

# **CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT**

## **Costa Rica IFRC OFFICE**

**Reference:** CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WITHIN FEDERATION OPERATIONS

### **Definition of a Critical Incident**

A situation that, threatens, or has impacted on, the safety / security of Federation personnel, assets or operations to the extent that there is the potential to be a significant disruption or even incapacity to continue to operate.

## **I. Immediate Response:**

The below is the basic procedure to be followed in response to a critical incident within the IFRC OFFICE in Costa Rica

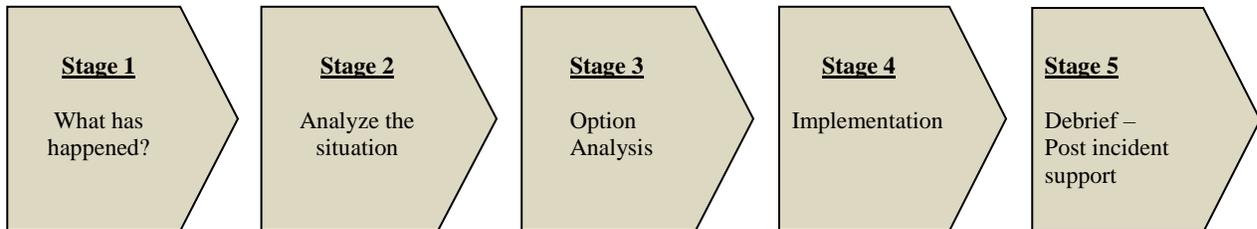
- 1) Incident reported to Head of IFRC Costa Rica Office and the IFRC Regional Security focal point.
- 2) Regional Security focal point calls (in order) until one is reached, who then informs the others on this list:
  - Head of IFRC Costa Rica Office (HoCO) – Andres Morales - +506-8708-3899
  - Regional Security Coordinator - Jorge E. Zequeira - +507-6949-5546
  - Regional Director – Walter Cotte - +507-6670-7377
  - Security Unit in Geneva informed - +41 79 217 33 71
- 3) HoCO contacts local authorities in the area (police, fire brigade, etc.) and requests assistance.
- 4) Security focal SMS/WhatsApp Alert of incident to all to ensure no more staff are exposed to the danger.
- 5) Security focal commences collecting information on the incident to advise the HoCO.
- 6) HoCO informs Insurance Provider, GVA and family members (as applicable).
- 7) HoCO forms Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT – including staff members as outlined above), either chairing it himself/herself, or appointing a Critical Incident Manager (CIM), who directs resources as needed.
- 8) The CIMT takes over all line and operational responsibilities of the incident (as per the process outlined below), report directly to the HoCO who retains overall authority.

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### II. Critical Incident Management Process:

Usually includes five stages as per the diagram below:



#### **Stage 1: Establishing What has Happened**

The first action must be to identify whether there *is any immediate action required to protect life – if so this must be taken.*

Verifiable information must be established outlining the details of the incident and an incident log is to be initiated. This is to record the chronology of events, log phone calls, record notes of all meetings and ensure all documents are recorded and filed.

#### **Stage 2: Analyse the situation / Map the playing field**

The primary aim of this stage is to identify the problem and the parameters surrounding the problem:

- RC Movement actors involved (ICRC, NS, PNS) and current status (locations, operational agreements in force)
- Security issues
- External actors involved
- Country context – current situation (disaster, conflict etc), infrastructure (transport, medical, food and water, sanitation), capability of Government, status and capability of NS in country, status of Federation in country, limitations on ability to act
- Legal issues
- Medical issues
- Communications issues
- Media issues
- Determine the end-state objective (injured person evacuated, body repatriated, hostage released)

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The CIMT must also decide:

- Whether due to risks to personnel, any programme activities should be suspended or whether personnel should be withdrawn to a more secure location.
- If additional support personnel should be deployed to any field location to assist.
- What information should be circulated internally and externally, and identify any limitations or confidentiality issues.
- If any additional personnel or external specialists should be included in the CIMT.

CIMT members may be assigned specific roles/tasks and responsibilities for managing relations with specific stakeholders.

### Stage 3: Option Analysis

At the start of this stage two questions must be asked:

- Is this situation covered by existing contingency plans – if so, can they be implemented?
- Is the situation severe enough to warrant the activation of a business continuity plan?
- Does the Federation have the internal expertise to manage the incident – if not, where can this be accessed?

If there are no existing contingency plans or no existing continuity plans that can be adapted, then a response plan must be developed. This requires the identification and analysis of options to reach the end-state objective. During this stage the following should be considered:

- Only options and factors that contribute to the identified end-state should be discussed and analysed
- Options should have technical input from all members of the CIMT
- If technical input is required that is not available from CIMT then this must be obtained.
- Options tested against
  - Fundamental principles
  - Code of conduct
  - Limitations imposed by country context
  - Resources available to implement
- Preferred option is identified and presented to the Head of Country Cluster, , Regional Director, USG/Director or Secretary General as appropriate for executive decision.

When considering options and having identified the preferred option the CIMT must always consider the fluid nature of the situation and the potential implication this might have – the question ‘**What if?**’ (something changes or something new happens) should constantly be tabled.

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### **Stage 4: Implementation**

Implementation of the preferred option should be in the form of a plan. This should:

- Clearly define the objective
- Assign roles
- Detail clear coordination aspects – timings, reporting requirements, interaction with other players – ICRC, PNS (if any), NS, external
- Define clear command and control framework
- Information flow – the CIMT needs to ensure that Federation Media and External Communication Department, ICRC and NS are kept informed on the need for control over information to the press/media and information sharing with our stakeholders. This might involve information black outs or preparing press lines, media statements and internal information sharing with NS.

The CIMT's role is to monitor the implementation and be prepared to adjust things if required.

### **Stage 5: Follow Up/Debrief**

After the incident has been resolved a debriefing process is to be implemented. In the first instance the incident and situation surrounding the incident is to be fully investigated to determine why it occurred and whether it could have been prevented. Secondly the debrief is to examine how the incident or situation was managed to determine what can be learned and whether the manner in which it was managed could be improved. This process is to work through the incident from start to finish and examine actions taken at each stage.

- Confirm the incident log and sequence of events is accurate
- Were the actions taken appropriate?
- Were the existing procedures followed and are these procedures appropriate or do they need changing?
- Lessons should be identified and recorded
- Are there any follow-up requirements: e.g. counselling, legal, insurance related?

A post incident report is to be produced and forwarded to senior management.