

Report on Roundtable on the Proposed Convention on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters

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UCC Disaster Research Cluster

CENTRE FOR LAW & THE ENVIROMENT | UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK

OVERVIEW

The main aim of this 1-day roundtable event, held in the UCC Sustainability Institute on 1st September 2025, was to enhance clarity on the current state of international debate and inform Ireland's position and priorities in the proposed [UN Convention on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters \(PPED\)](#).

The roundtable brought together leading academics from Italy, the UK and Ireland, and representatives from the International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Irish Red Cross Society, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Irish Aid, and Cork City Council to discuss key aspects of the proposed convention, including disaster risk reduction and coherence with other international law texts such as the proposed pandemic treaty.

The event commenced with academic presentations on the overview of the PPED process, the Role of the Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) Movement in the PPED process, the connections to the proposed Pandemic Treaty, and feedback from UK discussions on PPED. Representatives from the Legal Division, Irish Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade and the UN Office of Legal Affairs (New York) further provided practical insights into the ongoing PPED process and inter-governmental negotiations to advance the proposed convention.

In addition to presentations, there were also two interactive workshop sessions on: 1) PPED from the perspective of Irish domestic emergency planning and response, and 2) PPED from the perspective of Ireland's humanitarian assistance for countries affected by disasters.

From the discussions and presentations by persons actively involved with the draft articles and treaty-making process in different capacities, it was evident that the momentum for developing this treaty was on an upward trajectory. It was also evident that regional organisations are increasingly important in the development of international law on disasters.

In terms of challenges, there were still some issues in building consensus around key terms and provisions. It was also highlighted that important aspects and clarifications in the 2016 ILC Draft Articles on PPED are in the commentaries, and will be lost if not incorporated into the treaty text.

SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSIONS

To promote open dialogue, the event was held under the Chatman House rule, i.e. comments made should not be attributed to any specific participant. Over the course of the roundtable, a variety of important issues were raised, including:

- Ireland has a track record of providing leadership in the field of humanitarian assistance and development, and should carefully consider how this can be utilised to build consensus regarding the content and scope of the proposed Convention, particularly in Europe.

- There has, so far, been limited involvement by civil society and UN organisations in the PPED process. It was stressed that such involvement should be enhanced considering the important role that local organisations play in disaster risk reduction, response and recovery.
- The draft article on the relationship with other areas of law (currently Article 18) should be welcomed, but would benefit from further elaboration.
- In relation to disaster risk reduction, the current wording of Article 9 would be unlikely to bring any additional obligations upon Ireland in terms of domestic action, but this article would be beneficial to include to reduce risk globally.
- Ireland is currently predominantly an assisting state, but must acknowledge that it can also be an affected state in the future (for example due to the increasing impacts of climate change). (In October 2025, the Government published a review of response actions taken by the National Emergency Coordination Group during [Storm Éowyn](#)).

SUGGESTED PRIORITIES FOR IRELAND

As a synthesis of the presentations and discussions at the roundtable, it is possible to identify a series of suggested priorities for the Irish Government and Irish-based organisations involved in disaster preparedness, prevention and response.

1. Advocate strongly for the successful completion of this treaty. In doing so, the way in which the treaty could work to remove barriers for the facilitation of international humanitarian assistance should be highlighted.
2. Advocate for a comprehensive approach to the scope of the treaty, including not only disaster response, but also disaster risk reduction and recovery.
3. Reiterate the importance of the duty to cooperate which clearly includes disaster risk reduction and recovery.
4. Reiterate the importance of humanitarian principles throughout all phases of a disaster.
5. Highlight the value of legal preparedness and standing arrangements of assistance, including through regional organisations.
6. Advocate for a reference to the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement to be included in the treaty text.
7. Ensure involvement with civil society actors both domestically and in the international negotiation process.
8. Ensure coherence between different international legal frameworks, such as the Pandemic Treaty, Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction and the Sustainable Development Goals.

SELECT LIST OF RESOURCES

UN documents

- International Law Commission, [Draft Articles on the Protection of Persons in the event of Disasters](#) (2016)
 - [Draft Articles with Commentaries](#)
- UN General Assembly, [Protection of persons in the event of disasters: Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 4 December 2024](#) (12 December 2024) UN Doc. A/RES/79/128
- UN General Assembly, [Protection of persons in the event of disasters: Report of the Sixth Committee](#) (25 November 2024) UN Doc. A/79/476

Web resources

- International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), [Proposals on strengthening the draft articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters](#), (Geneva, 2025)
- International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), [Disaster Law initiative](#)
- University College Cork, [Disaster Research Cluster](#) webpages
- University of Strathclyde, What Can International Disaster Law Learn from Global Health Responses? Workshop Report and Briefing Document (October 2025)
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, [Review of Storm Éowyn](#) (October 2025)

Academic articles

- [Yearbook of International Disaster Law](#) (Brill Nijhoff)
- Giulio Bartolini, '[A Universal Treaty for Disasters? Remarks on the International Law Commission's Draft Articles on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters](#)' (2017) 99(3) *International Review of the Red Cross* 1103-1137
- Thérèse O'Donnell, '[Vulnerability and the International Law Commission's Draft Articles on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters](#)' (July 2019) 68(3) *International & Comparative Law Quarterly* 573-610
- Eduardo Valencia-Ospina, '[The Work of the International Law Commission on the "Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters"](#)' (2019) 1 *Yearbook of International Disaster Law* 5-27



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