**IFRC Style Guide**

[Month] 2017

[Note: this is intended as primarily an online tool. As such, some words are in bold – the idea is that these will be hyperlinked and allow people to jump from one entry to another without going back to the index.]

Suggested structure:

1. Introduction
2. Think first, write later
3. What to avoid
4. Jargonbusters
5. House style list

Annex 1: Preferred spellings

Annex 2: A-Z list of official names of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

**Think first, write later**

[Explanatory blurb to follow – this section is a list of questions/pitfalls that people should consider before they start writing. Who is the audience? What do I want them to learn or do? How does this promote IFRC and help achieve its objectives? Am I filling my text with nonsense? Etc.]

**Ask**

The ask is associated with fundraising, but also applies to advocacy and campaigning. What do you want your **audience** to learn by reading your story/watching your video/reading your tweets/etc.? What do you want them to do?

The ask should be a specific question that invites the audience to take a specific action: to donate money, sign a petition, take a first aid training course etc. It can be as simple as asking readers to become aware of an issue, or as complex as inviting a private foundation to invest in the IFRC, but it always must be clear and specific.

Work with relevant colleagues (file-holder, senior expert, partnerships and resource development department, communications department) to identify the ask and make sure it is agreed and included in the brief.

**Audience**

Who do you want to reach? What’s their level of knowledge and understanding about the issue you wish to communicate? Where are they? Is it best to use Twitter, an opinion piece in an international broadsheet, or community radio?

If you don’t ask these questions before you start working, there’s little point in starting.

Have a clear audience in mind, and tailor your messages to them. Be concise. Be dynamic. Be interesting.

The more high-level the audience, the less time you have to get your message across. Remember that you are trying to reach extremely busy people who have a long list of priorities, and an even longer list of people who are trying to get their attention. There’s no point in giving them a ten-page policy-heavy document with the **ask** buried on page nine. They won’t get there.

Give the top line and the **ask**, your contact details, and a maximum three hyperlinks to more information on the issue.

Take the same approach when writing for the general public. Everyone is busy, and people are bombarded with countless messages and calls for support from the media and from rival organisations. Your work will have a better chance of connecting with people, and making them care about your message, if it is tailored to a specific audience.

**Credibility**

The credibility of the IFRC is an integral part of its reputation, and everyone writing on behalf of the organization is expected to be able to vouch for the accuracy of their work if asked. Notes should be taken and kept. The full names of people quoted should be taken, although these can of course be withheld from publication at the request of the interviewee. The tone and meaning of any quotes used should not be altered and the writer should be able to prove the accuracy of the original quote when asked. Good practices such as these will allow the organization to uphold its reputation, and avoid legal challenges.

Don’t attribute your quotes to “a resident of Anbar” or “a villager affected by the floods”: give people the dignity of their names, unless there are pressing security or privacy reasons not to.

The use of full names will also enhance the credibility of the story, e.g. ‘“I’m very grateful to the Red Crescent,” said Mohamed from Syria’ could easily have been fabricated in an office many miles from the crisis zone.

Be careful when using quotes from more than one person in the same document, e.g. the following could be confusing or annoying for readers:

Tanzia Ahmed, the organization’s disaster management delegate, said: “The floods have destroyed dozens of settlements and many families have lost everything.”

“I’m concerned about resource mobilization for this disaster, as it can be much harder to raise money for slow-onset crises,” said regional partnerships manager Julius De Michelis.

Structure your document so that it is immediately obvious who is speaking, and where their quote ends.

Tanzia Ahmed, the organization’s disaster management delegate, said: “The floods have destroyed dozens of settlements and many families have lost everything.”

Regional partnerships manager Julius De Michelis added: “I’m concerned about resource mobilization for this disaster, as it can be much harder to raise money for slow-onset crises.”

If you omit part of a quote – making sure that this does not alter the meaning of the statement – be sure to add an ellipsis to let the reader know that this is only part of the quotation, e.g.:

“It’s clear to me that the National Society’s work in … humanitarian education has already had a positive impact in how young people view refugees and asylum seekers,” he said.

**Describing IFRC**

When naming the organization for the first time in an internal or external document, please use the full title with the IFRC acronym in brackets afterwards, i.e. – International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) – and then shorten to IFRC for each successive use.

