

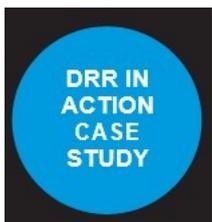


Jointly Organized by the Uganda Red Cross Society and the Office of the Prime Minister

Supported by the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



Photo: Officials posing for a photo after the concluded workshop



### Theme of the Case Study

Advocacy,  
Disaster Law

### Country

Uganda

### Case location

Uganda

## Disaster Law in Action – Case Study

### Why are disaster laws important?

Laws have a profound effect on how we prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters. This is particularly important in cases where the scale of the damage exceeds the capacities of the national authorities. Indeed, extensive research and consultations by the IFRC found that there is a common set of unnecessary regulatory problems that arise in major international disaster response operations. This results in reduced humanitarian access, higher costs for delivering aid, and poorer quality assistance to communities in need.

Disaster Risk Reduction laws are important because they spell out disaster risk management as a national priority. These laws are particularly important for establishing institutions and roles and responsibilities for disaster risk management both at the national level as well as the local level, and for making these institutions responsible for incorporating DRR into their plans and decisions.

### Who is the URCS?

The URCS is the biggest humanitarian organization in Uganda. URCS works through a network of 51 branches and more than 30 sub branches with a network of 360,000 volunteers. The mission of the URCS is to be a leading humanitarian agency in Uganda in saving lives, supporting livelihoods and promoting human dignity. Its vision is to fulfill the URCS mandate and obligation in delivering quality and sustainable humanitarian assistance.

What makes Uganda Red Cross Society unique is its auxiliary role by which, like all other National Societies, it enjoys a special legal condition as a private organization with certain recognized public functions. URCS therefore supports and supplements the public authorities in their humanitarian tasks.

The URCS has been at the center of Disaster response & preparedness for a very long time and as such has developed expertise in the field of disaster law since 2010.

## Reinforcing the Auxiliary Role through the Disaster Law Framework in Uganda

The Government of Uganda through the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), is currently engaged in the formulation of a National Disaster Preparedness and Management Bill. To support the initiative, the Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) is looking to harness their auxiliary role and advocate for the use of their relationship with national authorities to overcome key issues of humanitarian concern.

On October 16, 2018, the Office of the Prime Minister in collaboration with the URCS put together a training workshop to help discuss and implement positive steps to achieving the above goals. The latter was aimed at training several key players, especially Parliamentarians and other decision makers and influencers, on the auxiliary role of the Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) and the need for a disaster Law in Uganda. One of the key points addressed was the urgent need to revise the Red Cross Act and an enactment of the long overdue disaster law in Uganda.

***“...The mission of the URCS is to be a leading humanitarian agency in Uganda in saving lives, supporting livelihoods and promoting human dignity...”***

The outcomes of this successful workshop included:

- Highlighting the role of Red Cross as auxiliary to government in humanitarian response, and as the ‘community voice’ in national law and policy making processes
- Designing a road map for fast tracking a legal framework that integrates the auxiliary role of URCS
- Advanced training in Disaster Law issues that are relevant for Uganda, particularly those related to International Disaster Response Law (IDRL) and Laws relating to DRR
- Presentation by the OPM of the process of the national DRM Bill: strengths, gaps and support required

### Key ongoing activities:

Although a national policy for Disaster Preparedness and Management exists in Uganda, it doesn’t currently have a national law governing disaster risk reduction and management that aligns with the new international thinking. However, the government of Uganda through the Office of the Prime Minister is in the process of formulating a Disaster Preparedness and Management Bill.

The URCS has supported the Office of the Prime Minister in setting the grounds for the drafting of the Disaster Preparedness and Management Bill itself through a series of national and decentralised Disaster Law training and consultations in preparation to the drafting process. The aim of the Bill is to institutionalize a legal framework for Disaster Preparedness and Disaster Management while offering an integrated and coordinated disaster risk management approach, focusing on prevention, risk reduction, climate change adaptation as well as effective response.

The URCS has also drafted an amendment to the Red Cross Act, “The Uganda Red Cross Society and Emblem Use & Protection bill, 2018.” The bill seeks to highlight the present role of the national society particularly as a primary actor in the country’s national disaster management governance structure. It was presented to parliament as a private members bill in order to facilitate an expedited process. Leave to introduce the bill to parliament was granted in December 2018 and the bill has being gazetted in January 2019 ahead of its first reading in Parliament.