



## IFRC Director's Message to Red Cross and Red Crescent Volunteers in Africa | 10 December 2020

Dear Volunteers,

This year has been an extraordinary one. COVID-19 has affected every aspect of people's lives and placed a colossal strain on physical and mental health, health systems, economies, livelihoods, and social fabrics worldwide.

Despite this being a challenging year, we, as a Movement, have been reassured by the demonstration of unprecedented courage, humanity, and kindness by volunteers across the continent. Hundreds of thousands of new volunteers have joined their local Red Cross and Red Crescent society this year to help their communities during COVID-19. For example, the Kenyan Red Cross has reported a surge of interest in volunteering from people who lost their jobs during the pandemic, with over 35,000 new volunteers helping since April. Professionals such as gender-based violence counsellors and teachers have lent their expertise to inform COVID-19 response activities.

You have worked tirelessly to support vulnerable communities during complex and overlapping crises. You have done so with immense compassion and courage, all the while contending with the impacts of the virus on their own lives and families.

We appreciate your hard work, particularly in strengthening community resilience, developing social cohesion, engaging in civic processes, and advocating on behalf of the vulnerable communities.

We know that you can play a critical role in the community health revolution ahead of us. However, we also know that your role needs to be better formalized with national authorities all over the continent through the auxiliary role of National Societies and capacity strengthening. In view of this, I am pleased to inform you that IFRC is undergoing a transformative process, known as the "Agenda for Renewal," which entails, among other priorities, better engagement with volunteers. We will strive to prioritise the protection, support, recognition, and promotion of volunteers by acknowledging and recognising volunteer efforts and establishing an award system within our operational programmes. Regarding volunteer safety and protection, I am working with my team to ensure that your safety and security are prioritised by integrating the Duty of Care of Staff and Volunteers obligation within the Business Continuity Plans during and Beyond COVID 19 operations.

We have developed a volunteer management system that will provide evidence-based and real-time information on our volunteers' status. My team will get in contact and work closely with you on how to move forward with the implementation

I am deeply proud of the millions of Red Cross, and Red Crescent volunteers across Africa, saving lives and striving for our shared humanity. I thank every one of you.

Best regards,

Warm regards,

  


Mohammed Mukhier  
Regional Director, Africa