



POLICY ON THE PROTECTION OF INTEGRITY OF NATIONAL SOCIETIES AND ORGANS OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION

Introduction

In a fast changing, fragmented and unpredictable environment, the humanitarian sector must adapt to the complexity of today's challenges. National Societies are accountable to the people they serve and are committed to act ethically and promote a culture of accountability, transparency, and ethical behavior.

They always have an obligation to deliver high quality services making use of resources in the most effective and efficient way in line with the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the "Movement").

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the National Societies and their International Federation are actively pursuing the integrity of their organizations, staff and volunteers, by making sure that their objectives, policies, standards and acts are in full accordance with the Fundamental Principles of the Movement.

This policy should be read together with the International Federation Constitution which provides the legal basis for the International Federation intervention when a National Society appears to be having a breach of integrity¹ and the Guidance for National Society Statutes 2018 adopted at the Governing Board in October 2018, particularly the chapter related to compliance, integrity and dispute resolution.

The policy is also inspired by the Seville Agreement and the supplementary measures² which provides for the International Federation action, together with the ICRC, to protect the integrity of National Societies (Article 7.2.5 and 8.2 a).

Scope

The policy covers governance bodies, members, employees and volunteers of each of the National Societies (see instruments in the section "reference document"). The Policy also covers the organs of the International Federation defined under article 14 of the International Federation Constitution. It defines the measures they must take towards the protection of their integrity to comply with the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the Statutes of the Movement and the International Federation's Constitution.

¹ Article 5 (1) (A)(g) of the International Federation Constitution states that the functions of the Federation shall, among others, include “to be the official representative of the National Societies in the international field, among others for dealing with any matters in connection with decisions and recommendations by the General Assembly, and to be the guardian of their integrity and the protector of their interest”.

² Also see article 6 .4.(k) of the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Definition

For the purpose of this policy, integrity is defined as “the extent to which the National Societies and the International Federation **are actively pursuing** the integrity of their organizations, staff and volunteers, **by making sure** that their objectives, policies, standards and acts **are in full accordance** with the Fundamental Principles of the Movement”.

To complement the working definition of this policy, types of integrity breaches are defined. Each may be applicable both to National Societies and to the organs of the International Federation. A non-exhaustive list of the main types follows. In a given situation, they are not exclusive of each other and may not always be at the same intensity:

Type 1: Violation of the Fundamental Principles and non-adherence to the Statutes of the Movement.

Type 2: Political and/or administrative interferences in the National Society affairs relating to government control hindering their ability to adhere to the Fundamental Principles: such as but not limited to key appointments in the National Society, financial dependence and political allegiance;

Type 3: Issues related to the Statutes of the National Society, their compliance with the Guidance for National Society Statutes for 2018, their implementation and how the Statutes reflect the Fundamental Principles;

Type 4: Issues related to the performance of the National Society's/International Federation's leadership in relation to compliance, to protect the image and reputation of the organization including but not limited to financial management, financial reporting and governance matters;

Type 5: Integrity of individuals in the National Society/International Federation related mismanagement of funds, fraud and corruption and abuse of authority including but not limited to conflict of interest and nepotism; sexual misconduct and all forms of harassment among others, sexual harassment, and, sexual exploitation and abuse in light of the gender and diversity policy³.

Type 6: Operational integrity of the National Society/International Federation related to the way a National Society/ International Federation carries out its activities both nationally and internationally. This could include interference by donors, lack of respect for the Emblem Regulations⁴ and non-compliance with the principle of Unity⁵.

Type 7: Any failure to comply with the duties of National Societies as laid out in article 8 of the Constitution of the International Federation (see annex 1)⁶.

Statement

National Societies shall:

- Comply with the integrity policy and the duties set out in the International Federation Constitution and continue to fulfil the Conditions for Admission.
- Establish policies and management procedures for the protection of the National Society integrity and ensure that regular risk assessments are carried out.

