

Through humanity to peace: Efforts of Red cross and Red crescent to create a world free of war and conflicts

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Abstract

Peace has always been seen as an endless project, even a dream, to be in brotherhood realized by everyone across the earth. Since the XVII century the elimination of war and armed conflict has been a political and humanitarian objective of all nations in the world. The Red Cross and Red Crescent were conceived with the spirit of alleviating the war victims' suffering as a mean to contribute to the promotion of peace. In addition, the founders of the Red Cross wanted to eliminate the risk of war through the promotion of peace, cooperation and solidarity among Nations. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the subsequent human rights and international humanitarian law instruments were drafted with a sincere aspiration of promoting the value of human dignity, peace and human rights worldwide. International practice shows the close linkage between the disregard of human rights and the existence of war and armed conflict.

Keywords: Dunant, Red Cross, peace, humanity, war, human rights, right to life, enjoyment, generations

1. Introduction

This paper will approach to the political and philosophical thought of Henry Dunant and his contribution to the strengthening of peace worldwide. The principle of Humanity, as proclaimed in the XXth International Conference of the Red Cross held in Vienna in 1965, will also be analyzed. The linkage between the right to life and peace through the notion of "enjoyment" will also be studied. In particular, this linkage was elaborated in the *Istanbul Declaration* which was adopted by the Red Cross in its Twenty-first International Conference held in 1969. The legacy of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in the promotion of peace and human rights to the new generations will also be analyzed. Finally, the role played by Red Cross and Red Crescent in the promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace will be studied.

2. Contribution of Henry Dunant to Peace

The political and philosophical thought of Henry Dunant has gone through several stages. In the first period, Dunant focused his interest on ending the war and the need to assist the wounded in the battlefields. The main result of this stage was the organization of the First International Conference held in Geneva in 1864, in which the Red Cross as an institution was incepted and the first *Geneva Convention for Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field* was adopted.

The second period is dominated by a major anti-war feeling. Through the creation of the League of Peace, Henry Dunant attempted to end the war. From this period we should recall his friendship with the Austrian Baroness Bertha von Suttner, founder of the Austrian Society of Peace Friends. Both of them convinced the Tsar Nicholas II to hold an International Conference on disarmament and peace. Since his retirement in Heiden, on 12 May 1899 Dunant wrote to the Baroness asking her to prepare an international and diplomatic study on means

of pacification. Finally, these Conferences took place in The Hague in 1899 and 1907, giving birth to the so-called right of The Hague or the Law of War.

In the third period, Henry Dunant created at the Social Science Congress held in Plymouth in September 1872 an Office of Disarmament and International Arbitration or Mediation with the mandate of avoiding or at least limiting conflicts. Dunant successfully used this mediation system in the Boer War (South Africa) in 1900. To achieve this objective, Dunant invited the Norwegian commander Hans Daae to exercise his good offices through this legal and diplomatic mechanism. In a letter sent to Mr. Hans Daae on 30 April 1899, which is preserved in the Archives Anders Daae of Oslo, Dunant highlighted that the ideas of tolerance, cooperation among nations and individuals are the means to achieve a lasting peace in the world¹.

The pacifist attitude of Henry Dunant can again be found in a letter addressed to Ms. Suttner published at the occasion of the award of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1901². In this letter, Dunant suggested that the Red Cross should be favourable in declaring peace among nations and becoming the champion of the white flag. As Henry Dunant wrote in his diary, the dream of yesterday is the hope of today and the reality of tomorrow.

3. The Principle of Humanity

In the XIX century Henry Dunant decided to assist the wounded and most vulnerable people from those bloody wars which desolated European countries in those years. This

1. Guillermet Fernandez, C., And Fernandez Puyana, D., "Efforts to create a world free of scourge of war and conflict: the role of mediation and human rights", in Akyesilmen, N. and Sambur, B. (Editors), *Religion and human rights: right to peace*, Human Rights Centre at the Selcuk University, Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law and Government of Sweden, March 2015, Konya (Turkey), p. 29-35 (Publication in Turkish)

2. *Journal L'Independance*, Brussels (Belgium, 4 January 1902)

philanthropic person claimed at the Battle of Solferino (1859)³ that the wounded soldiers had to be assisted in the same battle fields to prevent their subsequent death because of lack of sanitary conditions. Dunant's message was clear and precise: "A wounded man on the battlefields is not an enemy; he is a brother"⁴.

