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## AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS

### DEFENCE WHITE PAPER PUBLIC SUBMISSION 2015

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Australian Red Cross welcomes the opportunity to make this contribution to the Defence White Paper process.

Australian Red Cross is auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field. Originally founded as a branch of the British Red Cross in 1914 and formally established by Royal Charter in 1941, we represent the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement) in Australia. As a National Red Cross Society and through its auxiliary role, we have a unique position and mandate under international and domestic legal frameworks to provide a role as partner, technical advisor and supporter of humanitarian activities to its Government.

As such, our submission addresses:

### 1. The Role of the ADF in Responding to Domestic Emergencies

Effective emergency response establishes a sustainable framework for community-led recovery. This requires an understanding of the complex matrix of factors that determine a community's ability to reinstate previously existing infrastructure and social networks. This submission particularly addresses psychosocial needs.

The Defence Aid to the Civil Community (DACC 1-6) instructions identify that Defence assets and capabilities be used when local community assets (and capabilities) are exhausted (this would include not-for-profit and private sector assets and capabilities). This approach is supported by Australian Red Cross and is inherent in the COAG endorsed National Strategy for Disaster Resilience, which strongly promotes local resilience and problem solving as the key to any community's capacity to deal with disaster.

In the event that the Australian Defence Force (ADF) is involved in domestic disasters we recommend that senior ADF personnel be trained in humanitarian relief operations, recovery management, and that Australian Red Cross, in our role as auxiliary to Government in the humanitarian field, be utilised to support and advise key ADF personnel, as an independent, experienced provider of recovery services, domestically and internationally.

### 2. The Role of the ADF in Civil Military Operations Overseas

Any military response to international emergencies must be carefully calibrated to ensure that humanitarian objectives and personnel are not compromised. Only if civilian resources are exhausted or unable to respond should militaries be engaged in humanitarian assistance in situations of armed conflict; the distinction between humanitarian and military operations must be preserved to ensure neutrality and impartiality of aid. Advance training in International Disaster Law (IDL), international humanitarian law (IHL) and the principles that govern humanitarian services delivery is critical to preventing military involvement





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from inadvertently hampering aid delivery, creating access problems and threatening the security of humanitarian personnel.

### **3. Australia's Policy regarding Nuclear Weapons**

This submission argues that the Government should change its policy with regard to nuclear weapons. There are three reasons why we suggest support for a total ban of nuclear weapons: the grave humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons are irreversible and unacceptable; nuclear weapons violate the most basic principles of international humanitarian law; and the shifting global discourse concerning the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons in which the Movement has played a significant role.

### **4. ADF's Commitment to the National Plan for Women, Peace and Security**

We congratulate the ADF on its considerable progress in advancing a program to meet this agenda and encourage Defence to allocate all necessary resources needed for the Defence Implementation Plan and ensure future Status of Forces Agreements and Rules of Engagement provide for the effective action on operations.

### **5. ADF's Commitment to international humanitarian law (IHL) training in the Region**

Given our mandate to disseminate IHL, we are interested and pleased in Defence's commitment to increase efforts to promote, disseminate and support implementation of IHL in Australia and the Asia Pacific region. We commend Defence's ongoing activities in this area and encourage the Department to ensure adequate resources are committed to this task.



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## 1. ADF Response to Complex Emergencies

Australian Red Cross makes the following submission in response to The Defence White paper question:

**What roles, if any, should Defence play in responding to border protection, domestic security incidents and natural disasters, and as a partner of the Australian community?**

This submission will address the complexity of emergencies, in order to clarify for policy-makers the proper framework in which ADF assets and capabilities may be utilised. It also offers recommendations on how the ADF's capabilities best fit into the broader emergency management spectrum, based on best practice derived from combining internationally agreed principles for civil military cooperation and Australia's recovery principles.

### Emergencies in Australia

If defence resources are committed to help with emergency management operations within the domestic setting, it is important for policy makers and decision makers to recognise that it is not a simple logistical endeavour requiring only the commitment of resources. The context is complex, and potentially different to other activities with which ADF personnel would usually be tasked.

Traditionally, the focus of emergency management activities in Australia has been on preservation of life, hazard management and mitigation, and the replacement of physical infrastructure impacted by emergencies, including roads, buildings and equipment. Understanding continues to grow of the complexity inherent in the consequences of loss and the severe disruption that emergency events have on individual life and community networks.

