



Our Principles, our Move
Nos Principes, nos Actions
Nuestros Principios, nuestra Acción
مبادئنا, حراكنا



CROCE
ROSSA
SAMMARINESE

Original: English

12th Mediterranean Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Agenda item no. 4

Concept paper

ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION TO MIGRANTS

ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION TO MIGRANTS

“The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement strives to adopt an integrated and impartial approach, combining immediate action for migrants in urgent need with long-term assistance and empowerment. It is therefore important that National Societies be permitted to work with and for all migrants, without discrimination and irrespective of their legal status”

IFRC Policy on Migration – Principle 1

INTRODUCTION

The Mediterranean region has a long history as one of the critical ‘hot spots’ of migration including source, transit and destination countries which results in a number of challenges, especially in times of widespread economic crisis and tightening border legislations which jeopardize respectively migrants’ inclusion in host communities and increase their vulnerability along migratory trails.

Over the past few decades the Northern Mediterranean Countries (NMCs) have rapidly evolved into net immigration countries and the Southern Mediterranean Countries (SMCs) have taken over their position as sending and transit countries for both NMCs and Northern European countries.

It is reported that only in the first four months of 2014, 42.000 migrants reached Europe, a number three times higher than the one on the same period in 2013.

Yet South-South migration is also a reality that deserves special attention. The political and social tensions of the so-called Arab Spring have shaken the economies of MENA countries and have changed migratory patterns. The increased volatility of the region has accentuated these migratory pressures. According to Fargues and Fandrich’s report, South-South mobility has increased as people fled their countries to find safety in neighbour countries¹.



¹ P. Fargues/C. Fandrich (2012).

Many Southern Mediterranean countries serve as corridors for regular and irregular routes from Sub-Saharan population and East-Asians. Frequently some of these countries are the final destination for those migrants.

Irregular migration in the Mediterranean is often a risk to human security as most migrants fall into organized criminal networks. In the attempt to cross the Mediterranean by boat over eight thousand people have lost their lives in the last decade, although real numbers are difficult to estimate and are probably higher².

People fleeing the revolution sought shelter mostly in neighbouring countries, most seeking asylum. The events of the Arab Spring triggered two massive refugee crises in the Southern Mediterranean, Libya and Syria. According to recent data, at least more than one million have fled Libya³ and 3 million have fled Syria⁴.

The revolts in Libya and Syria have created major humanitarian crises, with extreme violence, which continues to concern the international community. People from Libya fled to Tunisia, Egypt, Niger, Algeria, Chad and Sudan and a smaller percentage to Italy and Malta. Refugees from Syria are mainly accepted in Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon and Iraq⁵.

Amongst those who flee conflicts or simply seek a better life in other countries, there are the hundreds of people who undertake journeys which become longer and more risky. According to recent updates⁶ based on international press archives regarding the last 26 years, since 1988 at least 21.439 people have lost their lives at sea while trying to reach Europe: 2.352 only in 2011; at least 590 in 2012, 801 in 2013 and 2086 in the first nine months of in 2014.⁷

Attention to the plight of vulnerable migrants is one of the priorities of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, as stated at the International Conference in 2007 and underlined in the [**Resolution no. 3**](#)⁸ of the **31st International Conference** held in Geneva in 2011.

The [**Policy on Migration**](#) - developed by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), in close consultation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and adopted at the IFRC General Assembly in Nairobi in 2009 - compels the RC/RC Movement to do more and calls for solidarity: *“National Societies in countries along the migratory trails will work together to optimise their humanitarian action, including the restoration of family links. This requires a focus on situations and conditions in which migrants all along their journey are especially susceptible to risk”*.

Linking assistance, protection and humanitarian advocacy for migrants is one of the policy principles: *“Assistance to migrants goes hand in hand with efforts to protect them against abuse, exploitation, and the denial of rights. In making these efforts National Societies will respect the migrants’ own interest, and the imperative of doing them (and the host communities they find themselves in) no harm. To enable migrants to overcome abuses and*

² T. F. Rodrigues/S. S. Ferreira (2011), 23.

