



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

Introduction

The National Societies and their International Federation are accountable to their stakeholders and each other for maintaining the standards and quality of their services as well as the effective and efficient use of resources and for taking action to address any shortcomings.

The commitment to address such shortcomings, agreed in the Strategy for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement¹, is of the utmost importance: therefore, the purpose of this policy is to guarantee that the National Societies and their Federation possess the will and the ability to act in pursuit of their respective declared objectives in full accordance with the Fundamental Principles of the Movement.

The Federation Constitution provides the legal basis for the Federation's intervention when a National Society faces integrity issues:

- Article 5(1)(B)(d) of the International Federation Constitution² states that the functions of the Federation shall, among others, include “to be the official representative of National Societies in the international field, among others dealing with any matters in connection with decisions and recommendations by the General Assembly of the Federation and to be the guardian of the National Societies’ integrity and the protector of their interests”.
- Article 10 of the International Federation Constitution stipulates that “National Societies and constitutional bodies of the International Federation are expected to comply with applicable integrity policies³ adopted by the General Assembly and National Societies also with the duties of National Societies as set out in this Constitution.

Any failure to comply with the policies or duties referred to in paragraph 1 above will be considered a breach of integrity and shall be referred to the Compliance and Mediation Committee, as set out in Article 31”.

- Article 31 of the International Federation Constitution stipulates that “a Compliance and Mediation Committee shall be established to assist the bodies of the International Federation in taking the appropriate steps to resolve any potential breaches of integrity on the part of a National Society or any body of the International Federation, and to help settle any disagreements submitted to it”.

¹ Adopted by the 2001 session of the Council of Delegates and updated in 2005, Resolution 3; Action 3 of the Strategy

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

³ As stipulated under article 10 of the Constitution of the International Federation revised in 2007.

Also, the Seville Agreement⁴ provides for Federation action, together with the ICRC, to protect the integrity of National Societies (Arts. 7.2.5 and 8.2.a).

Definition

For the purpose of this policy, integrity is defined as “the extent to which the National Societies and their International Federation possess the will and the ability to act in pursuit of their respective declared objectives, policies and standards in full accordance with the Fundamental Principles of the Movement”⁵.

To complement the working definition of this policy, types of integrity issues can be defined. Each may be applicable both to National Societies and to the constitutional bodies 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:

- Violation of the Fundamental Principles and non adherence to the statutes of the Movement
- Political and/or administrative interferences in the National Society affairs relating to government control, key appointments in the National Society, financial dependence and political allegiance;
- Issues related to the Statutes of the National Society, their implementation and how the Statutes reflect the Fundamental Principles;
- Issues related to the performance of the National Society’s/Federation’s leadership and to financial management;
- Integrity of individuals in the National Society/Federation related to use of resources and authority;
- Operational integrity of the National Society/Federation related to the way a National Society/the Federation carries out its activities both nationally and internationally. This could include interference by donors and lack of respect for the Emblem Regulations⁶.
- Any failure to comply with the duties of National Societies⁷ as laid out in article 8 of the Constitution of the International Federation (see annex 1).

⁴ Agreement on the Organization of the International Activities of the Components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, adopted by the 1997 session of the Council of Delegates, Resolution 6.

⁵ (Doc. AG/20/1 of the IXth Session of the General Assembly, Birmingham, 1993, p. 3, as amended [by the XVth session of the General Assembly, Seoul, 2005]).

⁶ 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.

⁷ Article 10 of the Constitution of the International Federation adopted in November 2007.

Scope

The policy covers the policies, actions, governance, management, employees and volunteers of National Societies and the constitutional bodies of the International Federation. It defines the measures they must take towards the protection of their integrity in order to comply with the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the Statutes of the Movement and the Federation's Constitution.

Statement

Within the International Federation:

National Societies shall:

- Comply with the integrity policy and the duties set out in the Constitution and establish policies and internal procedures for the protection of their integrity.
- Commit to systematic Self-Assessment⁸, taking into account the Conditions for recognition of National Societies⁹ as well as other relevant sections of the Statutes of the Movement and the standards described in the Characteristics of a well-functioning National Society¹⁰.
- Continue to provide to the Joint ICRC/International Federation Commission for National Society Statutes with information about the revision of their Statutes prior to their adoption so that the Commission ensures their compliance with the minimum requirement set out in the Guidance for National Society Statutes.
- Address integrity issues at early stages and seek support from other National Societies, the International Federation and the ICRC.
- As a last resort, and all other means being considered and attempted, submit allegations to the Compliance and Mediation Committee on breaches of integrity, cooperate fully with the Committee and take the necessary steps to ensure adherence to the standards of integrity required to them.

