

APPROVED

by Resolution of the Presidium of the Governing Board of

Ukrainian Red Cross Society

No. 29/1 of 18 May 2026

The Ukrainian Red Cross Society

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

I. General Provisions

1.1. The Ukrainian Red Cross Society (hereinafter referred to as the "Society" or the "URCS")¹ is committed to creating and maintaining a safe environment for all people receiving assistance, as well as for URCS members, volunteers, employees, contractors and partners, where the rights, freedoms and dignity of every individual are respected.

1.2. The URCS prevents, identifies and responds to all forms of harm and safeguarding violations, including abuse of power, exploitation, neglect, violence, discrimination, sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and sexual harassment. The URCS is also committed to ensuring child safeguarding in accordance with the best interests of the child principle; maintaining a safe working environment; protecting individuals who, in good faith, report concerns, allegations or incidents of harm.

1.3. The URCS has Zero Tolerance for safeguarding violations, as well as for inaction, inadequate response, or failure to take appropriate action in response to known safeguarding risks, concerns, reports or violations.

1.4. This Policy sets out how safeguarding principles and standards are embedded across the work of the URCS and establishes the Society as a Safe Organisation, where safeguarding is a institutional value, an operational standard and a shared responsibility at all levels of the organisation, integrated throughout all areas of its work.

¹ For the purposes of this Policy, the Ukrainian Red Cross Society consists of the National Committee, regional organisations, the Kyiv City organisation, and their respective local organisations.

1.5. Within the URCS, safeguarding is an integral part of delivering the Society's humanitarian mission and encompasses the policies, procedures, practices and measures designed to prevent all forms of harm that may arise in connection with the activities of the URCS.

Safeguarding supports safe, inclusive and accountable humanitarian action and contributes to strengthening the trust of communities and the confidence of partners.

1.6. This Policy has been developed in accordance with the legislation of Ukraine and informed by relevant international standards and good practice, including those relating to human rights; child safeguarding and child protection; gender equality and inclusion; personal data protection; and safeguarding. The key international standards, legal framework and related URCS policies supporting this Policy are set out in *Annexes 1–3*.

1.7. Key terms and definitions used in this Policy are set out in the Glossary attached as *Annex 4*.

II. Purpose of the Policy

2.1. The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that safeguarding is systematically integrated across all areas of the URCS's work through the application of the Duty of Care principle and the promotion of a safe environment founded on respect for the rights, dignity and safety of all individuals with whom the URCS interacts.

2.2. This Policy sets out the commitments of the URCS and the minimum organisational requirements for the prevention, identification, reporting, response to and management of safeguarding risks and violations, and for ensuring accountability in safeguarding, including by:

- preventing risks of harm that may arise in connection with the activities of the URCS;

- defining safeguarding roles and responsibilities;

- establishing safeguarding standards and expectations for acceptable and unacceptable conduct;

- promoting safeguarding awareness and safe, ethical behaviour;

- identifying and managing safeguarding risks across the work of the URCS;

- ensuring safe, accessible and confidential reporting and referral mechanisms for safeguarding concerns, allegations and incidents;

- ensuring timely, fair, proportionate and accountable responses through the application of a Survivor-Centred Approach.

2.3. This Policy shall be applied in conjunction with other URCS internal policies, procedures and normative acts and does not replace them. The URCS safeguarding-related policies and other

supporting documents that define specific areas of application and responsibilities are set out in *Annex 3* to this Policy.

III. Scope of Application

3.1. This Policy applies across all levels of the Ukrainian Red Cross Society, including the National Committee, regional organizations, Kyiv City and local organisations, and to all persons associated with the URCS, regardless of where or how the Society's activities are carried out.

3.2. For the purposes of this Policy and the supporting URCS policies, procedures and normative acts adopted for its implementation, persons associated with the URCS include:

employees, volunteers and members of the URCS, as well as any other individuals acting for, on behalf of, or representing the URCS, for whom compliance with this Policy is mandatory;

contractors, suppliers, consultants, service providers, partners, donors and other third parties engaged by the URCS, including their personnel, as well as people receiving assistance from the URCS, who are expected to comply with the principles and provisions of this Policy to the greatest extent possible, taking into account the nature and scope of their relationship with the URCS.

3.3. This Policy applies throughout the entire period of engagement or interaction with the URCS, including outside normal working hours and during both in-person and online interactions. It applies where safeguarding risks or harm may arise from or in connection with the activities, representatives, programmes, services, partnerships, communications or organisational processes of the URCS.

This Policy does not seek to address all forms of violence, exploitation or vulnerability that may occur within communities generally, unless they arise from or are connected with the activities or influence of the URCS.