In the earlier decades of the XIX century, the minds of statesmen and soldiers were busy with the idea of how to prevent wars and how to fight the disorder and disorganization which followed in the wake of war⁵.

The humanist thought of Henry Dunant has always advocated for peace as the ultimate goal to be realized by humankind as a whole. In the Program of the Universal Alliance of Order and Civilization, founded in Paris in June 1871, Henry Dunant expressed that the aim of this Alliance is to promote, by all legitimate means, the continuous progress of civilization, trying to rein force political and social peace, in only one word: harmony among nations and individuals.

His interest in protecting victims of armed conflict was included in the *First International Governmental Conference* held at the Ateneo of Geneva in 1863. Dr. Nicasio Landa, the Spanish participant at the Conference, stated about the principle of humanity the following:

« In all fields of the civilized world holy legions going to the battlefields have raised, not to give death but life; not to destroy, but to preserve; not to kill, but to save. They are claiming, against all cries of war, the holy cry of peace and universal brotherhood"⁶

This initial thought was elaborated in one of the fundamental Principles of the international movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the principle of Humanity. This Principle, which was proclaimed in the XXth International Conference of the Red Cross held in Vienna in 1965, includes the desire of the movement to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield; to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found; to protect life and health; to ensure respect for the human being and to promote mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

The principle of Humanity is a firm commitment of the international movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent for the values flowing from the notion of human dignity. Indeed, the International Committee of the Red Cross has been called upon to help the victims, no longer of major international conflicts, but of civil wars which are often crueler still⁷. As suggested by Dunant, men should stop shedding the blood of

soldiers on a land, which should only water for the sweat of those persons who work this land⁸.

4. Linkage between the right to life and peace through the notion of enjoyment

The human cost and suffering caused by armed conflicts and violence is really high. In a context of armed conflict and violence the right to life is the most relevant fundamental human right violated. The arbitrary deprivation of life, the practice of ethnic cleansing, mass killings and genocide are considered war crimes and crimes against humanity⁹. The Red Cross and Red Crescent have usually expressed its profound anxiety with regard to the suffering endured by the populations of a number of countries where armed conflicts are being waged¹⁰.

The right to life as a fundamental and universal human right of everyone has been spelled out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹¹, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights¹², the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights¹³, the European Convention on Human Rights¹⁴ and the American Convention on Human Rights¹⁵. In accordance with these legal provisions, States Parties are expressly obligated to protect the right to life by law and to take positive measures to ensure it.

Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions prohibits "violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture" of civilians and persons *hors de combat*. All four Geneva Conventions list "wilful killing" of protected persons as a grave breach¹⁶. The prohibition of murder is recognized as a fundamental guarantee by Additional Protocols I and II¹⁷.

8. Henry Dunant, *La Charité sur les Champs de bataille: Le Traite de Genève et un souvenir de Solferino* (1865) (Montana: Kissinger Legacy Reprints, 2010)

9. Guillemet Fernandez, C., and Fernandez Puyana, D., "The complementarity of the Security Council and the Human Rights Council in the promotion and protection of the right to life in conflict situation", *Research Paper Scienza e Pace*, no. 26, March 2015, Journal of the Sciences for Peace Interdisciplinary Centre, University of Pisa (Italy), p. 1-31 and "The 30th Anniversary of the Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace: an opportunity to reinforce the linkage between the right to life and human rights, peace and development." *Peace Forum 3 (2014)*, Peace Studies Association of Japan, Meijigakuin University, Tokyo, p. 1-18

10. XX International Conference of the Red Cross, Resolution IX, Vienna, 1965

11. Art. 3: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person"

12. Art. 6 (1): "Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life". Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966, entry into force 23 March 1976

13. Art. 4: "Human beings are inviolable. Every human being shall be entitled to respect for his life and the integrity of his person. No one may be arbitrarily deprived of this right". Adopted June 27, 1981, OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/67/3 rev. 5, 21 I.L.M. 58 (1982), entered into force Oct. 21, 1986

14. Art. 2 (1): "Everyone's right to life shall be protected by law...." Signed on 4 November 1950 in Rome.

15. Art. 4 (1): "1. Every person has the right to have his life respected. This right shall be protected by law and, in general, from the moment of conception. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life". Signed at the Inter-American Specialized Conference on Human Rights, San Jose, Costa Rica, 22 November 1969

