National Societies that choose to adopt the red crescent as their sign of identification may incorporate within it any one of the recognized components of the Movement: the National Societies, the ICRC, the International Federation.

In compliance with domestic legislation, National Societies may use their work to protect and ensure respect for the emblems. In addition, the ICRC’s Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law has prepared a comprehensive model law concerning the use and protection of the emblems. States are invited to adopt this model law as a basis or guide in drafting their own domestic legislation.

In order to ensure universal respect for and protection of the emblems, each State party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions has the obligation to enact national legislation with the aim of regulating the use of the emblems and preventing and punishing their unauthorized use both in times of armed conflict and in peace-time. The prevention and repression of misuse of the emblems cannot be accomplished solely by the adoption of regulatory or penal measures. National authorities must also undertake to inform the public, businesses and the medical community of the proper use of the emblems.

National Societies also cooperate with public authorities to ensure proper use of the emblems.
In 1859 Henry Dunant, a Swiss businessman travelling in Italy, witnessed the grim aftermath of the battle of Solferino. On his return to Geneva, he wrote an account of what he had seen, A Memory of Solferino, in which he put forward two proposals aimed at improving assistance for war victims:

• to set up in peacetime, in every country, groups of volunteers ready to take care of casualties in wartime
• to get countries to agree to the idea of protecting aid workers and the wounded on the battlefield.

The first proposal led to the establishment of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, of which there are over 185 recognized by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (ICRC). The second proposal set the stage for the drafting of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, which are today accepted by all States.

The adoption of a single distinctive sign that would confer legal protection on army medical services, volunteer aid workers and victims of armed conflict was one of the main objectives of the five-member committee that met on 17 February 1863 to study Dunant’s proposals. This committee was later to become the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The sign – or emblem as it was eventually called – had to be simple, identifiable from a distance, known to everyone and identifiable for friend and foe alike.

A diplomatic conference that met in Geneva in August 1864 adopted a red cross on a white background, the colours of the Swiss flag in reverse. However, during the 1876-1878 war between Russia and Turkey, the Ottoman empire declared that it would use a red crescent instead of a red cross as its emblem, although it agreed to respect the red cross used by the other side. Persia also opted for a different sign: the red lion and sun. Both emblems were recognized by a diplomatic conference held in 1869. In 1929, the ICRC, the International Federation and their duly authorized authorities’ consent

Additional protocol III establishes an additional emblem.

**AN ADDITIONAL EMBLEM**

On 8 December 2005, the States party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions adopted Additional Protocol III establishing an additional emblem.

**ADDITIONAL PROTOCOL III**

**Recognizes an additional emblem that:**

• is drawn from any religious, cultural or political connotations,

• enjoys the same legal status as the red cross and red crescent and may be used in the same way or under the same conditions:

• may be used (like the red cross and crescent) on a temporary basis by medical services attached to armed forces in place of their own emblems when needed and to enhance their protection

• may be used in exceptional circumstances to facilitate the work of the ICRC, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (International Federation) and National Societies.

The Protocol gives States and National Societies greater flexibility in using the emblems and allows National Societies that are unable to use the red cross or red crescent to become full members of the Movement; provided they meet the other conditions of recognition.

**THE RED CRYSTAL**

• does not replace the red cross or red crescent

• does not replace the red cross or red crescent

• provides more flexibility in the use of the emblems

• provides more flexibility in the use of the emblems

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• may be used (like the red cross and crescent) on a temporary basis by medical services attached to armed forces in place of their own emblems when needed and to enhance their protection

• may be used in exceptional circumstances to facilitate the work of the ICRC, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (International Federation) and National Societies.

The ICRC recognizes an additional emblem.

**THE EMBLEMS**

**USE OF THE EMBLEMS**

The emblem serves two purposes: They may be used as:

**PROTECTIVE USE**

**WHO CAN USE THE EMBLEMS?**

In times of armed conflict:

• medical services and religious personnel of the armed forces

• medical personnel and medical units and transport of National Societies when placed at the disposal of the medical services of the armed forces and subject to military laws and regulations

• with the express authorization of the government and under its control: civilian hospitals, all civilian medical units and other voluntary relief societies and medical facilities, their staff and civilian medical means of transport assigned to the treatment and transport of the wounded, sick and shipwrecked.

In times of peace:

• medical services and religious personnel of the armed forces

• National Society medical facilities and means of transport that are to function as such in the event of armed conflict, with the states concerned’s consent.

The ICRC and the International Federation may use the emblems at all times (in peacetime as well as in times of armed conflict) and without restriction.

All three emblems may be used as protective devices.