- Recognize the necessity of ensuring their collective integrity, and agree to co-operate fully with the Compliance and Mediation Committee as well as to take the necessary steps to ensure adherence to the applicable integrity policies adopted by the General Assembly and any other standards of integrity required of them, and to comply with the recommendations of the Compliance and Mediation Committee, and the decisions of the President and Vice-Presidents, the Governing Board, and the General Assembly relating to allegations of a breach of integrity”.
- Commit to systematic self-assessment, such as the Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification process (OCAC).
- Ensure compliance with the standards of National Society Statutes as per the then applicable Guidance Document approved by the IFRC General Assembly and Governing Board.
- Continue to submit to the Joint ICRC/International Federation Commission for National Society Statutes draft amendments to their Statutes and take into account recommendations of the Commission prior to their adoption.
- Ensure compliance with the criteria of the CMC Dashboard- key performance and compliance factors (or whatever criteria are then in place) adopted by the IFRC Board⁷.
- Address integrity issues at early stages and if unable to resolve, seek support from other National Societies, the International Federation and the ICRC.
- Submit allegations to the CMC on breaches of integrity, cooperate fully with the CMC and take the necessary steps to ensure adherence to the standards of integrity required to them.

The International Federation Secretary General shall:

- Take appropriate measures and provide technical support to the member National

³ “ We can only achieve these goals, ensure we “do no harm” and remain true to our Fundamental Principles, if we put gender and diversity inclusion front and center of our work. Failing this would mean not reaching those that need our help, becoming irrelevant to the communities we serve, and risking contributing to vulnerabilities or worsening power imbalances and cycles of violence. To be effective, our work must pursue equality of power, influence, opportunities and access to resources and services”. Gender and Diversity policy as adopted by the General Assembly in December 2019.

⁴ Adopted by the 1991 session of the Council of Delegates, Resolution 5, and subsequently ratified by all the States party to the Geneva Conventions of 12th August 1949. The Federation committed to respect the Regulations at the 1993 session of the Council of Delegates, in connection with Resolution 8 thereof.

⁵ Principle of Unity – “There can only be one Red Cross and one Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work through its territory.

⁶ Article 10 of the Constitution of the International Federation adopted in November 2007.

⁷ The criteria of the dashboard- key performance and compliance factors: review the Statutes within 10 years, provide an annual report, provide financial statements, provide annual external audit, contribute to the Federation Wide Databank and reporting System, pay its statutory contribution, not be declared technically in default and not be subject to investigation by the CMC.

Societies in addressing their integrity problems in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures established for the handling of integrity.

- Provide the necessary material and support to National Societies to put in place policies and mechanisms to protect their integrity.
- Cooperate closely with the ICRC to ensure a common approach towards member National Societies facing integrity problems at both governance and management levels.
- Submit allegations on breaches of integrity to the CMC.
- Provide support to the President of the IFRC, the Governing Board and the CMC when preventing and solving an integrity matter.

The Compliance and Mediation Committee shall:

- Raise awareness among National Societies on issues related to integrity and compliance with criteria identified in the then current CMC dashboard.
- Take the appropriate steps to resolve any potential breaches of integrity on the part of a National Society or a body of the International Federation, as expeditiously as possible and with full respect for due process in accordance within Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedures and the CMC ways of working.
- Review, investigate and determine the nature and extent of, any breach of integrity, or of any dispute submitted to the CMC.
- May, in cases of a potential breach of integrity which involve serious allegations against an individual or individuals who hold a governance or senior management office within a National Society (“National Society leadership Position”), make a recommendation to the National Society in respect of such allegations, including that the individual or individuals who hold the National Society leadership Position step aside until at least the investigation has been completed and the reasons for the recommendation no longer apply.
- May, where ongoing investigations are being conducted by the CMC, make a recommendation to the Governing Board for the restriction of a National Society’s membership rights.
- Make recommendations to help resolve any breach of integrity, or any dispute submitted to the CMC, including, where appropriate:
 - ✓ Recommending action to be taken by the relevant National Society or Statutory Body.