IFRC is an international organization. It is the secretariat for 190 **National Societies**. and has its Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland and five Regional Offices worldwide. The term secretariat refers to the role we play with our members. The term Headquarters refers to our office in Geneva.

When communicating with all external **audiences**, simplicity is best. We should refer to ourselves only as IFRC (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the first instance), never as “the secretariat”. However, when communicating internally with National Societies or governance – audiences that have a nuanced understanding of our role and the structure of our global network – the terms “IFRC secretariat” or just “secretariat” are appropriate.

We are one organization, present in dozens of countries, supporting National Societies to respond to the needs of their communities. Our terminology should reinforce this. We are not “IFRC Asia Pacific” or “IFRC South Africa”, etc.

We are IFRC.

We are not “the Red Cross Red Crescent”.

If you read a publication or press release from Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) or ICRC, you’ll notice that they remain MSF and ICRC all the way through the document. At no point does MSF start to refer to itself as “the Borderless Doctors”, and ICRC does not become “the Committee That is International” halfway through a paragraph. And yet this is what consistently happens in IFRC communications.

In the 2008 IFRC Style Guide and its 2011 update, “Red Cross Red Crescent” was allowed as an alternative for “IFRC” in news stories to avoid repetition. However, the subsequent overuse of “Red Cross Red Crescent” across all available formats and platforms has created a sub-brand that dilutes our identity and confuses external audiences.

People will not support IFRC, donate money to IFRC, or take part in our campaigns and promotional events if they don’t know who we are. They will be even less likely to do any of these things if we don’t appear to know who we are.

Take care when typing the name of the organization. Some of the variants that have appeared (but were usually caught by editors) include:

* International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
* International Federation of Red Cross Red Crescent Societies
* International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies
* International Federation of RCRC Societies
* The IFRC of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies\*
* etc.

Mistakes such as this damage IFRC’s **credibility** - if we cannot even type our own name correctly when communicating our activities, how can anything we say be trusted?

\* as with **spellcheck**, find-and-replace is not the writer’s friend.

**Describing work by IFRC and National Societies, and IFRC, ICRC and National Societies**

If writing about generic IFRC or **National Society** humanitarian activity, refer to “the Red Cross and Red Crescent”.

If writing about a programme or response involving IFRC and one or more National Society, refer to activities by “the IFRC network”.

If writing about an initiative or response involving IFRC, ICRC and National Societies, refer to activities by “the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement” in the first instance, and “the Movement” subsequently.

Do not use internal **jargon** such as “host National Society” and “partner National Society” when writing for external **audiences**. If describing the support provided to a National Society in a crisis-affected country, say “The Lebanese Red Cross was supported by sister societies including the Japanese Red Cross and the Jordanian Red Crescent.”

**Diversity**

To the IFRC, diversity means acceptance of and respect for all forms of difference. This includes, but is not limited to, differences in: **gender**, sexual orientation, age, disability, HIV status, socio-economic status, religion, nationality and ethnic origin (including minority and migrant groups, regardless of the latter’s status).

In society, language plays a major role in how **gender** is constructed, and in how minority or marginalised groups are perceived. So, it is important to avoid **old-fashioned, gendered or pejorative language**. Please use the inclusive and gender-neutral “they” in any sentence relating to communities or groups, although both feminine and masculine pronouns can be used for individuals where appropriate: he/she, s/he, his/her, etc.

The generic “he” should be avoided in all IFRC writing.

DON’T: “Each villager was asked whether he wished to take part in the survey.”

DO: “Villagers were asked whether they wished to take part in the survey.”

DON’T: “A volunteer should be given ample time to familiarise himself with the Code of Conduct”.

DO: “Ample time should be allowed for the volunteer to become familiar with the Code of Conduct” or “A volunteer should be given ample time to become familiar with the Code of Conduct”.

Wherever possible, ask individuals how they prefer to describe themselves, particularly when writing about members of a marginalised or minority group. Always use the preferred pronouns of non-binary persons.

If writing about people who are sex workers or injecting drug users, treat their stories with sensitivity and do not increase stigma by making their vulnerability the most important thing about them.

**Gender**

The IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues is inclusive and takes into account “all those who are vulnerable to inequality, harm and loss of basic rights” because of their gender. Thus, gender refers to the social differences between females, males and persons with other gender identities throughout their life cycles.

