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**Human Resources Management and the Protection of  
Volunteer Workers in Conflicts**  
**Case Study: Syrian and Iraqi Arab Red Crescent Societies**

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## **Dedication**

This research paper is dedicated to my mother's memory in particular, and to my entire family for always supporting, helping, and standing by me.

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## **Acronyms**

HRM	Human Resources Management
ICRC	International Committee of Red Cross
ICRS	Iraqi Red Crescent Society
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
NGO	Non – Governmental Organization
NIAC	Non – International Armed Conflict
NSSA	National Society Self-Assessment
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
RCRC	Red Cross Red Crescent
SARC	Syrian Arab Red Crescent
UN	United Nations

## **Abstract**

The HRM function in organization is an area where security management and legislation eventually come together. The duty of care towards staff is HRM's raison d'être. Employment legislation can provide a robust framework for protection especially if the safety of the staff or volunteers has been compromised in a context like Syria and Iraq.

The objective of this work is to explore how the concept of duty of care is being implemented by the National Red Crescent Societies in Syria and Iraq as well as to highlight the gaps between policies and practices.

This research relies on literature reviews from internal policies of IFRC, reports collected from the internet, and an interview conducted with members of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society. It sees that a gap exists between policies and practices, mainly in employment legislation and insurance. It is important that SARC and ICRS have appropriate insurance policies and ensure adequate accident insurance for volunteers. The IFRC has to advocate for volunteers' security among its national societies, to establish volunteer friendly environment, to promote volunteers and volunteering and to pay attention to gender balance issues among these two national societies, SARC and ICRS, and to ensure that the lessons learned are strategically in place.

**Key words:** Volunteers, HRM, Duty of Care, protection, Risk, Security and lessons learned.

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## I. Introduction

*“There is no higher calling than when a person gives his or her own knowledge, skills, time or resources to someone in need of help or comfort. This is the fundamental principle of volunteerism”* IFRC (2011, p.4).

According to the Aid Worker Security Database (AWSDB, 2014), 610 workers from national and international organizations were killed, wounded or kidnapped in the field in 2013-2014. That figure does show a significant decrease in the number of victims (killed/injured/kidnapped) compared to 752 victims in 2012-2013, but the trend over the past decade shows a deeply concerning increase<sup>1</sup>. For the case of Syria, the year 2013 was considered the worst year since the outbreak of the conflict, with around 71 national and international humanitarian workers affected (killed/injured/kidnapped). These numbers show that the issue at stake is concerning reality. (Barker, 2014).

The year of 2013 has been the worst for the humanitarian workers, with 155 aid personnel killed in blanket. In 2014, data shows that at least 82 more humanitarian workers have been killed. While such violence occurs in a range of humanitarian settings, humanitarian personnel are in most danger in situations of tremendously violent conflict and collapse of fragile states. Indeed, three quarters of attacks such as killing, wound or kidnap on humanitarian personnel in 2013 took place in just five countries: Afghanistan, Syria, South Sudan, Pakistan, and Sudan. (Aid Worker Security Report, 2014). The report considered volunteers as humanitarian workers; therefore, volunteers are also included in these figures.

In such environments, humanitarian organizations face legal and operational challenges in reaching affected populations in need while protecting their own personnel from violence. Where states cannot guarantee the security of humanitarian actors, although it is their obligation<sup>2</sup>, organizations must negotiate and cooperate with a variety of stakeholders to secure space for humanitarian action. Thus, they are doing a lot of efforts to ensure their security and guarantee humanitarian access to affected populations. However, humanitarian organizations must have to

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<sup>1</sup><https://ilg2.org/2014/08/15/aid-workers-could-secure-better-protection-under-the-protection-of-civilians-mandate/>

<sup>2</sup>Common Article 1 Geneva Conventions

make sure not to jeopardize their adherence to the core humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

Moreover, according to IASC (2004), perceptions of links with political and military agendas have eroded acceptance of humanitarian actors as impartial, neutral and independent and the protective nature of the emblems of the humanitarian organizations. There have been significant efforts to reduce the risks and/or overcome the security constraints impeding humanitarian operations by adjusting risk awareness and management as well as operational procedures and arrangements to these new security challenges, and to develop alternative ways of working. Different approaches and modalities have been implemented in various contexts on the road to the objective of being able to maintain the humanitarian access to deliver aid to beneficiaries even in areas of sharp risk in a way that is unfailing with the core humanitarian principles (p.7).

The crisis in Syria has reached its fifth year; since the crisis began, 53 Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) volunteers have been killed on duty. SARC has more than 11,000 volunteers across the country<sup>3</sup>. The staff and volunteers of the SARC are risking their lives on a daily basis to provide life-saving assistance to civilians in desperate need.

Fighting in Iraq has displaced over 1.5 million people; The Iraqi Red Crescent Society (IRCS) has 100,000 volunteers of which 10,000 are working actively to assist displaced persons throughout Iraq<sup>4</sup>. IRCS workers and volunteers have paid a high price as they carry out their duties. They have been exposed to death, injury; kidnapping and imprisonment by armed men, militias and terrorists. In fact, volunteers are gradually more vulnerable to attacks. These are raising key issues and questions that should be answered in order to provide a protection to the volunteers in such situations and reduce their vulnerability. There are many factors that may contribute to security incidents such as poor understanding of the security situation, need of basic security awareness, no respect for the National Red Crescent emblem and international humanitarian law, poor coordination and lack of information sharing mechanism inside the organization, ineffective security management, lack of guidance, training, coaching and advice.

We acknowledge that the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescents Societies (IFRC) has considerable policies regarding volunteers which are aiming to protect and support volunteers who carry out volunteering activities for National Societies, occasionally or regularly.

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<sup>3</sup><http://sarc.sy/category/sarc-news/page/32/>

<sup>4</sup><https://en.ircs.org/>

So, bearing in mind that policies alone do not constitute a sufficient protection but surely will reduce the risk. Also, it is important to mention that IFRC does not manage national volunteers directly; IFRC societies member take the responsibility of volunteers on the national level.

SARC and IRCS have a moral obligation to take reasonable care for the security and health of their volunteers wherever they are working. Usually the legal environment for volunteers consists of state laws and policies. In addition, there are also Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement policies and principles, such as the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in particular the principle of Voluntary Service, which is obligatory for National Societies to adhere.

