters where first responders, local authorities, public services, civil society organizations, and communities have been successfully collaborative. Local DRR engagements, such as community-based multi-hazard risk assessments, also create more efficient and accountable structures for DRM with standard protocols for aid providers.⁵⁹

At the national level, the National Response Framework (NRF) provides Lebanon with a unified system for managing disasters and crises. It identifies the country's major risks, including earthquakes, floods, storms, wildfires, landslides, and armed conflict, and sets the overarching strategies, objectives, and mechanisms for preparedness, response, coordination, and early recovery. The NRF outlines activation and warning procedures, defines the structure and SOPs of the National Operations Room, and assigns clear roles and responsibilities to all ministries, security agencies, and national institutions. Moreover, the Lebanon Response Plan of 2024 (LRP) contributes to the Government of Lebanon's national response planning and provides the support required to inform preparedness and response efforts under the NRF.

Furthermore, the DRR Unit of the Lebanese Red Cross plays a key role in national disaster management efforts. Represented across key ministries, the Unit deploys trained personnel and leverages digital tools to map vulnerabilities and capacities and strengthen institutional preparedness. Trusted for its national reach and humanitarian expertise, the Lebanese Red Cross DRR Unit supports the Government in implementing national strategies and meeting international commitments to reduce disaster risk.

At the international level, Lebanon has demonstrated a sustained commitment to advancing international cooperation in DRM. Notably, during the 2023 earthquake response operations in Türkiye and the Syrian Arab Republic, a delegation for the Government of Lebanon, including the Lebanese Red Cross, contributed to regional humanitarian efforts. In Syria, ten ambulances and twenty-one paramedics from the National Search and Rescue (NSR) Unit were deployed, while in Türkiye, thirteen NSR paramedics joined a seventy-two-member Lebanese contingent comprising personnel from the DRM Unit, Civil Defence, and the Fire Department.

3.3.4 Remaining challenges and how the PPED treaty could mitigate them

Lebanon's recent experience offers valuable lessons on the importance of robust preparedness and coordination in reducing the human, social, and institutional toll of disasters. While the country has made important strides in DRM, overlapping crises – political instability, armed conflict, and economic hardship – have eroded national capacities. The Beirut Port explosion in 2020 became a stark reminder of these vulnerabilities. Hospitals were pushed beyond their limits, pre-hospital services were stretched thin, and families were left with urgent needs for shelter and psychosocial support. Moreover, national actors such as the Lebanese Red Cross mobilised rapidly, but the scale of the event highlighted serious gaps in risk reduction, coordination, and preparedness.

The Beirut Port explosion also underscored why DRR should not remain optional. Lebanon has several national strategies, but



resource constraints and competing priorities have sometimes hindered their implementation. Too often, attention has been directed to response rather than prevention. The PPED treaty could help Lebanon shift this balance. While binding obligations to reduce disaster risks do exist in regional agreements and in treaties relating to specific issues, there is currently no hard-law duty for DRR under international law. By making DRR an international legal obligation,⁶⁰ the treaty would encourage greater investment in prevention and preparedness, while supporting Lebanon in mobilising international partnerships and technical assistance. This could ensure that lessons learned from the Beirut tragedy and/or seasonal wildfires are transformed into practical measures – from building safer infrastructure to strengthening early warning and community resilience – so that future risks are reduced rather than repeated.

A clear understanding of Lebanon's overall legal and regulatory framework is essential to enable the Lebanese Government, working with key partners such as Lebanese Red Cross, to align national legislation with the PPED Treaty, strengthen coordination, risk reduction, and the protection of vulnerable populations in future crises.

The Beirut Port explosion further revealed the complexities of international cooperation in disasters. The outpouring of international solidarity was extraordinary, with support arriving from governments, UN agencies, regional organisations, and humanitarian actors. Yet Lebanon's existing legal and institutional frameworks were not fully prepared to manage such a sudden influx. Reports noted delays in the clearance of relief goods, parallel coordination mechanisms leading to duplication, and challenges in ensuring transparency and accountability. While external assistance ultimately reached affected communities, the process was at times slowed by these challenges. While there have been significant developments in international law related to external disaster assistance over the past two decades, lessons learned from Lebanon's recent experiences indicate that regulatory barriers remain a challenge in external disaster response operations. The PPED treaty could help address such challenges by requiring States to establish clear, predictable rules for facilitating external disaster relief.⁶¹ For Lebanon, this could mean smoother customs procedures for essential goods, better coordination between government authorities, the UN, and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and greater clarity on the roles and responsibilities of assisting actors based on their mandates. In future crises, this could ensure that international goodwill is translated swiftly and effectively into assistance for those most in need.

