



Social Media Policy

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1. Purpose, scope and audience

The goals of the Social Media Policy (henceforth referred to as Policy) are:

- To regulate the establishment and management of the IFRC's official social media accounts and platforms.
- To minimize online brand reputation threats by ensuring a use of social media platforms by the personnel of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (henceforth referred to as the IFRC) - both for personal and professional purposes - that is in line with the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the Staff Code of Conduct, as well as all IFRC mandatory rules, policies, and procedures, including the Information Security Framework.

This Policy applies to all personnel of the IFRC Secretariat, which includes staff (employees, local staff and staff-on-loan) and non-staff (volunteers, consultants and interns) as well as any other individuals working for or representing the IFRC and/or being requested to sign the staff Code of Conduct. The term "IFRC" in this Policy refers to the IFRC Secretariat in Geneva, Zone Offices, regional and country offices, as well as other operations/activities in which the IFRC is legally or organizationally included.

2. Background

Social media can be defined as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.¹ These can include, but are not limited to, collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia), blogs, content communities (e.g., YouTube), social networking sites (e.g., Facebook), virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft, Second Life)².

The IFRC, in accordance with its Strategy 2020 commitment to *'harness new knowledge and advances in communications and technology'*, promotes the use of social media as innovative, interactive means of engaging audiences worldwide, when such social media are compatible with the objectives, platforms and values of the IFRC. As an organization and as staff, we stand in a unique position to implement these technologies to build meaningful relationships, to promote our Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values, and ultimately to strengthen our brand and further our humanitarian objectives.

The IFRC also recognizes the necessity of rules and guidelines to safeguard the emblems and fundamental Principles embodied in our brand and to minimize reputational risk in these dynamic online environments.

3. Document detail

3.1 IFRC's official social media channels: establishment and management

The Communication Department of the IFRC secretariat in Geneva manages the organization's official communications channels on several leading social media platforms:

- Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/redcrossredcrescent>
- Twitter: [@federation](https://twitter.com/federation)
- YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/IFRC>

¹ Kaplan Andreas M., Haenlein Michael (2010). "Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media". Business Horizons 53 (1). p. 61.

² Kaplan Andreas M., Haenlein Michael (2010). "Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media". Business Horizons 53 (1). p. 60-62.

- Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/IFRC>
- Scribd: <http://www.scribd.com/redcrossredcrescent>
- LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/company/ifrc>
- Google+: <http://google.com/+IFRC>

3.1.1 Specialized IFRC accounts – To best engage the IFRC brand’s shared online audience, the IFRC strives to take an integrated, collaborative approach to the organizational use of social media. In particular, we currently have one official Facebook page - “[International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement](#)” and one official Twitter account - [@Federation](#) - through which we engage audiences around news, issues and events relevant to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

In special circumstances, a department, office or programme may be allowed to create and manage its own social media profile(s) for a specific professional objective that cannot be achieved via existing IFRC social communications vehicles. Prior approval shall be sought from the Communication Department through an [authorization form](#).

Examples of specialized accounts include the following Twitter handles:

- [@IFRCpolicy](#) (humanitarian diplomacy)
- [@RCRCyouth](#) (youth engagement)

3.1.2 Official accounts’ management – Community managers of any of the IFRC’s official social media accounts or platforms shall follow the following rules:

- *they shall at all times abide by the Fundamental Principles and the Staff Code of Conduct in all content they disseminate on the platforms that they manage, as well as in their relationship with online audiences.*
- *they shall abide by all existing and future mandatory rules, policies, and procedures of the IFRC (e.g. Information Security Framework, Information Security: Acceptable Use Policy, the emblem guidelines, photo and video guidelines).*
- *they shall share only information classified as Public within the guidelines of the IFRC Information Security: Acceptable Use Policy (henceforth referred to as AUP). Internal, restricted, and highly restricted content must never be shared via social media.*
- *they shall adhere to the IFRC’s official positions on the issues discussed and ensure at all times that facts and figures used are accurate.*
- *they shall establish rules of conduct for the platforms they manage, and ensure that they are adhered to by their audiences. Such rules should welcome users to share their voice using respectful language and behaviour and discourage the sharing of advertisements, solicitations or “spam”, as well as materials deemed inappropriate for family-friendly fora.*
- *they shall strive to build and maintain a climate of constructive information sharing with and among online users of the platforms they are responsible for, as well as address and prevent potential brand reputation threats.*
- *in case a reputational crisis escalates to a level that cannot be managed by the individual community manager and has the potential to have negative consequences at a bigger scale, the community manager shall inform his/her manager as well as the Communication Department, so that appropriate actions can be taken accordingly.*