The current crisis in Syria and Iraq presents countless challenges to those seeking to engage in humanitarian aid. The escalation of the conflicts and an increased frequency of attack on aid workers continue to obstruct project work and threaten employees and volunteers' safety. Knowing the legal obligations regarding the duty of care the organizations owe, as well as being able to systematically reduce the risks faced, are essential aspects for protecting the interests of anybody working in such environments. However, by implementing an enabling duty of care these two National Red Crescent Societies may increase the ability to respond to crisis effectively, and protect or improve their reputation.

In this paper, I would like to explore more in depth the relationship among the Human Resources Management (what), volunteers(who) and in conflict setting(where) with focus on the volunteers as a weak point and. I would like to explore more particularly the role of Human Resources Management (HRM) in fulfilling the organization's duty of care and protection in order to reduce the vulnerability of volunteers' aid workers in conflict settings.

Our purpose is to identify current and emerging key issues with organizational support as well as the barriers to the success of protection for national volunteers working in current conflict in Syria and Iraq. We will also examine the HRM's policies and practices in these two national societies to figure out to what extent the HRM support these societies in ensuring security and safety for volunteer aid workers.

This will lead us to gather knowledge and data surrounding this issue taking into account that this case study have different time frame with possibility of policies being changed or adapted over time. However, it is important to note that, although it is about two cases from two countries, they share the same source of policies and regulations, that is to say the IFRC.

### *1.1 Research questions*

In carrying this study, we want to answer the following question: what are the challenges of HRM within SARC and ICRC in protecting volunteers?

In order to be able to answer the main question, we will answer the following two sub-questions which cover the HRM challenges, duty of care and protection issues:

To what extent the functions of HRM have been integrated into HRM daily work to provide sufficient and successful protection to the volunteers?

To what extent does the security management practice of IFRC fulfill the obligation of duty of care towards the volunteer aid workers?

### *1.2 Objective*

The first objective of this paper is to see how the concept of duty of care is being implemented by these two National Red Crescent Societies according to policies and guidelines already available.

The second objective of this research is to underline the gaps in the policies and review the lessons learned when it comes to the issue of protection and duty of care for the volunteers' aid workers.

### *1.3 Methodology*

For this paper we have used a qualitative approach we have specifically looked at the theoretical and practical issues raised by researchers while comparing the documents from Syrian and Iraqi national societies and IFRC documents. We chose them because they work with a huge number of volunteers and both of these national societies are facing similar issues regarding protecting their volunteers. Iraq and Syria in raging violent conflicts and the scale of humanitarian crisis is motivating more people to risk their lives by volunteering. Also, both countries share almost the same culture, history, language and religion.

We used semi- structured interview with key personnel to highlight the key issues related to the research topic. The interview has been conducted with the head of Youth & Volunteers Department from Iraqi Red Crescent Society (IRCS) and the questions were clustered to cover the main subject matter.

#### *1.4 Limitation*

The research carries certain limitations. Firstly, there is a lack of scholarly writing regarding the correlation between the duty of care and attack on humanitarian workers, especially local/national volunteers. Secondly, we have been able to conduct one interview only out of two. Thirdly, the interview has been conducted remotely. Spontaneous answers sometimes fail to show up from an interviewee when he knew might be recorded. Also, a technological disadvantage rose since the interviewees located in conflict zone.

#### *1.5 Structure of the paper*

The literature review is discussed in chapter one, where we focused mainly on concepts that helped us to do our analysis regarding raising issues related to volunteers, HRM, duty of care and interrelations between these concepts in the reality , HRM and risk management and HRM and volunteers specialties. In chapter two, we have analyzed the documents, internal and manual policies from Syrian and Iraqi Red Crescent societies as well as of the IFRC. The analysis took into consideration the existing gaps between written policies and practices, and other important legal issues regarding the vacant binding legal contract for volunteers. In chapter three, we provided some recommendations based on the lesson learned extracted from the literature review analysis and the interviews.

## II. Literature Review

### 2.1 Key concepts

#### 2.1.1 *Volunteers within Red Cross movement*

Shin and Kleiner (2003) define a volunteer as any individual “who offers him/herself to a service without an expectation of monetary compensation”. The reasons why people volunteer include opportunities for personal growth, recognition, achievement, and a desire to contribute to the community. These are some of the incentives for volunteering, however, in some contexts and situations religion is the biggest motivation for volunteering.

From this definition, volunteering is an activity with meaning that aligns with a person’s values and it is an opportunity to make a difference in other people’s lives, get the chance to develop their talents and new skills.

In general volunteering is an activity that can occur in any setting and it has a direct benefit to the community and the volunteer, whether the benefit is tangible or intangible, it is undertaken by choice, and it is unpaid. However, the volunteer may receive reasonable or appropriate reimbursement for expenses incurred that are associated with the role, and/or may receive a monetary or other kind of incentive/reward.

According to IFRC (2011), “Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers work for a more humane and peaceful world. They do this by delivering services directly to vulnerable people and through seeking to prevent and reduce vulnerability and exclusion where they can. They also govern and lead National Societies and their International Federation. Volunteering with the Red Cross Red Crescent is organized by recognized representatives of National Societies and is aimed at furthering its services and activities, always working in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. It is carried out by people motivated by free will, and not by a desire for material or financial gain, or by external social, economic or political pressure” (p.1).

Within the IFRC and its national societies there are different types of volunteers in emergencies, strategic choices have to be taken by National Societies in regard to how they train, maintain and deploy volunteers in emergencies.

According to IFRC volunteer emergencies guidelines, “They have broad categories of volunteers with which National Societies are likely to engage before, during and after emergencies: volunteers trained in disaster management with roles and responsibilities relating to emergencies.

The national societies are likely to rely on their support on a regular basis, depending on the regular frequency of emergencies” (p.10).

The central point of the IFRC definition of the volunteers within the Red Cross movement and its following explanation is the emergencies; usually national societies count on the volunteers to response to the natural disaster emergencies. So, they focus mainly on volunteers who have health, disaster risk reduction (DRR) and social services background, providing more training in the subject due to the nature of these societies work and the requirements of the job.

In addition, there is the concept of Spontaneous volunteers: The common trends of spontaneous volunteers happened during the 2005 Pakistan earthquake, the 2001 Gujarat Earthquake, the 2005 Hurricane Katrina in the United States, and the 2011 social unrest in the Middle East and North Africa. Spontaneous volunteering is inevitable as affected people are the first responder to the emergencies. However, the inclusion of spontaneous volunteers in the National Society’s emergency management plan may be challenging as they not have been part of volunteering activities with the national societies before the crisis, or may not have training or experience as a volunteer.

Another concept is that of corporate volunteers: Some National Societies have agreements with private sector companies which make human resources available to the National Society during emergencies. These could involve specific forms of expertise to support the National Society, and might be linked to in-kind or financial donations or to the needs and well being of volunteers”<sup>5</sup>.