³ IOM (2012)

⁴ <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php> (3,824,483 as of 24 February 2015)

⁵ P. Fargues/C. Fandrich (2012), 4-11

⁶ Fortress Europe (<http://fortresseurope.blogspot.it/p/la-fortezza.html>)

⁷ Last update: October 3, 2014

⁸ *Migration: Ensuring Access, Dignity, Respect for Diversity and Social Inclusion*

pressures, National Societies can provide legal advice, refer them to other relevant and competent organisations or entities, or undertake discreet or public forms of humanitarian advocacy”.

The Migration Policy also underlines the essential need for regional cooperation among National Societies to tackle the humanitarian challenges of migration: *“There is a Movement-wide responsibility for capacity building, mutual support and coordination”.*

Likewise the [IFRC Strategy 2020](#) commits itself, through the strategic aim 3 to *Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace and “tackle migrants’ vulnerabilities by addressing the underlining causes of forced migration, providing help to vulnerable migrants who are in need of assistance and protection, reducing the risks that they face along the migratory routes, empowering them in their search for long-lasting and appropriate solutions, and promoting wider understanding of migrants’ rights and their social inclusion within the host communities”.*

The challenge of providing assistance and protection to migrants has also been one of the issues tackled by the **Mediterranean Conferences of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies** since the celebration of the first Conference in 1980. Throughout its eleven editions, migration related challenges have been among the most recurring issues.

Special attention in this regard was paid in the 11th Mediterranean Conference held in Dubrovnik (Croatia), from the 17th to the 19th of March 2010. The [Dubrovnik Declaration](#) contains the commitment of Mediterranean National Societies to:

- *Focus on vulnerabilities so as to identify major humanitarian needs along migratory trails, including the mobilization and strengthening of the Family Links Network within the National Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross in order to promote restoring family links;*
- *Intensify dialogue with the authorities in order to increase their awareness of the humanitarian dimension of migrants so as to provide better protection and assistance to migrants, regardless of their status.*

During the 9th European Regional Conference, held in Italy in June 2014, RC/RC National Societies, through the [Florence Call for Action](#), called on their respective governments and parliamentarians to collaborate with them in order to implement Resolution n.3 of the 31st International Conference of RC/RC; ensure migrants access to basic human rights at any phase of their journey; recognize the humanitarian mandate of RC/RC National Societies in providing humanitarian assistance to migrants; stop labelling migrants as “illegal”; highlight the positive contribution that migrants make both to their country of arrival and origin; re-engage in effective cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination with the aim of ensuring humanitarian protection of migrants and tackling human trafficking.

A. MIGRATION AND YOUTH

According to the document [Migration and Youth - Challenges and Opportunities](#), published in 2014 by the Global Migration Group, today there are approximately 232 million international migrants, according to the 2013 UN estimate of global migrant stock. Around 12 per cent of international migrants (roughly one out of eight) are youth (defined as those between 15 and 24 years old). The drivers of youth migration are various: search for sustainable livelihoods, due to the lack of employment and/or under-employment, absence of decent working conditions, poor economic prospects in countries of origin; furthering education; family reunification or formation; escaping from regions affected by war, persecution, humanitarian crisis, or natural disaster. For women, gender-based discrimination, including violence or restrictions in their rights, are other drivers to migrate.

A positive migration experience can set young migrants on a successful path toward capitalising on their accomplishments and developing economic and social assets for their future. However, if the circumstances are negative, migration can have particularly dire and traumatic consequences for young peoples' future. Not only they lose a valuable opportunity for full human development, but their countries of birth and destination stand to lose an enormous potential contribution to social, economic and cultural development.

Young migrants are generally resourceful, resilient, adaptable to new environments, and able to learn and speak new languages. In countries of destination, equality of treatment and opportunity allows migrants, including young migrants, to contribute as productive members of their communities: as workers, students, entrepreneurs, artists and consumers. If migration becomes a productive and empowering experience and opens up new opportunities, young migrants can gain more skills through education and/or work experience and earn higher wages, allowing them to support their families and contribute to the development of their communities of origin, as well as the societies in which they live and work.

