



CENTRE FOR THE
COOPERATION IN
THE MEDITERRANEAN



الهلال الأحمر المصري
EGYPTIAN RED CRESCENT

Cairo Declaration

Egypt, 12-15 June 2023

14th MEDITERRANEAN CONFERENCE OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

المؤتمر المتوسطي الرابع عشر لجمعية الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

14^{ème} CONFÉRENCE MÉDITERRANÉENNE DES SOCIÉTÉS DE LA CROIX-ROUGE ET DU CROISSANT-ROUGE
XIV CONFERENCIA MEDITERRÁNEA DE SOCIEDADES DE LA CRUZ ROJA Y DE LA MEDIA LUNA ROJA



CAIRO DECLARATION

With a rich joint history and common foundations, the Mediterranean basin encompasses African, Asian, and European countries, which share the same values while grounded in diversity.

The humanitarian challenges that were identified at the last Mediterranean Conference in 2019 and addressed in the Sarajevo Declaration are still relevant today and will remain relevant in the future. Recent years have been particularly challenging requiring to respond to various crises in a short period of time: COVID-19, large-scale earthquakes, extreme-weather events related to climate change, Ukrainian conflict, and socio-economic crises, in addition to the on-going protracted crises. Consequently, the Basin has been experiencing exponential increment of vulnerabilities and particularly of the risks faced by the people on the move, inter and intra regionally.

It is of vital importance that the Movement components prepare, adapt and respond promptly to the cross-border nature of these humanitarian challenges. Regional and subregional cooperation, as well as social innovation are essential for an individual and collective effective response.



PREAMBLE

We, the Mediterranean National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies leadership, gathered in Cairo for the 14th Mediterranean Conference, from 12th to 15th June 2023 while

Recalling the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement that guide our action;

Building on the Sarajevo Declaration adopted at the 13th Mediterranean Conference in 2019;

Building on the resolutions/commitments adopted at the statutory and regional conferences/meetings that took place since the last Mediterranean Conference in 2019;

Complying with IFRC Strategy 2030 and the shared inclusive leadership initiative ensuring National Societies are fitted for navigating the complex humanitarian landscape;

Acknowledging resolution CD/22/R9 titled Towards a Movement Strategy on Migration focusing on strengthening cooperative efforts;

Leveraging the positioning of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement during the COP-27 held in Egypt in 2022 and its relevant commitments;

Harnessing social innovation and technology to advance the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement humanitarian work;

Endorsing the Cairo Youth Declaration adopted at the 3rd Mediterranean Youth Meeting in 2023;

Acknowledging and recognizing the central role that our National Societies have and play also in crisis and disaster preparedness and response;

Commit to adopt and implement individually and collectively the current Cairo Declaration on the following topics of the agenda:



Climate and environmental action

1. To ensure that the commitments enlisted in the Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations are streamlined within the plans and programmes of National Societies, resorting to guidance and support for its implementation as necessary;
2. To diversify and foster cooperation including: peer-to-peer support, promotion of evidence-based advocacy, joint initiatives including for mobilization of resources, sharing of tools and knowledge through thematic working groups and existing networks and platforms;
3. To ensure that scientific information and knowledge is systematically used in programme and project design, implementation, and in our effort to scale up actions, while reducing our environmental footprint;
4. To build the capacities of volunteers and staff by providing appropriate tools and trainings needed to educate, raise awareness, advocate and engage from community to policy level;
5. To maximize youth-led action and youth engagement, ensuring youth are part of the whole process from the decision-making to the implementation;

Migration and displacement

6. To engage in a fruitful dialogue to understand the different narrative/perspectives on migration and to define common strategies and approaches on emergency, mid-term, and long-term interventions;
7. To adapt to the changing migration trends in order to effectively address the evolving needs of migrants and displaced people, including their protection and safety, and to improve our response both domestically and internationally;
8. To increase the effectiveness of our response by investing in our local branches' development;
9. To enhance cooperation among the National Societies in the Basin among others through establishment of "Mediterranean Migration Network", joint platform bringing together focal points from our National Societies, and linking it to the work of existing networks (e.g., Platform for European Red Cross Cooperation on Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants - PERCO, and MENA network);
10. To enhance the positioning with non-Movement partners to allow for better cooperation and the provision of complementary humanitarian services;
11. To engage with the formulation of the Movement Strategy on Migration and its implementation;



