

APPEAL BY THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS TO THE SECOND SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT

On the eve of the Second Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly which will be devoted to disarmament, the Presidents of the Standing Commission of the International Red Cross, of the International Committee of the Red Cross and of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, consider it their duty to express the growing concern of the world Red Cross movement over the unprecedented escalation of the nuclear and conventional arms race.

The following appeal expresses the spirit which has inspired the International Red Cross Movement throughout the 120 years of its humanitarian activities for mankind over which there looms today the threat of a catastrophe liable to dwarf any disaster recorded in human history.

THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS,

Conscious of its aims and of the mandate to alleviate human suffering, entrusted to it, as a universal humanitarian movement, by the Statutes of the International Red Cross,

Emphasizing the fundamental principle of humanity adopted by the Twentieth International Red Cross Conference (Vienna, 1965) to protect man's life, ensure respect for the human being and promote lasting peace amongst all peoples,

Bearing in mind all the resolutions in favour of peace and of disarmament adopted by numerous International Red Cross Conferences,

Greatly concerned by the worsening international situation, the widespread use of increasingly murderous arms and the accumulation of weapons of mass destruction capable of annihilating mankind,

Deeply convinced that disarmament and peace are attainable goals and that human beings are not condemned to destroy each other, but

can live in harmony, as shown by the very existence of the Red Cross movement which unites in a common ideal 230 million members of different races, beliefs and nationalities,

Recalling that the Red Cross does not view peace simply as the absence of war, but rather as a dynamic process of co-operation among 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,

Exhorts all States and the United Nations Organization to adopt urgent measures to stop armed conflicts and establish lasting peace, and to promote respect for existing international agreements in order to safeguard peace for all people,

Urges governments to stop the arms race, and to take all measures to achieve general and complete disarmament under effective international control,

Confirms its support of the efforts undertaken for disarmament and its readiness to contribute to them in accordance with the principles governing its work.

Geneva, 14 May 1982.

*The President of the
International Committee
of the Red Cross*

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