

**Statement of Johann Wilhelm Römer,  
General Secretary of the German Red Cross,  
to the Delegates of Commission II  
of the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red  
Crescent**

The German Red Cross will certainly join consensus on the Draft Resolutions in Commission II.

Nevertheless, it's necessary to comment on issues, that endanger our capacity to assist and protect :

- economic sanctions
- protection of humanitarian assistance

Economic sanctions tend to hit the most vulnerable and destroy their livelihoods and even their lives thus adding further suffering on top of that caused by war.

It is the civilian population who has to bear the consequences of economic sanctions. We call upon governments to minimize the impact of sanctions upon the most vulnerable. We urge them to find realistic ways and means of imposing sanctions without hampering the delivery of necessary humanitarian supplies, such as food and medicines.

Sanctions often include the freezing of government's money on foreign accounts. It should be possible to use this money - as far as it is not

confiscated - with consent of the government concerned, to finance humanitarian aid for the people suffering under these sanctions.

It is not justified, that we National Societies, the ICRC or the Federation must raise funds in the private sector for such a purpose.

We think that these efforts and this money could be used much better for the benefit of other vulnerable in other countries.

Let me remind you that international humanitarian law ,requires that the survival and essential needs of the civilian population be insured. Regardless of sanctions and embargo measures this general legal and humanitarian obligation remains - for the benefit of the most vulnerable.

Coming to the second point:

Our position on the matter of armed protection of humanitarian relief is in total consent with the code of behaviour, the Council of Delegate adopted at its last session, which means, that only under exceptional circumstances the use of armed protection might take place and the decision to accept it can only be made by the component concerned. Furthermore, we fully appreciate the suggestion that the armed protection, pending on the situation, should be provided by a reputable private company, the police and at last military personnel.

Nevertheless, we also would like to stress, that in our point of view, it is first the authorities controlling a territory, who must ensure safety for our work carried out under the emblem.

We call upon these authorities, that they must make it clear, that the disrespect of the emblem of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, which stands for the unarmed and impartial humanitarian help for the most vulnerable, might constitute a war crime.

Furthermore, it has to be emphasized once again, that even using armed protection under exceptional circumstances, does not mean that we give up our Fundamental Principles of impartiality and neutrality

Thank you, Mr. President