Disasters in Lebanon have also exposed how vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected. Vulnerable groups often face the greatest obstacles in accessing health care, shelter, and recovery

“The Lebanese Red Cross is a key actor in the Government's support system for facilitating its global commitments at the community level. Our auxiliary role ensures that we are able to not only provide life-saving aid to vulnerable communities on the ground, but we are also provided a «seat at the table» and work hand-in-hand with local authorities and other stakeholders to coordinate the smooth implementation of prevention and mitigation, preparedness and response plans”

*Kassem Chaalan,
DRR Unit Head, Lebanese Red Cross*

support. The PPED treaty could strengthen Lebanon's ability to address these disparities by committing States to systematically identify and protect vulnerable groups.⁶² It could provide a framework for ensuring that health services remain accessible, that barriers to assistance are reduced, and that protection is embedded into preparedness and response frameworks. In Lebanon's context, this would add weight to ongoing efforts by authorities and the Lebanese Red Cross to ensure that all communities, regardless of status, are supported when disasters strike.

Lebanon's situation also raises the question of how disaster law interacts with international humanitarian law (IHL). In a country where armed conflict has at times overlapped with disasters, clarity on the applicable rules is vital. Encouragingly, Lebanon's experience shows that IHL and disaster law are not in contradiction but rather complementary – with IHL guiding humanitarian action in conflict and disaster law ensuring protection in peacetime or non-conflict settings. By explicitly affirming this complementarity, a global treaty would provide reassurance to governments and humanitarian actors alike.

Taken together, these lessons from Lebanon show why the PPED treaty is not only relevant but necessary. It could help Lebanon make DRM a priority despite financial and political constraints, ensure more effective and coordinated external assistance in times of crisis, protect the most vulnerable, and reinforce the harmony between disaster law and IHL. Most importantly, it could support Lebanon in moving from reactive, crisis-driven responses toward a more predictable, resilient, and people-centred approach. In a region marked by complexity, such a framework would be a valuable tool in safeguarding lives and strengthening trust in national and international systems alike.

3.4 From cyclones to cooperation: The case for a disaster treaty in Madagascar

3.4.1 Summary

The Republic of Madagascar, one of the world's most disaster-prone island states, is extremely vulnerable to climate change and faces recurring threats from cyclones, floods, droughts, and epidemics. Over recent years, disasters have intensified in frequency and severity, prompting national authorities, working with key partners including the Malagasy Red Cross Society, to strengthen their disaster risk governance capacities. Madagascar has made significant progress in this regard, for instance, through enhancements to community-based DRR initiatives, the development of customs facilitation guidelines for relief goods, and strengthening collaboration with domestic and regional actors.

Notwithstanding these positive practices, legal and operational challenges persist, which have been highlighted in recent disasters such as Tropical Cyclones Dikeledi and Jude (2025), Cheneso and Freddy (2023), as well as Batsirai and Emnati (2022).

The proposed PPED treaty presents an unprecedented opportunity to reinforce these positive practices while addressing remaining challenges. To this end, the proposed PPED treaty could provide a framework to strengthen cooperation in DRM both domestically and internationally, including through training; strengthening legal and institutional frameworks; capacity

building; information sharing, including notification of disasters; joint simulation exercises; dedicated financial support; assistance with evacuations; humanitarian assistance; and enhanced coordination of international relief actions and communications. In addition, it offers the potential to reduce unnecessary bottlenecks encountered in the facilitation of external disaster assistance, clarify humanitarian actors' roles, and promote inclusive, people-centred DRM.

This case study narrates Madagascar's journey in disaster law and governance, highlighting both its achievements and the specific ways the PPED treaty could support lasting improvements, with a specific focus on enhancing cooperation in DRM, enhancing DRR and protection efforts, and facilitating external assistance in disasters.

3.4.2 Background

The Republic of Madagascar, with a population of over 29 million, is among the most disaster-prone countries in the world.⁶³ Each year, cyclones and floods devastate the eastern regions, while the south-west suffers from prolonged droughts and food insecurity. The country also experiences recurrent outbreaks of waterborne diseases following floods. In 2023, Cyclone Freddy — one of the longest-lived storm systems ever recorded in the Southern Hemisphere — made landfall in Madagascar twice,

“This Treaty offers more than a legal instrument — it creates a structured platform for building situational awareness and fostering enhanced cooperation among all stakeholders. By doing so, it ensures that our collective focus remains on the State’s actual priorities when facing disaster risks, with clearly defined roles, streamlined coordination, and equitable access to resources. Importantly, it provides an opportunity to better identify and articulate Madagascar’s operational, technical, and financial needs, as well as its capacity-building and infrastructure requirements, both within our national context and in our engagement with the international community. This clarity will allow us to set well-defined strategic priorities, strengthen our resilience, and prepare more effectively for the disasters of tomorrow.”