General Commitments

12. To further enhance our humanitarian diplomacy efforts for a principled humanitarian approach in accordance with our auxiliary role and mandate;
13. To unpack and operationalize the Movement Coordination for Collective Impact Agreement (Seville Agreement 2.0) in line with the different contexts ensuring that the National Societies have the central role and are recognized as the partners of choice;
14. To adapt and accommodate varying forms and levels of volunteer engagement by establishing flexible and inclusive systems and processes that enable volunteers to easily join our National Societies and contribute in diverse ways;
15. To foster safe and supportive working environments that prioritise the well-being, physical and mental health of staff and volunteers, for example, based on mutual solidarity, networks of peers, mentors, or coaches and institutionalization of relevant policies;
16. To strengthen our capacities and response to on-going protracted crises and disasters while ensuring localization and enhancement of local capacities;
17. To invest in the development of sustainable leadership, particularly in branches and communities, and focusing on the development of young leaders seeking diverse viewpoints and perspectives;
18. To promote social innovation to address humanitarian challenges and better respond to the existing and emerging needs through: new and existing practices such as the Red Social Innovation platform, IFRC Solferino Academy, and the engagement with diverse stakeholders;
19. To engage in foresighting and anticipating the future and reimagining our humanitarian work, embracing digital transformation and combining evidence-based approaches with scenario developments, analysis of trends that will help us to adapt and remain relevant in future;
20. To continue our efforts on keeping up informed about the new technologies, bridging the digital gap and enhancing diverse collaboration, that could help us from one side to improving and streamlining processes but also to address new vulnerabilities and reduce risks;
21. To engage with our respective governments to prepare for the 34th International Conference.



We, the leaders of the National Societies, request the Centre for the Cooperation in the Mediterranean to support and follow up the commitments of the Cairo Declaration including by setting indicators, paying special attention to youth engagement and development in the Basin.

The leadership of the Mediterranean National Societies wish to express their warmest thanks and appreciation to the leadership, volunteers and staff of the Egyptian Red Crescent for their warm hospitality and excellent organization of the 14th Mediterranean Conference, as well as Movement partners for their engagement and support.



CAIRO YOUTH DECLARATION

Ladies and gentlemen,

Since the last Youth Meeting in 2019 Sarajevo, the RCRC movement has faced many humanitarian challenges such as Covid-19, conflicts, complex crises in the Mediterranean region, climate change effects, migration and mental health. While we work to continue being relevant as the biggest humanitarian network.

These realities represent for all of us a strong appeal to reinforce and expand the commitments made during the 1st and the 2nd Red Cross and Red Crescent Mediterranean Youth Meeting in San Marino (2015) and Sarajevo (2019) respectively.

To achieve this, we have met here in Cairo: we are 24 youth delegates from 18 National Societies united to represent all the Red Cross Red Crescent Mediterranean youth and to take action to reduce the impact of the above-mentioned challenges looking to foster resilient communities but also the Movement to ensure the youth voice and presence is not isolated to consultation, we are looking for an active engagement in the leadership, and management of the RCRC movement.

Therefore, through prolific discussion, intercultural dialogue, learning and reflecting actively we have identified the following key areas: Gender & Diversity, Youth Volunteering, people on the move, climate change and self-care and peer support.

The following summarises the youth meeting sessions and reflections on the above-mentioned key topics. This youth declaration first refers to the challenges that the young representatives have identified in cooperation, later we present the commitments to tackle the humanitarian challenges in a more united RCRC movement.

Gender and Diversity

Although the RCRC commitment towards inclusion and diversity has been strengthened in the Movement in the last years, we can see that there is still work to be done internally and externally in how we approach these areas of our work. Reflecting on different contexts of the Mediterranean Red Cross and Red Crescent on how we work on gender and diversity, the youth representatives worked to identify the existing different ways and approaches to develop an inclusive perspective.



Taking into account the range of actions on gender and diversity such as educational and raise awareness activities, during and after emergency/intervention situations, as well as in the internal organisation and capacitation of the National Societies. Hence, we recognize several key challenges to improve our impact:

- A disparity exists between National Societies in terms of specific training for volunteers and staff members on gender and diversity.
- Lack of effective data recollection by age and gender factor in the leadership roles in all the levels inside the National Societies.

Volunteering

Considering the current volunteering patterns, the IFRC network has identified a pressing need for reimagining volunteering and youth involvement. In this regard, a session was facilitated to provide a comprehensive overview of youth volunteering trends, in which several reflections and questions have been brought forth. We aimed to propose alternative volunteering experiences, analyse their advantages and disadvantages, evaluate feasibility, and acknowledge the unique challenges present in the diverse Mediterranean context.

Four major challenges faced by National Societies in this realm were identified:

- Maintenance of the commitment and active participation of volunteers over time poses a significant challenge.
- The exploration of the role that youth volunteers can play when they transition into an age group beyond 30 years old is crucial.
- The attraction of a diverse pool of volunteers, including young individuals, requires targeted recruitment efforts.
- The lack of opportunities and official guidelines for involving individuals under the age of 18, particularly those under 15, is essential to tackle.

Climate Change

Although climate change has been in the RCRC agenda and priorities for an established period, including the Sarajevo Declaration (2019), it continues to persist as one of the current and major challenges in the region. Urgent action is needed to address climate change as a permanent challenge with devastating impact on our future generations, the crucial role of youth is undoubtedly driving change within the movement through active youth leadership.



We highly value the three key drivers of change that the youth rely on: awareness, action, and advocacy activities. Additionally, we recognise the youth role in fostering change in the movement raising the climate action through leading by example. We therefore, acknowledge the need to focus on supporting our communities in climate change adaptation to reduce its global impact. The following challenges were highlighted:

- The need to effectively prioritise climate action in the RCRC agendas.
- Lack of priority in funding for the Climate Action highlighting the benefits of investing in local actions which reach further and have a global impact.