16. First Geneva Convention, art.50; Second Geneva Convention, art.51; Third Geneva Convention, art.130; Fourth Geneva Convention, art. 147

17. Additional Protocol I, art.75.2 (a); Additional Protocol II, art. 4.2 (a)

3. For further information about the battle of Solferino see at <https://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/misc/57jnvr.htm> (accessed June 17, 2015)

4. Henry Dunant, *A memory of Solferino* (Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross, 1986)

5. Speech by Carl Joachim, Member of the Nobel Committee at the occasion of the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the International Committee of the Red Cross and League of Red Cross Societies in 1963. See at http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1963/press.html (accessed June 17, 2015)

6. *Journal The Voice of Charity*, No. 136, November 1, 1875

7. Speech delivered by Léopold Boissier in the name of the International Committee of the Red Cross in the Auditorium of the University of Oslo on December 10, 1963 at the occasion of the award of the Nobel Peace Prize. See at http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1963/red-cross-acceptance.html (accessed June 17, 2015)

The right to life has traditionally been linked to the notion of human dignity, because it has become a ubiquitous idea and central concern of international law¹⁸. As a foundational norm within the United Nations, “human dignity served to signify that moral consensus, indeed universality, was a necessary response to the war’s atrocities”¹⁹. The inclusion of human dignity in the contemporary international law is a response to the widespread revulsion of the horrors of the Second World War²⁰. Therefore, it prohibits the worst excesses possible in war²¹ and claims the observance of minimal standards of civil, political and social recognition²². Consequently, human dignity is a basic norm which “can be read as a reaction against pre-war sovereigntist conceptions of legality which allowed positive law to become the tool of crimes against humanity apparently without contradiction”²³. Human dignity is not as an autonomous right, but instead as a legal principle with constitutional status²⁴.

The Human Rights Committee has issued two General Comments interpreting the content of Art. 6 on the right to life contained in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Both comments focus on the duty of States to prevent mass violence such as war and emphasize the duty of States to adopt positive measures to protect the right to life²⁵.

The right to life has properly been characterized as the supreme human right, since without effective guarantee of this right, all other rights of the human being would be devoid of meaning²⁶. Since the right to life is non-derogable right in accordance with Art. 4(2) of the ICCPR²⁷, it may never be suspended in time of public emergency which threatens the life of the nation. In addition, the right to life has been deemed *iuscogens* under international law²⁸. The right to life is not only the legal foundation for other rights, but also an integral part of all the rights which are essential to guarantee a better life for all human beings.

Additionally, the protection of the right to life is an integral part of the principle of Humanity in accordance with the XXth International Conference of the Red Cross held in Vienna in 1965.

Since the right to life should not be narrowly interpreted, it has traditionally been linked to peace and security matters. However, the linkage between the concept of life and peace was included for the first time in a speech delivered by President Roosevelt on 4 March 1933 before the United States

Capitol in Washington²⁹. This elaboration was later inserted in both the Preamble of the UN Charter³⁰ without being discussed in substance in the San Francisco Conference and the North Atlantic Treaty³¹. The UNGA has quite often referred to this commitment³². However, some resolutions use the term “neighbours” in a narrow geographical sense³³, while others have a more far-reaching meaning³⁴.

The linkage between the right to life and peace was included in the *Istanbul Declaration* which was adopted by the Red Cross in its Twenty-first International Conference held in 1969 in the following terms³⁵: “Man has a right to enjoy lasting peace, that it is essential for him to be able to have a full and satisfactory life founded on respect of his rights and of his fundamental liberty”³⁶

It is interesting to highlight that in this provision the notion of peace should be read in conjunction with the expression of «right to enjoy». In accordance with the Black Law Dictionary, the expression of «enjoyment» should be understood as the «possession and fruition of a right, privilege or incorporeal hereditament. Comfort, consolation, contentment, ease, happiness and satisfaction ». It follows that in this case peace could be understood either as a right of every person and the peoples or as an aspiration or privilege to be reached by all humankind³⁷.