The Federation Secretary General shall:

- Take appropriate measures and provide technical support to the member National Societies in addressing any integrity problems.

⁸ This policy does not replace previous decisions regarding the integrity of the National Societies adopted by the General Assembly and the Federation Governing Board; 1st session of the Governing Board, Geneva 2-4 May 2000, Decision 6, The Protection of the Integrity of member Societies (Item 1.4.III) 2nd session of the Governing Board, Geneva 10-12 November 2000, Decision 11, Protection of the Integrity of National Societies (Agenda Item 2.2.2). 6th session of the Governing Board, 5-7 November 2002, Item 4.2.1 of the Agenda, Progress in the implementation of Strategy 2010 by National Societies, Item 4.2.3 Integrity issues, establishment of a Board sub-group and a group of resource persons.

⁹ Statutes of the Movement, 1986, article 4.

¹⁰ Decision 30 of the Xth Session of the General Assembly, Geneva, 1995.

- Cooperate closely with the ICRC ¹¹ to ensure a common approach towards member National Societies facing integrity problems at both governance and management levels.
- Continue to participate actively in the work of the Joint ICRC/International Federation Commission for National Society Statutes in pursuance of the Commission's mandate to support the National Societies in the revision of their Statutes to ensure that they meet the minimum requirements as set out in the Guidance for National Society Statutes.
- As a last resort, and all other means being considered and attempted, submit allegations on breaches of integrity to the Compliance and Mediation Committee.
- Provide support to the President, the Governing Board and the Compliance and Mediation Committee when preventing and solving an integrity matter.

The Compliance and Mediation Committee shall:

- Raise awareness among National Societies on issues related to integrity and non compliance with the National Society duties.
- 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 stipulated in Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedures and its ways of working such as but not limited to-:
 - Receive from an official representation of a National Society or a body of the International Federation allegations of breaches of integrity.
 - The Committee reviews the allegation and if an inquiry is merited ensures that a panel of three to five members is formed to consider the allegation.
 - The panel investigates the matter and makes a determination as to the nature and extend of any breach.
 - Where the breaches are substantiated the panel shall recommend to the National Society steps to resolve the matter.
 - If the matter is not resolved, the panel submits a report to the Governing Board, including a summary of its findings, measures taken to resolve the matter and any further action recommended to be taken by the Governing Board or the General Assembly.
- Report to the General Assembly and the Governing Board on its general activities on a regular basis.

The Governing Board :

- May submit allegations to the Compliance and Mediation on breaches of integrity.
- Based on the recommendation of the Compliance and Mediation Committee shall apply any or a combination of the following sanctions towards National Societies in case of breach of integrity
 - Recommend a particular action to one or more National Societies
 - Render the breach public or may make an appeal to the conscience of the world
 - Terminate any International Federation support to the National Society
 - Suspend the National Society

¹¹ The legal basis for the ICRC's intervention on integrity issues : (a) the Statutes of the Movement, which invests the ICRC with the responsibilities to maintain and disseminate the Fundamental Principles and to recognize any newly established or reconstituted National Society which fulfils the 10 conditions for recognition; (b) the Seville Agreement, which reiterates the ICRC's "lead role" for maintaining and disseminating the Fundamental Principles (art. 9.2.2), and explicitly provides for ICRC action to protect the integrity of the National Societies, together with the International Federation (articles 7.2.5 and 8.2.a)

- Take any other measure it deems appropriate
- As a last resort, recommend to the General Assembly the National Society be expelled¹².

The General Assembly:

- May submit allegations to the Compliance and Mediation on breaches of integrity.
- Shall take decisions on expulsion of National Societies based on the recommendation of the Governing Board as a last resort.

Annex: Duties of the National Societies

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

- a) **National Societies agree to act at all times in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red crescent Movement;**
- b) **National Societies agree to work diligently in pursuit of their humanitarian objectives as set out in the Statutes of the International Movement including minimising 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 set out in this Constitution, as well as to apply the decisions adopted by the General Assembly and by the Governing Board;**
- g) **National Societies recognize the necessity of ensuring their collective integrity, and agree to co-cooperate fully with the Compliance and Mediation Committee as well as to take the necessary steps to ensure adherence to the standards of integrity required of them.**
- h) **National Societies agree to remit on the date set out in the Finance regulations an annual contribution to the International Federation of the amount 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.**

¹² Article 23 (1) (n) of the Constitution of the International Federation, November 2007