While there is an increasing appreciation of the impacts of cumulative events on communities, there is still a tendency to treat these as separate events from an emergency management perspective. This includes multiple extreme weather events, such as drought, heatwave, flood or cyclone coupled with the effects of the global economic crisis or local economic downturns, and other demographic shifts.

Australian Red Cross describes these impacts of disaster as psycho-social impacts because they have an impact on people's psychological wellbeing, as well as their social wellbeing. The psychological dimension being the internal, emotional and thought processes of a person – his or her feelings and reactions; and the social dimension being relationships, family and community networks, social values and cultural practices<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, (2007), *Psycho-social Interventions: A handbook* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed)

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These impacts can be long lasting, as evidenced by the fact that many programs are still operating in Victoria post Black Saturday, nearly six year after the bushfires.

Constitutionally, emergency management is a state/territory government responsibility, with the Federal government providing support to the jurisdictions through coordination of assistance, mobilisation of Federal Government assets, and the coordination of overseas incidents involving Australian nationals. Consistent with this, ADF would normally be activated only when state/territory government, not-for-profit and private resources have been fully exhausted; this protocol is an important component of effective community resilience.

While most of the ADF's operations in domestic emergencies have been in relief and early recovery, in some circumstances the ADF has taken leading roles in recovery (the establishment of the Victorian Bushfire Recovery Authority and the Queensland Recovery Authority). So while the prevailing view may be of the ADF as a provider of logistics support or response and relief activities, it has also been called upon to lead recovery efforts.

### **ADF Capabilities for Relief**

It is clear that the ADF has a range of capabilities that can be quickly mobilised to support emergency management operations. As an example the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission report (Section 8: Commonwealth support for recovery) suggests that the ADF already plays a number of roles in some disasters from material assets to forensic assistance, aerial imagery capability and surveillance. Primary health, psychological support teams, accommodation and catering have also been provided by the ADF during the Black Saturday bushfires.<sup>2</sup>

While most of what was provided is detailed in the Victorian Emergency Management Arrangements, it is not clear whether local resources were, in fact exhausted before defence resources were activated.

The Defence Aid to the Civil Community (DACC 1-6) instructions are generally well understood by senior emergency managers and in Australian Red Cross' view, well utilised. In essence, Defence assets and capabilities could be used when local community assets (and capabilities) are exhausted (this includes not-for-profit and private sector assets and capabilities).

### **Australian Government's National Strategy for Disaster Resilience**

Consistent with the above, Australian Red Cross submits that the principles applicable in international settings should likewise apply to the domestic context. Civil Military Cooperation in the international context is governed by a number of principles, including 'last resort' and 'complementarity'.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission 2009, Exhibit 845 – *Commonwealth Response and Recovery Assistance Following the 2009 Victorian Bushfires* (RESP.6007.001.0001) [3.6]

<sup>3</sup> See UN OCHA brochure *Last Resort* (2012) for three conditions required for military 'last resort'.



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The expanding responsibilities assumed by military in disaster relief can create new areas where lines between humanitarian and military action are blurred, jeopardising the integrity of fundamental humanitarian principles including humanity, neutrality and impartiality. These principles apply equally in the domestic emergency management sector and are inherent in the COAG endorsed National Strategy for Disaster Resilience, which strongly promotes local resilience and problem solving as key to any community's capacity to deal with disaster.

It is not currently clear if ADF personnel are trained in humanitarian relief operations that are tailored for the domestic setting. This would include an understanding of the relevant emergency management arrangements, and the context in which they are operating. Australian Red Cross recommends that, if it is decided that ADF personnel are to play a more active role (including reservists) then they should be trained in emergency management.

Additionally, ADF personnel should be trained focussing on the psycho-social dimension, so that they understand the context in which they may be deployed.

### **Defence Force Capabilities for Recovery**

Australian government bodies have agreed on a consistent model of recovery across the country, based upon the National Recovery Principles.

This model has four key environments in recovery (the psycho-social, the built, the natural and the economic) and demonstrates the importance of these environments being integrated, with community being the lynch pin that links them all together.

