

OUR CHALLENGE FOR THE FUTURE: RETHINKING MIGRATION FROM A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Global Compact for Migration, from a global perspective to local actions

After years of field experience, study and research, we can recognize that migration is no longer an emergency. Migration, writ large, is structural: it is a sociological phenomenon embedded in the history of humanity.

Since the beginning of humanity, people have moved from one place to another; looking for better hunting or living conditions; moving from one country to another to find better economic opportunities, or a safe place where children can grow up. Migration is embedded in our DNA.

Of course, there are still *migration emergencies* in the world: migrants attempting to cross the sea, people forced to leave their homes following wars or persecution, or populations forced to move because of natural disasters or climate change.

We should envisage how to approach this phenomenon in a structured and strategic way, preparing in case of emergencies, but also working on durable solutions to make communities more resilient. In parallel, we must support the development of countries of origin to make migration a truly voluntary endeavour.

In upcoming years, talking about migration will require more courage, more leadership, and more truth. Otherwise, we will lose the opportunity to build a better world where migration is no longer an act of desperation.

To do so, we need not only leadership, but also a collective engagement at different levels: international and local. Migration should be considered a global phenomenon realized and felt locally.

For these reasons, collective engagement of different actors from different perspectives will be crucial: public authorities, UN agencies, international NGOs, and local NGOs, working together on cross-cutting matters while employing a global and cross-regional view. We must start to rethink migration “out of the box”. Now.

As part of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (RCM), we, at the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), approach migration mainly from a humanitarian perspective: Red Cross and Red Crescent actors respond to humanitarian needs and help reduce the suffering of populations, without seeking to encourage, discourage, or prevent migration.

As auxiliaries to States in the humanitarian field, National Societies work to address the protection and assistance needs of migrants, following RCM’s Fundamental Principles: Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity, and Universality. At the same time, as stated in the [Movement Statement on Migrants and our Common Humanity](#) adopted by the Council of Delegates of the International RCM in 2019, we stand ready to support States in the implementation of the Global Compacts on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and on refugees (GCR), always in accordance with our Principles.

At the IFRC, we are convinced that minimizing the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin (GCM Objective 2); providing accurate and timely information at all stages of migration (GCM Objective 3); addressing and reducing vulnerabilities in migration (GCM Objective 7); saving lives and establishing coordinated international efforts on missing migrants (GCM Objective 8); preventing, combatting, and eradicating trafficking in persons (GCM Objective 10); and providing access to basic services for migrants (GCM Objective 15), can be the pillars of a coordinated work from this dual level perspective (global and local) as the best approach to migration.

For these reasons, since 2020, as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, we are deeply engaged in the process of the Regional Review of the GCM in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), partaking in stakeholders' consultations at a regional and cross-regional level.

Moreover, this first Regional Review in the MENA region is happening during one of the most challenging and complex crises of the last decades, the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the outbreak, all Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies in the MENA Region have done their best to include migrants in their response activities: through advocacy, by translating all messages related to the virus in languages spoken by migrants, by distributing hygiene kits, food parcels, and personal protective equipment, and by supporting public authorities in first response and during the sanitation activities.

As IFRC, we have also technically supported all the Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies to preserve the rights of migrants in accessing basic services during the pandemic. And this has reminded us every day how far we are from achieving a world where migration is safe, orderly, and regular.

The Regional Review of the GCM will be a crucial moment to discuss how to translate the words of the GCM into reality and turn its principles into concrete actions. And in our case, always looking at the fundamental principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

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