IV. Role and Importance of Safeguarding

4.1. Within the URCS, safeguarding is an institutional framework of policies, systems and practices designed to prevent, identify and respond to safeguarding risks and instances of harm that may arise in connection with the activities of the URCS, with the aim of protecting the safety, dignity and rights of all individuals with whom the Society interacts.

4.2. Safeguarding is a core element of the URCS's institutional and operational practice and contributes to the quality and safety of programmes and services; organisational accountability; strengthening the trust and confidence of communities, partners and public authorities; and enhancing the institutional capacity and resilience of the Society.

4.3. Safeguarding is an institutional commitment of the URCS and is implemented through the Safe Organisation Approach, which is built around interconnected core components:

1) Safe Culture

Promoting a safeguarding culture and leadership accountability that supports Zero Tolerance for harm and safeguarding violations and fosters a safe environment for raising and reporting safeguarding concerns.

2) Safe People

Promoting people's safety through safe recruitment, ethical conduct and the application of the Duty of Care, covering employees, volunteers and all persons associated with the URCS.

3) Safe Programmes

Ensuring that programmes and services are designed and delivered safely by integrating safeguarding throughout the programme cycle and taking steps to prevent harm.

4) Safe Partnerships

Building safe and accountable partnerships through appropriate due diligence, safeguarding risk management and compliance with safeguarding standards.

5) Safe Systems

Ensuring that the URCS's systems, processes and organisational mechanisms operate in accordance with safeguarding principles and support effective safeguarding risk management and accountability.

Together, these components form the URCS safeguarding system and support the implementation of the Safe Organisation Approach across all levels of the Society.

4.4. Safeguarding is embedded across all areas of the URCS's work through a cross-cutting approach and forms an integral part of the Society's organisational culture, informing behaviour, decision-making and interactions at every level.

4.5. Safeguarding contributes to the organisational development of the URCS and supports the strengthening of a safe, accountable and resilient National Society.

4.6. Safeguarding is implemented as a comprehensive and continuous process encompassing prevention, protection, reporting and response to safeguarding risks and violations in accordance with URCS policies, procedures and established safeguarding mechanisms.

V. Safeguarding Risks and Violations

5.1. Safeguarding risks are risks of harm that may arise in connection with the activities of the URCS, including interactions involving persons associated with the Society.

The URCS recognises that its humanitarian action, organisational activities and partnerships may give rise to imbalances of power, resources, influence or capacity, including between:

- those providing and those receiving assistance;

- individuals at different organisational levels; and

- individuals or groups with differing levels of power, resources, influence and decision-making.

Such imbalances may increase the risk of safeguarding concerns and violations, particularly for individuals in situations of vulnerability.

The URCS further recognises that safeguarding risks may be heightened during humanitarian crises and emergencies, which can exacerbate existing inequalities, restrict access to services and protection mechanisms, increase dependence on assistance and support, and weaken oversight and accountability systems.

5.3. Safeguarding risks and violations may include, but are not limited to:

- abuse and violence, including gender-based violence, sexual violence and sexual abuse;

- physical, emotional, psychological and economic abuse and violence, including financial coercion, misuse of assistance or control over resources;

- exploitation, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, child labour and the abuse of vulnerability for personal gain;

- trafficking in persons, including child trafficking;

- harassment, intimidation and bullying, including workplace sexual harassment;

- neglect;

- discrimination, exclusion or unjustified denial of assistance; and

- abuse of power, authority or position.

These risks and violations may occur in both physical and digital environments.

5.4. The URCS takes safeguarding risks and potential violations into account when planning and implementing its activities, including the delivery of assistance, engagement with communities, the use of digital channels, and environmental and social factors that may affect the safety, dignity and well-being of individuals.

5.5. The URCS is committed to preventing harm and creating an environment that supports the prevention of safeguarding risks and violations; the safe reporting of safeguarding concerns and

incidents; and timely, appropriate and effective responses to safeguarding concerns and violations.

VI. Core URCS Safeguarding Commitments

6.1. The URCS is committed to upholding its Duty of Care and promoting the safety, dignity and well-being of all persons associated with the Society. To this end, the URCS shall:

1. embed safeguarding across all areas of the Society's work, systems and functions and allocate appropriate resources for its effective implementation and continuous improvement;
2. establish and maintain effective systems for the prevention, identification, reporting, response to and management of safeguarding risks, including safe, accessible and inclusive reporting and referral mechanisms for safeguarding concerns, allegations and incidents;
3. ensure timely, impartial and accountable responses to safeguarding risks and cases of harm through the application of a Survivor-Centered Approach;
4. strengthen the safeguarding awareness, knowledge and capacity of employees and volunteers through induction, training and ongoing learning and development;
5. ensure appropriate due diligence, safeguarding risk management and accountability across partnerships and operations;
6. promote and sustain a safeguarding culture based on ethical conduct, respect for human dignity and the prevention of the abuse of power and authority at all levels of the Society.