Youth on the Move

The Mediterranean region has experienced a significant influx of migrants, particularly young individuals, who face huge risks such as human trafficking, and experience different kind of discrimination along the route. Migration arises mainly from armed conflicts, cultural tensions, violence, poverty, and the impacts of climate change. All countries/National Societies in the Mediterranean region are implicated in migration dynamics, serving as countries of origin, transit, and/or destination. As this is one of the biggest migration routes, the youth representatives recognise a few challenges:

- Each country along the migration route has distinct contextual factors influencing the migration dynamics, and so the National Society actions and activities.
- The majority of transit countries are failing to identify and address the risks faced by vulnerable youth.
- Destination countries vary in their level of acceptance and willingness to include migrants in their societies resulting in a diverse approach from National Societies.

Self-Care

The youth representatives of the Mediterranean National Societies have recognized and emphasised the pressing need to address the significant challenge of mental health within their respective organisations. Additionally, young leaders have highlighted the concern that mental health support is often targeted towards beneficiaries and not adequately prioritised for RCRC members themselves. This discrepancy poses various challenges for youth:

- The recognition of young volunteers suffering from high stress levels from juggling volunteering with personal and professional life.



- The substantial risk of burnout of young volunteers due to the demanding tasks and bureaucratic challenges.
- The inadequate recognition of the young volunteers' efforts, and their added value to their National Societies.

COMMITMENTS

In addition to identifying the challenges, solutions and strategies to improve the situation were also proposed. The fruitful discussions and exchanges during this session enabled the participants to distil their collective wisdom, unite ideas and expertise into a set of commitments reflecting the youth's common vision and voice to improve the RCRC movement as key actors.

Referring to the commitments stated on the Youth declaration taken in Sarajevo (2019) and understanding that we are still in the path of addressing and tackling all the above-mentioned challenges. In this way, the youth believes that these cannot be addressed without a strong cooperation within the entire Mediterranean region.

Therefore, we call our National Societies to support through providing resources and capabilities on achieving the following commitments. Hence, as Young Leaders of Red Cross and Red Crescent of the Mediterranean Region, we commit:

- 1. In regards to strengthening the cooperation and the collaborative exchange between the European and Central Asia and the Middle East North Africa Youth Networks:**
 - a. To foster stronger connections and partnerships, by enhancing the sharing of experiences, resources, and best practices between the two regions that are ultimately empowering youth volunteers and promoting mutual growth and learning;
 - b. To monitor with the support of the Centre for the Cooperation in the Mediterranean the implementation of the commitments stated in this declaration.
- 2. In regards to gender and diversity:**
 - a. To train volunteers and staff to continue tackling gender inequalities through education, capacitation, and a critical analysis of our approach to gender and diversity;
 - b. To continue strengthening a more inclusive representation in leadership positions through an active data recollection of the age and gender factor in the relevant data in all the levels of leadership positions of National Societies as a key step to achieve our goals.
- 3. In regards to the youth and volunteering involvement:**
 - a. To leverage the experience and skills of those over 30 years old to bridge the generational gap, while implementing innovative



- methods to attract and engage potential volunteers and ensuring the meaningful inclusion of minors through age-appropriate programs, clear guidelines and inclusion in the broader structures;
- b. To implement effective strategies such as improved volunteer support systems, recognition programs, and targeted outreach campaigns to ensure long-term engagement and attract a diverse pool of volunteers that reflects communities.
- 4. In regards to the people on the move:**
- a. To advocate for migrant rights and dignified treatment;
 - b. To work on youth support services in providing practical support, such as language assistance, psychosocial support, or healthcare services;
 - c. To collaborate with other organisations, institutions, and community stakeholders to maximise impact through effective humanitarian diplomacy.
- 5. In regards to climate change:**
- a. To raise the issue in the agenda to foster the transition and our impact on tackling climate change;
 - b. To promote a holistic approach to tackling climate change through activities and integrated prevention, adaptation and mitigation; with a focus on our humanitarian work in supporting communities to reduce climate risks and adapt;
 - c. To call the RCRC movement and show more action, and more ambition in our priorities and goals in climate action;
 - d. To be principal actors to the change of mentality in our societies, leading by example and putting climate action in the centre of our objectives.
- 6. In regards to the self-care and peer support:**
- a. To improve or develop mechanisms to support volunteers, strengthening the peer support and reducing the bureaucratic procedures;
 - b. To foster active recognition of the young volunteer value and efforts and involve them in the decision-making process.

We as Youth Leaders of the National Societies in the Mediterranean Region proactively engage in taking actions to tackle the above-mentioned humanitarian challenges, we commit to lead by example and continue to work by living our Fundamental Principles, fostering intergenerational dialogue to achieve our goals by calling National Societies to support us in this task.



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EGYPTIAN RED CRESCENT



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