- ✓ In cases of a breach of integrity, reporting to the Governing Board or to the General Assembly with any recommendations for further actions or sanctions to be taken by the Governing Board and/or General Assembly.
- ✓ In cases of a breach of integrity, involving serious allegations against an individual or individuals who hold a National Society leadership Position, where further to a recommendation of the CMC, the individual or individuals who hold the National Society leadership have not stepped aside, reporting to the President and Vice-President or the Governing Board with any further action or sanctions to be taken by the President and Vice-President and/or Governing Board.
- Report to the General Assembly and the Governing Board on the CMC general activities on a regular basis.
- Use the CMC right of initiative in the following situations:
 1. When the National Society and/or the Secretary General have tried to resolve the breach of integrity for a period of two years and no significant progress has been made.
 2. When the National Society fails to fulfil the following three elements of the CMC Dashboard simultaneously:
 - The National Society has not reviewed its Statutes within the past 10 years.
 - The National Society has not provided an annual report.
 - The National Society is declared in default by the International Federation Governing Board.
 3. When the National Society has been subject to repeated criticism from one or multiple sources relating to violations(s) of the elements of the IFRC integrity policy and the National Society has not appeared to act upon the same, putting the reputation of the National Society and therefore, the IFRC at risk.
- Request the support of Vice-Presidents, when considered relevant by CMC, with the resolution of integrity challenges in the Vice President respective statutory regions and globally.

The Governing Board shall:

- Submit allegations to the CMC on breaches of integrity.
- Based on the recommendation of the CMC shall apply any or a combination of the following sanctions towards National Societies in case of breach of integrity, and/or failure or refusal without any justifiable cause to comply with the recommendations of the CMC:
 - ✓ Recommend a particular action to one or more National Societies,
 - ✓ Render the breach public or make an appeal to the conscience of the world,
 - ✓ Terminate any International Federation support to the National Society,
 - ✓ Issue a written warning,
 - ✓ Restrict membership rights as set out in Article 11,
 - ✓ Suspend or withdraw a capacity assessment certificate issued to a National Society by the Governing Board,

- ✓ Suspend the National Society as set out in Article 12 of the International Federation Constitution,
- ✓ Take any other measure it deems appropriate,
- ✓ As a last resort, recommend to the General Assembly the National Society be expelled subject to article 13 of the International Federation Constitution⁸.

The General Assembly shall:

- Submit allegations to the CMC on breaches of integrity.
- Receive and hear appeals against decisions of the Governing Board to suspend a National Society in relation to allegations of breaches of integrity.
- Shall take decisions on expulsion of National Societies based on the recommendation of the Governing Board as a last resort.

The IFRC President shall:

- Submit to the CMC allegations of breaches of integrity.
- May, in cases of a potential breach of integrity which involve serious allegations against an individual or individuals who hold a National Society Leadership Position and where the recommendation of the CMC to step aside has not been followed, take a decision collectively with the Vice-Presidents, which is issued to a National Society requiring the individual or individuals who hold the National Society leadership Position to step aside.
- May implement a decision of the Governing Board to suspend a National Society from membership status in the International Federation in accordance with the Rules of Procedures.

The IFRC Vice-President shall:

- In close coordination with the Secretary General, support National Societies in their statutory regions and globally with integrity challenges as requested by the National Society itself or the CMC. If however, an allegation of breach of integrity has been submitted to the CMC and a Vice-President, has initially been requested to support the National Society with its integrity challenges, once the allegation has been accepted by the CMC and the Vice-President has been informed as per Rule 3.3 of the IFRC Rules of Procedures, the Vice-President has an obligation to work closely with CMC and align his actions to the recommendation of the CMC or recuse himself/herself from further involvement.
- In cases of a potential breach of integrity which involve serious allegations against an individual who holds a National Society leadership Position and where the recommendation of the CMC to step aside has not been followed, take a decision collectively with the President and other Vice-Presidents, which is issued to a National Society requiring the individual or individuals who hold the National Society leadership

⁸ Article 10 A of the Constitution of the International Federation, November 2017

Position to step aside.

