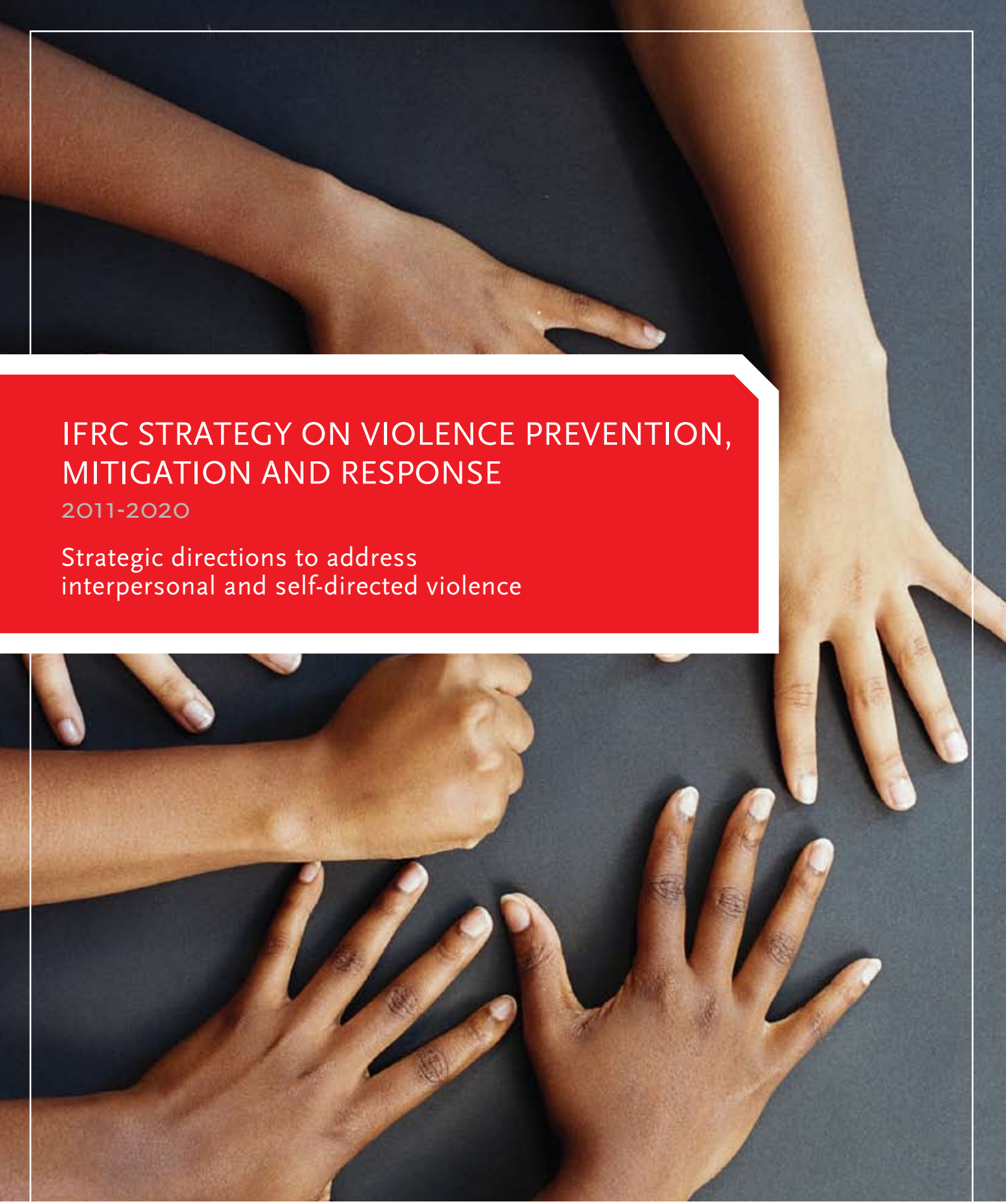

# IFRC STRATEGY ON VIOLENCE PREVENTION, MITIGATION AND RESPONSE

2011-2020

## Strategic directions to address interpersonal and self-directed violence

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

IN SUPPORT OF strategy2020

Photo: Brian Powell/IStock

# FOREWORD

Among the continuing and tragic vulnerabilities to humans around the world is violence. Violence is pervasive, often hidden and secretive; when people hurt themselves or others the humanitarian consequences are catastrophic. Regardless of what form violence takes, who it targets, where it occurs, or how it is justified, its toll is undeniably disastrous.

The 2007 Declaration "*Together for Humanity*", adopted at the *30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent* recognized violence as one of the world's greatest humanitarian challenges. Conference participants – all National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, States parties to the Geneva Conventions on International Humanitarian Law, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (hereafter "IFRC") and the International Committee of the Red Cross (hereafter "ICRC") - expressed their commitment to intensify efforts to prevent, defuse or mitigate violence, particularly in urban settings.

Based on these commitments, the IFRC Secretary General made "*the development of an IFRC Global Strategy on Violence*" (hereafter "the Strategy"), a 2008-2009 secretariat objective, as approved by the Governing Board in May 2008.

In December 2008, the secretariat's principles and values department, together with the Canadian Red Cross, organized a three-day high-level meeting on violence, gathering 22 National Societies[1] active in violence prevention, mitigation or response from all over the world (hereafter "the high-level meeting"). In addition there was also participation from the ICRC, WHO, UNICEF, UNHCHR, the Paolo Freire Institute and Boston University School of Public Health.

The high-level meeting determined a framework from which to build a global strategy, a definition of violence, the IFRC vision and mission regarding violence, as well as guiding standards for the secretariat and National Societies in their work to address violence.

This Strategy is the result of a collaborative process involving a Network of National Societies[2] under the leadership of the principles and values department, the Canadian Red Cross and the Spanish Red Cross. The network has co-shaped and developed the strategy through the following steps:

(i) survey and questionnaire on National Society violence prevention, mitigation and response activities and approaches
(ii) thematic papers on a cross-section of types of violence (see appendix 1)
(iii) comparative analysis of current National Society practice in violence prevention, mitigation, response
(iv) feedback on previous drafts of the Strategy.

**Bekele Geleta**
Secretary General

[1] Argentine Red Cross, Cameroon Red Cross, Canadian Red Cross, Colombian Red Cross, Guyana Red Cross, Honduran Red Cross, Indian Red Cross, Irish Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, Jamaican Red Cross, Kenya Red Cross, Liberian Red Cross, Mongolian Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Salvadorean Red Cross, Samoa Red Cross, Red Cross of Serbia, Sierra Leone Red Cross, South African Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross, and Sri Lanka Red Cross

[2] The network on violence is currently formed by National Societies which participated in the high-level meeting on violence (see footer 1 on this page) plus the Australian Red Cross and the Cambodian Red Cross

Our special gratitude goes to Sandra Gutierrez (Senior Officer Violence Prevention as Staff on loan from Spanish Red Cross), Gurvinder Singh (Advisor, Violence Prevention, International Operations, Canadian Red Cross); Judi Fairholm (National Director, RespectED: Violence and Abuse Prevention, Canadian Red Cross) and Dr. Katrien Beeckman (Head, P&V department) for their leadership and commitment in driving the Strategy development forward.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Violence** touches everyone – it is a global humanitarian catastrophe that affects all continents, countries and communities. The most prevalent types of violence are self-directed and interpersonal, which constitute the scope of this strategy. The Strategy **excludes collective violence** such as armed conflicts and internal strife; "violence" within this strategy pertains to self-directed and interpersonal violence.

