



ICRC

Global Refugee Forum

Geneva, 17-18 December 2019

Plenary Statement by Eva Svoboda, Deputy Director International Law and Policy,
International Committee of the Red Cross

Thank you Mr/Madam Chair

We welcome this first Global Refugee Forum. We strongly support its ambition to translate the principle of international responsibility-sharing into concrete action. Addressing challenges related to displacement requires shared goals and a strong collaboration between countries, organizations and communities.

Together with a large network of National Societies, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Swiss Confederation, the International Committee of the Red Cross helps refugees and migrants who find themselves in difficult situations in many parts of the world receive the protection and assistance they require. We play a leading role in the Movement's protection work, notably by visiting detained refugees and migrants and working to restore family links, and clarifying the fate of those who have gone missing.

Indeed, significant numbers of refugees lose contact with their loved ones or go missing during their flight. Thousands of families are left wondering if their loved ones are alive and where they might be. They are left trying to rebuild their lives in the absence of clear answers, hoping for a sign of life that might never materialize.

We would like to seize this opportunity to commit to strengthening our engagement with States and other stakeholders to support efforts to maintain family contacts, reduce the risk of people going missing on their journey to seek asylum and provide answers to families.

To achieve this, we will continue, together with our Movement partners, to strengthen our Humanitarian Family Links services along migratory routes. We will work with States and other stakeholders to develop technical recommendations on how to enhance coordination along routes, in full compliance with international data protection and privacy standards. We will continue to help building States' capacity to manage and identify the dead in a dignified manner and improve coordination between forensic services to provide swift answers to families. We will strengthen our dialogue with and support to States and other stakeholders to ensure that families of missing and separated refugees are able to exercise their rights and access existing services and other support, including by promoting the principle of family unity.

We hope to have the opportunity to engage with many of you through this process. Ultimately, we hope that this will increase our collective capacity to save lives and provide answers to families.

Thank you.