The Commissions and Committees

- The Finance, Audit and Risk and Youth Commissions, and the Election Committee may submit allegations of breaches of integrity to the CMC.

Promoting and monitoring the implementation

The CMC will ensure the implementation of the integrity policy and will work with National Society and organs of the International Federation to resolve allegations of breaches of integrity not respecting one of the types of the integrity policy.

The Secretary General shall develop guidelines for the implementation of the integrity policy and work closely with the CMC to ensure that the relevant tools are available to support National Societies in preventing integrity issues before they arise.

The integrity policy will be reviewed latest by 2027.

Reference:

- IFRC Constitution adopted in 2019:
<https://fednet.ifrc.org/FedNet/Our%20IFRC/Statutory%20Meetings/Governing%20Board/2016/33rd%20GB/E%20constitutional%20reform.pdf>
- Standard Operating Procedures for the handling of integrity within the Secretariat, CMC [working procedures](#), CMC right of initiative, the Governing Board and Staff code of conduct
- The volunteering [Charter](#):
- Child protection [policy](#):
- Gender and diversity policy as adopted in the General Assembly in December 2019 (TBC):https://fednet.ifrc.org/FedNet/Resources_and_Services/Disasters/Disaster%20and%20crisis%20management/Assessment%20and%20Planning/EN%20-06%2006%202019%20GD%20Policy%20final.pdf#page=1
- [Guidance](#) for National Society Statutes of 2018 adopted during the Governing Board in October 2018:

Annex to the Policy: Duties of the National Societies

Article 8 1.B. of the International Federation Constitution:

- a)** National Societies agree to act at all times in accordance with the Fundamental Principles and the general object of the International Federation;
- b)** National Societies agree to work diligently in pursuit of their humanitarian objectives as set out in the Statutes of the International Movement including minimizing the impacts of disaster and disease; strengthening local capacity to address vulnerability, promoting respect for diversity and human dignity; and alleviating the suffering resulting from armed conflict and internal strife;
- c)** National Societies agree to abide by the policies, decisions and rules adopted by the Council of Delegates and the International Conference;
- d)** National Societies, following the principle of Unity, agree to respect the territorial integrity and independence of one another.
- e)** National Societies agree to provide the necessary support to the International Federation in the pursuit of its general object and functions;
- f)** National Societies agree to follow the rules, and comply with the duties and obligations, set out in this Constitution and all other statutory texts, as well as to apply the decisions adopted by the General Assembly and by the Governing Board, and to ensure that this requirement is clearly specified in their Statutes;
- g)** National Societies recognize the necessity of ensuring their collective integrity, and agree to co-operate fully with the Compliance and Mediation Committee as well as to take the necessary steps to ensure adherence to the applicable integrity policies adopted by the General Assembly and any other standards of integrity required of them, and to comply with the recommendations of the Compliance and Mediation Committee, and the decisions of the President and Vice-Presidents, the Governing Board, and the General Assembly relating to allegations of a Breach of Integrity;
- h)** National Societies agree to remit on the date set out in the Financial regulations an annual contribution to the International Federation of the amount approved by the Governing Board calculated using the formula approved by the General Assembly;
- i)** National Societies agree to contribute to the International Federation-wide reporting and performance management systems, once such a system have been adopted by the General Assembly, and to provide the International Federation with annual reports and audited financial statements and;
- j)** National Societies agree to inform the International Federation, through the Secretary General, of any proposed amendments to their Statutes and of the composition of their main governing and managing bodies.