Men are usually not defined by their marital status or how many children they have, and neither should women.

DON’T: Melinda Milner, a first aid volunteer and a mother-of-three, said: “I’ve shaken a collection tin for my National Society on every World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day for more than 20 years.” [She’s a first aid volunteer and a fundraiser. Her children are not relevant.]

DO: “The nearest hospital is two days’ walk away, but the Red Cross mobile clinic was at the next village and they saved my baby’s life,” said Tanvi Patel, who also has two older children. [The woman has two other children to look after – this affects her ability to travel for medical treatment, and is therefore relevant.]

Always respect the stated gender of an individual, but do not identify an individual as transgender unless this aspect of their life is relevant to the story you are telling.

Do not use “gender” as a synonym for issues that affect women and girls only.

**Language**

The IFRC has four official languages – Arabic, English, French and Spanish – and a further working language, Russian. Please remember that your writing will be translated and that your English language version may be read by a non-native speaker. Use **clear, simple English**.

**National Societies**

Our National Societies are our most important clients. Please show IFRC’s respect for their sovereignty and achievements by using their names in full and in their preferred form, e.g. Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran, *not* Iranian Red Crescent; Red Cross Society of China, *not* Chinese Red Cross; Saudi Red Crescent Authority, *not* Saudi Arabia Red Crescent, etc.

If you are not sure what the correct name of a National Society is, don’t assume it is [Country] Red [Cross or Crescent] – check the list of official names in **Annex 2** or look at the Directory: <http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/where-we-work/>

When writing about National Societies, please use the name of the National Society in full each time – copy and paste it, if you want to save time – as there are several potential National Societies for each acronym. “MRC” could be Mali Red Cross or Maldivian Red Crescent; “ARC” could be Azerbaijan Red Crescent or Argentine Red Cross; “PRC” could be Paraguayan Red Cross or Philippine Red Cross. If used in a report or web story covering the work of several National Societies, acronyms can quickly turn good writing into a confusing, unreadable mess.

Getting the name of a National Society wrong is a reputational risk for the IFRC and damages our **credibility**.

It can also have serious [diplomatic implications](http://www.mfa.gr/en/fyrom-name-issue/). For example, the Red Cross Society of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia should have its name written in full wherever possible, and only rarely abbreviated to “the Red Cross of FYROM” or “FYROM Red Cross”. Never refer to it as “the Macedonian Red Cross”, as this will result in IFRC receiving a Note Verbale (serious) or a Diplomatic Note (very serious) from the Greek Government via its Permanent Missions\*.

Remember that some countries’ Red Cross or Red Crescent organisations have not yet been recognised by the ICRC and admitted as full members of IFRC. Until these processes have been completed, do not refer to them as a National Society, refer instead to “the Red [Cross or Crescent] in [country or territory]”.

As the status of unrecognised republics and disputed territories can be a source of great political controversy at national, regional and global levels, it’s always best to seek advice from the Regional Communications Manager, or from the relevant Country Office or Country Cluster Support Team, on how best to describe unrecognised Red Cross or Red Crescent organisations.

\*This has happened, more than once, and we’d really prefer it didn’t happen again.

**What to avoid**

**Acronyms and abbreviations**

Please avoid if at all possible. Acronyms and abbreviations turn a clear text into an alphabet soup that alienates all external audiences, and many internal ones. It also implies laziness – if a writer doesn’t take the time to type a few words, why should a reader take the time to read it?

Instead, please consider the needs of the reader. Spell out the name or technical term in full, followed by the abbreviation in brackets and an explanation of what it is if necessary, and then use the abbreviation thereafter. If you are only using the name or technical term once in the document, there’s no need to add the abbreviation.

DON’T: “IFRC has signed a MoU with Cludgecorp and will now scale up its WatSan activities, boosting access to WASH and bringing great benefit to targeted beneficiaries in MENA.”

DO: “Thousands of families in rural Egypt and Libya will now have access to safe drinking water thanks to a new agreement between IFRC and sanitation company Cludgecorp.”

It’s always better to put people at the heart of the information we are presenting, and to use plain language to get the point across. You can get technical later if you want to, but first you must encourage people to keep reading that far.

