

IN THE RED CROSS WORLD

AGREEMENT

BETWEEN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE
OF THE RED CROSS AND THE LEAGUE OF RED CROSS
SOCIETIES FOR THE PURPOSE OF SPECIFYING
CERTAIN OF THEIR RESPECTIVE FUNCTIONS

(signed on 25th April 1969)

Preamble

The respective functions of the International Committee of the Red Cross, founder body of the Red Cross, and of the League of Red Cross Societies, world federation of the National Societies, both of which are constituent bodies of the International Red Cross, are, in their principles, established by Articles VI (for the International Committee) and VII (for the League) of the Statutes of the International Red Cross.

Nevertheless, the International Committee and the League have deemed it advisable to complete these Statutes with certain specific provisions for the purpose of defining in so far as possible the respective spheres of activity of the two Institutions which, while co-operating closely, remain independent. These provisions are the subject of the present Agreement, which has the character of a friendly understanding.

In this Agreement, the International Committee and the League have sought to harmonise their respective activities in cases where the functions of both bodies are or might be exercised simultaneously, so as to ensure the unity and effectiveness of Red Cross work. They have also sought to avoid, in their relations with the National Red Cross Societies, any overlapping and confusion which might arise from the similarity of certain of their activities.

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The International Committee and the League furthermore consider that, should it be impossible to find a solution for the unforeseen problems in the Statutes of the International Red Cross or in the present Agreement, they should be solved on the basis of the general principles underlying the Statutes of the International Red Cross and the present Agreement. In particular, Red Cross action should always be primarily concerned with the interests of the persons to be helped and with safeguarding the fundamental and permanent principles of the Red Cross. Moreover, should unforeseen circumstances require some degree of adaptation, such adaptation should be examined by joint agreement, taking into account the situation and, where necessary, the particular character conferred upon the International Committee by its right of initiative confirmed by the Geneva Conventions.

Accordingly, it is hereby agreed, between:

The International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva, represented by Messrs. Jacques Freymond, Vice-President, and Jean Pictet, Member and Director General,

on the one hand,

and

The League of Red Cross Societies represented by Messrs. José Barroso Chavez, Chairman of the Board of Governors, and Henrik Beer, Secretary General,

on the other,

that:

I. Relief actions of National Societies for the civilian population

ARTICLE 1

Definition

Under the present Agreement, relief actions for the civilian population shall comprise not only all material assistance (food-stuffs, clothing, pharmaceutical products, shelter and money) but also the assignment of personnel of all categories. The term "civilian population" shall also include refugees and displaced persons.

ARTICLE 2

In countries where there is an international war, civil war, blockade or military occupation the ICRC, by virtue of the functions of a neutral intermediary devolving on it under the Geneva Conventions and the Statutes of the International Red Cross, shall assume the general direction of the Red Cross international action. *Red Cross action in the event of a conflict*

If, in these countries, as a result of special circumstances or in the event of a natural disaster, the League is, at the request of a National Society, called upon to give assistance to the civilian population of its country, the ways and means of the intervention of the League as well as its co-operation with the ICRC and the National Societies concerned shall be defined from case to case in accordance with Articles 4 and 5 of the present Agreement.

When the intervention of a neutral intermediary is not or is no longer necessary, the ICRC shall reach agreement with the League with a view to associating it with the relief action or even handing over to it the entire responsibility.

ARTICLE 3

In peacetime the League shall co-ordinate the relief actions of National Societies on behalf of one of them, co-operate in distributions and direct the action when asked to do so by the beneficiary National Society or when circumstances require. *Red Cross action in peacetime*

If a conflict arises in a country where the League is carrying out the above-mentioned activities and the intervention of a specifically neutral intermediary becomes necessary, the League shall propose that, in liaison with it, the ICRC assume these functions, in accordance with Articles 4 and 5.

ARTICLE 4

When the ICRC and the League are called upon to co-operate in the field of relief to the civilian population, the necessary machinery shall immediately be established, both in Geneva and the territories concerned, to ensure maximum efficiency and unity in the action of all the members of the International Red Cross: ICRC, League and National Societies. *Method of Co-operation*

As each situation will inevitably present different conditions, the respective spheres of activity of the ICRC, the League and National Societies in the territories concerned should be clearly laid down, from case to case, by the co-ordinating body provided for in the next Article.

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ARTICLE 5

Co-ordinating Body

The ICRC and the League shall each appoint two delegates and two deputies, who should at all times be able to meet without delay and who shall have the task:

- a) of informing each other on the approaches made to their Institutions and on the conduct of the actions under way. The communications addressed by National Societies to one of the Institutions and which concern the other within the terms of Articles 2 and 3 shall be passed on to it without delay;
- b) of taking—in accordance with the Statutes of the International Red Cross and the principles of the present Agreement—all the necessary decisions to ensure an immediate intervention of the Red Cross and the speedy conduct of relief actions;
- c) of entrusting the execution of a given action to one of the two international Institutions without, however, excluding—if this seems advisable—a joint action, the ways and means of which should then be clearly defined.

The fact that a National Society submits a request to the ICRC or the League or spontaneously donates relief to them shall not change the distribution of the tasks between the two Institutions.