Although violence is often kept hidden and secret, it can occur at any time, in any place, and is manifested as physical, emotional/psychological, sexual violence or neglect. Regardless of age, gender, background, or status, violence degrades, diminishes and denies human dignity, respect, health, and life; its toll on economies and community-development is profound.

While violence is pervasive and complex, it is not inevitable. Violence can be prevented, mitigated and responded to. For this to occur, the underlying root causes of violence must be addressed through comprehensive, evidence-based, persistent and coordinated action.[1]

The humanitarian catastrophe of violence has been recognized in Red Cross Red Crescent statutory decisions for decades and has gained more prominence in recent years. Two significant milestones mark the increased emphasis placed on violence: in 1999, the *28th International Conference of the Red Cross Red Crescent* presented an official plan of action on non-discrimination and non-violence followed by the 2007 *30th International Conference* where violence was declared one of the greatest humanitarian challenges facing the world.

Within the IFRC, there is considerable experience illustrating clear and significant roles in preventing, mitigating and responding to interpersonal and self-directed violence. Through the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values, the commitment and dedication of millions of volunteers, community-based approaches, and the capacity to forge key partnerships, the IFRC is positioned to make a powerful contribution to end this humanitarian crisis. By mobilizing the power of humanity to address the root causes of interpersonal and self-directed violence, reduce its burden, and advance the safety and dignity of vulnerable people the IFRC can nurture a culture of non-violence at local and global levels.

This Strategy has been prepared by the IFRC to provide specific strategic directions to National Societies and their federation to support the strategic aims and enabling actions of the IFRC Strategy 2020, as each one of them relates to violence prevention, mitigation and response.

The current document observes the following structure:

- Part 1 is an introduction that provides the purpose and scope of the Strategy; defines key concepts and explains the basis of the Strategy
- Part 2 provides an overview of **why violence is a great humanitarian challenge** through a description of its impact, categories of vulnerable people, root causes and the inter-relatedness of violence with other humanitarian challenges
- Part 3 defines **where we stand now** as the IFRC in terms of our statutory and operational framework and activities in the area of violence prevention, mitigation and response
- Part 4 describes **where we are going** through an overview of specific, measurable actions targeting each of the strategic aims and enabling actions of Strategy 2020.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE STRATEGY

The purpose of the *IFRC Strategy on Violence Prevention, Mitigation and Response* is to provide specific strategic directions to National Societies and their Federation to implement the strategic aims and enabling actions of IFRC Strategy 2020 as each of them relates to violence in the forms of self-directed and interpersonal violence including urban violence. The Strategy **does not cover collective** violence which includes armed conflict and internal strife, as defined in the *Agreement on the organization of the international activities of the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – the Seville Agreement*.[2]

## 1.2 TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

**Violence**

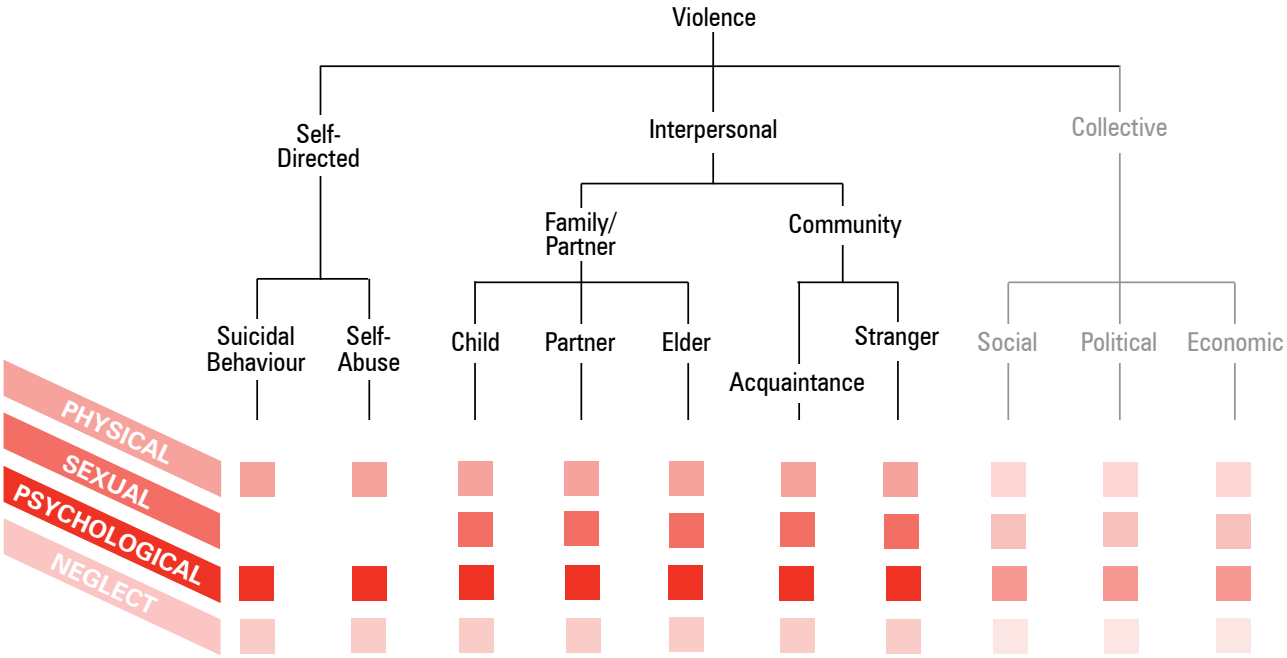
The IFRC has defined violence as : "*the use of force or power, either as an action or omission in any setting, threatened, perceived or actual against oneself, another person, a group, a community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in death, physical injury, psychological or emotional harm, mal-development or deprivation*."[3]

High-level meeting on violence, Geneva, 2008

**Categories, types and forms of violence**

According to the World Health Organisation[4] (hereafter "WHO"), violence can be viewed under three categories: self-directed, interpersonal and collective. Each category has various types of violence. Cutting across these categories and types are different forms of violence: psychological, physical, sexual and neglect.

FIGURE 1. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION'S TYPOLOGY OF VIOLENCE



### CATEGORIES OF VIOLENCE FALLING UNDER THE SCOPE OF THE STRATEGY:

***Self-directed violence*** violence refers to *violence by an individual against oneself*. It is subdivided into suicidal behaviour and self-abuse. Suicidal behaviour includes suicidal thoughts, attempted suicides and completed suicides. Self-abuse covers self-mutilation and substance abuse or misuse.[5]

***Interpersonal violence*** is *violence that occurs between individuals*. Interpersonal violence occurs between people who know each other; it can occur in homes, schools, workplaces and institutions. Examples include child abuse, bullying and harassment, family violence, and abuse of the elderly.

***Community violence*** is a type of interpersonal violence, that takes place at the community level, (e.g. in urban settings) between people who may or may not know one another.[6] Common forms of community violence include gang violence, violence by supporters of sports teams, mob attacks and sporadic crime.

### CATEGORIES OF VIOLENCE FALLING OUTSIDE OF THE SCOPE OF THE STRATEGY:

***Collective violence*** is *"the instrumental use of violence by people who identify themselves as members of a group - whether this group is transitory or has a more permanent identity - against another group or set of individuals, in order to achieve political, economic or social objectives."*[8] Examples include genocide, warfare, and terrorism. **(Note: This strategy does not focus on collective violence)**.

