



International Confederation of Midwives

Women, Children and Midwives in Situations of War and Civil Unrest

Background

ICM's *International Code of Ethics for Midwives* (2014) emphasises the importance of midwives respecting the basic Human Rights of all people, especially for women and children. In times of war and civil unrest, violations of Human Rights are more frequent, vulnerable groups, including women and children, often suffer disproportionately from displacement, deprivation and risk of injury and illness, while their access to healthcare is likely to be restricted or refused.

Position

ICM believes the rights of women and children should be protected in all circumstances and that it is only in peaceful situations that families can reach their full potential to the benefit of their nations. ICM therefore condemns all acts of war.

ICM supports:

- The efforts of international agencies that are seeking to resolve conflicts enforce peace, and relieve the suffering of the women and children in situations of war and civil unrest.
- The UN Convention Against Torture, noting Article 10 which urges that '*education regarding the prohibition against torture be included in the training of medical personnel and other persons who may be involved in the treatment of any individual subjected to any form of arrest, detention or imprisonment*'.

ICM condemns:

- The recruitment of children into armed forces.
- The use of items of war that can have a long-term impact on a population, such as anti-personnel landmines.

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- Leaders of forces who fail to safeguard the Human Rights of women and children, especially those whose armed forces physically and sexually abuse women and children.
 - Rape in general and as a weapon of war.
 - The use of women in active military service when they must interrupt lactation to do so.
 - Any health worker who, or health organisation that colludes with those who may cause harm to any individual.

ICM recognises:

- The courage of midwives who in the most difficult of circumstances continue to provide care for women and their newborn.
- That many midwives become the victims of war and civil unrest. They are killed, raped, maimed and suffer the loss of family members.

ICM will support Member Associations in countries beset by war and civil unrest.

Recommendations

Member Associations are encouraged to lobby their governments to support peace initiatives and to provide financial support to agencies offering humanitarian assistance to those whose lives have been disrupted by war and civil unrest.

Related ICM Documents

ICM. 2014. Core Document. International Code of Ethics for Midwives.

ICM. 2011. Position Statement. Midwives, Women and Human Rights.

ICM. 2014. Position Statement. Role of the midwife in disaster preparedness.

Other Relevant Documents

G8. 2013. Declaration on preventing sexual violence in conflict. 2013

[http://stoprapenow.org/uploads/docs/Formal%20Remarks%20by%20SRSG%20Banqu
ra%20-%20Lancaster%20House%2020130411doc.pdf](http://stoprapenow.org/uploads/docs/Formal%20Remarks%20by%20SRSG%20Banqu%20-%20Lancaster%20House%2020130411doc.pdf)

Geneva Convention (IV) Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

Geneva, Switzerland: 12 August 1949.

ICC. 2002. Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. UN. 1987. UN Convention against Torture, Article 10. UN High Commission for Human Rights. Geneva, Switzerland

UN. 1948. Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

UN. 1979. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

UN. 2012. Trust Fund to end violence against women. 2012. Annual Report.

UNICEF. 1990. World Declaration on the Survival Protection and Development of Children.

Adopted at Glasgow Council meeting, 2008

Reviewed and adopted at Prague Council meeting, 2014

Due for next review 2020