Integral to the success of any recovery program is an underpinning in psycho-social support. The International Federation of the Red Cross Psycho-social Framework defines psycho-social support as 'a process of facilitating resilience within individuals, families and communities'. Australian Red Cross implements community-based psycho-social support which concentrates on strengthening the social bonds of people in affected communities, by improving the psycho-social well-being of individuals and communities as whole entities. This approach encourages positive recovery and strengthens the ability of affected communities to deal with challenges in the future.<sup>4</sup>

Consequently it is critical that any ADF personnel deployed to respond to a domestic disaster have the appropriate psycho-social support understanding and competence to deal with individuals and communities that may be severely traumatised by the events that they have experienced.

Central to this is psychological first aid principles which provide an excellent 'test' to measure any direct services that are provided to emergency affected individuals and

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<sup>4</sup> IFRC Psychosocial Interventions handbook.




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communities. Consistent with the National Recovery Principles, activities being undertaken need to promote safety, calm, connectedness, self-efficacy, help and hope.

While experience, research and best practice guidelines all indicate that the impacts of disasters have long term and complex implications for affected people, planning for recovery activities is generally undertaken on a short term basis. In part this short term planning is driven by media and political considerations and partly by a view that people need more assistance immediately after an event rather than in the longer term.

Managing recovery is a technically challenging and complex task. Like many other tasks (eg military operations or managing bushfires) it requires highly skilled and experienced practitioners. While the logistical aspects of recovery from disaster (e.g. re-establishing essential services and rebuilding houses) are critical, it is also imperative that careful consideration is given to the longer term community development and psycho-social challenges, which are often heavily influenced by decisions taken very early in recovery.

Governance models require careful examination to ensure the optimal support for people affected by disaster. Best practice worldwide, as highlighted in the National Recovery Principles, is that community led recovery is the most effective model, as the community has most at stake in their future. For large scale events, however, Governments tend to appoint top down driven authorities or taskforces, with a scope to streamline resource acquisition. Recent experiences in Australia and New Zealand have indicated that the establishment of these taskforces requires lead time for scaling up both capacity and capability in understanding the environment in which they are operating.

At a minimum, if the ADF continue to be drawn upon to provide post disaster taskforce capabilities, then Australian Red Cross would recommend that all senior personnel be trained in recovery management and that Australian Red Cross, in our unique role as auxiliary to Government in their humanitarian endeavours,<sup>5</sup> be utilised, to support and advise key ADF personnel, as an independent and experienced provider of recovery services and coordination, domestically and internationally.

## 2. The ADF Role in Providing Humanitarian Assistance Overseas

Australian Red Cross makes the following submission on the question:

### **Should Defence focus less on preparing for war-like operations and focus more on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations overseas?**

Governments have the primary obligation to respond to the needs of the population; coordination of disaster response capacity will, therefore, generally be led by the host government. The accepted norm amongst disaster response stakeholders is that disaster relief should be 'as civilian as possible and as military as necessary.' Recognised

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<sup>5</sup> 'The [Australian Red Cross National] Society is a voluntary aid society auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field, including during times of emergency and times of armed conflict in accordance with the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols,' Supplement to 1914 The Royal Charter of the Australian Red Cross, signed by The Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia, 12 October 2010.





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international guidance recommends that military assets only be used when ‘no comparable civilian alternative’ is available.<sup>6</sup>

Frequently militaries are among the first response mechanisms to be activated by States following a disaster. In large scale events this can include the request for and/or acceptance of international military support. The ADF should be prepared to provide such assistance as requested but the circumstances in which it does so need to be clearly delineated, focusing on:

- Indirect assistance – such as logistical assets for the transporting of relief goods or personnel.
- Infrastructure support – providing general services, including heavy equipment for infrastructure repair.

Such assistance should be limited to essential functions and should complement the roles of local authorities, humanitarian actors and the private sector.

Australian Red Cross acknowledges that militaries may have a role to play supporting or, at times even providing, humanitarian services, locally and internationally; however it is critical that its role is properly defined. The absence of a clear distinction between military activity and humanitarian assistance can hamper aid delivery, create access problems and threaten the security of humanitarian personnel. It is well recognised that while military action supports political purposes, humanitarian assistance is based firmly on need and is provided neutrally without taking sides in disputes or political positions on the underlying issues.

Provision of humanitarian assistance by militaries should be restricted to support in times of natural disasters and not complex emergencies to ensure there is no blurring of the lines between conflict response and humanitarian assistance which can compromise the safety and security of not only Australians but the wider response community. In times of conflict, the involvement of militaries in providing humanitarian assistance may have serious consequences, and could impact the perceived or actual neutrality, impartiality and operational independence of the overall humanitarian effort.