Please avoid National Society abbreviations. We live and work with these every day in our internal communications, but the bulk of our audiences do not. We want our external writing to be clear and intuitive, and long unfamiliar abbreviations act like roadblocks to understanding.

Using “BDRCS” instead of “Bangladesh Red Crescent” throughout a story will also make it much more difficult for search engines to find and return IFRC material online.

**Cliché**

It can sometimes be difficult to avoid using clichés – after all, there are only so many ways one can describe a landslide hitting a community – but we don't want to promote the idea that every disaster is the same. Each typhoon, earthquake, landslide or conflict affects individual lives in individual ways and language can either help a reader to understand this, or it can reinforce the stereotype of the generic victim.

DON’T: Flood water swept away\* ten houses

DO: The flood destroyed ten houses

\*it’s estimated that 80 per cent of flood-related web stories received for ifrc.org include the phrase “swept away”.

**Dangling modifiers**

*"One morning I shot an elephant in my pyjamas. How he got into my pyjamas I'll never know."* – Groucho Marx

A modifier is an optional element in a sentence. Be careful when using a modifying phrase – ensure it stays close to the word it is meant to modify, and doesn’t dangle.

Dangling modifiers can change the meaning of a sentence in unexpected and amusing ways, e.g.:

“Fresh from the oven and stuffed with vegetables, the migrants enjoyed the flatbreads that were their first meal since starting the perilous journey two days earlier.”

“Old, rusty and potentially dangerous, the operations manager rejected the vehicle on security grounds.”

**Dissemination**

This word is needlessly pompous. It’s better to say IFRC is raising awareness of an issue, or sharing information.

**Exclamation marks**

*“Five exclamation marks, the sure sign of an insane mind.” – Terry Pratchett.*

You are a professional working for the world’s largest humanitarian organization, not a tween posting to Tumblr. Exclamation marks are banned in formal writing, with the exception of their use within direct **quotes**:

DON’T: IFRC has launched an exciting new campaign!

DO: Nidzara Jelacic was at work when the explosion ripped through the building. “I remember feeling the ground shake, and hearing someone yell ‘Get out!’,” she said.

**Homophones**

English contains many words that sound alike and yet have dramatically different meanings, and this can lead to mistakes. This is not a question of language proficiency but rather an issue created by workload, imminent deadlines and a reliance on **spellcheck**; native English speakers are equally likely to mistake one word for another.  
  
For example, “grisly” means “inspiring horror or intense fear”; scenes in the immediate aftermath of a crisis are unlikely to be “grizzly” unless large brown bears are involved. “Razed” means completely destroyed, “raised” means lifted; buildings cannot be “raised to the ground” by an earthquake. A “tenet” is a principle widely believed to be true, a “tenant” is someone who pays money to occupy a building; the Fundamental Principles are not the tenants of the Movement.

**Intervention**

Please do not refer to intervention in an IFRC context, and never refer to IFRC making a humanitarian intervention. This has a particular meaning in political and security contexts, and it’s not one IFRC should be associated with.

**Jargon**

Excessive use of internal and corporate jargon can obscure the meaning of sentences and give readers a bland and soulless impression of an organization. The IFRC has some of the most compelling stories in the world – let’s not take the humanity out of our writing.

**Use plain English**. Please explain IFRC’s programmes and activities as you would to a friend or relative who doesn’t work in the industry.

Take extra care to ensure that internal jargon and shorthand does not creep into external-facing documents. Describing someone as “an expert in gender-based violence” is fine when introducing them to a colleague in the office or at an industry event - but a member of the general public will interpret those words in a completely different way, and presumably run a mile.

**Key**

Use this very sparingly, as it is easily rendered meaningless through overuse. Something is either important, or it isn’t. If everything in a piece of writing is described as “key”, it implies that nothing is.

**Key stakeholders**

“Key stakeholders” is one of IFRC’s most over-used and most meaningless descriptions, in that it offers absolutely no information or insight to the reader. Specify who is involved and why they are interested. If you don’t know who they are, ask someone.

**Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet**

Latin is not an official or working **language** of IFRC, so there’s no need to be pedantically correct when using Latin words.