In order to better understand the notion of «enjoyment» in comparative international law, we should take into account its elaboration in the field of scientific progress or medicine. In particular, article 15.3 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights indicates that the « States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone ... to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications... ». Additionally, the Convention on Human

18. Rabkin, J., “What we can learn about human dignity from international law”, *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*, Fall 2003, n. 27, p. 145-147

19. Riley, S., “Human dignity: comparative and conceptual debates”, *International Journal of Law in context*, 2010, n. 6, p. 119

20. Wicks, E., “The meaning of life: dignity and the right to life in international human rights treaties”, *Human Rights Law Review*, 2012, Vol. 12:2, p. 206

21. International humanitarian law

22. Human Rights law

23. Riley, S., *op.cit.*, note 17, p. 123-124

24. Barroso, L.R., “Here, there and everywhere: human dignity in contemporary and in the transitional discourse”, *International and Comparative Law Review*, 2012, n. 331, p. 354

25. Doc. General Comment No. 6: The right to life (art. 6): 30 April 1982; Doc. General Comment No. 14: The right to life (art. 6): 9 November 1984

26. Nowak, M., *U.N. Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: CCPR Commentary*, Engel Publisher, Kehl/Strasbourg/Arlington, 2005, p. 104

27. Art. 4 (2): “No derogation from articles 6, 7, 8 (paragraphs 1 and 2), 11, 15, 16 and 18 may be made under this provision”.

28. Ramcharan, B., “The Right to Life”, *Netherlands International Law Review* (NILR), 1983

29. “In the field of world policy I would dedicate this Nation to the policy of the good neighbor — the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others — the neighbor who respects his obligations and respects the sanctity of his agreements in and with a world of neighbours”. Statement delivered in the First inaugural Address on 3 March 1933. See in

http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Franklin_Roosevelt%27s_First_Inaugural_Address (accessed June 17, 2015)

30. Preamble, paragraph 5: “...to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours...”

31. Preamble, paragraph 1: “The Parties to this Treaty reaffirm their faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and their desire to live in peace with all peoples and all governments...” Signed in Washington on 4 April 1949.

See at http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm (accessed June 17, 2015)

32. Doc. UNGA Res. entitled “Peaceful and neighbourly relations among States”, A/RES/1236(XII) (14 December 1957); UNGA Res. entitled “Measures aimed at the implementation and promotion of peaceful and neighbourly relations among States”, A/RES/1301 (XIII) (10 December 1958) and UNGA Res. entitled “Development and strengthening of good neighbourliness between States”, A/RES/34/99 (14 December 1979)

33. Doc. UNGA Res entitled “Development and strengthening of good neighbourliness between States: 34/99 (14 December 1979); 36/101 (9 December 1981) and 37/117 (16 December 1982)

34. Doc. UNGA Res 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970

35. Bertrand Ramcharan, “The Right to Life”, *Netherlands International Law Review* (1983): 307-308

36. International Review of Red Cross, Ninth year, n. 104, 1969, Para. 1 and 2, p. 620. See at http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/RC_Nov-1969.pdf (accessed June 17, 2015)

37. Guillermet Fernandez, C., and Fernandez Puyana, D., “The ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, the Human Rights Council and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action”, *Indonesian Quarterly*, First issue, March 2015 (Vol. 43 No. 1), Yayasan Proklamasi, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta (Indonesia), p. 43

Rights and Biomedicine of the Council of Europe contains, in the preamble thereto, important provisions, including “the need for international cooperation so that all humanity may enjoy the benefits of biology and medicine”.

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) has not adopted a general comment on the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress though it has adopted general comments on Article 15 (1) (a) and (c).

Few commentators have explicitly addressed the elements of the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications, which include availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality. There has been rich discussion among commentators concerning the responsibilities of States Parties to respect, protect and fulfil the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications³⁸.

The other field in which the notion of «enjoyment» is elaborated is on cultural rights. The *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* recognises in its Article 27 that «in those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language».

The UN Human Rights Committee has stated that article 27 of the ICCPR is directed towards 'ensuring the survival and continued development of the cultural, religious and social identity of the minorities concerned, thus enriching the fabric of society as a whole'. On the other hand, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has stated that in order to assure enjoyment of the right to take part in cultural life, countries should provide cultural services that are open for everyone to enjoy and benefit from, including libraries, museums, theatres, cinemas and sports stadiums.

