



ICRC

The President

Geneva, 8 July 2015
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Sir,

dear Jan

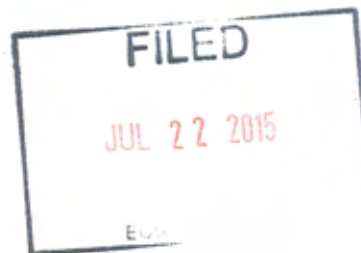
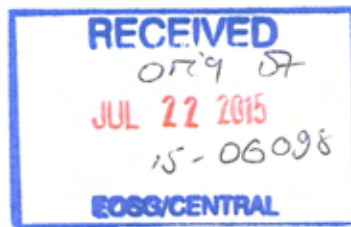
The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) wishes to cordially invite you to attend and share opening remarks at a High-Level panel debate entitled, "Uniting Around the Principle of Humanity" on the margins of the UNGA High Level week in New York.

The event will take place on 30 September 2015 at the UN General Assembly Conference Room (TBC) from 0800 to 0930 a.m.

Respect for the Principle of Humanity is a secular and sacred conviction, as well as the underpinning principle of international humanitarian law. This event offers an important platform to reaffirm this core value that demands humane conduct in armed conflict and which finds common cause between humanitarian and religious principles. This is especially important at a time when armed conflict is being waged across very different cultural and religious contexts.

Mr Jan Eliasson
Deputy Secretary-General
United Nations

Encl: Concept Note



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The panel will be co-chaired by the President of the ICRC and the Foreign Affairs Minister of Brazil (TBC) and moderated by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordination (TBC). Panellists will include political and religious leaders to discuss the Principle of Humanity and how it is embraced across all cultures as a clear guide to human behaviour in armed conflict and other situations of violence. Please find enclosed a concept note with our rationale and objectives.

We would be honoured by your participation and affirm that your involvement would greatly enrich the panel discussion and significantly contribute to the overall success of the event.

Mr Stephane Bonamy at our delegation in New York remains at your disposal for follow-up and would be pleased to answer questions regarding this project.

Please accept, Sir, the assurance of my highest consideration.



Peter Maurer

High-Level panel debate

“Uniting Around the Principle of Humanity”

September 2015 (during high level segment of UNGA)

– Concept Note –

Rationale

Humanity is the first principle of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement whose Fundamental Principles celebrate their 50th anniversary this year. A deep concern for the dignity and protection of the human person sits equally at the heart of the UN Charter which celebrates its 70th anniversary this year.

This event brings together ICRC and UN humanitarian leaders with political and religious leaders to discuss the Principle of Humanity and how it is embraced across all cultures as a clear guide to human behavior in armed conflict and other situations of violence. Diverse experience of non-religious and religious humanitarian action illustrates a common global commitment to humanity.

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Celebrating Humanity

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is guided by Humanity as the first aim of its Fundamental Principles. The Movement’s goal is “to prevent and alleviate humanitarian suffering wherever it may be found and to protect life, health and to ensure respect for the human being.” The Preamble of the UN Charter emphasizes “the dignity and worth of the human person” as a central concern of world politics.

The great religious traditions of our world - which precede the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the United Nations by thousands of years – have long held a deep commitment to humanity at the very heart of their faiths. They believe that human life is good and a blessing from God. Love, mercy, joy, compassion, respect and forgiveness guide each great faith and call religious people to restrain their violence, care for one another and make a better world.

Affirming Support for Humanitarian Principles

Humanitarian action can benefit greatly from the explicit moral and practical support of the world’s religions. The faith of every religion and the principles of humanitarian law and action share a profound concern for individual human suffering. At a time when armed conflict and extreme violence are affecting an ever increasing number of countries, cultures and victims, the reaffirmation of this most fundamental principle of humankind needs to be heard. Humanity demands that we all respect and care for people in armed conflict and extend humanitarian action to those who need it most.

Objectives

The objectives of the High-Level panel are:

- **To raise awareness of the common commitment to humanity that exists across all cultures** and encourage states and people to embrace humanity even in times of armed conflict;
- **To reinforce the principle of humanity as the fundamental goal of humanitarian action** in contemporary armed conflicts and the basis of International Humanitarian Law;
- **To recommend that the principle of humanity be reaffirmed as a major principle of international action** in the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the UN's World Humanitarian Summit.

The participants

The event will be chaired by the President of the ICRC and the Foreign Minister of Brazil (tbc) and moderated by the UN Under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs (tbc). The United Nations Secretary General will share opening remarks (tbc). The panelists will be eminent representatives of various stakeholder groups—governments, non-religious and religious humanitarian organisations.

Chair: **Mr. Peter Maurer**, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and **H.E. Mauro Luiz Lecker Vieira (TBC)**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil
[Introduce Event]

Opening remarks: **Mr. Mr Jan Eliasson (TBC)**, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General
[The DSG will give a broad statement on the principle of humanity as a guiding principle for the work of the United Nations and the need for its reaffirmation]

Moderator: **Mr. Stephen O'Brien (TBC)**, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator [Perspective from humanitarian coordination]

Panellists: [5 minutes each]

Member State (TBC),

Islamic scholar (TBC),

[Ideally this panelist should be able to give a broad view on the principle of humanity from a perspective of Islam and illustrate its practical effect in important forms of contemporary humanitarian action]

Christian humanitarian leader (TBC),

[Idem to previous speaker, but from perspective of Judeo-Christian theology and action]

Buddhist civil society leader (TBC)

[To speak from the perspective of Buddhist engagement with humanitarian action and armed conflict]

A.C Grayling (TBC)

[To speak as a leading western humanist philosopher]

Mr. Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)[Emphasizing the importance and relevance of the principle of humanity in ICRC and broader RC/RC Movement's daily work; and outline opportunities to strengthen this principle]