For example, “the data were collected” is jarring and a little pompous. If referring to a single point of data, we don’t refer to it as “a datum”. Data, like its Latin sister agenda, is now overwhelming used to denote the singular and the plural. If you don’t believe us, you can put it on the agendum of our next meeting.

Likewise, we shouldn’t worry too much about splitting the infinitive. Modern prejudice about this originates in the 19th century, when teachers and scholars would argue that as Latin infinitives cannot be split - they are one word - writers should never separate “to” from the verb in English. *The Guardian* style guide notes that, unless one is writing in Latin, one should “not worry about any of this even slightly”. The IFRC Style Guide agrees with this sentiment.

**Neologisms**

Neologisms are fun and many have entered common usage in formal and informal modern English, e.g. meme, webinar, omnishambles, selfie etc. However, native English speakers should remember that English neologisms may not translate meaningfully into Arabic, French, Spanish or Russian.

**Non-food items**

Shoes? Fidget spinners? Wardrobes? The list of inedible things is pretty long. When writing about IFRC and National Society support, it’s always better to be clear about how we’re helping people in need.

DON’T

“Singapore Red Cross volunteers were quickly on the scene and distributed food and non-food items to the traumatised survivors.”

DO

“IFRC distributed food, hygiene kits and other relief items to the people affected by the earthquake.”

“More than 10,000 families in the flooded area have already received food, water, and shelter kits from the Pakistan Red Crescent Society.”

**Nouns and verbs**

Please do not turn nouns into verbs or vice versa. In particular, “impact” is inelegant when used as a verb, and the adjective “impacted” means “tightly packed or wedged in” or “not easily moved” and is correctly used to describe teeth, not people. “Might affect” is more clear and concise than the stiff and pompous "could potentially impact on".

DO: “The avalanche happened so quickly that no warning could be given, and many people did not survive the impact.”

DON’T: “There are concerns that the land reform proposals will impact on families who were impacted by the 2014 earthquake.”

Please do not verb nouns by adding –ise or –ised to them (e.g. concretise) as it obscures meaning, confuses translators and interpreters, and looks ugly in print. If allowed to flourish, this habit encourages further abuse of language – e.g. concretisation, concretisable – and can lead to people making up entirely new words\*.

\*Such as the staff member who once argued that the IFRC should “responsitise” all its systems.

**Redundancy**

Don’t pad out your writing with unnecessary adjectives, as these can result in redundancy (“a young baby” - all babies are young) and pleonasm (“a huge big flood”). Watch out for redundancy if using acronyms: HIV virus, CMS system, PIN number etc.

**Spellcheck**

Spellcheck is not a writer’s friend and should never be used in place of a professional editor. Some recent mistakes that were missed by spellcheck, but caught and corrected by editors before publication, include:

* “Your donation means we can help thousands of people, many of whom are staring.”
* “The campaign has many objectives but its main focus is to enrage Youth.”
* “Hygiene promotion activities in the targeted communities were organised by the water and sanitation fecal point.”
* “To have the greatest impact in our programmes we must make best use of all the fools, systems and mechanisms at our disposal.”

In addition, spellcheck will not tell a writer that they have omitted an important word (or words) from a typed sentence. Again, some recent howlers:

* “[Corporate partner] also contributed to the programme activities through valuable in-kind donations of pre-school children.”
* “The scale of the crisis was so immense that an appeal was immediately launched seeking the unprecedented amount of 19.5 US dollars.”
* “Four people were killed, one seriously, and eight more received slight injuries.”

Editors are a writer’s friend. Always ask someone to read your work before it is published.

**Scare quotes**

Scare quotes – superfluous quotation marks - are used by writers who are unsure of their facts and organizations that are trying to mislead the public. As such, they encourage readers to distrust the information being presented to them, and should be avoided.

They are sometimes used – again, wrongly – to denote a word or phrase that the writer feels may not be familiar to their audience. There is no need to do this. Movement-specific tools and mechanisms can be explained quickly and in plain English.

**Trainings**

“New delegates were offered trainings in community engagement and accountability, and in anti-corruption.”

No, they were not. There is no such thing as “a training” or “trainings” in English, likewise nobody speaks of having acquired “a learning” or “some learnings”. If the word “training” is somehow not enough, use “training courses” or “training sessions”, or just say that people “were trained in [skill] and [area of work]”.