The role of humanitarian agencies must be recognised and accepted by military personnel: it is to provide assistance wherever there is need, regardless of who controls the relevant territory, or the political persuasion of the people in need. For this, humanitarian agencies must have unimpeded access to all affected civilian populations. And, they must be accepted by all parties as impartial agents of assistance, not associated with any military or political force. In these endeavours, perceptions can be as important as reality. How the affected population perceive humanitarian agencies can lead to violent consequences. Populations may not want to accept their assistance, in the belief that doing so might make them targets of violence.

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<sup>6</sup> ‘Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence assets in Disaster Relief’ (the ‘Oslo Guidelines’).

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At all times the application of the principles of humanity, independence, impartiality and neutrality must be of primary concern. It is our submission that the ADF must be prepared to engage appropriately with all actors to ensure the effective use of the assistance they provide. Effective application of IHL and IDL can assist in facilitating such coordination.

### 3. Nuclear Weapons Policy

Australian Red Cross makes the following submission in response to the Defence White Paper statement:

**The current 2013 Defence White Paper notes a range of potential nuclear threats and that ‘as long as nuclear weapons exist, we rely on nuclear forces ... to deter a nuclear attack on Australia.’<sup>7</sup>**

It is the view of Australian Red Cross that the use of nuclear weapons would be unacceptable in any and all circumstances. This submission will address the humanitarian concerns, international legal obligations and changing international discourse on this issue.

#### **International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement position on nuclear weapons**

The position of the Movement regarding nuclear weapons is found in Resolution 1 of the Council of Delegates (the peak decision making body of the Movement) *Working towards the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, 26 November 2011*. This resolution:

- emphasises the incalculable human suffering that can be expected to result from any use of nuclear weapons, the lack of any adequate humanitarian response capacity and the absolute imperative to prevent such use,
- finds it difficult to envisage how any use of nuclear weapons could be compatible with the rules of international humanitarian law, in particular the rules of distinction, precaution and proportionality, and
- appeals to all States:
  - to ensure that nuclear weapons are never again used, regardless of their views on the legality of such weapons, and
  - to pursue in good faith and conclude with urgency and determination negotiations to prohibit the use of and completely eliminate nuclear weapons through a legally binding international agreement, based on existing commitments and international obligations.

This Resolution was reinforced in 2013 when the Australian Red Cross hosted the International Red Cross Red Crescent Statutory meetings in Sydney last year. At those meetings an additional Resolution was passed, outlining a plan of action for the Movement to continue working toward the prohibition, and ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons.

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<sup>7</sup> Australian Government (2013) *Defence White Paper* at [3.41].



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## Humanitarian concerns

Since 1945, the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons has been well known. As years have passed, the immense intergenerational suffering has also become apparent.

The devastating consequences of these weapons are well documented. Sixty per cent of Hiroshima was destroyed.<sup>8</sup> Thirty per cent of the population were killed and another 30 per cent injured.<sup>9</sup> The number of deaths from the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki roughly doubled between the months after the bombings and five years later, as a result of radiation poisoning and other complications. The total fatalities after five years are estimated at more than 400,000. During the 65 years after the atomic bombings, the Japanese Red Cross Hospital in Hiroshima has seen an average of 2,408 atomic bomb survivors as new patients each year.<sup>10</sup>

Further, the weapons dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 were small in comparison to the approximately 17,000 nuclear weapons in existence today.<sup>11</sup> The horrific humanitarian consequences of their use today would be beyond the capacity of any humanitarian or medical organisation to respond and have catastrophic global consequences.<sup>12</sup>

Further, it is clear that the possession of nuclear weapons itself is a gravely hazardous endeavour, with significant risks of human or technical error resulting in a potential nuclear accident. Surveys of nuclear accidents indicate that it is good fortune, not good management, that we have not seen a nuclear weapon used since 1945.<sup>13</sup> These instances include computer faults, miscommunication, mistaken identity, misperception and a situation in which an exercise scenario tape caused a nuclear alert.<sup>14</sup> Add to this the now growing threat of cyber-terrorism and it becomes evident 'the risks associated with the acquisition or retention of nuclear weapons far outweigh any conceivable utility they may have'.<sup>15</sup>