Colonel Aritiana Faly,
General Operations Coordinator, BNGRC



© Laren Ramanantoanina, IRC Africa

A mother from the village of Bezaha giving the food supply to her children



Malagasy Red Cross volunteers are supporting rapid assessments & sites' management



As-of March 2022, 809 households in the commune of Sandrohy (district of Mananjary, Vatovavy region) have been assisted with other distributions being planned after an IFRC Emergency Appeal

affecting over 189,000 people and resulting in loss of life and widespread damage.⁶⁴ This came on the heels of Tropical Cyclones Batsirai and Emnati (2022), which together displaced hundreds of thousands of people, stretched humanitarian capacity, and slowed recovery.⁶⁵ More recently, in 2025, Tropical Storm Jude impacted more than 100,000 people, destroying homes and infrastructure.⁶⁶ These recurring shocks illustrate not only the scale of the humanitarian needs, but also the urgency of establishing predictable, well-coordinated disaster governance frameworks.

Madagascar's DRM system operates in cyclical phases: after immediate emergencies subside, national authorities and humanitarian partners, including the Malagasy Red Cross Society, shift focus to preparedness. Relief stocks are pre-positioned, volunteers are trained, and simulation exercises are conducted with support from the UN system, the Red Cross and Red Crescent global network, and international NGOs. The National Bureau for Disaster Risk Management (BNGRC) plays a central role in coordinating these activities, working closely with regional organisations such as the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Southern Africa Regional Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF)

to ensure that assessments and preparedness strategies are harmonised across borders. In addition, Madagascar has received support from the African Development Bank on the basis of an official request during Tropical Cyclone Freddy to complement ongoing efforts led in-country.⁶⁷

At the national level, Madagascar has invested significantly in strengthening its DRM framework. It adopted its first National Policy for DRM in 2003 and Guiding Principles in 2015, which prioritised DRR and the dissemination of risk knowledge. In 2016, a new National Policy clarified institutional responsibilities, with the BNGRC leading operational work and the National Council for Disaster Risk Management (CNGRC) steering strategic initiatives. The National Strategy for DRM (2016–2030) further set out long-term goals to make Madagascar more shock resilient, including by increasing financial resources dedicated to DRM.⁶⁸

Strengthening cooperation with regional and local actors has also been a priority. To this end, Madagascar has worked with the IOC and neighbouring National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to facilitate cross-border deployment of relief supplies and personnel, and standard operating procedures for cyclones now set out clear roles across the DRM cycle.⁶⁹

The auxiliary role of the Malagasy Red Cross Society

The Malagasy Red Cross Society is recognised as auxiliary to its public authorities in the humanitarian field and is a key actor in supporting the government's humanitarian interventions. The activities of the Malagasy Red Cross Society in DRM include, but are not limited to:

- Reducing disaster risk, responding to emergencies, and leading reconstruction efforts, often in collaboration with local communities and authorities;
- Providing training to the public and private sectors to improve response to accidents and emergencies; and
- Mobilising and engaging communities to prepare for and respond to disasters, ensuring local ownership and decision-making in programs.

Progress has also been made in addressing challenges encountered in past disasters. For example, after bottlenecks in clearing relief items during cyclones, Madagascar adopted a Practical Guide for Customs Clearance and Regularisation of Relief Goods in 2022, with support from the World Customs Organization.⁷⁰ These guidelines introduced customs rebates and tax exemptions, helping humanitarian actors deliver aid more rapidly to affected populations.⁷¹

In parallel, the government has sought to mainstream DRR into broader development and climate strategies.⁷² The 2019 National Adaptation Plan to Climate Change emphasises multi-hazard early warning systems and the integration of disaster risk considerations into climate resilience efforts.⁷³ Together, these initiatives represent meaningful progress. Considering the systemic gaps exposed by the frequent disasters impacting Madagascar, a global treaty could provide the enabling framework to capitalise on the country's experience in disaster risk reduction, protection of vulnerable groups, stronger cooperation, and external assistance.