6.2. The URCS shall ensure:

safe, respectful and dignified interactions with all individuals;

safeguarding measures are inclusive and responsive to the needs of people in situations of vulnerability;

accountability, transparency and protection from any form of retaliation against individuals who, in good faith, report safeguarding concerns; and

appropriate action is taken in response to safeguarding violations, inadequate responses or failures to take appropriate action, in accordance with URCS policies, procedures and the legislation of Ukraine.

VII. Safeguarding Principles

7.1. Safeguarding within the URCS is grounded in internationally recognized standards and principles and reflects the Society's commitment to upholding human dignity and human rights.

Every individual has the right to a safe environment free from violence, exploitation, abuse, discrimination and all forms of harm.

7.2. The URCS is guided by the following safeguarding principles:

- respect for human dignity and human rights;

- Zero Tolerance for harm and safeguarding violations, together with the Do No Harm principle;

- a Survivor-Centered Approach, which respects the dignity, rights, safety and choices of survivors, recognizes their right to informed and voluntary consent that may be withdrawn at any time in accordance with URCS procedures, and acknowledges the impact of trauma through the application of trauma-informed approaches to minimize the risk of re-traumatisation;

- a child-sensitive approach that promotes and protects the best interests of the child;

- non-discrimination, equality and fairness;

- accessibility and barrier-free safeguarding;

- addressing power imbalances and preventing the abuse of power and authority;

- Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP);

- confidentiality and the protection of personal data; and

- transparency and openness in the organizational safeguarding approaches, systems and processes.

7.3. Safeguarding is proactive and aims to prevent harm, identify risks at an early stage, and ensure timely and effective responses.

7.4. The URCS promotes and sustains a safe environment in which individuals feel confident and supported in raising safeguarding concerns, suspicions and allegations without fear of retaliation or adverse consequences, thereby strengthening the safeguarding culture of the Society.

7.5 The URCS is committed to the continuous improvement of its safeguarding system through learning, reflection, the incorporation of lessons learned, and the regular review and updating of relevant policies, procedures and safeguarding mechanisms.

VIII. Standards of Conduct

8.1. Persons associated with the URCS shall uphold standards of conduct that reflect the values of the Society, safeguarding principles and the URCS Code of Conduct for Members, Volunteers

and Employees, while contributing to a safe environment in which safeguarding concerns can be raised without fear of retaliation.

8.2. The standards of conduct include, among other things:

- treating all individuals with respect and dignity;
- maintaining appropriate professional boundaries; and
- ensuring safe and ethical interactions with children and individuals in situations of vulnerability.

The standards of conduct are set out in this Policy, the URCS Code of Conduct for Members, Volunteers and Employees, and other relevant URCS policies and procedures. Practical examples of expected behaviour are provided in *Annex 5*.

8.3. The URCS prohibits any behaviour that may cause harm, abuse, exploitation or undermine the dignity, safety or well-being of an individual. Lack of knowledge of a person's age, lack of awareness or absence of intent shall not justify behaviour that causes harm. Practical examples of unacceptable behaviour are provided in *Annex 6*.

8.4. In its activities, the URCS adheres to internationally recognised principles for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, as reflected in the relevant URCS policies and procedures.

8.5. The URCS applies internationally recognised safeguarding standards and good practice, including:

- the IASC Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse²;
- the IASC Minimum Operating Standards for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by Own Personnel (MOS-PSEA)³;
- the Keeping Children Safe International Child Safeguarding Standards⁴;
- the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS)⁵; and
- the IFRC Safeguarding Framework and Self-Assessment Tool⁶.

These standards inform and support the implementation of this Policy and the wider URCS safeguarding system.

² [IASC Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, 2019 | IASC](#)

³ [IASC Minimum Operating Standards - Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by own Personnel | IASC](#)

⁴ [The International Child Safeguarding Standards - Keeping Children Safe](#)

⁵ [Home | CHS 2024](#)

⁶ [IFRC Safeguarding Framework and Self-Assessment | Protection, Gender & Inclusion](#)

IX. Roles and Responsibilities

9.1. Safeguarding is a shared responsibility across all levels of the URCS and is embedded in the Society's governance, leadership, management and operations.