Risks faced by migrants are exacerbated in the case of some youth, especially those under 18 years of age, particularly where they are in irregular situations and face threats of exploitation, trafficking, exclusion, detection, detention and deportation. Young migrants, especially girls and young women, are vulnerable to human rights violations such as child marriage, sexual exploitation, violence and unpaid labour. Many young migrants face precarious employment in so-called 3-D jobs (dirty, dangerous and degrading), despite having higher educational or skills-training qualifications. Moreover, during the migration process young people can lose their social networks and may also be without parents or family members to provide guidance and care. Due to their age and developmental stage, young migrants are more vulnerable to migration experiences that result in isolation, exclusion and insecurity. They may be particularly affected by xenophobia and discrimination, and suffer further marginalisation due to lack of fluency in the local language, new and different cultural norms, and insufficient information about laws and regulations in their new country. To overcome these risks and enhance their development potential and contributions to their countries of origin and destination, young migrants need to be able to realise their rights without discrimination, including their right to education, health, work, family life, and participation in decision-making and community life.

The 2013 United Nations World Youth Report focuses on the importance of youth engagement on the theme of migration, stating that “*Young migrants face many challenges, but their meaningful awareness of and engagement in migration-centred initiative such as policy and programme development allows them to facilitate their integration and assume ownership to their contribution to development*”.

It is clear that youth have a growing role and responsibility in the development of policies and programmes that can facilitate the integration of migrants, also through the creation of tools that may support advocacy and awareness raising programmes on this theme.

The IFRC Principles and Values Department, created in 2008 the **Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change (YABC) toolkit**, a programme aiming at empowering individuals to take up an ethical leadership role in their community. It does so by triggering a process of self-transformation amongst participants that results in positive and lasting changes of mind sets, attitudes and behaviours, to generate change in others in harmony with the Fundamental Principles.

Many Mediterranean RC/RC National Societies use this toolkit also to face the issues related to the social inclusion of young migrants. The IFRC Europe and MENA Zones offices, as well as the IFRC Migration Unit, have also actively supported the RC/RC Youth and Migration initiatives in the Mediterranean region, participating and facilitating sessions in the trainings organized by the CCM and RC/RC National Societies.

The humanitarian consequences of migration on young people, the opportunities and the challenges that youth may face by migrating need the special attention of RC/RC National Societies gathering in the 12th Mediterranean Conference in San Marino. According to the **RC/RC Fundamental Principles and Values**, especially the Principles of **Humanity, Universality and Impartiality**, the International Movement of Red Cross and Red Crescent must find common strategies to assist, protect and empower young migrants and must cooperate to advocate in favour of their rights.

B. HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The **IFRC Strategy 2020** identifies, in its **Strategic Aim 3**, *the people who have been trafficked or displaced* as a disadvantaged group, who are not able to enjoy the general benefits that are accessible to mainstream society and who may be neglected, marginalized or excluded.

According to the [2014 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons](#), issued by the UNODC⁹, human trafficking is a crime of global scope that leaves virtually no country unaffected. As per the information given by 80 countries, between 2010 and 2012 the victims of human trafficking who were detected were 31.766. They had 152 different citizenships and were detected in 127 different countries across the world. At least 510 trafficking flows were identified, not including the hidden cases of trafficking.

⁹ United Nations Office on Drug and Crime

Victims can be trafficked either domestically (between the borders of one country) or transnationally. While most detected cases of trafficking are transnational – meaning that they implicate more than one country and at least one border crossing - they are usually also of limited geographical reach (they often happen within the same sub-region). Victims may be subjected to various types of exploitation. The two most frequently detected types are sexual exploitation and forced labour. The forced labour category is broad and includes, for example, manufacturing, cleaning, construction, textile production, catering and domestic servitude, to mention some of the forms that have been reported to UNODC. Yet, victims may also be trafficked for the purpose of organ removal.