3.4.3 How the PPED treaty could strengthen Madagascar's resilience

Despite major progress, Madagascar's experience shows that coordination challenges still hamper disaster response. During recent cyclones, communication gaps between community, district, national and international actors created confusion, slowing down the delivery of aid. Roles and responsibilities

“As the Malagasy Red Cross, we are closely involved in Anticipatory Action, with preparedness and response efforts across Madagascar and have been formalizing our cooperation with the Government, including in the form of a Pre-Disaster Agreement. This treaty has the potential to define roles and responsibilities with respect to the protection of persons in disasters and promote greater cooperation between Governments and other stakeholders in DRM, including Red Cross Red Crescent-National Societies. By including obligations on protection, the treaty will also facilitate vulnerable populations to have a seat at the table and that no one is left behind in disaster risk management efforts.”

*Miyo Rabaritsimba,
Disaster Manager, Malagasy Red Cross Society*

among key stakeholders — from the BNGRC to the Malagasy Red Cross Society, civil society organisations, volunteers, and the military — are not always clearly defined. In practice, this has led to overlaps in some areas and persistent gaps in others, with affected people sometimes waiting days before assistance could reach them.⁷⁴

A global treaty would provide a binding framework for cooperation that clarifies expectations at every level.⁷⁵ By clarifying rules for coordination and information-sharing between local, national, regional, and international actors through the existing mechanisms like the Advisory Committee of Emergency Actors (CRIC) and the different sectoral groups, the PPED treaty could reduce duplication, improve trust, and ensure that humanitarian aid is timely, appropriate, and aligned with people's needs. In practice, this would enable the full implementation of domestic instruments such as the relief goods customs clearance guidelines. Provisions on cooperation could also clarify the roles of all assisting actors in DRM, including National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies such as the Malagasy Red Cross Society.⁷⁶

With respect to DRR, Madagascar has invested in risk reduction — from contingency planning to early warning systems — but despite these efforts, risk and vulnerability assessments are often carried out on an ad hoc basis, and resource constraints limit their coverage.⁷⁷ Communities in remote or rural areas can be left out, leaving entire populations more exposed when storms or droughts strike.

The PPED treaty provides an opportunity to make DRR a binding obligation for all States. For the Malagasy government, it could ensure formalised risk assessments, further investment to operationalise multi-hazard early warning systems, and concrete resilience-building measures. By embedding DRR as a legal duty, the treaty would help Madagascar — and countries like it — reduce vulnerabilities before disasters strike, saving lives and livelihoods.

With respect to the protection of vulnerable groups — Madagascar has taken steps to prioritise and include vulnerable groups in DRM structures, though social and cultural factors continue to pose challenges to the full participation of women, persons with disabilities, and marginalised communities in decision-making. The PPED treaty could reinforce the principle that disaster laws and operations must protect everyone, with a special focus on people in vulnerable situations.⁷⁸ Binding obligations in this regard would support States to consider the unique needs of different groups throughout the DRM continuum. This would accelerate domestic reforms, foster greater representation of vulnerable communities in planning and decision-making, and ensure that protection is not left to discretion but becomes a global standard.

With regards to effective external assistance, Madagascar's Practical Guide for Customs Clearance of Relief Goods is certainly an important step in the right direction; however, gaps remain. Customs exemptions are temporary, warehouses incur private costs that are not covered, and expedited procedures can still take weeks to complete. During Cyclone Freddy, bottlenecks in relief clearance meant delays in delivering food and medicine to affected families.⁷⁹ In addition, international actors faced legal barriers in deploying personnel and supplies, leaving communities without much-needed support.

The PPED treaty could provide the clarity and predictability currently missing. By establishing clear rules on the initiation,

facilitation, and termination of external assistance, the treaty could protect State sovereignty while clarifying mutual cooperation mechanisms and obligations in international relief, ensuring that humanitarian aid can move swiftly across borders.⁸⁰ Detailed provisions on customs, tax exemptions, and the entry of relief personnel and goods could help the authorities of Madagascar, with the support of the international community, to deliver assistance more rapidly, saving lives in critical hours and days after disaster strikes. ●

