

International Committee of the Red Cross

At its meeting of 24 June 1998, the Assembly of the International Committee of the Red Cross adopted the ICRC's new Statutes. When the Assembly took the decisions arising from the Avenir project (see «The ICRC looks to the future», IIRC, No. 322, March 1998, pp. 126-136), it also approved new internal structures for the organization, and the relevant articles of the Statutes had to be amended accordingly.

The new ICRC Statutes replace those of 21 June 1973. They came into effect on 20 July 1998.

STATUTES OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

of 24 June 1998

Article 1 — International Committee of the Red Cross

1. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), founded in Geneva in 1863 and formally recognized in the Geneva Conventions and by the International Conferences of the Red Cross,¹ is an independent humanitarian organization having a status of its own.
2. It is one of the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.²

¹ Since 8 November 1986, the title of the International Conference has been «International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent».

² The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement) is also known as the International Red Cross. It comprises the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (the National Societies), the International Committee of the Red Cross (the International Committee or ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Article 2 — Legal status

As an association governed by Article 60 and following of the Swiss Civil Code, the ICRC has legal personality.

Article 3 — Headquarters, emblem and motto

1. The headquarters of the ICRC is in Geneva.
2. Its emblem is a red cross on a white ground. Its motto is *Inter arma caritas*. It likewise acknowledges the motto *Per humanitatem ad pacem*.

Article 4 — Role

1. The role of the ICRC shall be in particular:
 - a) to maintain and disseminate the Fundamental Principles of the Movement, namely humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality;
 - b) to recognize any newly established or reconstituted National Society which fulfils the conditions for recognition set out in the Statutes of the Movement, and to notify other National Societies of such recognition;
 - c) to undertake the tasks incumbent upon it under the Geneva Conventions,³ to work for the faithful application of international humanitarian law applicable in armed conflicts and to take cognizance of any complaints based on alleged breaches of that law;
 - d) to endeavour at all times — as a neutral institution whose humanitarian work is carried out particularly in time of international and other armed conflicts or internal strife — to ensure the protection of and assistance to military and civilian victims of such events and of their direct results;
 - e) to ensure the operation of the Central Tracing Agency as provided in the Geneva Conventions;

³ In the present Statutes, the expression «Geneva Conventions» also covers their Additional Protocols for the States party to those Protocols.

- f) to contribute, in anticipation of armed conflicts, to the training of medical personnel and the preparation of medical equipment, in cooperation with the National Societies, the military and civilian medical services and other competent authorities;
 - g) to work for the understanding and dissemination of knowledge of international humanitarian law applicable in armed conflicts and to prepare any development thereof;
 - h) to carry out mandates entrusted to it by the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (the International Conference).
2. The ICRC may take any humanitarian initiative which comes within its role as a specifically neutral and independent institution and intermediary, and may consider any question requiring examination by such an institution.

Article 5 — Relations with the other components of the Movement

- 1. The ICRC shall maintain close contact with the National Societies. In agreement with them, it shall cooperate in matters of common concern, such as their preparation for action in times of armed conflict, respect for and development and ratification of the Geneva Conventions, and the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles and international humanitarian law.
- 2. In situations foreseen in Article 4, paragraph 1 d) which require coordination of assistance provided by National Societies of other countries, the ICRC, in cooperation with the National Society of the country or countries concerned, shall coordinate such assistance in accordance with the agreements concluded with the other components of the Movement.
- 3. The ICRC shall maintain close contact with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. It shall cooperate with the latter in matters of common concern in accordance with the Statutes of the Movement and the agreements concluded between the two organizations.

Article 6 — Relations outside the Movement

The ICRC shall maintain relations with government authorities and any national or international institution whose assistance it considers useful.

Article 7 — Membership of the ICRC

1. The ICRC shall co-opt its Members from among Swiss citizens. It shall comprise fifteen to twenty-five Members.
2. The rights and duties of Members of the ICRC shall be laid down in Internal Regulations.
3. Members of the ICRC shall be subject to re-election every four years. After three terms of four years they must obtain a three-fourths majority of the full membership of the ICRC in order to serve any additional term.
4. The ICRC may elect honorary members.