The Movement, with its objective of alleviating human suffering wherever it may be found, is naturally deeply concerned by the destructive force of nuclear weapons and the immense human suffering they inflict and to this end are calling on all states to give their full support and commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons. The British and American Medical

<sup>8</sup> Joseph M Siracus (2008) *Nuclear Weapons A very short introduction* (OUP) at 23

<sup>9</sup> United States Government (1946) *The United States Strategic Bombing Survey: The Effect of Atomic Bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki* (US Government Printing Office, Washington) at 6

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.hiroshima-med.jrc.or.jp/english/atomic\\_bomb.html](http://www.hiroshima-med.jrc.or.jp/english/atomic_bomb.html)

<sup>11</sup> Australian Red Cross Nuclear Weapons: a unique threat to humanity Magazine (2011) at 10.

<sup>12</sup> Australian Red Cross Nuclear Weapons: a unique threat to humanity Magazine (2011) at 7-9.

<sup>13</sup> See for example Chatham House Report (2014) *Too close for comfort. Cases of nuclear near use and options for policy* at vi.

<sup>14</sup> Chatham House Report (2014) *Too close for comfort. Cases of nuclear near use and options for policy* at vi.

<sup>15</sup> Gareth Evans (2013) *Nuclear Deterrence in Asia and the Pacific* (Asia and the Pacific Policy Studies vol 1 no 1 91-111) at 91.

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Associations and the World Health Organisation also call for elimination on humanitarian grounds.

## Legal Frameworks

Two legal frameworks apply to the question of nuclear weapons. The Geneva Conventions of 1949 (agreed to by all States) and their Additional Protocols, outline the rules and principles applicable to the conduct of armed conflict. Legal obligations are also found in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Rather than restrict particular weapons, the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols set out the fundamental principles of IHL. The principle of distinction lies at the heart of the law. Specifically, Additional Protocol I requires that those engaged in conflict must: always distinguish between civilians and combatants (article 48); not use weapons which cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering (article 35); nor use methods which are disproportionate to the military aim (article 51) or which cause widespread, long term and severe damage to the environment (article 55).

It is the strong view of the Movement that the use of nuclear weapons offends all these principles and is therefore contrary to fundamental rules found in IHL. We also note the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which confirmed that the principles and rules of IHL apply to nuclear weapons and concluded that the threat or use of such weapons would generally be contrary to the principles and rules of IHL. In addition, the commitments made in Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) require States to move 'in good faith' towards nuclear disarmament.

## Other Considerations

### NPT Process

The historical record indicates that deterrence was always intended to be an interim approach, with disarmament the ultimate goal. At the first special session on disarmament of the United Nations General Assembly in 1978, all countries agreed to the elimination of nuclear weapons through a comprehensive disarmament programme.<sup>16</sup> The Australian government has indicated its commitment to the NPT.

### Shifting Global Discourse

Moreover, it is clear that the momentum is shifting in this field from being one dominated by nuclear weapons states to a global discourse on this topic led by many concerned states intent on ensuring nuclear weapons are never again used.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid at 381.

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March 2013 saw 127 governments of the world come together for the first time to discuss the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons. Governments engaged as scientists and medical practitioners warned of the catastrophic consequences that even a small nuclear weapon could cause. The story continued in February 2014, as Mexico hosted 146 governments at the Second Intergovernmental Meeting on the Humanitarian Impacts of Nuclear Weapons. The Movement have been represented at these meetings with delegations from the International Committee of the Red Cross as well as the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. Australian Red Cross has contributed to the IFRC delegations at both these international meetings. The significant contribution of the Movement to the changing debate on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons has been recognised at the highest levels of governments.

The Third Intergovernmental Conference on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons will be held in Vienna on 8 and 9 December 2014 and we strongly encourage the Australian Government to participate in this Conference.

Just this month, in October 2014, New Zealand made a statement, on behalf of 155 countries, which again stressed the humanitarian consequences of Nuclear Weapons, and the crucial role played by civil society.<sup>17</sup>

Other statements were made at the First Committee at the UN General Assembly in October 2014 including one by Ireland, which noted the ‘abysmal record of underachievement and underperformance on multilateral nuclear disarmament since a decision was taken to extent the NPT twenty years ago.’<sup>18</sup> That statement goes on to note that there is growing evidence [of] very strong support for ‘fresh thinking to this discussion’, for civil society engagement and importantly for options, including a Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty, to be ‘discussed and fully tested’.