There are other types of volunteers such as International volunteers and online volunteers but we will not address their work here as this dissertation focusing on national volunteers specifically those who are working on the ground responding to emergencies.

However, The IFRC does not recruit volunteers to work overseas. Nor do they coordinate exchange programmes between National Societies. A small number of National Societies do send some volunteers overseas and there are numbers of National Societies who receive international volunteers<sup>6</sup>.

It is important to explain that in the most IFRC’s national societies members beside the human resources department there is youth and volunteers department. For instance, ICRS depends on it

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid, P11.

<sup>6</sup><http://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/what-we-do/volunteers/>

in accomplishing its mission like attract volunteers, training, and youth and social activities. While HR Department plays a vital role in guiding, supporting and coordination for both staff and volunteers, it is the link between volunteers and regular staff.

It is important to study volunteers as they provide organizational efficiency in the sense that networking opportunities increase and paid employees develop due to teamwork and increased morale. Economic efficiency is a result of volunteer engagement as well; since costs will be saved because of the free services that volunteers offer otherwise the organization will be paid for. Besides, volunteers often contribute with new and fresh ideas, since they are not so closely associated to the organization, and can thereby bring innovation into the organization.

The Red Cross Red Crescent movement depends on the effort of the volunteers, without its volunteers, they may no longer exist<sup>7</sup>.

### *2.1.2 Human Resources Management*

As the definition of Roehling (2005) "The HR function is transforming its focus from the management of human resources to the development and maintenance of organizational effectiveness." (P.208).

According to Christine Williamson (2008) "Human Resources refer to the people, and the policies and practices that affect them in the workplace" (p.5). And "the management of the people and the staff policies and practice that enable an organization to carry out its work. This affects staff from the moment an individual contacts the organization in response to a job advertisement, to the time they leave the organization. Human resources management is about enabling staff to use their qualities in order to fulfill their role and contribute to the organization's mission and purpose" (p.5).

As related by Christine Williamson (2008) "Good human resource management is essential if organizations want to attract and retain good staff. If people see that an organization values its staff, they are more likely to apply for a job with the organization and more likely to stay once they are recruited. Good human resource management means that an organization reduces risk to its staff and reputation. It can do this by considering issues such as employment law, child protection and health and safety" (p.5).

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<sup>7</sup>Work for free? Motivation of voluntary workers in the Red Cross. Bachelor thesis within Business Administration  
Authors: Holmberg Erica, SöderlundKajsa

Fadel, Khaled (2012) illustrated that “human resources may be defined as the total knowledge, skills, creative abilities, talents and aptitudes of an organization’s workforce, as well as the values, attitudes, approaches and beliefs of the individuals involved in the affairs of the organization. It is the sum total or aggregate of inherent abilities, acquired knowledge and skills represented by the talents and aptitudes of the persons employed in the organization” (p.6).

From the last definition, it can be concluded that Human Resource Management (HRM) is the function within an organization that focuses on people as a human capital that deserve to take care about by training and involve them within the organization’s norms and culture. On the other hand, organization expect that their employees already have the values, attitudes and believes that go on the same direction of the message of the organization, it’s like an implicit contract, not official one, but reasonable and communicable between both parties, and this is why this definition is the most suitable when it comes to volunteer management, it’s focus on the believe of the individuals which is very important in volunteering since it’s about non financial reward.

Moreover, HRM has more emphasis on development and implementation of people strategies integrated with corporate strategies, for the purpose of ensuring the culture and values of the organization and contributing to the achievement of organizational goals.

HRM is a process that can be broken down into specific activities: job analysis, writing job descriptions, hiring, orientation, training, employer/employee interactions, performance appraisal, compensation and discipline (Armstrong, 2003). Guest and Conway (2004) suggested the HRM’s functions or practice have four key dimensions: commitment, flexibility, quality and integration. For Novac (2008), HRM provides a systematic check on a set of interrelated processes affecting and involving all members of an organization, processes that include human resource planning, recruitment, selection and evaluation, employee training and human resources development, motivating and rewarding employees (Wright & Boswell, 2002).

To sum up all these definitions and concepts and to link them with each other, one can say that HR is responsible of building, maintain and develop the architecture of the organization. It identifies the way the operations should be done through the defined and agreed procedure that complying with the known standards in the field. Once the policies and procedures are settled up and communicated among the staff in a proper way, administration and execution will be the easiest part of the HRM. However, the most complicated part is to figure out whether HRM can

deal with the staff and tolerate their behavior and attitudes to be in line with the strategy of the organization. It seems that people management is a comprehensive approach that works as a framework for strategy, structure, systems, staff, style, skills and competencies, and shared value among the staff in the organization. The ultimate goal of the people management is to get work done from others bearing in mind that people are the most valued assets to the organization; people should be protected, developed, retained through the procedures and administrations, this is for the sake of parties, people and the organization.

### 2.1.3 *Duty of care*

In the report of International SOS Foundation (2012), it is said that “an employer’s Duty of Care is the obligation to take practical steps to safeguard their employees against any reasonably foreseeable dangers in the workplace” (p.2).

In this definition we can have two understandings, a moral duty owed to someone or a legal obligation. These two understandings are not contradictory and often go in parallel.

In the following definition we will see that the legal obligation is mentioned clearly with referring impliedly to the moral duty. So according to Merkelbach and Kemp (2016), “Duty of Care is a legal obligation imposed on an individual or organization requiring that they adhere to a standard of reasonable care while performing acts that present a reasonably foreseeable risk of harm to others” (p.20 ). This second definitions mention an important principle in humanitarian sphere, “do no harm”, which represents the idea of avoid exposing people to further harm as a result of one actions including the volunteers themselves and not to expose them to physical hazards.

In her paper, Hoppe (2016) states that

“Duty of Care is most accurately described as a social contract – a combination of activities, actions, documents, policies, procedures, and practices which indicate that the organization is attempting to keep people safe and inform them of any harm they might face. Security practice is not duty of care. Security practice indicates duty of care. This is a small but fundamental difference. Even if an organization has every security policy and procedure considered best practice in a high risk environment they might still is found deficient in duty of care. Maybe they are hiring the wrong people for jobs, not paying them enough, not evaluating their performance, and requiring them to work too many

long hours. All of these are outside the parameters of security management but are also indicative of duty of care” (p.1).