### OTHER RELEVANT DEFINITIONS

***Structural violence*** is related to "*non-physical acts or indirect forms of violence that have emerged from historical experiences and are woven into social, economic and political systems*"[9]. Structural violence is "*built into the structure of society… and shows up as unequal power and consequentially as unequal life chances*"[10]. Self-directed or interpersonal violence can constitute structural violence if they are built into societal systems. Examples include the failure of public systems or other institutions to fulfil their responsibilities without discrimination and violence.

***Culture of non-violence*** respects human beings, their well-being and dignity; it honours diversity, non-discrimination, inclusiveness, mutual understanding and dialogue, willingness to serve, cooperation and lasting peace. It is a culture where individuals, institutions and societies refrain from harming others, groups, communities or themselves. There is a commitment to positive and constructive solutions to problems, tensions and the source of violence; violence is never an option.

#### Actions addressing violence

- ***Prevention*** means to avoid violence from occurring in the first place
- ***Mitigation*** focuses on decreasing further risk of violence and reducing its impact when it does occur
- ***Response*** refers to an action or intervention to cope with and handle violence after it has occurred.

#### URBAN VIOLENCE

As of 2007, for the first time in the history of human kind more than 50 per cent of the world's population is living in urban areas. The cities of the development world are expected to account for 95 per cent of urban growth over the next two decades.[7]

**Urban violence** is a form of community violence; its very definition is based on the urban setting where all kinds of violence happen. The violence that occurs behind closed doors of homes directly impacts the violence that happens on public streets; they are intertwined.

Violence is a concern in urban communities around the world, though the risk is heightened where poverty, unregulated small arms availability and alcohol/drugs fuel the violent behaviours. Urban violence can include gang violence, organized crime and interpersonal violence.

## 1.3 BASIS OF THE STRATEGY

This Strategy is based on the Fundamental Principles[3], in particular the principle of humanity, and their underpinning humanitarian values. The strategy is guided by the:

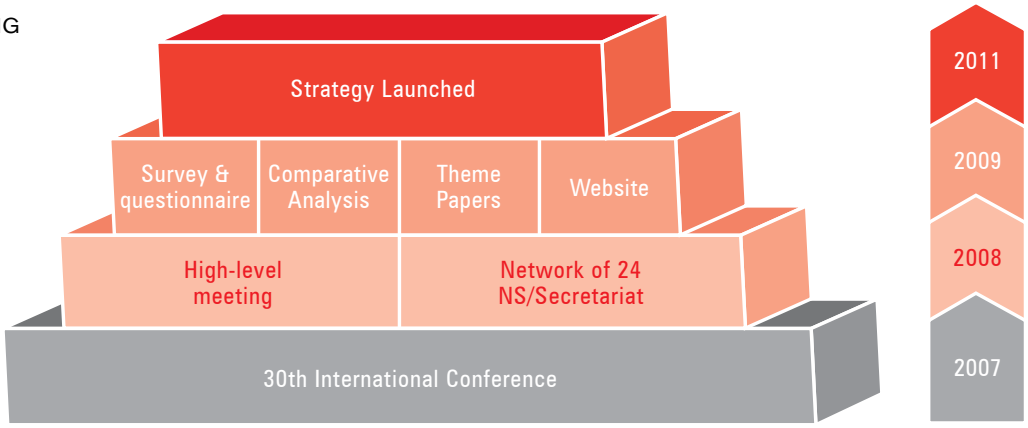
- **Vision of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**, as defined by its Constitution (*Article 4, version 2007*);
  *To inspire, encourage, facilitate, and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.*
- **Declaration "Together for Humanity"**, adopted at the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent[11], which expressed "resolve" to:
  *"Work together to develop at all levels comprehensive violence prevention and reduction programmes in order to build safer communities through practical measures that take into account social and economic development objectives, and to facilitate the rehabilitation of youth affected by violence in order to reduce their alienation and radicalization and reduce their vulnerability to drugs and crime. We will intensify efforts to mobilize community respect for diversity and action against racism, discrimination, xenophobia, marginalization and other forms of exclusion, faced by all vulnerable groups, also empowering volunteers and youth in humanitarian activities to prevent, defuse or mitigate violence, particularly in urban settings, basing ourselves on the considerable experience of National Societies."*
- **Vision of the IFRC regarding its role in addressing violence**
  *Advancing the Red Cross Red Crescent Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values, we commit to work with people vulnerable to violence, with a particular focus on children and youth; to prevent, mitigate and respond to violence [interpersonal and self-directed] – locally and globally – through advocacy and promoting change in knowledge, mindsets, attitudes and behaviours in order to foster environments that respect human dignity and diversity and are caring, safe and peaceful.*

  *Report, High-level meeting on violence, Geneva, 2008*
- **Strategy 2020 of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2009);**
  *"We have consolidated the direction and progress that were initiated under Strategy 2010 by focusing our vision on three mutually reinforcing aims for the next decade. The first strategic aim recognizes our well known role and renews the commitment to be the world's leading actor in humanitarian action. The second and third strategic aims build on established service strengths and resolve to do more to promote development by preventing and reducing the underlying causes of vulnerability."*[12]

  *Strategy 2020*
- **Youth Declaration (2009)**
  *"In a world full of challenges, we the youth of the … Movement commit ourselves to..."inner change and the development of skills to promote harmony and positive attitudes within communities"; "live our seven Fundamental Principles as agents of behavioural change"; and "renounce violence, promote non-discrimination and respect for diversity, and a culture of peace in the world."* [13]

  *Youth Declaration, Solferino, 2009*

FIGURE 2:
PROCESS TO CREATING
THE STRATEGY




[3] Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity and Universality

# 2. VIOLENCE: WHY IS IT A GREAT HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGE

Violence is a global catastrophe and one of today's greatest humanitarian challenges. Violence is a health, social, justice, legal, spiritual, economic, cultural, community-development, and human rights problem[4]. Section 2.1 focuses on the disastrous impact of violence on human lives, health and dignity; local, national and worldwide economies; and community development. People who are vulnerable to certain forms of violence can also fall victim to other forms, and hence be subjected to multiple forms of violence (section 2.2.). As a complex phenomenon, different categories, types and forms of violence are interrelated, mutually influencing and can reinforce the prevalence and impact of one another; addressing violence calls for the adoption of comprehensive strategies targeting the different underlying root causes and social determinants (section 2.3.). Violence is also intrinsically linked as a potential cause, effect or instrument of other humanitarian challenges as defined at the 2007 International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (section 2.4.).

## 2.1 THE DISASTROUS IMPACT OF VIOLENCE

*No matter what form violence takes, the human impact is devastating, not only in physical loss of life and injuries but also the emotional and psychological effects from exposure to violent acts. It also has significant public health, social and economic consequences on communities, compromising the capacity of individuals to live in dignity and without fear or suffering, as well as their ability to sustain their livelihoods.*

IFRC, 2007[14]

[4] Violence is considered here as a *cultural* issue from two perspectives. The first ones refer to violence as a widely accepted method within a community/society for conflict solving and it is linked to structural violence. The second ones looks at cultural traditions considered as harmful practices (e.g. female genital mutilation)

### *Human impact*

The impact of violence affects humans: individuals, families, communities and whole societies. The consequences can be felt across a lifetime or even generations. The destructive effects of violence on health include brain injuries, bruises and scalds, chronic pain, irritable bowel syndrome, infertility, pregnancy-related complications, pelvic inflammatory disorders, HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies, cancer, heart disease, chronic lung disease, stress-related conditions, substance abuse, suicide, and mental illness.[15] In addition, the inability to develop and maintain healthy self-esteem and interpersonal relationships can have diverse and lasting negative social impacts.