9.2. All employees and volunteers are responsible for complying with this Policy, contributing to the prevention of harm and acting in accordance with URCS policies, procedures and the legislation of Ukraine.

9.3. Safeguarding responsibilities shall be established through relevant URCS policies and procedures and reflected in organisational, operational and work plans to promote accountability across all levels of the Society.

9.4. Safeguarding roles and responsibilities are established across all levels of the URCS to support accountability and the effective implementation of this Policy, including:

1. The President, the Governing Board and the Presidium of the Governing Board of the URCS provide overall leadership, oversight and accountability for safeguarding.
2. The Director General and the Executive Council of the National Committee ensure that safeguarding is embedded across all areas of the Society's work.
3. The Safeguarding Unit of the National Committee coordinates the development, implementation, monitoring and continuous improvement of the URCS safeguarding system.
4. The Safeguarding Coordination Committee provides strategic guidance and promotes cross-functional coordination and collaboration.
5. Chairs of regional and local URCS organisations and heads of independent structural units of the National Committee are responsible for implementing this Policy, embedding safeguarding within their areas of responsibility, promoting a safe environment and ensuring accountability.
6. Safeguarding Focal Points contribute to safeguarding awareness, the early identification of safeguarding risks and operational coordination.
7. All employees and volunteers uphold safeguarding principles and standards, contribute to a safe organizational culture and promptly raise and report safeguarding concerns, risks and alleged violations.
8. Partners are expected to take reasonable steps to uphold safeguarding principles and standards and to integrate them into their own activities and operations.

9.5. The URCS shall ensure that communications, engagement with media and external stakeholders, and the collection, use and sharing of images, stories, personal data and other information are carried out with respect for the dignity, privacy and safety of individuals and in accordance with safeguarding principles and standards.

External communications on behalf of the URCS shall be conducted in accordance with established URCS policies and procedures.

X. Reporting and Response

Reporting

10.1. The URCS shall ensure that all individuals have access to safe, accessible and confidential reporting channels and are informed about how to access and use them.

10.2. The URCS encourages anyone who becomes aware of safeguarding risks, concerns, allegations or incidents, including suspected breaches of this Policy or the URCS Code of Conduct for Members, Volunteers and Employees, to promptly raise and report them through designated safeguarding reporting mechanisms.

10.3. The URCS shall ensure that individuals know:

- how to recognise safeguarding risks and concerns;

- how to raise and report safeguarding concerns; and

- how to access appropriate reporting channels and referral mechanisms.

10.4. Employees, volunteers and partners shall not attempt to verify allegations independently or conduct informal investigations but shall promptly report and refer safeguarding concerns through the designated mechanisms and procedures.

10.5. The URCS promotes a safeguarding culture in which individuals feel safe and confident to raise concerns and report suspected or actual safeguarding violations.

Survivors are not required to report their own experiences and they may directly seek support and advice through designated safeguarding channels.

10.6. The URCS shall ensure:

- protection against retaliation for individuals who, in good faith, raise or report safeguarding concerns;

- confidentiality and the protection of personal data;

- reporting channels that are accessible and responsive to different needs and contexts;

- appropriate whistleblowing mechanisms for reporting serious concerns, including those involving senior leadership or systemic issues.

10.7. Safeguarding reporting processes shall be governed by relevant URCS policies, procedures and referral mechanisms, in accordance with the legislation of Ukraine.

10.8. Where required by contractual obligations or applicable law, information relating to safeguarding risks or violations may be shared with donors or other authorised third parties in defined circumstances, while ensuring confidentiality, data protection, the application of a Survivor-Centred Approach and adherence to the Do No Harm principle.

Response

10.9. The URCS is committed to ensuring timely, fair and accountable responses to safeguarding risks and violations through the application of a Survivor-Centred Approach.

10.10. Where necessary, immediate measures shall be taken to assess and manage risks and to protect the safety, dignity and well-being of all affected individuals, including:

- survivors;

- individuals raising or reporting concerns;

- persons who are the subject of allegations; and

- any other individuals who may be affected.

10.11. Safeguarding investigations shall be conducted in accordance with relevant URCS policies and procedures, which establish the principles and processes for independent, fair and confidential investigations.

10.12. The URCS shall ensure that safeguarding responses are accountable and carried out in accordance with established procedures.

Response measures may include risk assessment and mitigation; safeguarding measures; survivor support; investigations, where appropriate; confidentiality and data protection measures; and information management processes designed to minimise the risk of further harm or re-traumatisation.

XI. Confidentiality and Data Protection

11.1. The URCS shall ensure that information relating to safeguarding risks, safeguarding violations and safeguarding case management is handled in accordance with the highest standards of confidentiality, security and respect for the rights and dignity of individuals.