While the right in article 27 is expressed as one to be enjoyed in community with others, it is an individual, not a collective right. This means that the right is to be enjoyed by individuals, rather than by groups of persons. The individuals who enjoy the right are those who belong to a group which shares a common culture, religion or language. The right is to be distinguished from the right to self-determination on this basis. The Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights has stated that cultural rights may be exercised by a person as an individual, in association with others, or within a community or group.

Taking into account the previous provisions, in which the notion of «enjoyment» has been used, it should be concluded that the right to enjoy peace is intended to ensure that authorities take measures to guarantee that peace may be enjoyed in a natural and dignified manner and that the individual has every possible means for this purpose. Peace is a holistic concept which goes beyond the strict absence of armed conflicts. It is also positive, since it is linked to the eradication of structural violence as a result of the economic and social

inequalities in the world and to the effective respect for all human rights without discrimination³⁹.

5. The peace legacy of the Red Cross to future generations

The best teaching left by Henry Dunant to future generations was his message of peace and brotherhood among men and women worldwide. One of the first people who supported his thought was Mrs. Concepción Arenal, Secretary General of the Spanish Red Cross from 1871 to 1872. She stated⁴⁰ that the principle of universality opens a new era in international relations, by being the most eloquent component of peace, which one day will reign between us and reveal a great moral progress.

In the resolution V adopted in the 10th International Conference of the Red Cross, held in Geneva in 1921, both the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies made an appeal to all peoples of the world exhorting them to combat the spirit of war which still dominates the earth. Another important decision of this Conference was about the guidance of activities of Red Cross in peace time. It was stated that Red Cross had adopted the principle of serving humanity in every time and place, and that serving compassionately and without discrimination in every situation would be helpful to obtain the trust and sympathy of people⁴¹.

The XXVIIth International Conference of Red Cross held in Stockholm in 1948 adopted the resolution LXIV on the Red Cross and Peace, by which re-affirmed «the abhorrence ... and its determination to work constantly for the development of that international understanding which would bring about an enduring Peace amongst all nations of the world».

As also indicated, the peace objective will be achieved by spreading the ideal for which the Red Cross particularly stands: «the relief of suffering wherever it may exist and the endeavour to spread the Red Cross principles of selfless service to all quarters of the globe».

This International Red Cross Conference also adopted the *Declaration on Peace* submitted by the XXth Session of the Board of Governors of the League of Red Cross Societies by which it was stated that «the Red Cross, nationally and internationally, is a vital force for the preservation of peace. Peace in a nation is built in the hearts and minds of men by deeds that are prompted by manifest sympathy, understanding and respect for their fellow men»⁴².

In the XXIth International Conference held in Istanbul in 1969, the Red Cross enumerates those means that the international community should apply in order to achieve a lasting peace among peoples. These principles are contained in the effective implementation of the norms set by international law, the Charter of the United Nations, conventions and declarations of

38. The Special Rapporteur on cultural rights identifies four general obligations: “access to the benefits of science by everyone, without discrimination; opportunities for all to contribute to the scientific enterprise and freedom indispensable for scientific research; participation of individuals and communities in decision-making; and an enabling environment fostering the conservation, development and diffusion of science and technology.”

39. Guillermet Fernandez, C., and Fernandez Puyana, D., “The ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, the Human Rights Council and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action”, *Indonesian Quarterly*, First issue, March 2015 (Vol. 43 No. 1), Yayasan Proklamasi, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta (Indonesia), p. 44

40. *Journal Voice of Charity*, 1 January 1874

41. See at

<http://www.ishimj.net/ishimj/910/IISHIM%20NO.9%20PDF/06.pdf> (accessed June 17, 2015)

42. Report, Seventeenth International Red Cross Conference, Stockholm, 1948. See at http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/RC_XVIIth-RC-Conference.pdf (accessed June 17, 2015)

international humanitarian law and all humanitarian resolutions adopted by the International Red Cross and the United Nations. The First World Red Cross Conference on Peace, which took place from 11 to 13 June 1975 in Belgrade, was organized by the League of Red Cross Societies. Participants examined how Red Cross movement might contribute to the promotion of peace and to consider the role it can assume as factor for peace in the world. The ICRC provided the organizing committee with a study on the *Alleviation of war victims' suffering as a Red Cross contribution to the promotion of peace*⁴³. The Conference adopted a *Programme of Action of the Red Cross as a Factor of Peace* which was formally approved by the Council of Delegates at the Twenty-third International Red Cross Conference (Bucharest, 1977).