NOTES

- 1 United Nations, Human Rights and Disaster Risk Reduction: Strengthening the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Considerations from the Asia-Pacific Region (2023), page 5.
- 2 *Id.*
- 3 IFRC, Disaster Risk Governance Guidelines (2024), 70.
- 4 Draft Article 4 establishes that human dignity must be respected, while Draft Article 5 is dedicated to the protection of human rights. Draft Article 6 provides that disaster response shall take place in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality, and based on non-discrimination, while taking into account the needs of the particularly vulnerable.
- 5 Main findings and recommendations of the midterm review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, para 6.
- 6 See for just a few examples, developments at regional level such as the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response of 26 July 2005, the Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism (and subsequent amending instruments), the Agreement establishing the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency of 2008, and the Regional Humanitarian Assistance Mechanism for Disasters of the Central American Integration System. As a very recent example, the SADC Humanitarian and Emergency Operations Centre (SHOC) has recently been established in Mozambique. The SADC SHOC is responsible for the coordination of regional disaster risk preparedness, response and early recovery to support Member States affected by disasters. See also for example the IFRC's Guidelines for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance (2007); and resolutions of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent: Final goal 3.2 of the 28th International Conference (2003); Resolution 4 of the 30th International Conference (2007) ; Resolution 7 of the 31st International Conference (2011); Resolution 7 of the 31st International Conference (2011); Resolution 6 of the 32nd International Conference (2015) and Resolution 3 of the 34th International Conference (2024).
- 7 See IFRC, Law and legal issues in international disaster response (2007), 89.
- 8 See for example the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030), Part IV. See also Annex 1 for additional references.
- 9 See for example, the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response of 26 July 2005 (AADMER), Articles 2, 3(3), 4(a), 6(1) and (3), 7(2) and 8(1) and (3); Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism (as amended), Article 1, Article 5, Agreement Establishing the Caribbean Disaster Management Agency of 2008 (CDEMA), Article V(e)(ii); and XIX(r). See further Annex 1.
- 10 See for example UNGA Res 79/205 of 19 December 2024, UNGA Res 78/152 of 19 December 2023, UNGA Res 72/132 of 11 December 2017; UNGA Res 78/120 of 8 December 2023; and UNGA Res 79/139 of 9 December 2024.
- 11 See for example Resolution 3 of the 34th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent on Strengthening disaster risk governance through comprehensive legal and regulatory frameworks (2024), para 4 which calls for bilateral, sub-regional, regional, and international cooperation to support implementation of the resolution, including through the provision of financial assistance, technical support, capacity development, and voluntary sharing of knowledge, experiences and good practices as well as non-sensitive data and information, tools, mechanisms, technology, on mutually agreed terms.
- 12 See e.g. UNGA Res 79/205 of 19 December 2024, para. 62.
- 13 The critical role of local actors in DRM has been recognised in the Grand Bargain, which recognises the critical role that local actors play when a disaster strikes, and aims to make principled humanitarian action "as local as possible and as international as necessary"; as well as resolutions of the International Conference relating to localisation and strengthening resilience; and resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly. The Grand Bargain is a platform bringing together donors and aid organisations who have committed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the humanitarian action, in order to get more means into the hands of people in need. See also for example UNGA RES 46/182 of 19 December 1991 and UNGA Res 79/139 of 9 December 2024, para 36; and Resolution 4 of the 34th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent on Enabling local leadership, capacity and delivery in principled humanitarian action and strengthening resilience.
- 14 Over the past two decades, disaster response treaties, mechanisms and agencies have proliferated under the auspices of regional and sub-regional intergovernmental organisations in particular. Key examples include the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response, the Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism (and subsequent amending instruments), and the Agreement establishing the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency.
- 15 Draft Article 7 provides a duty for States to cooperate "among themselves, with the United Nations, with the components of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and with other assisting actors," and Draft Article 8 enumerates specific forms of cooperation.
- 16 World Bank Group, Climate Change Knowledge Portal, *Belize Current Climate > Climatology* (published 2021), available at: <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/belize/climate-data-historical>