Protocol III stipulates that, for enhanced protection, the medical services and religious personnel of a State’s armed forces may, without prejudice to their current emblems, make temporary use of any recognized emblem.

The ICRC, the International Federation and their duly authorized personnel will retain their current names and emblems. However, in exceptional circumstances and to facilitate their work, they may use the red crystal.
In 1859 Henry Dunant, a Swiss businessman travelling in Italy, witnessed the grim aftermath of the battle of Solferino. On his return to Geneva, he wrote an account of what he had seen, A Memory of Solferino, in which he put forward two proposals aimed at improving assistance for war victims:

- to set up a peace-time, in every country, groups of volunteers ready to take care of casualties in wartime
- to get countries to agree to the idea of protecting aid workers and the wounded on the battlefield

The first proposal led to the establishment of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, of which there are over 185 recognized by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement). The second proposal set the stage for the drafting of the four Geneva Conventions of 1864, which is today accepted by all States.

The adoption of a single distinctive sign that would confer legal protection on army medical services, volunteer aid workers and victims of armed conflict was one of the main objectives of the five-member committee that met on 17 February 1863 to study Dunant’s proposals. This committee was later to become the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and, while its emblem as it was eventually called—red cross—may be simple, identifiable from a distance, known to everyone and identical for friend and foe alike.

A diplomatic conference that met in Geneva in August 1864 adopted a red cross on a white background, the colours of the Swiss flag in reverse. However, during the 1876-1878 war between Russia and Turkey, the Ottoman empire declared that it would use a red crescent instead of a red cross as its emblem, although it agreed to respect the red cross used by the other side. Persia also opted for a different sign: the red lion and sun. Although it agreed to respect the red cross used by the other side.

In times of peace, the ICRC, the International Federation and their duly authorized authorities’ consent

The ICRC and the International Federation may use the emblems at all times (in peacetime as well as in times of armed conflict) and without restriction.

Protocol III stipulates that, for enhanced protection, the medical services and religious personnel of a State’s armed forces may, without prejudice to their current names and emblems, take temporary use of any recognized emblem. The ICRC, the International Federation and their duly authorized personnel will retain their current names and emblems. However, in exceptional circumstances and to facilitate their work, they may use the red crystal.
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A diplomatic conference that met in Geneva in August 1864 adopted a red cross on a white background, the colours of the Swiss flag in reverse. However, during the 1870-1879 war between Russia and Turkey, the Ottoman empire declared that it would use a red crescent instead of a red cross as its emblem, although it agreed to respect the red cross used by the other side. Peru also opted for a different sign: the red lion and sun. Both emblems were recognized by a diplomatic conference held in 1869.

In 1929, in 1980, the Islamic Republic of Iran decided to use the red crescent instead of the red lion and sun.

The red cross and red crescent emblems are entitled to full respect under international law. However, they are sometimes used either in a religious or political context.

To overcome these problems, the idea of introducing an additional emblem that would be acceptable to all National Societies and States was put forward. This idea, which was strongly supported by the Movement, became a reality in December 2005 when a diplomatic conference recognized the red crystal as a distinctive emblem alongside the red cross and red crescent.

The Protocol gives States and National Societies greater flexibility in using the emblems and allows National Societies that are unable to use the red cross or red crescent to become full members of the Movement. They may be used in exceptional circumstances and to facilitate their work, they may be used (like the red cross and crescent) on a temporary basis by medical services attached to armed forces in place of their own emblems when needed and to enhance their protection.

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The ICRC and the International Federation may use the emblems at all times (in peacetime as well as in times of armed conflict) and may be used (like the red cross and crescent) on a temporary basis by medical services attached to armed forces in place of their own emblems when needed and to enhance their protection.

In times of peace, the red crystal can be used by the following:

- national medical and religious personnel of the armed forces
- national and local volunteer and relief societies and medical facilities, their staff and civilian medical means of transport assigned to the treatment and transport of the wounded, sick and shipwrecked

The ICRC, the International Federation and their duly authorized authorities' consent

All three emblems may be used as protective devices.
Conventions and the ICRC prior to the adoption of Protocol III. Use and was communicated to the other States party to the Geneva Convention on the Rights of Persons Confronted with Armed Conflict the International Committee of the Red Cross in times of peace in order to protect the wounded and sick, as an exceptional measure, in conformity with national legislation and with the express authorization of the National Society. In compliance with domestic legislation, National Societies may use the red crystal in exceptional circumstances and to facilitate its work, both on national and foreign territory. A National Society that uses the red cross or red crescent emblem as its sign of identification, may, for indicative purposes, temporarily use the red crystal in exceptional circumstances and to facilitate its work, both on national and foreign territory.