Such information shall:

- be treated as strictly confidential;

- be shared strictly on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with established procedures;

- be securely stored and protected against unauthorised access; and

be processed in accordance with the legislation of Ukraine, relevant international standards and applicable URCS policies and procedures relating to data protection.

11.2. Responsibility for safeguarding case management shall rest with the designated authorised unit in accordance with established procedures set out in the relevant URCS policies and procedures. Where significant delays occur in responding to or investigating safeguarding cases, such matters shall be promptly escalated to the appropriate level of URCS senior leadership.

11.3. The URCS shall ensure that relevant individuals are appropriately informed of safeguarding case outcomes in accordance with established procedures, while respecting the principles of confidentiality, data protection and the Survivor-Centred Approach.

11.4. All employees and persons associated with the URCS shall comply with confidentiality requirements and standards for the proper handling of safeguarding information in accordance with this Policy and other relevant URCS policies and procedures. Breaches of confidentiality may constitute violations of this Policy and may result in disciplinary measures in accordance with URCS procedures and the legislation of Ukraine.

11.5. Information relating to safeguarding risks and safeguarding violations shall only be disclosed to authorised third parties following appropriate authorisation and in accordance with established URCS procedures, while ensuring confidentiality, security and compliance with the legislation of Ukraine.

XII. Consequences of Violations

12.1. Violations of this Policy and the URCS Code of Conduct for Members, Volunteers and Employees shall be addressed in accordance with URCS policies and procedures and the legislation of Ukraine.

12.2. Where appropriate, the URCS may take disciplinary, contractual or other corrective measures in accordance with its internal procedures and applicable legislation.

Where required by law or by URCS policies and procedures, relevant information may be referred to law enforcement agencies or other competent authorities, while ensuring adherence to the Do No Harm principle; confidentiality; safety; respect for the rights of survivors; and in cases involving children, due consideration of the best interests of the child.

12.3. The URCS maintains Zero Tolerance for all forms of safeguarding violations and ensures that all response measures are fair, proportionate and consistent with the legislation of Ukraine and applicable URCS policies and procedures.

12.4. Failure to report safeguarding risks or safeguarding violations, as well as inaction, inadequate response or failure to take appropriate action, may constitute non-compliance with this Policy.

XIII. Relationship of this Policy to the URCS Safeguarding System

13.1. This Policy forms an integral part of the URCS safeguarding system and shall be applied in conjunction with relevant safeguarding policies, internal procedures and the URCS Safeguarding Framework, which establishes the overall structure, standards, mechanisms and approaches for the development and implementation of safeguarding across the Society.

13.2. This Policy is supported by and interconnected with the following key URCS safeguarding-related policies and procedures, including:

- URCS Code of Conduct for Members, Volunteers and Employees;

- URCS Policy on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse;

- URCS Child Safeguarding Policy;

- URCS Protection, Gender and Inclusion Policy;

- URCS Feedback Policy;

- URCS Personal Data Protection Policy;

- URCS Gender Policy;

- URCS Know Your Partner Policy;

- URCS Regulation on Internal Investigations.

A comprehensive list of URCS safeguarding-related policies, together with their respective scope and functions, is provided in *Annex 3* to this Policy.

13.3. In the event of any inconsistency between this Policy and other URCS policies and procedures, this Policy shall serve as the primary safeguarding policy of the URCS. The URCS Safeguarding Framework and related procedures establish the detailed standards, mechanisms and practical approaches necessary for the implementation of the safeguarding system.

XIV. Implementation, Review and Compliance

14.1. Safeguarding within the URCS is implemented through the Safe Organisation Approach and embedded across all functions, systems and operations of the Society, including:

- programme design and implementation, including safe programming and safe service delivery;

organisational processes, including safe people management, organisational operations and partnerships;

risk management and compliance; and

planning, monitoring, measurement and organisational learning.

Implementation of this Policy is supported by the URCS Safeguarding Framework, the Safeguarding Plan of Action, and relevant URCS policies and procedures.

Standard Operating Procedures provide practical guidance for the implementation of safeguarding across the URCS.

The URCS is committed to the continuous improvement of its safeguarding system through learning, adaptation and the regular monitoring of its effectiveness.

14.2. This Policy shall be reviewed periodically to ensure its continued relevance, effectiveness and alignment with the legislation of Ukraine, international safeguarding standards and URCS priorities. The Policy shall be formally reviewed at least once every three years.

An extraordinary review may be undertaken whenever necessary, including in response to significant legislative or regulatory changes; developments in international safeguarding standards; organisational changes; or emerging safeguarding risks.