To spot the link and the direct relationship between HRM and Duty of Care, Darby Roger (2011) states that

“In many ways, the human resources management (HRM) function in organizations is an area where security management and legislation ultimately come together. It could be argued that the duty of care towards staff is the HRM department’s reason for being. If the safety of a staff member has been compromised, employment legislation can provide a robust framework for investigation and protection. For this reason, it is vital that human resource professionals in the humanitarian aid work are aware of and involved in the design and implementation of risk, security strategies and legal practices as well” (p.4).

In this research we have found that the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS)<sup>8</sup> can use as a guide for implementing the concept of Duty of Care since it stated what they can expect from organizations and individuals delivering humanitarian assistance. The CHS describes the essential elements of principled, accountable and high – quality humanitarian action. The CHS can be used by any organization to bring better quality and greater accountability to all aspects of its work with communities, people affected by crisis and its staff as well.

The CHS is the result of a global consultation process. It draws together key elements of existing humanitarian standards and commitments. These include but are not limited to: The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief.

In the commitment number 8 which is supported by the quality criteria which stated that “staff<sup>9</sup> are supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably” (p.17).

Also it stated the three key actions to be undertaken by staff in order to fulfill the commitment:

- 1- Staff work according to the mandate and values of the organization and to agreed objectives and performance standards.
- 2- Staff adhere to the policies that are relevant to them and understand the consequences of not adhering to them.

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<sup>8</sup><https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard>

<sup>9</sup>Staff refers to: any designated representative of the organization, including national, International, permanent or short-term employees, as well as volunteers and consultants.

- 3- Staffs develop and use the necessary personal, technical and management competencies to fulfill their role and understand how the organization can support them to do this.

And in opposition, it stated six organizational responsibilities to support the consistent and systematic implementation of the three key actions throughout the organization:

- 1- The organization has the management and staff capacity and capability to deliver its programmes.
- 2- Staff policies and procedures are fair, transparent, non-discriminatory and compliant with local employment law.
- 3- Job descriptions, work objectives and feedback process are in place so that staff have a clear understanding of what is required of them.
- 4- A code of conduct is in place that establishes, at minimum, the obligation of staff not to exploit abuse or otherwise discriminate against people.
- 5- Policies are in place to support staff to improve their skills and competencies.
- 6- Policies are in place for the security and the wellbeing of staff.

So to summarize, the duty of care is a general legal duty on all the staff, volunteers and the National Societies to avoid carelessly or make volunteers or staff vulnerable to any kind of violence. It requires the whole things to be done to protect the health and safety of staff and volunteers while performing their duties. Duty of care to volunteers' means that National Societies provide to them a safe volunteering environment, information, instruction, supervision and the provision of health and safety advice. National Societies for each volunteering work to ensure carry out a risk assessment to identify hazards. On the other hand, volunteers to adhere to the policies and procedures of the National Society including the security protocol. So, duty of care ensures that volunteers are protected and are kept safe.

## 2.2 Type of the conflict: What does it mean to the SARC/ICRS and their volunteers

Iraq and Syria have overlapping political histories. Both states were created after the end of the World War 1 under the mandate of the League of Nations in 1920. Iraq was placed under the control of British rule, and Syria under French rule. Throughout the second half of the 20th century, the two countries were governed by repressive Arab Socialist Ba'ath party regimes. Although the Ba'ath party is thought to be a secular party that promotes an Arab nationalist ideology, in Iraq and Syria two minority groups wielded power.

Although Iraq and Syria also share a border and hold certain attributes in common, the two countries differ in their geography, demographic constituency, climate, and resources. Iraq is one of the world's largest exporters of crude oil, which has been the main driver of social and economic development. It has also had a longer period of successive wars—the Iran–Iraq war, the first Gulf War, the UN sanctions, and the 2003 invasion and occupation, which overthrew the Ba'athist regime. Nonetheless, wars in Iraq and Syria have some common features. Urban violence, widespread involvement of militia and non-state combatants, large-scale displacement to regional countries, and international military interventions has occurred in both.

Although both countries share the same culture, language and religion. Sectarianism is believed to be the reason of the current conflicts in these two countries with the divide of Sunni vs. Shia making the conflict is more religious than political<sup>10</sup>.

The situation in Syria constituted a non-international armed conflict. The ICRC stated:

As the situation has evolved, the ICRC has continued to monitor the conflict in the country. The ICRC concludes that there is currently a non-international (internal) armed conflict occurring in Syria opposing Government Forces and a number of organized armed opposition groups operating in several parts of the country (including, but not limited to, Homs, Idlib and Hama). Thus, hostilities between these parties wherever they may occur in Syria are subject to the rules of international humanitarian law. These rules impose limits on how the fighting can be conducted, with the aim of protecting the civilian population and persons not, or no longer, directly participating in the hostilities. (ICRC press release, 2012).

Accordingly, hostilities between these parties wherever they may take place in Syria is subject to the rules of international humanitarian law (IHL). These rules entail limits on how the fighting can be conducted, with the aim of protecting the civilian population and persons not, or no longer, directly participating in the hostilities.

This armed conflict with a number of actors has a negative impact on the operation of the national societies of these two countries. Although the National Societies support the public authorities in their own countries as independent auxiliaries of the government in the humanitarian field, they may not be perceived as neutral, from the other sectarian groups which are fighting against the government. Access and protection of the National Society's workers are the main issues as the result of this perception. For the HRM and volunteers, it is important to

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<sup>10</sup><http://www.fpri.org/article/2017/01/sectarianism-war-iraq-syria/>

understand the context they are working in otherwise it is the biggest threat to security. National volunteers may be targeted because of their religious or beliefs if they have been sent to the wrong places within the country.

It is important to mention that, humanitarian laws must be respected in order to protect the civilian and humanitarian workers including national volunteers; the parties to the conflict must not undertake indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks. Unfortunately, the conflict witnessing massive indiscriminate shelling, bombardment and gross violations/abuses of human rights and all violations of international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict.

The fundamental principle of international humanitarian law according to which a distinction must always be made between combatants and noncombatants is the cornerstone of the protection afforded to the personnel of humanitarian organizations. Persons who are not, or are no longer participating actively in the hostilities, enjoy general protection from the effects of military operations. Accordingly, civilians must be respected and protected in all circumstances. They must always be treated humanely, and any assault against their lives, their health and their physical or mental integrity is prohibited. They must not in any case be made the object of attacks and must never be subjected to torture or biological experiments.

This general immunity, which is also enjoyed by the personnel of humanitarian organizations, is strengthened by specific rules of international humanitarian law, some relating to the protection conferred by the red cross/red crescent emblem, and others concerning the protection of staff taking part in relief operations.