- 17 *Id.*; See also Love FM, *Floodwaters Recede Significantly in Belize River Valley, but Damage from Storm Sara Remains* (published 5 December 2024), available at: <https://lovefm.com/floodwaters-recede-significantly-in-belize-river-valley-but-damage-from-storm-sara-remains/>.
- 18 Alfred E. Alford, O. Nigel Bolland (Britannica), *Belize* <https://www.britannica.com/place/Belize> (last updated 5 August 2025), available at: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Belize>.
- 19 World Bank Group, Climate Change Knowledge Portal, *Belize Current Climate > Climatology* (published 2021).
- 20 World Bank Group, Climate Change Knowledge Portal, *Belize*, available at <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/belize/vulnerability>.
- 21 *Id.*
- 22 Jessie Jordan (IFRC), *Report on the Second Caribbean IDRL Workshop, Re-engineering the Caribbean regulatory framework for international disaster relief and humanitarian assistance in the context of comprehensive disaster management – A Call to Action!* (published 29 February 2024), available at: https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/media/disaster_law/2024-05/Second IDRL Workshop Report_final.pdf; See also UNDP Belize, *Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) Floods due to Hurricane Lisa in Belize – Executive Summary* (2023), available at: <https://www.undp.org/belize/publications/post-disaster-needs-assessment-pdna-floods-due-hurricane-lisa-belize-executive-summary>, BelmopanOnline.com, *Belize Districts* (last updated 2025), available at: <https://www.belmopanonline.com/belize-districts>.
- 23 UNDP Belize, *Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) Floods due to Hurricane Lisa in Belize – Executive Summary* (2023).
- 24 Love FM, *Floodwaters Recede Significantly in Belize River Valley, but Damage from Storm Sara Remains* (published 5 December 2024).
- 25 Coordinator Daniel Mendez (Belize NEMO), Key Informant Interview in Support of IFRC Disaster Law's Case Study on the Potential Impact of an International Legal Instrument on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters (PPED) on Belize's Approach to Disaster Risk Management (2025).
- 26 Disaster Preparedness and Response Act, Chapter 145, Revised Edition 2000, available at: <https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org/media/723>.
- 27 IFRC, *International Disaster Relief Law in Belize* (published March 2022).
- 28 Foreign Assistance Plan, 5 March 2025, §1.1, available at: <https://site.nemo.org.bz/download/national-plan-foreign-assistance/>
- 29 *Id.*
- 30 IFRC, *Celebrating 20 Years of Disaster Law* (published 2024); See also IFRC Disaster Law, *Annual Report 2023* (published 27 July 2024), available at: <https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org/node/1014>.
- 31 See Dan Morath, Paulo C. Fernandes, et al. (Pacific Disaster Center), *Belize National Disaster Preparedness Baseline Assessment, A Data-Driven Tool for Assessing Risk and Building Lasting Resilience* (published 2022), available at: https://www.pdc.org/wp-content/uploads/NDPBA_Belize_Final_Report_English.pdf.
- 32 Dan Morath, Paulo C. Fernandes, et al. (Pacific Disaster Center), *Belize National Disaster Preparedness Baseline Assessment, A Data-Driven Tool for Assessing Risk and Building Lasting Resilience* (published 2022); See also Coordinator Daniel Mendez (Belize NEMO), Key Informant Interview in Support of IFRC Disaster Law's Case Study on the Potential Impact of an International Legal Instrument on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters (PPED) on Belize's Approach to Disaster Risk Management (2025).
- 33 These obligations could be created on the basis of the International Law Commission, *Draft Articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters, with commentaries* (adopted 2016), Draft Article 9, available at: https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/commentaries/6_3_2016.pdf.
- 34 *Id.*, Draft Articles 7 and 8.
- 35 *Id.*, Draft Articles 10-17.