**STATISTICS:**
**HUMAN IMPACT**

- **Each day 4,200 people die from violence** (1.6 million a year), more than 90 per cent of them in low and middle income countries; approximately 2,300 die from suicide, 1,500 from interpersonal violence and 400 from collective violence.[16]
- Each year, 16 million cases of injury, due to violence, are severe enough to receive medical attention in hospitals.[17]
- While more than 2 billion people worldwide consume alcohol, 76.3 million drinkers are diagnosed with alcohol use disorders. Research has linked alcohol with more than 60 types of disease and injury; alcohol causes 1.8 million deaths per year and 58.3 million disabilities.[18]
- Approximately 180 million people worldwide abuse illicit drugs; 13.1 million people from 130 countries inject drugs; and 200,000 deaths (0.4 per cent of total deaths) are directly attributed to overall illicit drug use.[19]
- Sexual abuse experienced during childhood accounts for 27 per cent of post-traumatic stress disorders, 10 per cent of panic disorders, 8 per cent of suicide attempts and 6 per cent of cases of depression, and substance abuse in the general population.[20]

### *Economic impact*

Local and national economies are impacted through multi-sector direct costs: health, justice, education, social services, public safety, child welfare, treatment and rehabilitation. Indirect costs reflect the long-term consequences of violence: special education, mental health, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, welfare services, homelessness, addictions, and criminal behaviour. These costs may also include inferred costs of lost productivity associated with injury, imprisonment, unemployment, stress leave, or death.

**STATISTICS:**
**ECONOMIC IMPACT**

- The cost of violence against children can cost countries billions of dollars each year.[21]
- The cost of violence against children can equal 2 per cent of GDP.[22]

### *Community-development impact*

The destructive impact of violence – including the fear, stress, stigma, and health consequences – undermines the development of communities and societies; there is slowing of economic growth, eroding of individual and collective security, and limiting of social development – especially in low and middle-income countries. The role of violence in development reduces not only the scale or speed of development but also the quality.[23] Violence damages infrastructure and property, limits the delivery of pubic services, undermines investment in human, social and economic capital, and contributes to unproductive expenditures on security services, impeding development.[24]

**STATISTICS:**
**COMMUNITY-DEVELOPMENT IMPACT**

- Violence within communities has shown to increase, by 50 per cent, security costs spent by local businesses; increase, by 37 per cent, the fear of losing investments; and decrease motivation to expand business ventures by 39 per cent.[25]
- Communities where homicide rates exceed 100 per 100,000 have shown to also be communities with rapidly rising population growth, large concentrations of adolescents and pre-adolescents, high household density, limited access to public sewers, limited job availability, and low educational achievement.[26]

## 2.2 PEOPLE AT PARTICULAR RISK TO VIOLENCE

Violence is a universal problem and can affect anyone, anywhere, at any time. However, some groups of people are at higher risk to violence than others.

*"All communities have groups of people – often hidden – who are unable to enjoy the general benefits that are accessible to mainstream society. Such people may be neglected, marginalized or excluded for many reasons such as social or economic disadvantage, their employment status, a lack of access to information, knowledge or modern communication tools, or perhaps due to public attitudes that stigmatize or discriminate against them. Such disadvantaged groups include women and girls who are at risk because of their gender; older people; those with HIV or certain diseases and disabilities; children and young people in difficulty such as orphans, child labourers or those on the street; people who have been trafficked or displaced; refugees and other migrants; people of particular sexual orientation; members of minority groups; those subjected to harmful cultural practices; and countless others deprived of their human rights. Many of them may live in circumstances where they are subject to violence, abuse and exploitation."*

*Strategy 2020*

The frequency, duration, and intensity of violence can vary in each unique circumstance, yet it always involves a victim/survivor and someone inflicting the violence; frequently it also includes bystanders or witnesses. In self-directed violence the victim/perpetrator is the same person; in interpersonal violence a victim/survivor may also be a perpetrator. Often individuals or groups of people can be vulnerable and subjected to multiple categories, roles, types and forms of violence throughout their lives. Although this can occur for many reasons, this vulnerability is often linked to social determinants such as alcohol and substance misuse, mental illness, poverty, gender inequalities, access to weapons, discrimination and stigma, and economic disparities.

***Victims/survivors***

Victims/survivors of violence can include anyone of any background, gender or other status who is subjected to an act of violence. The impact is direct for those who are targeted by violence and causes physical and/or emotional harm. Indirectly it can also impact the families, friends, neighbours, colleagues, and whole communities of those targeted; secondary trauma or vicarious trauma is often the result.

Appendix 1 provides a summary of eleven thematic papers that overview people at particular risk of violence and multiple types of violence. The papers highlight the context, prevalence, vulnerabilities, and prevention strategies for each type of interpersonal and self-directed violence, as well as examples of successful programming among National Societies. The papers make it clear that different types of violence share similar risk factors and are likely to co-occur and reinforce one another.

| CATEGORY | TYPE | TARGET | AUTHOR |
|---|---|---|---|
| Self-directed violence | Substance abuse | | Australian Red Cross |
| | Suicide | | Canadian Red Cross |
| Inter-personal violence | Family/partner | Children | Guyana Red Cross |
| | | Youth | Red Cross of Serbia |
| | | Elderly | Spanish Red Cross |
| | | Women | Irish Red Cross |
| | | Men | IFRC & Canadian Red Cross |
| | Community | Indigenous people | Canadian Red Cross |
| | | Xenophobic violence | Spanish Red Cross |
| | | Urban violence | Colombian Red Cross |
| | | Violence during and after disasters | Australian Red Cross and Canadian Red Cross |

While the thematic papers are not exhaustive and do not reflect all vulnerable groups, they do provide a general overview of populations, settings and unique factors that highlight the scale and scope of this global catastrophe. In order to effectively understand, address and counter self-directed and interpersonal violence, other actors that require attention are people who inflict violence and by-standers/witnesses to violence.

***People who inflict violence***

People who inflict violence may cause harm once or repeatedly; they may have complex motivations for acting out violently. Common to all perpetrators of violence is the misuse of their power. People who inflict violence can be as diverse as victims/survivors; they include individuals or groups of people, organizations, communities or societies.

***Bystanders***

Bystanders or witnesses to violence are individuals, groups of people, communities or societies who know, hear, see or are aware that violent acts are occurring. They are powerful actors, especially when it is a person in a position of authority, in determining the response and outcomes of violence. The action, or inaction, taken by bystanders can legitimize, fuel, or prolong violence, or it can de-legitimize, contain, deny or stop it. Bystanders may also be indirect victims who experience secondary or vicarious trauma.

## 2.3 ROOT CAUSES OR SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF INTERPERSONAL AND SELF-DIRECTED VIOLENCE

*"The most prevalent vulnerabilities arise not only from disasters and diseases but also from complex factors such as grievances that are born from deprivation and unfairness, marginalization that is rooted in inequality, alienation and injustice, or despair that comes from loneliness, ignorance and poverty. All too often, these are expressed through violence against oneself and others, and may be magnified into wider conflict within and between communities and nations."*

*Strategy 2020*

It is important to recognize that self-directed and interpersonal violence are the result of complex dynamics and factors between individuals, their families, communities and societies. Each of the factors is tied together and combines to increase the vulnerability to experience violence. The ecological model[27] highlights these linkages.