3.1.3 Requests for promotion – The IFRC’s social networks are first and foremost two-way, public communications channels for building relationships and sharing

timely and relevant information across parties. IFRC staff interested in sharing official information that facilitates dialogue or interaction via IFRC's social media channels should contact the Communication Department (social.media@ifrc.org) during the planning stages for support and recommendations.

The IFRC's social networks cannot accommodate marketing requests from numerous partners and supporters (e.g. requests for retweet), and an attempt to do so may compromise the IFRC's online identity as a neutral, independent source of information. IFRC personnel interested to promote news and information intended for a Red Cross Red Crescent audience are encouraged to do so through internal information-sharing channels such as [FedNet's Communities of Practice](#) (e.g. the Social media fans community of practice).

3.2 Personal use of social media by IFRC staff

IFRC personnel may use social media on a personal level, bearing in mind that they are bound by the Staff Code of Conduct and Fundamental Principles in all interactions. IFRC personnel should be familiar with the organization's [Social Media Guidelines for IFRC staff](#), which lay out rules and good practices for using social communications tools safely and responsibly on both personal and professional levels.

The IFRC acknowledges that the use of social media by its personnel is largely a personal issue; however, there are circumstances where, due to the functions of the person concerned and/or to the nature of the information posted on a social media, this use is also affecting the IFRC, justifying limitations to the freedom of personnel in their personal use of social media.

When using social media platforms, IFRC personnel shall abide by the following rules of conduct:

3.2.1 Respect of national laws – Personnel shall abide by the laws and regulations of the country in which they are located regarding the use of social media. Should national laws provide more restrictive rules on social media use than this Policy, the former shall prevail.

3.2.2 Respect of IFRC rules and policies – Personnel shall ensure that their participation in social media is done in accordance with the site's acceptable use terms, as well as the IFRC's Information Security Framework, and in particular the AUP when accessing social media accounts from IFRC systems.

3.2.3 Respect for persons – Personnel shall always act in accordance with the Fundamental Principles when interacting with or talking about people on social media. This includes:

- *respecting all people equally and without any discrimination based on nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, class, sexual orientation or political opinions and taking into account the sensitivities of peoples' customs, habits, and religious beliefs.*
- *obtaining permission from individuals for the use of their photos and stories obtained as part of the rapporteur's tasks within the IFRC. Personnel shall not post any personally identifiable information (PII) regarding staff or beneficiaries³. For more information, consult the [Information Classification Standard](#), the [IFRC photography guidelines](#) and the [Child Protection Policy](#).*
- *abstaining from all acts which could be considered harassment or stalking. Please refer to the [Anti-Harassment guidelines](#) for more information.*

3.2.4 Independence – Personnel shall make it clear in all personal social media postings that they are speaking on their own behalf, and where they disclose their IFRC affiliation that their views do not represent those of the IFRC.

³ "Information, which by itself or combined with other information, can be used to identify, contact, or locate a person (e.g. name, email, birth date, passport number, social insurance number, criminal record, etc.)", IFRC Information Classification Standard;

3.2.5 Neutrality – Personnel shall at no time utilize social media platforms (i.e. their personal social media profiles, official IFRC accounts, or third party’s pages/accounts) to express any opinions on events connected with political affairs or engage in political activities that could reflect adversely on the impartiality, neutrality or independence of the IFRC.

3.2.6 Use of the emblem – Personnel shall:

- *use the emblems of the red cross, the red crescent and the red crystal as part of their profile only as consistent with the applicable rules. For further guidance on the use of the emblems, please refer to the emblem guidelines on FedNet.*
- *avoid using the emblems as part of their profile in a way that is likely to bring the IFRC brand and image into disrepute.*
- *ensure any use of the emblems on their profile will not give the profile an official appearance (e.g. by including a disclaimer).*

3.2.7 Protection of information – Personnel shall not disseminate any internal, restricted or highly restricted information⁴, unless it has been decided by the authorized IFRC officer to make such information public.