In compliance with Decision I of the Council of Delegates in October 1983, the Second World Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference on Peace met at Aaland, Finland, and Stockholm, Sweden, from 2 to 7 September 1984. The Council of Delegates of October 1983 decided that the objectives of the Second Conference should be to examine, assess, further develop and demonstrate the Red Cross contribution to peace.

The Council of Delegates carefully defined the spirit in which the Second Conference on Peace should work, as follows: "For a constructive action on its part, within its sphere of competence, the Red Cross does not view peace simply as the absence of war. It intends to take part in the efforts made to preserve and organize a true peace, that is a dynamic process of co-operation among all States and peoples; co-operation founded on freedom, independence, national sovereignty, equality, respect of human rights, as well as a fair and equitable distribution of resources to meet the needs of peoples"⁴⁴.

Mr Soehanda Ijas of the Indonesian Red Cross, Chairman of the Drafting Committee, then submitted to the assembly the *draft Fundamental Guidelines for the Red Cross and Red Crescent contribution to peace*. This document sets forth the Movement's contribution to a true peace and is intended to encourage and guide its members' work for peace. It states: "The National Societies, the ICRC and the League are slowly but steadily building for peace by their work. Through consistent, patient and all-encompassing effort each component of the Movement contributes to this dynamic process of co-operation which is to build such future for humanity to which we all aspire. Whereas war is most often the consequence of a long process of increasing tension, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement contribute to reducing tensions and defusing the causes of conflicts. In this way it works constantly-within the limits of its competence-for true peace. This long-term action is guaranteed by respect for the Fundamental Principles, which are an inspiration and a guide for all the Movement's humanitarian activities and which give it its unity, its strength, its orientation and its staying power". In according to Chairman of the Drafting Committee, by following these guidelines the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement hoped to inspire all the peoples and governments of

the world, so helping to find the paths that will lead mankind to a lasting peace. The Fundamental Guidelines were adopted by consensus⁴⁵.

At the XXVth International Conference of the Red Cross held in Geneva in 1986, the Red Cross and Red Crescent again declared that the Movement promotes a lasting peace, which is not simply the absence of war, but is a dynamic process of cooperation among all States and peoples. This International Conference of the Red Cross recalled resolutions X and XI of the XXIVth International Conference of the Red Cross and the resolutions of the previous International Conferences, as well as the *Programme of Action of the Red Cross as a Factor of Peace* of the World Red Cross Conference on Peace (Belgrade, 1975), as adopted in 1977 and the conclusions of the Second World Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference on Peace (Aaland and Stockholm, 1984).

The mission of the Red Cross as a key peace actor has been endlessly repeated in various regional conferences held throughout the second half of the XX century⁴⁶. In accordance with the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the concept of peace is linked to the notions of mutual understanding, friendship and cooperation⁴⁷ and is also related to the need to keep alive the ideal of peace among all peoples in order to achieve a lasting peace for humankind⁴⁸.

Consequently, the Red Cross and Red Crescent should use its unique position of neutrality, impartiality and independence to be a key force in promoting positive changes in the situation of the most vulnerable. The movement should become the new social conscience⁴⁹.

6. Red Cross and Red Crescent in the promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace

Since the adoption of the resolution A/65/138 of 5 April 2011, the General Assembly has progressively elaborated the notion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace by consensus⁵⁰.

On 2 October 2014, the Secretary General presented his report on this matter in pursuance of General Assembly resolutions 68/125, on the follow-up to the Declaration and Plan of Action on a Culture of Peace⁵¹, and 68/126, on the promotion of

45. ICRC, *International Review of the Red Cross*, No. 243 (1984): 314.

See at

http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/RC_Mar-1975.pdf (accessed June 17, 2015)

46. Toronto (1952), Oslo (1954), New Delhi (1957), Athens (1959), Prague (1961), Geneva (1963), Vienna (1965) and Istanbul (1969)

47. XX International Conference of the Red Cross, Resolution X, Vienna, 1965 in ICRC, *International Review of the Red Cross*, November 1965, N° 56, p.574. See at http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/RC_Nov-1965.pdf (accessed June 17, 2015)

48. XIX International Conference of the Red Cross, New Delhi, 1957 in ICRC, *International Review of the Red Cross*, November 1965, N° 56, p.574.