The routes of human trafficking change over time as traffickers adapt to enforcement and effective border patrols. The primary transit routes are across the Mediterranean, the Balkans, Eastern Europe and Turkey.

As underlined in the publication '[*Enhancing Co-operation to Prevent Trafficking in Human Beings in the Mediterranean Region*](#)¹⁰, migrants or asylum seekers who are travelling through Southern Mediterranean countries may find themselves in situations of complete social exclusion due to factors such as the fear of being arrested or deported by the authorities, or demands for payments from smugglers who tell their victims they are “assisting and protecting” them.

Having exhausted their resources, they become “stranded”, and are recruited by intermediaries – often of their own nationality or ethnic group – for forced labour activities. With little prospect of continuing, but also no hope of returning to their country of origin, migrants are passed from one intermediary to the other. The apparent consent to the exploitation is in fact the consequence of their social vulnerability and multiple dependencies.

Moreover, once migrants have reached their final destination, often in Europe, their undocumented status exacerbates their vulnerability to trafficking and exploitation practices with very few alternatives but to live in unsanitary conditions with inadequate food supplies and very limited or no access to health services.

Human trafficking has an impact on the individuals it victimizes in all areas of their lives. Every stage of the trafficking process can involve physical, sexual and psychological abuse and violence, deprivation and torture, the forced use of substances, manipulation, economic exploitation and abusive working and living conditions. The trauma experienced by victims of trafficking includes post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, alienation, disorientation, aggression and difficulty concentrating. Studies indicate that trauma worsens during the trafficking process and may persist far beyond the end of any exploitation.

The humanitarian consequences of human trafficking and its impact on individuals and societies need the special attention of RC/RC National Societies gathering in the XII Mediterranean Conference in San Marino. According to the **RC/RC Fundamental Principles and Values**, especially the Principles of **Humanity**, the International Movement of Red

¹⁰ OSCE Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, *Enhancing Co-operation to Prevent Trafficking in Human Beings in the Mediterranean Region* (November 2013).

Cross and Red Crescent must find common strategies to prevent, reduce and respond adequately to human trafficking and advocate in favour of the victims.

OBJECTIVES OF THE SESSION

The general goal of the session is to improve the commitment of RC/RC Mediterranean National Societies to face the humanitarian consequences of forced migration, with a particular focus on the human trafficking issues and on youth and migration. National Societies should cooperate in order to:

- a) Identify critical humanitarian needs arising from migration, in particular regarding youth and human trafficking;
- b) Define the requirement for support (including support that may be required in the areas of assessment, planning and advocacy);
- c) Transfer expertise and capacities in accordance with support requirements
- d) When required, develop additional skills through coordinated efforts.

Discussions should therefore focus on country-specific examples. To this end, part of the content of the session will be the presentations delivered by the National Societies to provide a background briefing, focusing on three main areas:

- 1) *Outline of the activities required to address the critical needs identified by the National Societies concerned.*
- 2) *Analysis and inventory of constraints and obstacles affecting the response.*
- 3) *Identification of specific skills and capacities required to overcome the constraints and obstacles.*

FORMAT

- Chaired by: Tunisian RC
- Introduced by: UNHCR
- Panellists: Hellenic RC; Italian RC; Malta RC; Turkish RC; PERCO (tbc)

The session will include two parallel workshops:

- 1) **Migration and Youth**
 - Chaired by: Monaco RC
 - Introduced by: Prof. Hassan Boubakri, Sousse University, Tunisia
 - Panellists: Italian RC; Moroccan RC; Turkish RC
- 2) **Human Trafficking**
 - Chaired by: Croatian RC
 - Introduced by: IOM
 - Panellists: Portuguese RC; RCSBH; RC of Serbia

Date: 27th May 2015

Time: 11:30am - 5pm (including 1.5 hrs lunch break; coffee break and 30 minutes to report back in plenary).