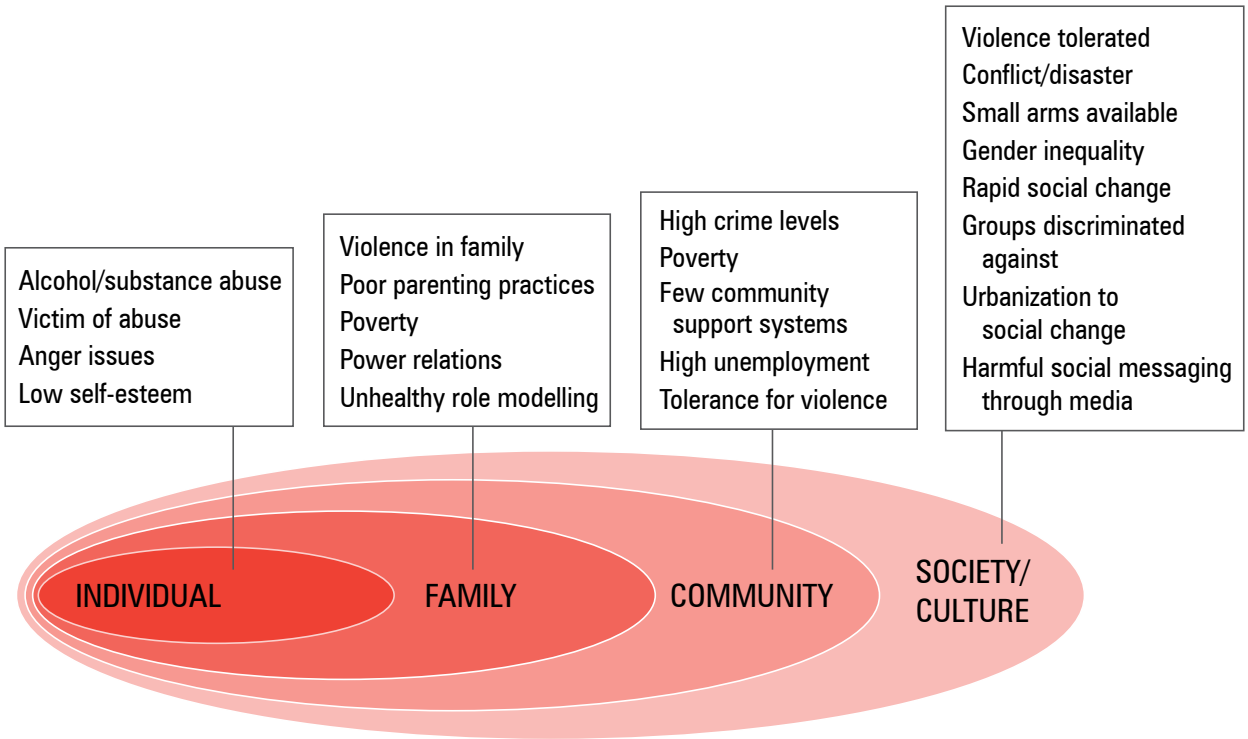
The ecological model highlights the many different factors that increase risk of violence, and that need to be addressed in order to effectively prevent, mitigate and respond to violence. By identifying the factors of risk, it becomes possible to define specific interventions at the individual, family, community and societal/cultural levels.

***Individual level***

There is mounting and compelling evidence indicating that the experience of children between the ages of 0-6 years can significantly shape their health and success across the lifespan.[28] When children are victims of violence at an early age there can be dramatic consequences that in turn increase their likelihood to act out in harmful ways, engage in gangs, perpetrate or become victims of further violence.[29]

The choices that individuals make and the environments they create can either reduce or increase the risk for violence. When individuals do not control their anger, become dependent on alcohol or other substances, and make unsafe decisions, the risk of violence against themselves or others can grow.

FIGURE 3: ECOLOGICAL MODEL




Adapted from World Health Organization. (2002).*World Report of Violence and Health*. Geneva: WHO.

### *Family level*

Among individuals and within families, the diverse effects of alcohol and illicit drugs can contribute to the risk of becoming either the victim or the perpetrator of violence; the impact may also increase the chances of victims misusing alcohol and drugs.[29] Families are also at risk in times of stress, including disasters and emergencies; the risk of violence can increase dramatically.[31]

### *Community level*

The communities in which people live have a significant influence on the risk of violence. One of the most significant community factors is poverty: it creates a climate where violence is fed by hopelessness, helplessness, inequalities, disparities, and inability to access resources.[32] More than 3 billion people live on less than 2.50 US dollars a day, of which 1 billion are children; and 25,000 children die each day due to poverty.[33] Poverty adds additional stress and when compounded by other risk factors can escalate the potential for violence; however, even if actual poverty itself is not experienced, the stress from economic insecurity can be a risk factor. The lack of trust, tolerance and understanding between individuals, between societal groups, and/or in the public systems and institutions can also become part of the equation that leads to violence, and obstruct a culture of non-violence and peace.

A growing concern is the linkages between urbanization – with its often related to rapid growth, population density, economic and social inequalities, and confluence of diverse groups of people who may have historical tensions between themselves. Half the world's population now lives in towns or cities with 1 billion living in slum conditions.[34] Cities in transition can create unsafe environments, especially for youth whose frustrations with unemployment, inadequate housing and few opportunities can manifest in frustration, anger and violence.[35] Another key factor is the growing availability of cheap, small, lethal arms: "The unregulated availability of small arms and light weapons, especially in urban settings, is another relevant factor which contributes to increasing the impact of violence, particularly on youth."[36]

### *Social/cultural level*

The final factors in shaping the risk of violence are social and cultural variables such as inequality, poverty, devaluing groups of people, honouring of or tolerance for violence, negative stereotypes, unequal gender roles, inadequate laws, inadequate social welfare and justice systems, extreme individualism, and "legitimized" violence.[37] Societies and cultures set frameworks that either nurture violent behaviours or develop processes and systems to prevent, mitigate and respond to this humanitarian catastrophe.

### *Resilience*

While risk factors exist for violence at the multiple levels of the ecological model, at the same, each level can also be turned-around to enhance resilience – a person's or community's capacity to adapt to and remain strong in the face of adversity. These individual, relationship, community and societal factors play a key role in providing protective factors and safety for individuals and groups of people.

RESILIENCY FACTORS[38]

**INDIVIDUAL FACTORS**
- Assertiveness
- Ability to solve problems
- Self-awareness
- Empathy for others
- Having goals and aspirations
- Sense of humour

**COMMUNITY CONTEXT FACTORS**
- Limited exposure to violence within family, community, and peer groups
- Government provision for children's safety, recreation, housing, and jobs when older
- Access to school and education, information, and learning resources
- Safety and security

**RELATIONSHIP FACTORS**
- Presence of positive mentors and role models
- Perceived social support
- Appropriate emotional expression and parental monitoring within the family
- Peer group acceptance

**CULTURAL FACTORS**
- Tolerance of differing ideologies, beliefs
- Having a life philosophy
- Cultural and/or spiritual identification
- Being culturally grounded

## 2.4 INTER-RELATEDNESS OF TODAY'S GREAT HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES

The Declaration "*Together for Humanity*", adopted at the 30th International Conference, identified **four great challenges** facing the world today **emergent and recurrent diseases, international migration, climate change and violence.** In addition to standing alone as a challenge, violence also links to and impacts in significant ways each of the other three challenges.