Article 8 — Decision-making bodies of the ICRC

The decision-making bodies of the ICRC shall be:

- (a) the Assembly;
- (b) the Assembly Council;
- (c) the Presidency;
- (d) the Directorate;
- (e) Management Control.

Article 9 — Assembly

1. The Assembly shall be the supreme governing body of the ICRC. It shall oversee all the ICRC's activities, formulate policy, define general objectives and institutional strategy, and approve the budget and accounts. It shall delegate certain of its powers to the Assembly Council.
2. The Assembly shall be composed of the Members of the ICRC. It shall be collegial in character. Its President and two Vice-Presidents shall be the President and Vice-Presidents of the ICRC.

Article 10 — Assembly Council

1. The Assembly Council shall be a body of the Assembly which acts on the authority of the latter. It shall prepare the Assembly's activities,

take decisions on matters within its area of competence, and serve as a link between the Directorate and the Assembly, to which it shall report regularly.

2. The Assembly Council shall comprise five members elected by the Assembly.
3. The Assembly Council shall be presided over by the President of the ICRC.

Article 11 — Presidency

1. The President of the ICRC shall assume primary responsibility for the external relations of the institution.
2. As President of the Assembly and of the Assembly Council, he shall ensure that the areas of competence of these two bodies are safeguarded.
3. The President of the ICRC shall be assisted in the performance of his duties by a permanent Vice-President and a non-permanent Vice-President.

Article 12 — Directorate

1. The Directorate shall be the executive body of the ICRC, responsible for applying and ensuring application of the general objectives and institutional strategy defined by the Assembly or the Assembly Council. The Directorate shall also be responsible for the smooth running and the efficiency of the Administration, which comprises ICRC staff as a whole.
2. The Directorate shall be composed of the Director-General and the three Directors, all appointed by the Assembly.
3. The Directorate shall be chaired by the Director-General.

Article 13 — Power of representation

1. All commitments made by the President or the Directorate shall be binding on the ICRC. The terms and conditions under which they exercise their powers shall be set out in the Internal Regulations.

2. All documents involving financial commitments on the part of the ICRC towards third parties must bear the signature of two duly authorized persons. The Assembly Council shall determine, on a proposal from the Directorate, the amounts below which this requirement may be waived.

Article 14 — Management Control

1. The ICRC's Management Control shall have an internal monitoring function independent of the Directorate. It shall report directly to the Assembly. It shall proceed through internal operational and financial audits.
2. Management Control shall cover the ICRC as a whole, both field and headquarters. Its aim shall be to assess, on an independent basis, the performance of the institution and the pertinence of the means deployed in relation to the ICRC's strategy.
3. In the area of finance, the role of Management Control shall complement that of the firm(s) of external auditors mandated by the Assembly.

Article 15 — Assets and financial verification

1. The principal assets of the ICRC shall be the contributions of governments and National Societies, funds from private sources and its income from securities.
2. These assets, and such capital funds as it may have at its disposal, shall alone, to the exclusion of any personal or collective liability of its Members, guarantee commitments entered into by the ICRC.
3. The utilization of those assets and funds shall be subject to independent financial verification, both internally (by Management Control) and externally (by one or more firms of auditors).
3. Even in case of dissolution, Members shall have no personal claim to the assets of the ICRC, which shall be used solely for humanitarian purposes.

Article 16 — Internal Regulations

The Assembly shall provide for the implementation of the present Statutes, in particular by establishing Internal Regulations.

Article 17 — Revision

1. The Assembly may revise the present Statutes at any time. Revision shall be the subject of discussion at two separate meetings, on the agendas of which it shall be an item.
2. The Statutes may be amended only if so decided by a final two-thirds majority vote of the Members present and constituting at least half of the full membership of the ICRC.

Article 18 — Entry into force

The present Statutes shall replace the Statutes of the International Committee of the Red Cross of 21 June 1973 and shall take effect as from 20 July 1998.
