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COUNCIL OF DELEGATES
OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS
AND RED CRESCENT
MOVEMENT

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RESOLUTION 13

Respecting and Protecting Health-Care
in armed conflict and other situations of violence

RESOLUTION 13
“Respecting and Protecting Health Care
in armed conflict and other situations of violence”

The Council of Delegates,

- PP1 *continuously aware* that the origin and very identity of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement are rooted in care for the wounded and sick, through providing them with immediate and practical relief while upholding the laws that protect them, and that concern for respecting and protecting health care must therefore always be at the heart of the Movement's concerns,
- PP2 *aware also* of the uniqueness of the Movement's role in providing health care and humanitarian relief for victims of armed conflicts and other situations of violence,
- PP3 *deeply alarmed* that the wounded and sick in armed conflict and other situations of violence do not receive the care and protection that they require, and frequently are denied health care through deliberate action or omission, or owing to serious disruptions in the provision of care and the delivery of medicines, medical equipment and other medical supplies,
- PP4 *equally alarmed* at the frequent attacks committed against health-care workers, facilities and transports, including those of the components of the Movement, and expressing in this regard its admiration for the unrelenting commitment of the staff and volunteers of the National Societies who give first aid and other health care to the wounded and sick,
- PP5 *deploring* the misuse of medical establishments and other medical facilities and of the distinctive emblems to carry out military operations that place civilians, the wounded and sick, and health-care personnel in danger,
- PP6 *emphasizing* the importance of upholding at all times the rules of international humanitarian law and international human rights law,
- PP6bis *recalling in situations of armed conflict the prohibition of attacks directed at civilians or civilian objects, the prohibition of indiscriminate attacks, the principle of proportionality in attack, the obligation to take all feasible precautions in attack as well as against the effects of attack, and to protect and spare the civilian population.*
- PP7 *recalling* the obligation to respect and to protect health-care personnel, including Red Cross and Red Crescent workers, their means of transport, as well as medical establishments and other medical facilities at all times, in accordance with international law,
- PP8 *recognizing* the importance of health-care personnel having access to any place where their services are required,
- PP9 *emphasizing* that national implementation, training and education are prerequisites if States and their armed and security forces are to comply with international humanitarian law

and international human rights law; highlighting the importance for all state armed forces and organized armed groups of ensuring that the relevant norms are implemented in military practice; stressing that the enforcement of relevant international legal regimes (in particular through the effective prosecution of relevant international crimes such as attacks on medical staff, transports and units) is required to put an end to impunity and to encourage future respect,

- PP10 *recalling* the protective value of the distinctive emblems recognized by the Geneva Conventions and, where applicable, their Additional Protocols and reaffirming the obligation of parties to armed conflict to recognize, uphold and respect the emblems in all circumstances,
- PP11 *bearing in mind* previous relevant resolutions on protecting health care and humanitarian relief and protecting the delivery of those services, in particular Resolution 12 on 'Humanitarian assistance in situations of armed conflict' of the 1991 Council of Delegates, Resolution 2 on 'The Emblem' and Resolution 8 on 'Peace, International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights' of the 1997 Council of Delegates and Resolution 3 on 'Reaffirmation and implementation of international humanitarian law: Preserving Human Life and Dignity in Armed Conflict' of the 30th International Conference of 2007,
- PP12 *emphasizing* the importance of the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in providing the necessary framework for action to help the wounded and sick in armed conflict and other situations of violence,
- PP13 *stressing* the need for effective coordination among all those involved in delivering health care in order to allow safe passage for ambulances and other health services and supplies,
- OP1. calls upon all parties to armed conflicts and all actors involved in other situations of violence to respect and ensure respect for health-care personnel, premises and means of transport, and to take all measures to ensure safe and prompt access to health care,
- OP2. *calls upon* all components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to take determined action and to bring their combined influence to bear should access to health care and its safe and prompt delivery be endangered or impeded in armed conflict or other situations of violence, and to adopt plans of action to ensure the protection of health care to the greatest extent possible,
- OP3. *calls upon* the ICRC, with the assistance of the International Federation, to support the National Societies' efforts to gain safe access to the wounded and sick and to others in need of health care in armed conflict and other situations of violence in order to meet their health needs and other vital requirements,
- OP4. *calls upon* the ICRC, with the assistance of the International Federation and National Society partners, to contribute to strengthening the capacity of National Societies in countries affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence to provide health-care to the wounded and sick,

- OP5. *calls upon* the ICRC, the International Federation and National Societies to continue supporting and strengthening the capacity of health-care facilities and personnel around the world,
- OP6. *invites* the ICRC in accordance with its mandate to protect and assist victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence, to continue to collect, if the circumstances permit, specific information on incidents impeding and endangering access to and delivery of health care, and to make representations to the parties to conflict in order to remove any restrictions on the safe and prompt provision of health care,
- OP7. *calls upon* the ICRC and National Societies, with the assistance of the International Federation, to increase their efforts to promote, disseminate and support the national implementation of humanitarian law and human rights obligations to respect and protect health care in armed conflict and other situations of violence;
- OP8. *urges* the ICRC and the National Societies with the assistance of their International Federation, to encourage and support governments in the adoption of relevant national implementation measures in their domestic law and practice – including legislation, regulations, administrative orders and practical measures - to ensure identification of medical personnel and facilities, protection of the distinctive emblems, dissemination and training in the field of international humanitarian law, and the national repression of serious violations of relevant international norms in their domestic courts consistent with international law,
- OP9. *urges* the ICRC and National Societies to encourage and support all armed forces in ensuring implementation of the relevant international humanitarian and human rights law into military doctrine and practice,
- OP10. *calls upon* National Societies, the ICRC and the International Federation to intensify efforts to ensure that the health-care needs of the most vulnerable people are heard by those in a position to strengthen care for them and ensure that the ability of civil society, in particular local communities, to strengthen health care is recognized,
- OP11. *encourages* the ICRC, as well as National Societies with support of the ICRC and the International Federation, to develop and promote campaigns to heighten the awareness of concerned authorities, armed and security forces, and local communities of the need for health care in armed conflict and other situations of violence and of the obligation under international law to respect and protect medical personnel, their transport and medical facilities,
- OP12. *requests* the ICRC, in consultation with National Societies and the International Federation, to present a report, with recommendations, on the issue of health care in armed conflict and other situations of violence to the 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in 2011.