Violence is sometimes a direct cause of another humanitarian scourge or can be used to inflict another scourge. Most often, violence can be a cause or a result of another humanitarian disaster, such as HIV/AIDS, mass displacement or inequitable access to the world's resources linked to climate change. The following table provides some concrete examples of how violence is inter-related with the other humanitarian challenges, hence exponentially expanding and deepening existing vulnerabilities.

| INTER-RELATEDNESS OF VIOLENCE AND… | VIOLENCE AS A CAUSE, EFFECT OR INSTRUMENT | EXAMPLES OF INTER-RELATEDNESS |
|---|---|---|
| Diseases (e.g. HIV/AIDS) | Cause | *Transmission:*<br>• Women who are victims of violence are up to three times more likely to acquire HIV.[39] |
| | Cause | • Fear of abandonment and violence by partners is a significant barrier to taking an HIV test.[40] |
| | Effect | • Children who are orphaned by AIDS are more likely to face violence, exploitation, stigma and discrimination[41],[42] |
| | Effect | *People living with HIV:*<br>• Women who disclose HIV are at higher risk of violence[43], and orphans with HIV are incredibly vulnerable to stigma and violence.[44] |
| | Effect | • Men who have sex with men who are HIV positive are more at risk of psychological, physical and sexual assault than their HIV negative peers.[45] |
| | Effect | *Survivors of HIV:*<br>• Widows of men deceased by HIV have shown increased vulnerability to violence from family and the community.[46] |

| INTER-RELATEDNESS OF VIOLENCE AND… | VIOLENCE AS A CAUSE, EFFECT OR INSTRUMENT | EXAMPLES OF INTER-RELATEDNESS |
|---|---|---|
| Migration | | *Migrants*[5]: |
| | Cause and Effect | • Violence accompanies people throughout the whole migration process: as a motivator to migrate, a reality on the journey, and an increased vulnerability within destination country due to lack of legal status.[47] |
| | Effect | • Migrants are often seen as "different" and therefore can be targeted by the existing community and are at risk of xeno-phobic violence and discrimination.[48] |
| | Effect | • There are an estimated 800,000 human beings trafficked across national boundaries each year and millions trafficked within their own countries; 80 per cent are women and girls, and up to 50 per cent are children.[49] |
| | | *Displacement:* |
| | Cause | • Risk factors include: over-population, high stress, lack of policing and security, lack of safe sanitation facilities and lighting, high levels of alcohol and other substance abuse, few livelihood opportunities, chaotic environments, feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness. |
| | Effect | • Forced displacement increases risk factors that could lead to suicidal behaviours; i.e. refugees who are grieving or have significant stress are at risk of suicide.[50] |
| | Effect | • In the Great Lakes Region of Africa, more than 50 per cent of children in displacement camps had experienced some form of sexual abuse; in one camp the rate was 87 per cent.[51] |
| | Instrument | • The use of sexual violence, especially against women and girls, as a "weapon of war" to instil fear, terror, and shame within opposing communities, break-up community structures, force people to flee, and to "reward" armed combatants for their victories is a particularly brutal, vicious and degrading form of violence that targets innocents in times of conflict.[52] |
| Climate change | Effect | • Climate change threatens sustainable development, poten-tially deepening children's poverty and increasing their vulner-ability to abuse, exploitation and displacement.[53] |
| | Effect | • Alarming increases in the rates of child abuse and family violence have been reported after disasters in various parts of the world.[54],[55],[56],[57] |
| | Effect | • Violence is likely to be as a consequence of climate change, leading to ever more becoming scarce resources and envi-ronmental degradation.[58] |

[5] The IFRC Policy on Migration (2009) (http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Governance/Policies/migration-policy-en.pdf) considers migrants as "*persons who leave or flee their habitual residence to go to new places - usually abroad - to seek opportunities or safer and better prospects*" after a voluntary or involuntary individual decision. The policy focuses on, amongst others, labour migrants, stateless migrants, and migrants deemed irregular by public authorities, as well as individual refugees and asylum seekers.

# 3. WHERE DOES THE IFRC STAND?

IFRC's position on the great humanitarian challenge and work on violence prevention, mitigation and response is built on IFRC's official statutory framework (section 2.1.) and operational framework - policies, tools and programmes developed to address violence within the community and the secretariat (section 2.2.). An examination of IFRC work in violence prevention, mitigation and response identifies key lessons learned and guiding standards to be observed in all violence related action, and current strengths and challenges in meeting these standards (section 2.3.). The second part of the section provides the basis for Part 3 which will provide concrete strategic directions to move forward in addressing violence in alignment with Strategy 2020.

## 3.1. THE IFRC STATUTORY FRAMEWORK ON VIOLENCE

***International***

Starting in 1969 with the *Istanbul Declaration*[59] and with increasing attention since 1999, violence has been an expressed concern of the IFRC. The stance at the high-level statutory meetings of the Movement reflects pragmatism and commitment to concrete and diversified action, while targeting the affected community, victims and perpetrators of violence.

Overall, international statutory decisions have underscored the need to:

- *Promote* tolerance, non-violence in the community and respect for diversity (27th International Conference, 1999, *Plan of Action for the years 2000-2003*)[60]
- *Create conditions of safety* for persons endangered by violence or discrimination (Council of Delegates, 2001, *Resolution 12: Strengthening humanitarian values across religious, political and ethnic lines*[61]);
- *Learn about and understand better* the trends that fuel intolerance, violence ... and actions that can combat these trends (28th International Conference, 2003, *IFRC Pledge on Non-Discrimination and Respect for Diversity*[62]);
- *Develop at all levels comprehensive violence prevention and reduction programmes* (30th International Conference of the Red Cross Red Crescent, Declaration "*Together for Humanity*," 2007[63]).

***Regional***

Regional statutory conferences have detailed and deepened International Red Cross Red Crescent commitments to work on violence. The 17th and 18th *Inter-American Conferences in Santiago de Chile* (2003) and *Guayaquil* (2007), as well as the 7th *Pan-African Conference* held in Johannesburg (2008), highlighted youth violence as an area of priority focus. The latter two furthermore strongly brought the need to influence positive behaviour change, public policy and decision-making through humanitarian diplomacy.

The *Johannesburg Commitments* of 2008 and the *Youth Declaration* adopted at the 150th anniversary of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in Solferino, June 2009, by Red Cross Red Crescent youth from 149 countries, emphasize the imperative to engage in pro-active violence prevention programmes in the community, through the promotion of humanitarian values and a culture of non-violence and peace.

## 3.2. THE IFRC OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK ON INTERPERSONAL AND SELF-DIRECTED VIOLENCE

The IFRC secretariat and National Societies have translated the framework set by statutory decisions into policies, programming tools and concrete activities adapted to the specific realities, context and needs at local, country and regional levels. Violence has either been dealt with as a stand-alone humanitarian issue, or as an issue which is mainstreamed into other thematic areas of work of the Red Cross Red Crescent. The focus has predominantly been on violence in the community, and the required action to address this. Since 2002, the IFRC has also taken a number of concrete actions to address violence occurring within the organization itself or committed by staff and volunteers (Appendixes 3 and 4).

To date, there is no overall, systematic mapping of violence related policies, programmes, activities and initiatives within our member National Societies. Thus, examples below pertain to tools and action developed by the secretariat. Appendix 4 provides more information on the policies, tools and activities listed below and include direct web linkages to them, as well as a detailed box on violence and accountability.