The 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols of 1977 reaffirmed and considerably developed this immunity by extending it to medical personnel and units as well as military and civilian medical transports. The protection provided by these instruments is represented visually by the red cross/red crescent emblem, which strengthens its legal basis. To take account of developments in armed conflicts, Additional Protocol 1 also gave States the option of identifying medical units and transports by distinctive signals, such as light signals, radio signals or electronic means of identification<sup>11</sup>.

In order to limit as far as possible misuses of the red cross/red crescent emblem, which are likely to impair its protective effect in the event of armed conflict, its use is subject to some very strict regulations. Thus, the emblem can be displayed only with the permission of the relevant

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<sup>11</sup><https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/intro/470>

authorities and under their control. It is essential for States to enact national legislation on the use and protection of the red cross/red crescent emblem, providing, in particular, for an effective monitoring system and punishment for grave misuse of it.

The main users of the emblem are medical personnel and other humanitarian workers in general, the medical services of the armed forces and civilian medical units and transports, such as hospitals and ambulances. Under the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, National Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies and other relief societies duly recognized and authorized by their government may provide the medical services of the armed forces with personnel and equipment, which will then be subject to military laws and regulations. Ambulances and first aid posts may display the emblem in peacetime, under certain conditions.

In addition, the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement have a special tie to the emblem. The National Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies may use it at any time to indicate the affiliation of their personnel, installations and equipment. They may also use it for protective purposes when serving as auxiliaries to armed forces medical services or when working under the auspices of the ICRC. In regards to the ICRC and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, they may display the emblem at any time and for all their activities.

A reminder should be given here concerning the special role which the ICRC is called upon to play in armed conflicts. The Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols expressly confer certain rights on the ICRC, such as that of acting as a substitute for Protecting Powers and that of access to prisoners of war and persons protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention. In addition, the Geneva Conventions give it the right to offer its services to the parties to the conflict. Generally speaking, the ICRC acts as the promoter and guardian of international humanitarian law, and in this capacity it works to ensure respect for this law, as well as its promotion, dissemination and development. In armed conflicts or other situations requiring the intervention of a specifically neutral and independent institution, the ICRC assumes the overall guidance.

Before closing this section, it is important to refer to the type of the relationship between the ICRC and the National Red Cross and the Red Crescent Societies, and what benefit is obtained of this relationship to the ICRC and SARC and their volunteers. There are four aspects in cooperation with the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and with their International

Federation in order to ensure a concerted, rational and rapid humanitarian response to the needs of the victims of armed conflict or any other situation of internal violence: operational coordination, coordinating the RCRC movement's components, National Society capacity building and the ICRC takes an active part in designing and implementing policies for the Movement.

In term of capacity building which it is very important for volunteers and staff as well, the ICRC passes on its expertise to the National Societies in the field of emergency aid and health care for those affected by conflict, promotion of international humanitarian law and of the Movement's Fundamental Principles, and mine-hazard awareness education<sup>12</sup>.

Thus, the conflict in Syria and Iraq means a lot for the national volunteers as it represent the threat to their lives, trouble their work and embedded the humanitarian access of Red Cross/Red Crescent National Societies and other relief organization. The risk could come from the government interference on the national society's work or misuse the permissible relationship with national society for political agenda, and that national society's workers and volunteers perceived as associated with or supporting the government so workers of these national societies could become subject to attack from the opposite militias. In response to such threat, SARC and ICRS don't have many options to protect their volunteers, but only by respecting the IHL from parties to the conflict and capacity building opportunities for the volunteers come within reach of these national societies by building and maintain the cooperation relationship with ICRC and other specialized organizations.

## 2.3 A continuous challenges of HRM in supporting volunteers working in conflict

### *2.3.1 Before, during and after the emergencies:*

It is important to mention that IFRC and its national societies usually work in the context of natural disaster rather than the conflict as it is happening currently in Syria and Iraq. That means there is a gap of experience to deal with in such a situation, but as discussed in the previous section this gap could be filled by strengthening the capacity building by the principal partner, ICRC.

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<sup>12</sup><https://www.icrc.org/eng/what-we-do/cooperating-national-societies/overview-cooperation-national-societies.htm>

The role of HRM and Youth and Volunteers Departments in managing and supporting volunteers working in conflict and crisis consist of three phases, before, during and after the crisis.

- First phase, before crisis (prior to emergencies):

Focus on policy and planning, understanding legal issues around volunteering, legal risk management and volunteer insurance. Key policies and procedures to have in place prior to an emergency may include; systems to assess, register and train volunteers, systems to lead and manage volunteers, legal risk management, appropriate insurance for volunteers involved in emergencies, provision for psychosocial support to volunteers involved in emergencies, and finally a contingency plan that provides clarity on volunteer mobilization. Also, there are some financial aspects to consider such as volunteer insurance, volunteer equipments, food and expenses (if necessary), training for volunteers in emergency and adequate volunteers record-keeping systems.

- Second phase, during crisis (during emergencies):

Managing all volunteers during emergencies requires the HRM to match the needs of the situation with the skills and experience of volunteers. In doing so, national society must ensure the safety and well-being of volunteers, as well as meeting the needs of vulnerable people. In matching individual volunteers to tasks, HRM should bear in mind volunteers' previous experience, skills and physical and emotional condition. Moreover, a primary concern of HRM should be volunteer safety. In assessing the situation and designing appropriate tasks for volunteers, HRM should regularly reflect on the level of risk involved in the activity, and how that risk can be managed. Additionally, it is important that all volunteers are briefed before they start work, and regularly updated on the changing nature of the emergency, any hazards, and any changes in policies and procedures by the national society, this ensures volunteers have an understanding of the current emergency situation and the national society's response, their task and objectives. The resources that will be required are communication and reporting lines and requirements, occupational health and safety, including self-care and available ongoing support. Ethical aspects and code of conduct and any administration requirements should also be included.

- Third phase, after emergencies:

Monitoring stress and fatigue levels of volunteers, and being able to provide psychosocial support, will be a vital part of the HRM intervention that should be offered after emergency. If

stress reactions are severe, increasing, or still present after a month, the recommendation is that volunteers should then be referred for professional treatment.

It is important to give volunteers the opportunity to debrief at the end of each shift as well as at the end of their deployment. This allows them to reflect on what went well and what went wrong, and improve the quality of the response. It is also an opportunity for the volunteers to discuss any situations they found challenging and request help or guidance or support.

