

IN THE WORDS OF ALEXANDRE HAY...

Red Cross, Red Crescent

“It may be, indeed, that the strength of the Red Cross lies in the limits it has set for itself. It does not lay claim to any abstract truth, except that suffering human beings are deserving of help by the very fact of that suffering”.

Address by the President of the ICRC on the occasion of the visit of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, on 15 June 1982

“We are now engaged in a ‘planetary Solferino’. For every member of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent, all the victims of the current Solferino represent a personal challenge, especially those far too numerous victims to whom we have no access.

We feel solidarity with the victims of all conflicts, just as we feel solidarity with the members of National Societies and the ICRC delegates who bring them assistance and protection. Like Henry Dunant, we should know that we must act and look ahead into the future”.

Opening message to the Second World Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference on Peace (Aaland/Stockholm, September 1984)

“In this world riddled with every form of violence, unspeakable misery and perpetual tension and conflict, the work of the ICRC remains indispensable. Although this task is difficult and hampered by countless obstacles, it remains a noble one, well worth being pursued with courage and conviction”.

Assembly of the ICRC (6 May 1987)

Respect for international humanitarian law and State responsibility

“How many governments are there which have still not understood that, in the long term, humanitarian problems are remorseless in their effects on those who ignore them?”

*Opening message to the Second World Red Cross
and Red Crescent Conference on Peace
(Aaland/Stockholm, September 1984)*

“It is not always easy to persuade States in conflict to maintain a balance between humanitarian imperatives and their security requirements. It is even more difficult to convince States that their security would be improved if they granted victims of the conflict who are *hors de combat* the protection to which they are entitled under international humanitarian law”.

*Respect for international humanitarian law —
Twenty-fifth International Conference of the Red Cross
(Geneva, October 1986)*

Humanitarian mobilization

“Even where the formal application of law is contested, humanitarian principles must prevail, the essential values of humanity must be respected at all times. The first of these is recognizing the spark of humanity in all men (...). The protection of humanitarian values must be one of the priorities of States and of every man, and part of a collective strategy; it must be included in negotiations and international agreements and have the support of the public conscience”.

Ibid.

Peace

“It is through our personal commitment in the fight against disease and underdevelopment, through our ceaseless struggle for the dignity of man, for respect for the rules of humanity and through the gesture intended to help, protect and save, repeated a thousand times every day and over the whole planet, that the Red Cross remains the world’s most forceful movement for the humanitarian ideal of peace”.

*Opening message to the Second World Red Cross
and Red Crescent Conference on Peace
(Aaland/Stockholm, September 1984)*