In compliance with domestic legislation, National Societies may use one of these emblems, both on national and foreign territory. A National Society that uses the red cross or red crescent emblem as its sign of identification, may, for indicative purposes, temporarily use the red crystal in exceptional circumstances and to facilitate its work, both on national and foreign territory.

National Societies that choose to adopt the red crystal as their sign of identification may incorporate within it any one of the recognized emblems or a combination thereof. They may also incorporate within it another distinctive sign, which has been in effective use and was communicated to the other States party to the Geneva Convention on the Rights of Persons Confronted with Armed Conflict the International Committee of the Red Cross in times of peace in order to protect the wounded and sick, as an exceptional measure, in conformity with national legislation and with the express authorization of the National Society. In compliance with domestic legislation, National Societies may use the red crystal in exceptional circumstances and to facilitate its work, both on national and foreign territory. A National Society that uses the red cross or red crescent emblem as its sign of identification, may, for indicative purposes, temporarily use the red crystal in exceptional circumstances and to facilitate its work, both on national and foreign territory.

MISUSE OF THE EMBLEMS

Any misuse of the emblems may diminish their protective value and undermine the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance. In order to ensure universal respect for and protection of the emblems, each State party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions has the obligation to enact national legislation with the aim of regulating the use of the emblems and preventing and punishing their unauthorized use both in times of armed conflict and in peace-time. The prevention and repression of misuse of the emblems cannot be accomplished simply by the adoption of regulatory or penal measures. National authorities must also undertake to inform the public, businesses and the medical community of the proper use of the emblems.

National Societies also cooperate with public authorities to ensure proper use of the emblems.

WHO CAN USE THE EMBLEMS?

INDICATIVE USE

The use of a sign which, owing to its shape and/or colour, may be confused with one of the emblems.

IMPROPER USE

The use of a distinctive emblem inconsistent with the relevant rules of international humanitarian law. The use of an emblem by unauthorized people or bodies (commercial enterprises, pharmacists, private doctors, NGOs, ordinary individuals, etc.) or for purposes that are inconsistent with the Movement’s Fundamental Principles.

PERIODY

The use of the distinctive emblem during an armed conflict in order to protect combatants and military equipment and with intent to mislead the adversary. Pervasive use of the emblem when causing death or serious personal injury is considered a war crime. The ICRC has published a series of documents describing in more detail the meaning of the emblems and the conditions for their use. In addition, the ICRC’s Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law has prepared a comprehensive model law concerning the use and protection of the emblems. States are invited to adopt this model law as a basis or guide in drafting their own domestic legislation. www.icrc.org

The International Federation also supports National Societies in their work to protect and ensure respect for the emblems. www.ifrc.org
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IMMEDIATE USE

The use of a sign which, owing to its shape and/or colour, may be confused with one of the emblems.

PERPETUAL USE

The use of the distinctive emblem during an armed conflict in order to protect combatants and military equipment and with intent to mislead the adversary. Perfidious use of the emblem, when causing death or serious personal injury, is considered a war crime.

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MISSION

The International Committee of the Red Cross is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence and to provide them with assistance. It directs and coordinates the international relief activities conducted by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in situations of conflict. It also endeavors to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

www.icrc.org
MISUSE OF THE EMBLEMS

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WHO CAN USE THE EMBLEMS?

In peace:
- The International Committee of the Red Cross
- The International Federation
- The National Societies that choose to adopt the red crystal as their sign
- The ICRC

In times of armed conflict:
- Ambulances and first-aid stations exclusively assigned to humanitarian assistance.
- Pharmacists, private doctors, NGOs, ordinary individuals, etc.
- National Societies

IMITATION

The use of a sign which, owing to its shape and/or colour, may be confused with one of the emblems.

PERFIDY

The use of a distinctive emblem inconsistent with the relevant rules of international humanitarian law.

In order to ensure universal respect for and protection of the emblems, each State party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions has the obligation to enact national legislation with the aim of regulating the use of the emblems and preventing and punishing their unauthorized use both in times of armed conflict and in peace-time. The prevention and repression of misuse of the emblems cannot be accomplished solely by the adoption of regulatory or penal measures. National authorities must also undertake to inform the public, businesses and the medical community of the proper use of the emblems.

National Societies also cooperate with public authorities to ensure proper use of the emblems.

THE EMBLEMS

anyone who uses an emblem, whether in times of peace or in times of armed conflict, for purposes that are inconsistent with the Movement’s Fundamental Principles.

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