Usually, in normal situations, the national society has a permanent level of activities and a permanent number of volunteers. In a disaster response situation, the national society scales-up activities and people is offering their volunteer time (peak of volunteers) then in new situation, national society scales-down to new equilibrium some volunteers stay and others prefer to leave. Some of the challenges of HRM within these two Red Crescent Societies in supporting their volunteers in conflicts may include aspects such as legal responsibility and protection of volunteers, policies, risk and security.

According to IFRC's *Volunteers in Emergences* guidelines "The volunteer has the right to receive the necessary information, training, supervision, personal and technical support for the discharge of their duties. Insurance against the risk of accidents and illness related to the volunteer activity, the right to work in safe, secure and healthy conditions. The right to be reimbursed for reasonable expenses related to the volunteer activity, as well as to be provided with basic subsistence support for food and accommodation whenever the volunteer assignment so requires. Appropriate accreditation, describing the nature and length of time of the volunteer activity, as well as certification acknowledging the volunteer's contribution at the end of the service."(p.21).

### *2.3.2 HRM and Risk Management:*

Although the relationship between HRM and Duty of care has already been discussed in this paper, this part of literature review has the purpose to link between HRM and Risk Management. Risk management is everyone's job, including the volunteers since they have clear job descriptions or terms of references (TOR) that shows them their duties and responsibilities.

Part of the role and responsibility of HRM is engaging with the people in the organization. HRM has the capabilities to motivate and train, and nevertheless urge people to have a risk

management perspective. The implication of HRM in risk management determines risk management to involve human resource risks.

When discussing HR risks it is hard not to consider the psychological implications. Risk affects people and the diversity of psychological characteristics determines different risk-taking behavior. One important factor that affects risk perception and risk attitude is emotion.

HRM need to consider the emotions of the employees and volunteers and know that fear will create a risk unfavorable attitude. Nevertheless, it is very important to understand that people influence one another. Therefore, it seems that it would be better if the work environment consists of people with similar skills and characteristics and where teamwork is promoted.

For ICRS and SARC, they have good and collective work environment but the sense of security among the staff and volunteers still will be a challenge especially for volunteers who join for the first time without any emergency work experience. HRM and other expertise sections in ICRS and SARC should create and adopt a sense of security culture within the organization, by raising the awareness of staff and volunteers about the risk and security, buy-in the idea of sense of security, it will become part of their personal attributes that bring benefits in return to both workers and the National Societies in term of protection.

### *2.3.3 Specific challenges regarding security and perception:*

As discussed in the general background section, the majority of population of both countries – Syria and Iraq – is divided historically to sunnah and shitte and that is what driving the ongoing conflict currently. So in terms of recruitment, an organization should follow the neutrality with no discrimination based on religion or ethnicity, but at the same time HRD should be aware and has a sense of security before sending them to an area that may be perceived as enemy and been exposed to hazard. Screening and background check is very important in this context, especially counter terrorist check, the region is scene for many terrorist groups with high recruiting tactics and strategies. Also, most national societies in the region don't ask volunteers to sign a formal and legal contract and Syrian and Iraqi societies are not exception, in this way, HRD makes that every single volunteers has signed a contract regardless the length or nature of the volunteering. For the HR best practice, gender balance is required in workplace and it give good remark for the humanitarian organizations, however it could be an issue for these two national societies with difficult possibility to be applied because the culture and the gender role in the society. Other

challenge for HRD is mobilizing and evacuation, any evacuation plan for volunteers who deploy or send to the front lines must be flexible enough to adjust to the situation or emergency, communication strategies, tools and means to be in place.

In war zones it is important for humanitarian organizations to create a culture of security awareness, providing a comprehensive understanding of the root causes of the most common security vulnerabilities that impact volunteers, staff and organization itself. This kind of scheme could fit better in an organization that has regular staff who expected to work for the organization for long time, but in case of national societies with volunteers it would be so challenged, volunteers come and go with no sufficient legal liability or intention to work long for the organization, in this manner, it is difficult for HRM to formulate such a plan for the long run. In most cases, they do induction training before deploying the volunteers, which is probably not sufficient enough to equip the volunteers with security awareness.

Although it could not be a human resource issue, the disrespect of the IHL and the Geneva conventions by conflict parties applying the principles of discrimination and proportionality ease the targeting of national volunteers while doing their humanitarian work. The issue is out of human resource management mandate and larger than it to be controlled by the national society itself, however, human resource management needs to be aware of such contexts and to keep updated communication with specialized organizations that are working on the subject such as ICRC.

### **III. Discussion**

Specifically, this part will discuss the motivation of the volunteers, training and development, role clarity, supportive relationship between regular staff and volunteers, informal communication between staff and volunteers, and complaint mechanism. Particularly, it looks at how all these topics together, and the interrelations between them, participate in providing protection to the volunteers, and as well as in building solid organizational commitment. Likewise, it looks at how the current role of HRM, Youth and Volunteers departments' participate in supporting and shaping the motivation of the volunteers. This section is also an opportunity to emphasize the link and the interrelation among the core concepts of the paper. That is to say motivation, protection, duty of care and HRM and volunteers previously discussed in the literature review and see how this interrelation influences volunteerism.

#### *3.1 Protection measures*

Based on an interview with Dr. Yas (24 June 2017), volunteers and the regular staff are aware of and involved in the design and implementation of risk and security strategies. HRM, Youth & Volunteers departments play a vital role in the IRCS on the strategic level. The organization is following a bottom-up decision process. In the implementation level, IRCS performs risk/threat assessment before sending volunteers to front line. In many emergencies cases in recent years, ICRS didn't send the volunteers because of the security situations. Moreover, HRM investigated the incident that happened and took precautions measures to prevent such incidents happen again in the future.

Also, there is a complaint mechanism in place in IRCS. Indeed, volunteers have a committee (volunteers committee) to represent them in the top management. One of its responsibilities is to ensure that the voice of volunteers is heard and the management is not far away from the volunteers' day-to-day operations.

#### *3.2 Link between Motivation and Protection*

In general, volunteers have intrinsic motivation; therefore regular employees and volunteers have different motivations and view the commitment to their jobs differently. But in the case of national societies of Red Cross and Red Crescent "it is totally different since the national societies consider volunteering is the heart of these national societies and when it comes to

commitment there are no differences between volunteers and regular staff on the way they do the job and show the commitment”. This is the insights we got from an interview with Dr.Yas from Youth & Volunteers department, ICRS (Interviewed on 24-06-2017).

Volunteers’ commitment and satisfaction are influenced by recognition, possible future opportunity and training. ICRS makes every effort to retain the volunteers by encouraging them to be in contact with the National Society after their and try to show a kind of recognition after their assignment is completed to give them adequate recognition. Consistent and ongoing recognition is the best thing the ICRS does for the volunteers. Volunteers may lose motivation if they feel their job and accomplishment are not being valued.