14.3. Compliance with this Policy shall be supported through an annual safeguarding self-assessment; internal risk audits; and monitoring the implementation of the Safeguarding Plan of Action. The designated Safeguarding Unit shall monitor and analyse safeguarding data to identify emerging risks and trends, strengthen preventive measures and support the overall effectiveness of the URCS safeguarding system.

14.4. In the event of any inconsistency between the requirements of the legislation of Ukraine and the provisions of this Policy, the applicable legal requirements shall prevail.

The URCS shall nevertheless seek to achieve the highest possible level of compliance with safeguarding principles and standards.

Annex 1 – Key International Safeguarding Standards;

Annex 2 – Key Legal and Regulatory Instruments;

Annex 3 – URCS Safeguarding Policies (включно з таблицею);

Annex 4 – Glossary of Key Safeguarding Terms (це найважливіший додаток);

Annex 5 – Practical Examples of Expected Behaviour;

Annex 6 – Practical Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour;

Annex 7 – IASC Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

Key International Safeguarding Standards

The URCS Safeguarding Policy is informed by internationally recognised safeguarding standards and guidance, including:

1. Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse [IASC Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, 2019 | IASC](#)

These principles establish the minimum standards of conduct for humanitarian personnel and organisations in preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse.

2. IASC Minimum Operating Standards for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by Own Personnel (MOS-PSEA) [IASC Minimum Operating Standards - Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by own Personnel | IASC](#)

The Minimum Operating Standards (MOS) provide a common framework for organisational systems and accountability mechanisms to prevent and address sexual exploitation and abuse.

3. IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action [IASC Guidelines, Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, 2019 | IASC](#)

These Guidelines support the meaningful participation, inclusion and protection of persons with disabilities throughout humanitarian action.

4. International Child Safeguarding Standards, Keeping Children Safe [KCS-ICS-Standards-EN-2024.pdf](#)

The International Child Safeguarding Standards establish a comprehensive framework for organisations working with and for children to prevent harm and strengthen child safeguarding systems.

5. Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) [Home | CHS 2024](#)

The Core Humanitarian Standard establishes commitments and quality criteria to improve accountability and the quality of humanitarian action.

Key International and National Legal Instruments Relevant to Safeguarding

International Instruments

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

National Legal Framework of Ukraine

- Constitution of Ukraine;
- Criminal Code of Ukraine;
- Labour Code of Ukraine;
- Law of Ukraine "On Prevention and Combating Domestic Violence";
- Law of Ukraine "On Child Protection";
- Law of Ukraine "On Combating Trafficking in Human Beings";
- Law of Ukraine "On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men";
- Law of Ukraine "On Personal Data Protection";
- Law of Ukraine "On the Fundamentals of Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities in Ukraine";
- Law of Ukraine "On Education";
- Law of Ukraine "On the Fundamentals of National Resistance";
- Law of Ukraine "On Social Services".

National Strategies and Policy Documents

- National Security Strategy of Ukraine "Human Security – National Security";
- National Mine Action Strategy until 2033;
- Concept of the State Targeted Social Programme for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings until 2030;
- State Language Standard "Barrier-Free Terminology".

to the Ukrainian Red Cross Society Safeguarding Policy

(Section 1.6)

URCS SG-Related Policies

1. URCS Code of Conduct for Members, Volunteers and Employees

Defines acceptable conduct and misconduct for employees, volunteers and partners in accordance with the URCS Statute.

Includes safeguarding, ethical and digital conduct requirements and serves as the foundation for the URCS safeguarding culture.

2. URCS Safeguarding Policy

Establishes the overarching safeguarding commitments of the URCS.

Provides common definitions, guiding principles, institutional responsibilities and the relationship with subordinate safeguarding policies and Standard Operating Procedures.

This Policy serves as the overarching safeguarding document and prevails in the event of inconsistencies between safeguarding policies.

Thematic Policies

3. URCS Policy on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Covers the prevention of and response to sexual exploitation and abuse, including both community-facing and workplace-related risks.

4. URCS Child Protection Policy

Defines URCS commitments, standards and procedures for preventing and responding to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect affecting children across all programmes and activities.

Cross-Cutting Policies

5. URCS Protection, Gender and Inclusion Policy

Promotes inclusion, safety and dignity through addressing structural barriers and discrimination, including those related to gender, disability, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

6. URCS Feedback Policy

Establishes safe and confidential feedback and reporting mechanisms.

7. URCS Personal Data Protection Policy

Regulates the processing and protection of personal and sensitive information.

8. URCS Know Your Partner Policy

Establishes the URCS due diligence framework for third parties and constitutes a key component of safeguarding risk management.