- 36 Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Fiji country brief*, available at: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/fiji/fiji-country-brief>; See also World Bank Group, Climate Change Knowledge Portal, *Fiji, Risk > Historical Hazards* (published 2021), available at: <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/fiji/vulnerability>
- 37 World Bank Group, Climate Change Knowledge Portal, *Fiji, Risk > Historical Hazards* (published 2021).
- 38 IFRC, *Simplified Early Action Protocol, Fiji | Tropical Cyclone* (published 2024) available at https://www.anticipation-hub.org/Documents/EAPs/sEAP_Fiji_Tropical_Cyclone.pdf.
- 39 See Government of Fiji: Post-Disaster Needs Assessment, Tropical Cyclone Winston, February 20, 2016 (May 2016) available at [https://www.gfdrr.org/sites/default/files/publication/Post Disaster Needs Assessments CYCLONE WINSTON Fiji 2016 \(Online Version\).pdf](https://www.gfdrr.org/sites/default/files/publication/Post%20Disaster%20Needs%20Assessments%20CYCLONE%20WINSTON%20Fiji%202016%20(Online%20Version).pdf).
- 40 IFRC, *Extensive destruction reported as Cyclone Yasa slams into Fiji* (published 18 December 2020), available at <https://www.ifrc.org/press-release/extensive-destruction-reported-cyclone-yasa-slams-fiji>
- 41 See the National Disaster Risk Management Act 14 of 2024. See also IFRC, *20 Years of Disaster Law (2024)* available at https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/media/disaster_law/2024-11/Celebrating%2020%20years%20of%20Disaster%20Law.pdf.
- 42 National Disaster Risk Management Act 14 of 2024, section 5.
- 43 *Id.*, section 31-33.
- 44 IFRC, *Celebrating 20 Years of Disaster Law* (published 2024); See also IFRC Disaster Law, *Annual Report 2023* (published 27 July 2024), available at: <https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org/node/1014>.
- 45 IFRC, *Simplified Early Action Protocol, Fiji, Tropical Cyclone* (published 2024).
- 46 IFRC, Climate Risk & Early Warning Systems, *People Centered Early Warning Systems: Learning from National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies* (published 9 June 2021).
- 47 IFRC, *Pacific Week of Anticipatory Action, 28 – 31 March 2023 | Nadi, Fiji* (published 2023), available at: <https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org/media/4304>.
- 48 Director Napolioni Boseiwaqa (Fiji NDRMO), Key Informant Interview in Support of IFRC Disaster Law's Case Study on the Potential Impact of an International Legal Instrument on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters (PPED) on Fiji's Approach to Disaster Risk Management (2025).
- 49 These obligations could be created on the basis of the International Law Commission, *Draft Articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters, with commentaries* (adopted 2016), Draft Articles 7, 8 and 9, available at: https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/commentaries/6_3_2016.pdf.
- 50 Bill No. 6 of 2024, National Disaster Risk Management Bill, 2024, sections 68 - 69, available at: <https://www.parliament.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Bill-No.-6-National-Disaster-Risk-Management-Bill-2024-.pdf>.
- 51 Maciu Nokelevu (IFRC), Key Informant Interview in Support of IFRC Disaster Law's Case Study on the Potential Impact of an International Legal Instrument on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters (PPED) on Fiji's Approach to Disaster Risk Management (2025).
- 52 These obligations could be created on the basis of the International Law Commission, *Draft Articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters, with commentaries* (adopted 2016), Draft Articles 10-17, available at: https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/commentaries/6_3_2016.pdf.
- 53 Philip Loft, Reshma Rajendralal (House of Commons Library), *Lebanon: Introductory country profile* (published 4 March 2025), available at: <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9729/CBP-9729.pdf>; See also World Bank Group, Climate Change Knowledge Portal, *Lebanon Current Climate > Climatology* (published 2021), available at: <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/lebanon/climate-data-historical>