On a personal level, volunteer work shows the National Society that the volunteer are generally caring and a committed person. Many volunteers are motivated simply by the desire to do good things for others. In addition, to get a permanent job with the National Society, they need to have a volunteering experience within the RCRC movement in their specialized area and first of all the suitable qualifications. However, not everyone volunteering with ICRS gets a permanent job. Actually, most of the volunteers start as such and continue like that for very long time or even for their entire life. Some already have their jobs and volunteering as a part time or work on loan from their organizations.

In terms of retention, volunteers stay when they have a sense of belonging to the National Society. In the same way, satisfaction and learn new things that keep them motivated. They leave when there are no meaningful activities, when they feel unappreciated or unsupported, and especially when it becomes related to their security and health.

We will discuss some functions that HRM perform in these two national societies which may result directly in providing protection to the volunteers or enhance the existing capacity or at least diminish their vulnerability and build the self-efficacy as well.

### *3.2.1 Training and development*

Training and development play a vital role not only in enhancing technical skills aspects but in forming the National Society culture and set the volunteers norms, values and attitude to be in line with the National Society vision and mission.

Specialized security training equips volunteers with required skills in emergencies and deep their knowledge beyond the simple security protocols in such context and of course contributes in enhancing the culture of security among volunteers.

By engaging in the training and development programs volunteers become more resilient and having willingness to incorporate their expectations with the organization message so even if their expectations are not fully covered or satisfied, these expectations will be adjusted and volunteers continue supporting the organization. Generally, the expectation of volunteers' is influenced also by the expectation of their National society. That is why each party should know what to expect from the other and understand how to support each other. That leads to the importance of the job clarity in the relationship between the volunteers and the national societies, which can assist and lead to minimize the risk and provide some sort of security in the emergencies.

### *3.2.2 Job clarity and expectations*

Volunteers need to know how to do their jobs and be fully aware of their jobs in order to carry out them out well. Volunteers need also to know what the National Society expectations are for them. They need to have a solid understanding of their supervisors and vice versa. Moreover, in an emergency context it would be better for volunteers to have knowledge about their peers' duties in order to maintain good level of coordination and complementarities so the operation does not stop because of the absence of someone for any reason. The role clarity supports volunteers and the national societies to reach high performance. It facilitates also the communication between the volunteers themselves and other staff in the societies. It will give clear vision for volunteers on how to act and react in emergencies and difficult situations, take rapid decision and take full responsibility of the consequences based on what is clearly stipulated in the job description. Moreover, it prevents the conflict and enhances the leadership role as well as keeping the harmony between the team.

The relationship between job satisfaction and role clarity is positive relationship. The volunteers want to take tasks that match up to their personal interests. They like to feel that their work is important and that it gives them a chance to use their valued skills and abilities. The importance of job satisfaction is that it is crucial for volunteers who work in hardship areas, it keeps them well motivated.

In the case of ICRS and SARC volunteers, one of the building block of role clarity, is that from beginning it should be explained if the job holder will be exposure to the hazard or not, if so, to what extent, and how to deal with it, so volunteers be aware about the hazard attached to their job that will carry out.

### *3.2.3 Supportive relationship between regular staff and volunteers*

In practice, volunteers prefer colleagues and subordinates who share their values and who help them to perform their duties. They value supervisors who consider them as individuals before anything else, who show respect for them, communicative and allow some participation in decisions making process. In case of Iraqi Red crescent, the regular staffs provide the required support to the volunteers including guidance, care and peer – to –peer training.

The ICRS has diversity manpower; however, since its national society the volunteers and regular staff to some extent have the same social background which ease the flow of this relationship.

As the relationship between regular staff and volunteers is very strong, so automatically it enhanced the informal communication with the volunteers as well as the formal one.

One of the associated challenges is that some volunteers themselves come from vulnerable groups and they need to take care of themselves first before they start providing their services to others. Nevertheless, to minimize the risk of this issue, the ICRS provides its volunteers with psychosocial support in a regular way for all staff and volunteers through its program “care for volunteers”. For IFRC and its members, post-disaster psychosocial support is an obligation, not an option.

### *3.3 The gap between policies and practices*

In ICRS, the volunteers agree and sign the code of conduct and volunteer policy as an internal work regulations but the issue is that no contract is signed, so there is no legal binding in framing the relationship between the volunteer and ICRS. Moreover, existing gaps between IFRC volunteers and national volunteers policies not been addressed yet, the ICRS do not have an insurance policy for the volunteers although there is international insurance policy from IFRC for all its national societies members.

When the IFRC Volunteering Policy was adopted in 1999, one of the General Assembly’s recommendations was that all National Societies should review their existing policies and

procedures. The policy encourages National Societies to adopt their work policies at country level, and the Volunteer Policy Implementation Guide (2002) was developed to support this process. Since then, many steps have been taken in the volunteering development of National Societies. The National Society Self-Assessment (NSSA) shows that National Societies that have adopted a volunteering policy demonstrate better volunteer recruitment and retention<sup>13</sup>. However, this investigation and Interview conducted confirm that SARC and ICRS are among those not having a comprehensible volunteer policy but instead they have a volunteer development plan.

As mentioned earlier in this paper, employment legislation can provide a robust framework for investigation and protection for the volunteers and the National Society itself. It protects the National Society from being sued by volunteers in case of any incident might happen for volunteers and things became out of control of the National Societies. The volunteering contract serves as a better reference in such case. It also gives volunteers the right to sue his/her National Societies in case of any commit a breach. It keeps the balance of the relation between the volunteer and the national society.

### *3.4 The link between individual positioning and protection*

As mentioned before National volunteers might be targeted from parties to the conflicts as well as locals may perceive nationals from another region or province to be just as much of an outsider, and their association with certain ethnic or religious groups, clan affiliation or economic privilege may even add additional risks. So this is considered one of the challenges for human resources management when it comes to the recruitment techniques and candidate's background check and verifications. The other issue, it could be that the volunteer may have his/her own political or religion opinion, which makes him or her little neutral. In such cases, the code of conduct of these national societies should address it and make it clear to the volunteer that the organization may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature<sup>14</sup>. Volunteers must work for the name of the National Societies not for their own benefits. It would be difficult to do the work without the commitment to the neutrality principle.