See at

http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/RC_Nov-1965.pdf (accessed June 17, 2015)

49. Copenhagen Declaration on Action and Advocacy adopted in the 5th regional European Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference on 20 March 1997

50. Guillermet Fernandez, C., and Fernandez Puyana, D., "The search for consensus and unanimity within the international organizations", *US-China Law Journal*, Vol. 13, No. 1, January 2016

51. Guillermet Fernandez, C., and Fernandez Puyana, D., "Analysis of the UNESCO approach to the notions of human rights, peace and development in the context of Culture of Peace", *European Human Rights Law Review*, issue 5 (2014), Thomson Reuters, London (UK), p. 439-455 and "From a Culture of Conflict to a Culture of Peace, Human Rights and Development.",

43. ICRC, *International Review of the Red Cross*, March 1975, N° 168, p.142. See at :

http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/RC_Mar-1975.pdf (accessed June 17, 2015)

44. ICRC, *International Review of the Red Cross*, November-December 1984, N° 243, p.307. See at

http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/RC_Mar-1975.pdf (accessed June 17, 2015)

interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace. This was the first time that a combined report has been submitted covering the implementation by the United Nations system of the two resolutions⁵².

This increased proximity between both topics can again be found in the report A/70/373 of 18 September 2015 on activities that have been carried out by the main UN entities working in the areas of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace.

In accordance with the Secretary-General, the United Nations human rights machinery promotes a culture of peace and dialogue from various angles, such as the cultural rights and the right to peace. The Secretary-General also stressed that in June 2014 the working group on the right to peace made a clear reference to the «supreme importance of practicing tolerance, dialogue, cooperation and solidarity as means to promote world peace through human rights»⁵³.

In this context, the linkage between the «right to enjoy lasting peace» and «right to life» elaborated by the *Istanbul Declaration*, which was adopted by Red Cross and Red Crescent in 1969, should be interpreted in light of the promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace. In fact, in accordance with the Secretary-General the right to peace is an integral part of the rights-based approach to the promotion of peace and intercultural and interreligious dialogue⁵⁴.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace (A/69/413) and the progress described in the report led by UNESCO and many other United Nations entities⁵⁵.

The IFRC agreed with the Secretary General's emphasis on the interconnectedness between the culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue⁵⁶, and his call for “an increasingly integrated approach on the part of the entities of the United Nations system to these problems, particularly in their activities at the field level” (A/69/413, para. 95)

The IFRC states that they are strongly committed to fostering a global culture of respect for peace and non-violence, intercultural dialogue and social inclusion in which human values and dignity are truly celebrated⁵⁷.

7. Conclusions

The commitment of the international movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to the promotion of peace and peaceful means of resolving disputes has been clear since its inception. One of the main promoters of these ideas was Henry Dunant, founder of the Red Cross.

DirittiUmani/ Peace Human Rights, Special Issue on the Right to Peace, no. 2–3 (magg.-dic 2013), Human Rights Centre of the University of Padova, UNESCO Chair on human rights, democracy and peace and Region of Veneto, p. 13–40

52. Secretary-General, Report on the Promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace, Doc. A/69/413, 2 October 2014, par. 1

53. Op. cit. 52, p. 87

54. Op. cit. 52, Section VI

55. Doc. A/69/PV.72, Official Records, 15 December 2014, p. 18

56. Op. cit. 55, p. 19

57. Op. cit. 55, p. 19

Dunant raised his voice more than 100 years ago against barbarity, suffering and misery. National Societies emerged and developed as a direct consequence of his attitude and philosophy. Therefore, this intellectual and human contribution continued with the movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. This organization is one of the great miracles in human history⁵⁸.

There have been many international conferences in which peace has been proclaimed as the ultimate goal to be realized by all men and women. To achieve This humanitarian purpose, the Red Cross and Red Crescent offers to the world a human structure composed of hundreds of thousands of volunteers, whose purpose is to embody the principles of humanity and world peace. Additionally, its role in the promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace has been critical.

The message which emerges from the human and intellectual work of Henry Dunant still shines in the world with the same intensity as in the past. This is the reason that his thought is now a source of inspiration for those new impulses of peace, which continue to emerge in the world. Dunant will have the important privilege of occupying a relevant place in history because he has become one of the foremost champions of peace in the world.