As the Foreign Minister Julie Bishop has noted, Australia has actively supported nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and worked towards the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.<sup>19</sup> In 2013, there was cross-party commitment by the then Labor Government, the Opposition, and the Greens, in support of the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. We encourage the White Paper to take this into consideration and hope that these past expressions of commitment translate into courageous and steadfast leadership in the years to come.

<sup>17</sup> UNGA 69: First Committee Joint Statement on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons, Statement by Statement by New Zealand, 20 October 2014. <http://www.mfat.govt.nz/Media-and-publications/Media/MFAT-speeches/2014/0-20-Oct-2014.php>

<sup>18</sup> UNGA 69: First Committee Joint Statement on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons, Statement by Statement by Ireland, 20 October 2014, [http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/1com/1com14/statements/21Oct\\_Ireland.pdf](http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/1com/1com14/statements/21Oct_Ireland.pdf).





<sup>19</sup> Julie Bishop ‘We must engage not enrage’ Sydney Morning Herald, 14 February 2014.

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It has been suggested that to ban nuclear weapons before significant movement has been made towards their elimination is a problematic course of action.<sup>20</sup> However there are many examples in history where weapons have been prohibited before they have been eliminated – indeed this is true for all major weapons law treaties – including the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions. Australia has played globally significant roles in achieving and supporting these treaties and we encourage the Australian Government to review its current stance and take a global leadership role in this humanitarian issue.

No political party has a monopoly on leadership of IHL issues, and over the years all sides of politics have demonstrated at times great courage in relation to critical IHL issues – Australia’s change in policy to ensure a global ban on the use, transfer, production and stockpile of anti-personnel landmines in 1996 stands out as a magnificent example of foreign policy that took humanitarian imperatives into account.

For as long as nuclear weapons exist there is a real and present risk of inadvertent, accidental or deliberate detonation. This is a unique and unacceptable threat to humanity. Australian reliance on the policy of extended nuclear deterrence is problematic in so far as it ignores the humanitarian arguments for a legally binding instrument prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons, ignores the legal obligations to work towards the weapons being eliminated and fails to take into account the strategic reality that nuclear weapons are more of a liability than an asset. We encourage the Australian Government to join the lead alongside our New Zealand neighbours and denounce nuclear weapons and the nuclear umbrella. The humanitarian imperative is clear and Australia should be proud to be on the right side of history.

#### 4. ADF’s Commitment to the National Plan for Women, Peace and Security

Australian Red Cross makes the following additional submission in response to the Defence White Paper question:

##### **What can Australia do to contribute to strengthening peace and stability in our region?**

Our IHL department has among its chief concerns, the protection of civilians in armed conflict. It is women and children who continue to suffer the worst of the violence in contemporary armed conflicts. United Nations Resolution 1325 calls for institutional shifts to redress the gendered harms of armed conflict and to re-define the protection and participation of women.

Australian Red Cross recognises recent accomplishments of the ADF towards implementing and reporting on the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018 (WPS), in particular the robust views put forward by Chief of Army, Lieutenant General David Morrison, AO, at the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict (London, June 2014),

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<sup>20</sup> Julie Bishop, “We must engage not enrage” Sydney Morning Herald 14 February 2014.

**100**  
years

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and the ongoing public support for realising the Defence National Action Plan Implementation Plan by Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin AC, Chief of Defence Forces, among others .

To ensure the success of these reforms, Australian Red Cross:

- urges Defence and the ADF to continue to direct all necessary resources to fulfilling its obligations and commitments under the Defence Implementation Plan; and
- recommends that in all operations, Rules of Engagement clearly allow the ADF to fundamentally protect civilians and, where appropriate, provide the legal authority to respond to acts of violence in situations where the indigenous policing authority lacks capacity to properly act.

## 5. ADF's Commitment to the Dissemination of International Humanitarian Law

A core mandate of Red Cross National Societies is the dissemination of IHL to increase understanding, respect and implementation for this body of law. In this light, Australian Red Cross acknowledges and supports Defence's ongoing commitment to IHL training among ADF, Defence and civilian personnel domestically and in the Asia Pacific region to promote understanding and respect and advance implementation of IHL in the region. We commend Defence's ongoing activities and encourage the Department to ensure adequate resources are committed to this task.

# 100

years

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