**Violence as a stand-alone humanitarian issue**

*Violence within the community*

Within the IFRC there are several regional and global strategies and agreements that highlight violence: *The Regional Strategy for Violence Prevention in Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean*[64]; *Regional Strategy on Gender Based Violence and HIV in Southern Africa*[65]; and the *Rome Consensus for a Humanitarian Drug Policy*.[66]

**Violence as an issue mainstreamed into other IFRC areas of work**

*Within the organisation*

Of high concern for all humanitarian agencies is the significant level of accusations of sexual abuse and exploitation against vulnerable populations, especially women and children, by humanitarian aid workers.[67],[68],[69],[70],[71] In order to ensure this does not occur within the IFRC, it has taken a number of concrete actions to address the issues which include: developing a new *Code of Conduct* (2007), enhanced reporting options for questions or concerns related to the code, and new tools to brief personnel on the code; and developing the *IFRC Pledge 101 on Prevention of Abuse of Power*[72]. An example of a regional initiative is the *Child Protection Strategy for Southern Africa*.[73]

## 3.3. KEY LESSONS LEARNED AND GUIDING STANDARDS ON WORK ON INTERPERSONAL AND SELF-DIRECTED VIOLENCE WITHIN THE IFRC

### 3.3.1. KEY LESSONS LEARNED

Across the IFRC, there is an increasing number of National Societies addressing violence through a range of community-based programs and activities. From an informal survey of 16 National Societies working in the area of violence, key lessons emerged on how to build upon, improve and develop effective programmes.

General, over-arching, lessons and gaps from analysing samples of National Societies' programmes (see Appendix 5 for a full listing of gaps and strengths and Appendix 6 for specific lessons from an informal survey of 16 National Societies in terms of addressed types of violence, target groups and prevention, mitigation and response actions) include:

- Variation in application of common standards: There is considerable variation in a consistent and rigorous **application of common standards**. Initiatives to address violence are implemented in diverse ways due to a lack of standards, inability to access standards, different skill levels of personnel managing and delivering projects, inconsistent quality of resources or communication, limited monitoring or accountability, and variable understandings of the importance of applying common standards to ensure quality and effectiveness. The IFRC secretariat and National Societies are now in the early stages of developing common standards to address violence.
- Limited number of National Societies that address violence: A significant challenge is the **limited number of National Societies that address violence**, both in response to the needs of their communities and in creating safe environments for their own personnel and beneficiaries. In some National Societies there is a reluctance to address violence issues in general, and in other cases resistance to specific types of violence or supporting specific populations; the barriers may be personal, institutional, societal, or relating to traditional taboos.
- Populations, categories, types and forms of violence not addressed: While some National Societies do address violence, **many vulnerable populations and categories, types and forms of violence are overlooked.** Although a number of National Societies have taken leadership roles within local communities, and in some cases across their entire countries, to address various forms of violence such as violence against children, youth and women, key gaps still remain. Specifically, the work to address violence against children, youth and women has only begun to "scratch the surface" and much more is still required to make lasting gains and to reach more people. In addition, there are some thematic areas that need increased attention and action: violence against men and the elderly, xenophobic violence, violence against indigenous populations, urban violence, and sexual violence are addressed by very few National Societies and where they are, it is often in an indirect or peripheral manner. Furthermore, prevention of suicide, which is the single greatest cause of mortality from violence, is especially neglected and needs significantly greater attention.
- Adaptation of successful programmes: While some forms of violence and populations are neglected, **there are some outstanding examples of successful programmes** that address violence. These examples of success, especially those that are evidence-based and evaluated by external partners, have great potential to be adapted for local contexts, replicated, scaled up and promoted to benefit other National Societies.
- Lack of technical knowledge: The **technical knowledge** within the IFRC to address violence varies considerably. For some National Societies, not only is the technical knowledge unavailable, but personnel do not always know what knowledge they need and where to access violence prevention related information.

**Factors influencing these lessons and gaps:**

- National Societies have limited resources and therefore need to focus their work on where they determine the greatest need and potential impact of their participation
- Some forms of violence may not be recognized as needing attention because they simply have not been considered
- A few forms of violence may be considered "too sensitive" to address
- Some forms of violence are considered to be "unhelpful" for generating donor or partner support
- Building technical capacity for staff and volunteers becomes a challenge especially if professional level technical capacity does not exist within the National Society or IFRC or among key partners
- Violence prevention, mitigation and response are new areas of focus for many National Societies and as a result knowledge and skills on the issues are in development.

### 3.3.2. ROLE AND GUIDING STANDARDS FOR ACTION ON VIOLENCE

The role and the guiding standards for National Societies and the secretariat to follow in addressing violence were clearly defined at the high-level meeting in December 2008.

*"As the largest humanitarian network in the world with a mission to help vulnerable people, and given that violence is a leading cause of vulnerability, the … Movement considers violence as a great humanitarian challenge, especially for the most vulnerable. With its global network in diverse communities, the IFRC has a significant and crucial role in reducing the level and impact of violence. In particular, it has a unique position to support governments through its auxiliary role and an ability to bring together volunteers and partners to mobilize their communities against violence."*

GUIDING STANDARDS FOR IFRC VIOLENCE PREVENTION, MITIGATION and RESPONSE
(see appendix 5 for more details)

**Programme standards**

- Integration into all IFRC programmes and services.
- Evidence-based programmes – evaluation and research.
- Comprehensive/multi-disciplinary approach – addressing risk factors and root causes of violence.
- Humanitarian education – catalyst for social change.
- Special focus on children and youth – female and male.
- Enhance resiliency.
- Sustainability of action.

Performance and accountability standards

- **Accountability – monitoring. Sharing of lessons learned.**
- Culture of non-violence – modelling respect for human dignity.
- Gender-sensitive approach – embracing both male and female perspectives; active participation in the identification of strategies and solutions.
- Safety and security of Red Cross Red Crescent staff and volunteers.
- Basic needs met – survival, food, shelter, protection, health and education prioritized.

**Partnership standards**

- Partners share same ideals as the Movement's Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values and commitment to addressing violence.
- Community participation and ownership - all stakeholders involved including victims/survivors, witnesses, people who inflict violence and the broader community.

# 4. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

IFRC Strategy 2020 (hereafter "S2020") describes the "high levels of violence" as one of the "projected global trends" which will deserve special attention of the IFRC. In fact, the prevention, mitigation and response to violence are important to achieving each of the strategic directions and enabling actions of S2020:

- **Strategic aim 1:** Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disasters and crises.
- **Strategic aim 2:** Enable healthy and safe living.
- **Strategic aim 3:** Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.
- **Enabling action 1:** Building strong National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.
- **Enabling action 2:** Pursue humanitarian diplomacy to prevent and reduce vulnerability in a globalized world.
- **Enabling action 3:** Function effectively as the IFRC.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS ON INTERPERSONAL AND SELF-DIRECTED VIOLENCE TO SUPPORT S2020 STRATEGIC AIMS AND ENABLING ACTIONS (2011-2020)

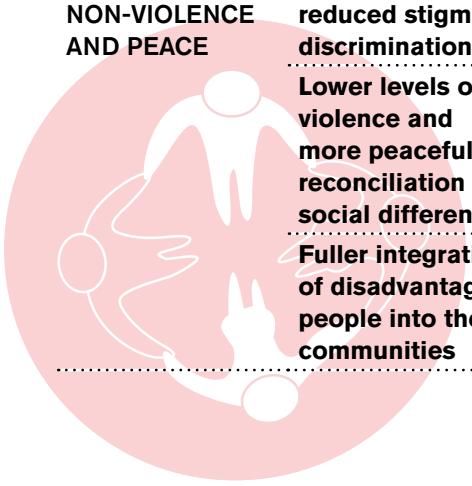
The strategic aims and enabling actions from IFRC Strategy 2020 and their expected impacts are the framework used to define how to move forward on the prevention, mitigation and response to interpersonal and self-directed violence. Strategic directions specific to interpersonal and self-directed violence that support and reinforce the expected impact of each S2020's strategic aims and enabling actions are listed below.