Includes partner screening procedures, risk classification and minimum safeguarding standards.

9. Policy on prevention of Fraud and Corruption in URCS

Establishes procedures for reporting and investigating misconduct, including safeguarding-related concerns where applicable.

10. URCS Data Protection Policy

Ensures compliance with national data protection legislation and regulates the processing of safeguarding-related sensitive information.

11. HR Policies Procedures on Safe Recruitment

Integrate safeguarding standards into recruitment, induction, performance management and disciplinary procedures.

12. URCS Regulation on Internal Investigations

Defines the principles, procedures and standards governing investigations, including safeguarding-related matters.

Glossary of Key Safeguarding Terms

General Terms

- **Harm.** Any physical, psychological, emotional, sexual, social, economic or other adverse impact affecting an individual's safety, rights, dignity or well-being.
- **Abuse.** A broad term encompassing various forms of inappropriate treatment, including acts or omissions that cause or may cause harm to an individual, particularly through the misuse of power, trust or control. Abuse may include physical, psychological, sexual or economic violence, exploitation, neglect, coercion or other forms of harm. It may occur through both actions and failures to act that compromise an individual's rights, safety, dignity or well-being.
- **Violence.** A form of harm or abuse involving the intentional use of force, coercion, threats or aggression that results in or is likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or other forms of harm or injury.
- **Gender-Based Violence (GBV).** A form of violence committed against an individual on the basis of gender norms, unequal power relations or gender inequality. GBV includes any act of violence, threat or coercion committed against a person's will, including physical violence; sexual violence; psychological violence; economic violence.
- **Exploitation.** A form of harm or abuse involving the use of an individual or group for personal benefit through unfair, unethical or coercive means, including the abuse of power, trust or vulnerability.
- **Neglect.** A form of harm or abuse resulting from a failure to fulfil a Duty of Care or to provide appropriate support, care, protection or response, thereby placing an individual's safety, health, dignity or well-being at risk.
- **Harassment.** A form of abuse characterised by unwelcome or inappropriate behaviour that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
- **Bullying.** A form of abuse or harassment involving repeated offensive, degrading, aggressive or intimidating behaviour intended to undermine an individual's dignity, confidence, safety or well-being. Bullying may occur in physical, psychological, economic or sexual forms and may include cyberbullying through electronic communications.

Sexual Violence Terms

Sexual Violence. A form of Gender-Based Violence involving any sexual act committed without an individual's freely given consent or through force, coercion, threats or abuse of power. Sexual violence may include rape, sexual harassment, coercion into sexual activity and other forms of sexual coercion.

Forms of Sexual Violence

- **Sexual Abuse.** A form of sexual violence involving the abuse of power, trust or vulnerability. Within the humanitarian context, sexual abuse refers to an actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature committed under unequal or coercive conditions. It may also include inappropriate sexual conduct in online environments.
- **Sexual Exploitation.** Within the humanitarian context, sexual exploitation refers to any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes, including profiting socially, politically or financially from the sexual exploitation of another person. It may include trafficking for sexual purposes, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, debt bondage, organ removal, forced pregnancy, exploitative adoption, involvement in criminal activities and other exploitative practices.
- **Sexual Harassment.** A form of sexual violence or unacceptable conduct involving unwelcome verbal, non-verbal or physical behaviour of a sexual nature that violates an individual's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Sexual harassment may occur in person or through electronic communications.

Safeguarding Related Terms

- **Safeguarding.** Safeguarding is an institutional system of policies, procedures and practices designed to prevent all forms of harm associated with an organisation's activities and to ensure the timely identification, reporting and response to safeguarding risks and incidents. Safeguarding is a shared responsibility of employees, volunteers, partners and all persons associated with the organisation and is implemented through the integration of safety, dignity and accountability principles across all areas of work. The safeguarding system includes prevention, identification, reporting, response and protection, as well as specialised areas such as Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and Child Safeguarding.
- **Power Imbalance.** A situation in which one party possesses significantly greater influence, authority or control over another, increasing the risk of exploitation or abuse.
- **Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).** Measures and actions taken to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse, particularly within humanitarian and development contexts. PSEA aims to protect vulnerable individuals from harm caused

by those holding positions of power, including humanitarian workers, and to ensure that all individuals are treated with dignity and respect for their rights.

