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Notes on the legal status of national Red Cross societies / Allan Rosas

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Abstract:	<p>The author discusses the difficulty of classifying National Red Cross Societies within domestic legal frameworks. The author examines the history of national societies and shows that they were intended to act as auxiliaries to public authorities, governments were required to recognize them and facilitate their activities and, in some jurisdictions, were given the same legal privileges as government entities. At the same time national societies were meant to be governed by Red Cross principles which stress independence and autonomy from governments, they were to be voluntary membership associations, and the Statutes of the International Committee for the Red Cross allowed for national societies to be sanctioned for lack of independence. The semi-public nature of national societies then raises questions of how administrative law may apply to them. The author argues that national societies can be seen as an example of the Finnish administrative law concept of Indirect Public Administration where private bodies are entrusted with public functions outside state administration. The author notes that the legal status of national societies varies and further research into how national societies are classified under domestic law within their respective countries may provide insight into how they handle the challenge of maintaining autonomy while cooperating with national governments. [Summary by students at the University of Toronto, Faculty of Law (IHRP)].</p>
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