National Societies shall be regularly informed of the decisions taken in accordance with the above-mentioned provisions.

ARTICLE 6

Appeals

As a general rule, the appeals with regard to a relief action shall be launched to National Societies by one of the two international Institutions which, by virtue of Articles 2 and 3, is responsible for the action. There may also be joint appeals.

ARTICLE 7

League Field Delegate

If in the event of a conflict a League Field Delegate is on the spot or is sent out at the request of the National Society, he shall carry out his duties vis-à-vis that Society in consultation with the ICRC delegation.

II. First Aid

The promotion of this activity shall fall within the competence of the League.

III. Legal assistance for foreigners

The promotion of this activity shall fall within the competence of the ICRC.

IV. Training of medical personnel and preparation of medical equipment of National Societies

The promotion of this training and preparation shall fall within the competence of the ICRC and the League. The two Institutions shall co-ordinate their activities in this field.

V. Protection of civilian populations against certain effects of war

The protection of civilian populations by a development of international law shall fall within the competence of the International Committee.

This shall also apply to the practical measures to be taken in the event of an armed conflict (such as limitation of the dangers of war, evacuation, safety localities and open towns, transmission of complaints).

The promotion of the technical preparation of National Societies (Civil Defence) shall fall within the competence of the ICRC and the League. The two Institutions shall co-ordinate their activities in this field.

VI. Studies concerning the Geneva Conventions

It shall be the task of the International Committee to interpret the Geneva Conventions, to comment upon them from a legal standpoint and to establish model agreements, laws of application and similar documents.

VII. The Red Cross as a factor in world peace

In this sphere, which is of interest to the whole Red Cross movement, the two Institutions shall as in the past endeavour to adopt a common attitude and to co-ordinate their activities.

VIII. Recognition of newly-formed or reconstituted National Societies

The recognition of new National Societies shall be pronounced by the ICRC while their admission to the League shall be decided upon by the latter. As these two operations are based on the same conditions they should be harmonised.

Consequently, these operations shall be preceded by a joint examination of the files to determine whether and, if so, to what extent the Society satisfies the said conditions. The circular issued by the International Committee to announce its recognition of the newly-formed Society shall mention the examination carried out in conjunction with the League. Similarly the League Secretariat shall draw attention to this examination when it proposes the admission of the new Society.

If after detailed examination there should remain a divergency of opinion as to the fulfilment of any specific condition for recognition or admission, the Standing Commission shall be consulted.

IX. Structure and activities of National Societies

The two Institutions shall continue to study jointly the Statutes, structure, organisation and activities of National Societies and, if applicable, to make the recommendations required.

X. Protection of the integrity of National Societies

The League and the International Committee may act jointly or separately in this sphere. In the latter case, the two Institutions shall consult each other.

XI. Relations with international institutions

In their relations with the United Nations and the other international institutions, the ICRC and the League shall continue to take counsel together with a view to adopting, if possible, a common attitude so as to maintain the unity and independence of the Red Cross.

XII. Covering of the administrative expenses of the Standing Commission

The International Committee and the League shall each continue to be responsible for one half of the administrative expenses incurred by the Standing Commission.

XIII. Amendments to the Statutes of the International Committee and to the Constitution of the League

Neither the ICRC nor the League shall amend its Statutes or Constitution on a point related to their respective spheres of competence without giving the other an opportunity to express an opinion on the contemplated amendment.

XIV. Liaison between the governing bodies of the International Committee and the League

As a complement to Article VIII of the Statutes of the International Red Cross it is anticipated that representatives of each Institution should be invited to meetings of the governing bodies of the other whenever a question of common interest is being discussed. Representatives so invited may take part in the discussions, but shall not be entitled to vote.

At their joint meetings the two Institutions shall regularly keep each other informed on the broad outlines of their respective activities.

In addition there shall be regular contacts between those in charge of the various sectors of activity, in particular relief and information.

The two Institutions shall inform each other on the missions they are planning and on the important visitors they receive.

XV. Interpretation of the Agreement and co-operation

Whenever a situation which falls equally within the province of both Institutions or a need to interpret the present Agreement arises, the two Institutions shall determine with all speed which one of them shall assume responsibility for the action or shall reach agreement on the ways and means of possible co-operation.

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In the latter case, they shall continue to consult each other during the whole duration of the action, both at the headquarters of the two Institutions and in the field.

XVI. Application of the Agreement

The present Agreement, which replaces the Agreement concluded on 8th December 1951, shall come into force as soon as it has been ratified by the International Committee and by the Board of Governors in the name of the League and the National Societies.

The withdrawal of one of the Parties to the present Agreement cannot in itself be considered as affecting the friendly relations uniting the two Institutions. In such an eventuality advance notice of at least six months should be given.

done and signed in two originals,
at Geneva, on 25th April 1969

For the League
of Red Cross Societies:

JOSÉ BARROSO CHAVEZ

HENRIK BEER

For the International Committee
of the Red Cross:

JACQUES FREYMOND

JEAN PICTET

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This agreement was ratified in Istanbul by the League Board of Governors on 4 September 1969 and by the International Committee of the Red Cross on 6 September 1969.