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<sup>13</sup>[http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/volunteers/Taking\\_Volunteers\\_Seriously\\_2007\\_EN.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/volunteers/Taking_Volunteers_Seriously_2007_EN.pdf)

<sup>14</sup><http://www.ifrc.org/en/who-we-are/vision-and-mission/the-seven-fundamental-principles/neutrality/>

## **IV. Conclusion and recommendation**

### *4.1 Conclusion*

This paper has attempted to identify the issues of protection of the two National Societies volunteers who have been working in the hottest spot in the world for the recent years and maybe for many years to come. The lack of scholarly writing regarding the correlation between the duty of care and attack on local/national humanitarian workers, especially volunteers is one of the limitations of this paper. In order to overcome this obstacle it focused more on internal policies and regulations in SARC, ICRS and IFRC.

In an attempt to answer the main question and its following sub-questions, it highlighted the challenges of HRM within SARC and ICRS, the role and functions of HRM and linked them to the concept of duty of care. We tried to see how the output of this relation could be tangible and reflected in the daily operation for the volunteers in terms of risk and security in order to be protected. So, in the literature review we came up with the triangular relationship consisting of these three spheres: Volunteers, HRM and Duty of Care.

By examining the existing policies and guidelines that assisted us to underline the gap in the policies versus practices, the interviews conducted helped to answer the broad and specific questions. They brought to light positive points that are not reflected in the written policies such as the relationship between volunteers and regular staff from one side and between volunteers themselves on the other side.

We used an analysis done by ICRC regarding the qualification of the ongoing conflicts in Syria and to reflect on what does it mean to volunteers in terms of protection within the SARC. The review also includes the partnership model between ICRC, IFRC, and these National Societies within RCRC movement as a framework for this relationship.

In discussion part, it was found that motivation and protection, training and development, job clarity and expectations of volunteers are the most important elements of motivation that contribute to the volunteers' work.

One of the main findings of this paper is the gap between policies and practices in these two national societies, especially when it comes to employment legislation and insurance. Based on the gaps identified, one can make some recommendations that can help addressing better the identified gaps and improving the work of national societies and volunteers.

#### 4.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the literature review and the interviews conducted during the research process. The recommendations are related to the gap and challenges identified in the previous chapters.

##### **1. Advocate within the IFRC and national societies for volunteer security**

There is a need to increase advocacy within IFRC in order to ensure and support these two National Societies to adopt volunteer management systems, procedures and practices so that they can better support and manage volunteers. One should also advocate and enhance ICRS and SARC to work in establishing volunteer friendly environment by creating appropriate security rules for working in conflicts and dangerous situations.

It is important that SARC and ICRS have appropriate insurance policies and ensure adequate accident insurance for volunteers.

##### **2. Promote volunteers and volunteering in order to increase the supply of volunteers in the market**

Recognize the value of a diverse volunteer workforce, and vigorously take on volunteers, irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender, religious belief, disability or age. They should remove physical, economic, social and cultural barriers to involvement, and recruit volunteers based on their potential.

Afford volunteers with access to accredited learning and personal development opportunities so as to help them to better undertake their contracted tasks or roles, as well as to motivate them to grow their skills and capacity and undertake future roles within these national societies.

SARC and ICRS should also work with the corporate sector and other partners to promote an enabling environment for volunteering in national life.

##### **3. Improve gender equity in recruitment process**

In the literature review and discussion, this aspect was emphasized on the background check as the most important step in the recruitment process as the situation in the Syria and Iraq requires.

On the other hand, the interview showed that, the volunteers of IRCS share the same values, believes and almost come from the same social background and that have a significant positive effect on the relations between the volunteers themselves and staff as well.

Similarly, the interview highlighted that the percentage of men against women is significant. That is why; IRCS and SARC should ensure that there is an appropriate participation of men and women in their programs for effective and gender-sensitivity delivery of services and activities. These organizations' should also reflect on the relevance of volunteer's roles with respect to the needs and attitudes of the community or affected population. For instance, in the event that a woman wants to be attended by a woman health care provider, the National Societies should be equipped with personnel so that there are both men and women to provide services to the affected population.

But it is understood that because of the security situations and cultural issues in these two countries, it would be very difficult to keep the required balance and not deter female volunteers. In addition these two National Societies should address the issue of diversity in volunteers' recruitment and avoid restricting recruitment to certain segments of society, refugees and other marginalized groups.

#### **4. Lesson learned strategy**

IFRC has many lessons learned strategies. For example, experience and lessons from Strategy 2010 (now IFRC implementing Strategy 2020), Youth Engagement Strategy and previous operations response such as to the Zika virus. However, there is no lesson learned strategy regarding protecting the national societies volunteers. Maybe one of the reasons is the fact that the operation is still ongoing as the conflict in Syria is still ongoing and the fact that the context has been changed and become different from what it was earlier.

SARC and ICRS should examine the legal protection of volunteers and ensure that the lessons learned are strategically in place. They should also link the lessons learned to training and development so they can use them later. There is a risk for volunteers to harm themselves, or harm other people and property, when they are not properly trained and equipped. The lessons learned could also help in designing simulation exercises and regular training in order to maintain volunteers' skills and to achieve intended results.

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## **VI. Annex:**

### Interview questions

#### **Practice HRM**

1. How do you describe the relationships between staff and volunteers?
2. Does National Society ask volunteers to sign legal contract?
3. Does National Society pay small stipend or any kind of financial assistant to volunteers to perform their duties?
4. What are the recruitment techniques for recruiting volunteers? Is HR do some background check for candidates?
5. Is there any complaint mechanism for Volunteers?
6. Does HRM implement any kind of investigation and root causes analysis after incident happened?
7. Do you think HRM play a vital role in the National Society on the strategic level? Why/why not?
8. Does HRM consider the sense of security when hiring volunteers?
9. How the National Societies communicate with the volunteers?
10. Is there any psychosocial support program? Is HR supporting volunteers following a traumatic incident?

## **Policies**

11. Are insurance policies in place and in align with IFRC international insurance policy?
12. Does National Society implement the policies of IFRC? With which results? How they work?

## **Security**

13. What are the protections means that National Society use to protect volunteers?
14. Is there any lesson learned? Does National Society share them with staff and volunteers in order to minimize the risk of working in insecure environment?
15. Are the volunteers and staff aware of and involved in the design and Implementation of risk, security strategies and legal practices in their national society?
16. Has the National Societies performed risk/threat assessment before sending volunteers to front lines?
17. Have consistent efforts been made to communicate and train volunteers to make them aware of security and their role protecting themselves?

## **Perception**

18. National societies have to work with national government, how you describe the relationships between your red crescent and the government or local authorities? How people perceive this relationship?
19. How volunteers of National Society are perceived in the field from civilian and armed groups?