4. Implementation and enforcement

4.1 Implementation

The Communications and Human Resources Departments are responsible for the effective implementation and enforcement of this policy. All personnel are responsible for reading and undertaking the policy. Any questions regarding its content should be directed to the line manager or the Communications Department in the first instance.

4.2 Monitoring, content removal or accounts cancellation

The Communication Department reserves the right to:

4.2.1 monitor IFRC personnel’s activities and conduct on IFRC accounts, third party’s pages/accounts, as well as on publicly accessible personal accounts, to ensure compliance with the provisions of this Policy.

4.2.2 request the modification/removal of content or materials published on any IFRC specialized accounts managed by IFRC personnel, offices, departments or programmes that do not fulfil the requirements expressed in this Policy (e.g. visual identity, official positions).

4.2.3 after consultation with the account’s owner and manager, request the cancellation of accounts or pages for official use created without prior consultation with and approval of the Communication Department in liaison with the Legal Department.

4.2.4 request the removal of content or materials posted by IFRC personnel on their own or on third party accounts, which are in violations of the provisions listed in paragraphs 3.1 or 3.2 of this Policy.

4.2.5 report any alleged cases of breach of the Code of Conduct through social media by IFRC personnel to the Human Resources Department.

4.3 Breaches and sanctions

IFRC personnel are accountable for any breaches of this Policy. Breaches include:

- Violations of any of the provisions listed in sections 3.1.2 and 3.2 of this Policy
- Failure or refusal to implement the requests listed in paragraphs 4.2.2, 4.2.3 and 4.2.4
- Any other violations of this Policy that also constitute breaches of the Staff Code of Conduct.

Any of the above-mentioned breaches shall result in disciplinary measures, which may include dismissal in serious cases.

⁴ See the definition provided in the [IFRC Information Classification Standard](#)

4.4 Reporting

Should IFRC personnel believe that any online conversations, information or visual materials shared on social media and involving IFRC personnel are in violation of this Policy, they shall:

- document them visually;
- if appropriate, consult with the poster individually;
- escalate to their line manager and to the Communication Department (social.media@ifrc.org), along with the afore-mentioned visual documentation. That information should also be provided to the Human Resources Department if the person having raised the issue and/or the Communication Department considers that this may also constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct. The Communication Department may investigate the issue to verify if the content is in violation of any provisions of this Policy and take measures accordingly, which can include but are not limited to requesting that the conversation be removed. Any disciplinary process, if warranted, will be dealt by Human Resources Department according to standard procedures.

5. Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Communication Department

- To promote awareness and understanding of the Policy among IFRC staff.
- To implement the provisions outlined in this Policy (e.g. monitoring of IFRC personnel's conduct on social media, management of the IFRC's platforms, removal of content, cancellation of accounts).
- To ensure personnel are held accountable to the Policy. Any breach of this Policy that also represents a breach of the Staff Code of Conduct shall be reported to the Human Resources Department.

Responsibilities of the Human Resources Department

To examine the alleged cases of breach of the Code of Conduct reported by the Communication Department or by any person and take appropriate disciplinary measures in line with the Staff Code of Conduct and the relevant disciplinary procedures.

Responsibilities of all IFRC personnel

- To understand, advocate and apply the Policy to their work.
- To report any alleged breaches of this Policy by IFRC staff to the Communication Department, along with visual documentation, and to Human Resources Department if they consider that this also constitutes a breach of the Staff Code of Conduct.

6. Review of this Policy

This Policy is subject to regular review—at least every two years or earlier if warranted.

7. Abbreviations/acronyms

Abbreviation	Meaning
Federation or IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Policy	Social Media Policy
AUP	IFRC Information Security: Acceptable Use Policy

8. Related documents

File number	Name	Version
109	Staff Code of Conduct	2007
149	Social Media Guidelines for IFRC Staff	2012
To be found on	IFRC Photography Guidelines	2012

FedNet		
To be found on FedNet	IFRC video guidelines	2011
122	IFRC Anti-Harassment Guidelines	2012
131	Red cross, red crescent, red crystal emblems - Design guidelines	2006
193	Child Protection Policy	2013
	Information Security Framework	2014
199	Information Security Charter	2014
200	Information Classification Standard	2014
62	Information Security Acceptable Use Policy	2014

9. Document revision history

Version	Date	Details