- **Zero Tolerance.** An organisational approach under which the URCS does not tolerate any form of safeguarding violation, including sexual exploitation and abuse, harassment, exploitation, abuse, discrimination or abuse of power. Zero Tolerance also requires the timely reporting of and response to safeguarding risks, concerns and incidents. Failure to act upon known safeguarding risks or reports may itself constitute a violation of this Policy. The application of Zero Tolerance shall always be guided by the principles of fairness, proportionality, confidentiality and a Survivor-Centred Approach.
- **Non-Retaliation.** Protection against any form of retaliation directed towards individuals who report safeguarding concerns in good faith or participate in safeguarding processes or investigations.
- **Whistleblower.** An individual who reports suspected misconduct or wrongdoing based on reasonable grounds to believe that such misconduct has occurred or may occur.

Other Terms

- **Child.** Any person under the age of eighteen (18) years, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- **Protection.** Measures aimed at ensuring individuals' safety, dignity and rights through preventing and responding to violence, discrimination, exploitation and other human rights violations within humanitarian action. For the purposes of this Policy, protection is regarded as one component of the broader safeguarding system, alongside prevention, identification, reporting and response.
- **Child Protection.** A humanitarian and social sector dedicated to preventing and responding to violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect affecting children within communities and society.
- **Do No Harm.** The obligation to avoid and minimise both intentional and unintended harm that may arise from the activities, operations or influence of the URCS or persons associated with the Society.

to the Ukrainian Red Cross Society Safeguarding Policy

(Section 8.2)

Standards of Expected Behaviour (Practical Examples)

The URCS Safeguarding Policy requires all employees, volunteers and other persons associated with the URCS to uphold standards of conduct consistent with the Society's values, safeguarding principles and the URCS Code of Conduct for Members, Volunteers and Employees.

The following practical examples illustrate the expected standards of behaviour:

- ✓ Treat all individuals with respect and dignity, regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, disability, birth or any other status.
- ✓ Use appropriate, respectful and non-violent language and behaviour, contributing to a safe and inclusive environment.
- ✓ Maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times, particularly when interacting with children and individuals in situations of vulnerability.
- ✓ Ensure that interactions with children and individuals in situations of vulnerability take place in safe, open and appropriately supervised environments in accordance with safeguarding procedures.
- ✓ Conduct oneself in a manner that avoids situations which could reasonably be perceived as inappropriate, promoting transparency and accountability in all interactions.
- ✓ Contribute to an open and safe environment where individuals feel comfortable raising concerns or expressing discomfort.
- ✓ Take personal responsibility for recognising safeguarding risks and responding appropriately, including reporting concerns in accordance with this Policy.
- ✓ Support and promote a positive safeguarding culture based on mutual respect, accountability and adherence to safeguarding standards.

to the Ukrainian Red Cross Society Safeguarding Policy

(Section 8.3)

Practical Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour

The URCS strictly prohibits any behaviour that may result in harm, abuse, violence, exploitation or violations of human dignity, including but not limited to:

- ✗ Sexual exploitation and abuse.
- ✗ Any sexual activity with a child (a person under the age of 18), regardless of the legal age of consent or provisions of local legislation.
- ✗ Exchanging money, employment, goods or services for sexual favours or any form of humiliating, degrading or exploitative conduct.
- ✗ Sexual relationships with recipients of assistance or other individuals where a power imbalance exists or may reasonably be perceived to exist.
- ✗ Any form of physical, emotional, psychological or economic violence or abuse.
- ✗ Harassment, bullying, intimidation or coercion, including workplace sexual harassment.
- ✗ Discrimination, exclusion or denial of services on any prohibited ground.
- ✗ Abuse of power, position or influence for personal benefit or to the detriment of others.
- ✗ Exploitation and neglect, including child labour, forced labour or failure to take reasonable steps to prevent harm.
- ✗ Misuse of humanitarian assistance, resources or services in ways that may cause harm or facilitate exploitation.
- ✗ Misuse of digital platforms, communications or images in ways that compromise safety, dignity or privacy.
- ✗ Breaches of confidentiality, including unauthorised disclosure of sensitive information.
- ✗ Failure to report safeguarding risks or safeguarding violations in accordance with this Policy.
- ✗ Lack of knowledge of a person's age, the presence or absence of consent, or lack of intent shall not constitute a justification for such conduct.

to the Ukrainian Red Cross Society Safeguarding Policy

(Section 8.5)

IASC Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

The Ukrainian Red Cross Society adheres to the **IASC Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse**, which establish the minimum standards of conduct for humanitarian personnel.

1. Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.
2. Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defence.
3. Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.
4. Any sexual relationship between those providing humanitarian assistance and protection and a person benefitting from such humanitarian assistance and protection that involves improper use of rank or position is prohibited. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.
5. Where a humanitarian worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, he or she must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms.
6. Humanitarian workers are obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of their code of conduct. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems which maintain this environment.