



# ICRC

**United Nations General Assembly, 80th session, Sixth Committee Meeting on  
Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism**

**Agenda Item 109**

**Statement by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)**

7 October 2025

Chair,

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) unequivocally condemns all acts of terrorism, whether in times of armed conflict or not, and regardless of the perpetrators. Terrorism is prohibited under international humanitarian law (IHL). Acts or threats of violence whose primary purpose is to spread terror among civilians are prohibited. These prohibitions apply equally to all parties to armed conflict, State and non-State alike. Terrorism violates IHL and negates the basic principle of humanity. The ICRC has repeatedly recalled the prohibition on terrorizing the civilian population, both in public statements and in its confidential bilateral dialogue with parties to armed conflict.

Chair,

The ICRC recognizes the legitimacy for States to take responsive action, in conformity with international law, to counter terrorism and ensure their security and that of their population.

However, we continue to observe instances where counter-terrorism measures may restrict humanitarian action. The risk exists when

humanitarian activities conducted by impartial humanitarian organizations such as the ICRC, are considered as a form of support to terrorism. This may result in the criminalization of humanitarian activities which are foreseen, authorized and protected under IHL. Impartial humanitarian organizations must be able to carry out such activities, which include, for example the delivery of food assistance to civilians, the delivery of essential services such as water or electricity to the civilian population, providing medical supplies and treatment for the wounded and sick, visiting people deprived of their liberty, reuniting families and training parties to armed conflict on their obligations under IHL. Criminalization of such activities is also in clear contradiction with States' obligation under IHL to respect and protect humanitarian personnel, as recalled in UN Security Council resolution 2730 (2024).

The Security Council and the General Assembly have both urged States to ensure that their counter-terrorism frameworks do not impede humanitarian and medical activities or engagement with all relevant actors as foreseen by IHL. They have also demanded that States ensure that all measures taken to counter terrorism comply with their obligations under international law, including IHL.

In the view of the ICRC, the most effective way to reconcile counter-terrorism obligations with IHL and preserve humanitarian activities is to adopt well-framed and standing humanitarian exemptions. To this end, in July 2025, the ICRC published an advisory note on "[Humanitarian Exemptions in Domestic Counterterrorism Legislation](#)". The document sets out the relevant rules of IHL, including the rules governing humanitarian activities, the rules protecting humanitarian personnel, and the rules protecting the wounded and sick as well as those providing medical assistance. It proposes sample wording of a humanitarian exemption that strikes the right balance of avoiding the

adverse impact of counterterrorism legislation on humanitarian action without opening the exemption up to abuse or otherwise endangering the effectiveness of counterterrorism measures.

A limited number of Member States have already adopted such measures, but more efforts have still to be made. We commend the Member States that have already taken steps in this direction, and we encourage others to follow suit.

Chair,

The ICRC looks forward to continued discussions with States and with UN bodies in order to raise awareness about the impact of counterterrorism measures and promote effective mitigation of their unintended consequences.

Thank you Chair.