- 54 Republic of Lebanon Ministry of Environment, University of Balamand, *Wildfires in Lebanon 2008 – 2021: Reporting on fires for a better risk management* (published December 2021).
- 55 Katie Peters, Nuha Eltinay, Kerrie Holloway (ODI, GIZ, Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development), *Executive Summary, Disaster risk reduction, urban informality and a 'fragile peace,' The case of Lebanon* (published September 2019) available at <https://media.odi.org/documents/12884.pdf>.
- 56 OCHA, *Emergency Response Plan, Lebanon* (published April 2023), Part 1 available at https://lebanon.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-05/Lebanon_ERP_2023.pdf.
- 57 Sara Elroubi (Ark Republic), *Massive explosion in Downtown Beirut shakes city, killing dozens and wounding thousands* (published 5 August 2020), available at: <https://www.arkrepublic.com/2020/08/05/massive-explosion-in-downtown-beirut-shakes-city-killing-dozens-and-wounding-thousands/>; See also International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *Lessons from Disaster Governance, Port of Beirut Explosion Reform Recovery and Reconstruction Framework* (2024) available at <https://www.preventionweb.net/media/97428/download?startDownload=20250819>.
- 58 International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *Lessons from Disaster Governance, Port of Beirut Explosion Reform Recovery and Reconstruction Framework* (published 2024).
- 59 *Id.*; See also Disaster Risk Management Head Zahi Chahine (Lebanese Government), Key Informant Interview in Support of IFRC Disaster Law's Case Study on the Potential Impact of an International Legal Instrument on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters (PPED) on Lebanon's Approach to Disaster Risk Management (2025).
- 60 This obligation could be created on the basis of the International Law Commission, *Draft Articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters, with commentaries* (adopted 2016), Draft Article 9, available at: https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/commentaries/6_3_2016.pdf.
- 61 These obligations could be created on the basis of the International Law Commission, *Draft Articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters, with commentaries* (adopted 2016), Draft Articles 10-17, available at: https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/commentaries/6_3_2016.pdf.
- 62 These obligations could be created on the basis of the International Law Commission, *Draft Articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters, with commentaries* (adopted 2016), Draft Articles 6, available at: https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/commentaries/6_3_2016.pdf.
- 63 ANSA, *IOM: humanitarian aid desperately needed after cyclone in Madagascar* (published 18 April, 2024), available at <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/56546/iom-humanitarian-aid-desperately-needed-after-cyclone-in-madagascar>.
- 64 IFRC, *DREF Final Report, Madagascar Tropical Cyclone Freddy* (published 4 April, 2024), available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/madagascar/madagascar-tropical-cyclone-freddy-dref-final-report-mdrmg020>; See also PIROI center, *Malagasy Red Cross's humanitarian response to Cyclone FREDDY* (published 13 April, 2023), available at: <https://piroi.croix-rouge.fr/cyclone-freddy-madagascar/?lang=en>.
- 65 IFRC, *Operation Update #5, Madagascar | Tropical Storms and Cyclones* (published 30 June, 2023), available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/madagascar/madagascar-tropical-storms-and-cyclones-operations-update-5-emergency-appeal-ndeg-mdrmg018>.
- 66 OCHA, *Southern Africa: Tropical Storm Jude Flash Update No. 2* (published 18 March, 2025), available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/madagascar/southern-africa-tropical-storm-jude-flash-update-no-2-18-march-2025>; See also Cyclone OI, *Jude, Five Dead and Thousands Affected in Madagascar* (published 26 March, 2025), available at: <https://www.cycloneoi.com/archives-blog/madagascar/jude-cinq-morts-et-des-milliers-de-sinistres-a-madagascar.html#:~:text=Des%20d%C3%A9g%C3%A2ts%20mat%C3%A9riels%20consid%C3%A9rables,693%20salles%20de%20classe%20d%C3%A9truites> (originally in French)
- 67 https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/projects-and-operations/madagascar_-_appui_durgence_en_faveur_de_la_population_victime_des_effets_de_passage_de_cyclone_freddy_-_rapport_devaluation_de_projet.pdf.
- 68 IFRC, *Madagascar: Mapping of Legal and Policy Arrangements for Disaster Risk Management, including Public Health Emergencies and International Disaster Assistance* (published 2021), available at: <https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org/media/3826>.
- 69 IFRC Disaster Law, *Annual Report 2023* (published 27 July 2024), available at: <https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org/node/1014>.
- 70 IFRC Disaster Law, *IDRL in Madagascar, Snapshot* (published 19 March 2025), available at: <https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org/media/4426>.
- 71 *Id.*
- 72 African Development Bank Group, *Madagascar – Cyclone Freddy Emergency Response AID – Project Completion Report*, (published 7 March, 2025), available at: [madagascar_-_appui_durgence_en_faveur_de_la_population_victime_des_effets_de_passage_de_cyclone_freddy_-_rapport_devaluation_de_projet.pdf](https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/madagascar-cyclone-freddy-emergency-response-aid-project-completion-report) (French – full project report) or <https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/madagascar-cyclone-freddy-emergency-response-aid-project-completion-report> (English, Project Completion Report only).
- 73 IFRC, *Madagascar: Mapping of Legal and Policy Arrangements for Disaster Risk Management, including Public Health Emergencies and International Disaster Assistance* (published 2021).
- 74 Candela Navarro Casquette (IFRC), *Madagascar: Mapping of Legal and Policy Arrangements for Disaster Risk Management, including Public Health Emergencies and International Disaster Assistance* (published 2021).
- 75 Colonel Aritiana Faly (Madagascar BNGRC), Key Informant Interview in Support of IFRC Disaster Law's Case Study on the Potential Impact of an International Legal Instrument on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters (PPED) on Madagascar's Approach to Disaster Risk Management (2025).
- 76 IFRC Disaster Law, *IFRC Proposals on Strengthening the Draft Articles on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters* (last updated 7 August 2025).
- 77 Candela Navarro Casquette (IFRC), *Madagascar: Mapping of Legal and Policy Arrangements for Disaster Risk Management, including Public Health Emergencies and International Disaster Assistance* (published 2021).
- 78 See Draft Article 6.
- 79 Denis Bariyanga (IFRC), Key Informant Interview in Support of IFRC Disaster Law's Case Study on the Potential Impact of an International Legal Instrument on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters (PPED) on Madagascar's Approach to Disaster Risk Management (2025).
- 80 IFRC Disaster Law, *IFRC Proposals on Strengthening the Draft Articles on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters* (last updated 7 August 2025).