8. Annex Resolution XIX Istanbul Declaration

The XXIst International Conference of the Red Cross, aware of the unity and indivisibility of the human family,

Declares:

that man has the right to enjoy lasting peace,

that it is essential for him to be able to live a full and satisfactory life founded on respect of his rights and of his fundamental liberty,

that this aim can be achieved only if human rights as set forth and defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Humanitarian Conventions are respected and observed,

that it is a human right to be free from all fears, acts of violence and brutality, threats and anxieties likely to injure man in his person, his honour and his dignity,

that everyone has the right to equal enjoyment of the benefits of contemporary civilisation without distinction or discrimination as to race, sex, origin, religion, language, philosophy and political opinion,

that the universally recognized general principles of law demand that the rule of law be effectively guaranteed everywhere,

that if the ideals of peace and freedom are to be achieved, special attention must be paid to the younger generation, and upbringing and education must be improved in accordance with the principles of human rights and humanism embodied *inter*

58. Speech by Carl Joachim, Member of the Nobel Committee at the occasion of the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the International Committee of the Red Cross and League of Red Cross Societies in 1963. See at http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1963/press.html (accessed June 17, 2015)

alia in the International Red Cross and finding expression in the Geneva Conventions,

that the common fate of mankind depends on solidarity, co-operation and sincere friendship between nations.

Resolution XX

The Red Cross as a Factor in World Peace

The XXIst International Conference of the Red Cross,

Considering that the International Red Cross, in accordance with its fundamental humanitarian principles adopted by the XXth International Conference, is called upon to promote mutual understanding, friendship, co-operation and lasting peace amongst all peoples,

confirming all previous resolutions in support of peace condemning any threat or use of force which jeopardizes the independence and right of self-determination of all peoples, and the appeals of previous Red Cross Conferences to all Governments to settle their disputes by effective peaceful means, within the spirit of international law,

expressing its anxiety at the threat to world peace and international security resulting from armed conflicts in different regions of the world which are causing great suffering and distress, and prompted by the necessity for effective measures to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security which requires, as an essential element, respect for international agreements and international law,

re-affirming that the Red Cross is always faithful to its traditional commitments for the benefit of all mankind and calls for respect of the internationally accepted fundamental human rights of all persons and of all human societies,

urgently appeals to all Governments and to the United Nations to take all measures to put an end to armed conflicts and to establish a lasting peace; urges renewed efforts to halt the nuclear arms race, including the establishment of an adequately verified treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in all environments, a seabeds arms control treaty, sound and effective arrangements covering chemical and biological weapons, and general and complete disarmament under effective international control,

proposes that funds that would have been assigned to the purchase of armaments be used for the service of mankind, the protection of the lives and health of people, first and foremost the younger generation, and for the improvement of education and teaching,

noting with satisfaction resolution 2444 of the United Nations General Assembly adopted on 19 December 1968, requests the leaders of the International Red Cross to maintain constant and close contact with the United Nations in respect of activities on behalf of peace and human rights,

urges all States to accept and effectively put into practice the standards established by international law, the Charter of the United Nations, international humanitarian Conventions and declarations and all previous humanitarian Resolutions of the International Red Cross and the United Nations,

recommends that the International Red Cross bodies and the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies, in constant liaison with the Specialized Agencies of the United Nations, take active measures to initiate the whole population, particularly youth, in Red Cross activities by training youth in a spirit of international brotherhood,

solidarity, friendship with all peoples and social responsibility for the destiny of their peoples; in this spirit it invites the International Red Cross bodies, in liaison with UNESCO, other UN Specialized Agencies and youth organisations, to initiate an educational programme on peace,

urgently invites and recommends the National Societies to increase and maintain closer contacts with each other for the purpose of exchanging experiences, and achieving closer co-operation and mutual understanding in the promotion of peace,

draws the attention of the International Red Cross to the need to have further recourse to all media of information in support of peace, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to the need for extensive dissemination of the humanitarian principles of the Red Cross,

recommends to the International Red Cross organs and to all National Societies to convene meetings and study groups to seek practical ways of enabling the Red Cross to participate more effectively in the cause of safeguarding peace and preventing wars.

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