The strategic directions assume incorporation of all appropriate guiding standards, and apply to National Societies and their secretariat. While collectively the strategic directions represent a comprehensive approach to addressing interpersonal and self-directed violence, it is recognized that the scale, scope, and implementation of the strategic directions will vary across each National Society and their secretariat.

| STRATEGY 2020 | EXPECTED IMPACT | STRATEGY ON VIOLENCE PREVENTION, MITIGATION AND RESPONSE |
|---|---|---|
| STRATEGIC AIM **1** ▶ | | |
| **SAVE LIVES, PROTECT LIVELIHOODS, AND STRENGTHEN RECOVERY FROM DISASTERS AND CRISES** | **Reduced deaths, losses, damage and other detrimental consequences of disasters and crises** | **Strategic direction 1:** Issues of violence prevention, mitigation and response are integrated into the assessments, planning, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages of appropriate initiatives for disaster and crises preparedness, response and recovery programming.<br>**Strategic direction 2:** Education on the prevention, mitigation and response to violence for all people affected by disaster, especially against children and women, is built into disaster and crises preparedness, response and recovery programming.<br>**Strategic direction 3:** The increased risk of various forms of violence and protective factors to prevent and mitigate them before, during and after disasters and crises are highlighted in communications and awareness raising campaigns. |
| | **Improved restoration of community functioning after disasters and crises** | **Strategic direction 4:** Mitigation of social determinants of violence such as poverty, gender-inequality, alcohol and substance misuse and abuse, and stress-related violence are addressed through targeted initiatives to support community functioning after disasters or crises. |

| STRATEGY 2020 | EXPECTED IMPACT | STRATEGY ON VIOLENCE PREVENTION, MITIGATION AND RESPONSE |
|---|---|---|
| STRATEGIC AIM **2** ▶ | | |
| **ENABLE HEALTHY AND SAFE LIVING** | **Better personal and community health, and more inclusive public health systems** | **Strategic direction 5:** Violence prevention, mitigation and response are included in vulnerability and capacity assessments for programming related to disasters, health and community-based needs. |
| | **Reduced exposure and vulnerability to natural and human-made hazards** | **Strategic direction 6:** Violence prevention, mitigation and response programmes that build on individual and community capacity and resilience are implemented to address social determinants of violence such as alcohol and substance misuse and abuse, managing stress, countering prejudice against stigmatising conditions, and promoting personal safety from violence at home, work and in communities, especially against children and youth.<br><br>**Strategic direction 7:** Psychosocial support through education and vocational training is provided to people affected by violence, including in health crises and disasters. |
| | **Greater public adoption of environmentally sustainable living** | **Strategic direction 8:** Linkages between violence and environmental degradation are assessed and integrated into appropriate prevention and mitigation strategies. |

| STRATEGY 2020 | EXPECTED IMPACT | STRATEGY ON VIOLENCE PREVENTION, MITIGATION AND RESPONSE |
|---|---|---|
| STRATEGIC AIM **3** ▶ | | |
| **PROMOTE SOCIAL INCLUSION AND A CULTURE OF NON-VIOLENCE AND PEACE** | **Greater public support for the Fundamental Principles and reduced stigma and discrimination** | **Strategic direction 9:** Violence prevention, mitigation and response programmes apply the Fundamental Principles through addressing intolerance, stigma and discrimination as underlying causes of violence. |
| | **Lower levels of violence and more peaceful reconciliation of social differences** | **Strategic direction 10:** Programmes are implemented to promote intercultural dialogue, social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace within and between communities. |
| | **Fuller integration of disadvantaged people into their communities** | **Strategic direction 11:** An all-inclusive society will be promoted through life-skills, livelihoods and psychosocial programmes for disadvantaged people. |



| STRATEGY 2020 | STRATEGY ON VIOLENCE PREVENTION, MITIGATION AND RESPONSE |
|---|---|
| ENABLING ACTION **1** ▶ | |
| **BUILD STRONG NATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES** | **Strategic direction 12:** Policies, procedures, screening programmes, training and education on violence prevention, mitigation and response for staff, volunteers and vulnerable and affected communities are developed, monitored and integrated across all projects, programs and services, with the aim to support accountable and safe National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.<br><br>**Strategic Direction 13:** National Societies' staff, volunteers and members, with a special emphasis on youth, are equipped with appropriate technical and behavioural skills and empowered to play a leading role in interpersonal and self-directed violence prevention, mitigation and response within communities. |

| STRATEGY 2020 | STRATEGY ON VIOLENCE PREVENTION, MITIGATION AND RESPONSE |
|---|---|
| ENABLING ACTION 2 ▶ | |
| **PURSUE HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY TO PREVENT AND REDUCE VULNERABILITY IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD** | **Strategic direction 14:** Partnerships with public authorities, at all levels, are developed to persuade decision-makers and opinion leaders to address violence prevention, mitigation and response.<br><br>**Strategic direction 15:** The voice of the IFRC is raised at local, national, regional and global levels, through awareness-raising campaigns and advocacy furthering dialogue among people and a culture of non-violence and peace. |

| STRATEGY 2020 | STRATEGY ON VIOLENCE PREVENTION, MITIGATION AND RESPONSE |
|---|---|
| ENABLING ACTION 3 ▶ | |
| **FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY AS THE IFRC** | **Strategic direction 16:** A coordinated Red Cross Red Crescent platform is developed and maintained to share learning, best practices, resources, skills, and technical expertise in order to expand and improve violence prevention, mitigation and response activities. |

Understandably, priority is often given to dealing with the immediate consequences of violence, providing support to victims and punishing and reintegrating offenders. Such responses while important and in need of strengthening, should be accompanied by a greater investment in primary prevention. A comprehensive response to violence is one that not only protects and supports victims of violence, but also promotes non-violence, reduces the perpetration of violence, and changes the circumstances and conditions that give rise to violence in the first place.[74]

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Note: "Perceived" was added to ensure particular attention to the "victim", and include her opinion. As such a parallel is made with the definition of "degrading treatment" under international human rights law.

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The evaluation criteria for the pledge (by 2011) are to:

- Support National Societies to adopt and implement a zero tolerance approach towards sexual exploitation and abuse;
- Assist National Societies in promoting safe environments for all vulnerable populations, especially children within their own institutions and throughout their operations and programs;
- Promote awareness on the abuse of power and support capacity building efforts and training in preventative approaches;
- Collaborate with other international, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations in reviewing the implementation and impact of collective efforts to eliminate abuse of power.

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# THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

## HUMANITY
The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace among all peoples.

## IMPARTIALITY
It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

## NEUTRALITY
In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

## INDEPENDENCE
The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

## VOLUNTARY SERVICE
It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

## UNITY
There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

## UNIVERSALITY
The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies promotes the humanitarian activities of National Societies among vulnerable people.

By coordinating international disaster relief and encouraging development support, it seeks to prevent and alleviate human suffering.

The International Federation, the National Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross together constitute the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.