**Unique**

If something is unique, it is the only example of its kind. A thing cannot be “quite unique” or “very unique”.

DON’T: “The Burundi Red Cross took a quite unique approach to organising and motivating its volunteers.” (the writer should establish whether this approach is unique or not, so they can be clear about what the National Society is doing.)

**Weasel words**

Watch out for weasel words in your writing - e.g. some; probably; linked to, claim etc. – as these are commonly used by writers who are trying to disguise a lack of evidence or a dubious source. This prevarication is obvious to readers and undermines IFRC’s **credibility**.

Sentences to avoid, unless weighted with credible citations:

"A growing body of evidence indicates that..." (What evidence? Where can it be found?)

"Analysts believe that…” Which analysts – can you name at least one? What are their affiliations? Why should their analysis be trusted?

“Officially known as..." Which officials? Is it unofficially known as something else? If so, what?

**Who vs That or Which**

Use “who” to refer to people. Use “that” or “which” when referring to anything that isn’t a person.

DO

“The volunteers, who worked through the night in dangerous conditions and freezing temperatures, were praised by President Rocca.”

“Five years later, the houses that were constructed by IFRC are the centre of a thriving community.”

“The psychosocial support centre, which has won several awards for its services, now faces closure after its funding was withdrawn.”

DON’T

“The IFRC President spoke to the National Society operations manager that had been at the forefront of the response.”

“Shama Junego was one of ten volunteers which had been chosen to represent the National Society at the General Assembly.”

**Jargonbusters**

IFRC language should be clear, jargon-free and inclusive.

We want people to read about our work and engage with it emotionally, and this will only happen if our **audience** feels we are speaking to them directly.

We want our readers to care about the people IFRC and National Societies are supporting. Always put people at the centre of your communications about humanitarian work, and avoid dehumanising them with patronising language such as “the most vulnerable” or “those we serve”.

The following list includes many pompous and impenetrable bits of **jargon** alongside some **gendered** and pejorative language that should stay in the 1950s, where it belongs. This list is not exhaustive, and IFRC staff are encouraged to email any problematic words to xxxx@ifrc.org.

**Words to avoid: Please use instead:**

Aborigine Indigenous

actors organizations, partners

additionally also, and

amongst among

beneficiaries people

businessmen managers, executives

cameraman camera operator, film-maker

chairman/chairwoman chair

decimated badly affected

emotional support comfort

enable help

engaged with involved

exacerbate, exacerbated worsen, worsened, made worse

forefathers ancestors

frequently often

the handicapped, handicapped people people with disabilities

impact/impacted affect/affected

initiative project, programme

irregardless\* regardless

is able to can

learnt learned

leverage use

locals local people, the community

mankind humanity

man-made technological, artificial, human-made

manned, manning worked at, staffed, staffing

manpower workforce, employees

participate take part

perished died

policeman police officer

prostitute (of any gender) sex worker

prostituted child victim/survivor of sexual abuse

quantify count, measure

reach out to/reached out to contact/contacted

recovery actors humanitarian organizations, Governments

remains engaged continues

request/requested ask/asked

scaling up increasing

stakeholders partners

sufficient enough

target beneficiaries help people

the disabled people with disabilities

the vulnerable/most vulnerable vulnerable people, marginalised people, people at risk

those, e.g. “those we serve”. people. People we serve.

to a man unanimously

trainings training, training courses

transgendered transgender

utilise use

victims people affected

\* this is not a word. Please don’t use it.

**IFRC House Style: standard usage**

Standard spelling

The standard spelling used by IFRC is the Oxford English Dictionary preferred spelling.

Alternative spellings, which appear in brackets in the Oxford English Dictionary, should only be used if they are part of a name, title or quotation, e.g.:

the US Department of Defense (Oxford English Dictionary = defence)

Capitalisation

Overcapitalisation is common and is often used incorrectly for emphasis. However, it slows down reading speed, is uncomfortable on the eye, and can appear pompous. If used online, the reader will feel that you’re shouting at them.

Use common sense - the word delegate is a simple noun that should not be capitalised. If you capitalise Delegate, for example, why not Refugee or Survivor?

Use initial capitals for proper nouns and names:

Department for International Development

Governing Board

Élysée

Do not give importance to temporary committees, teams, departments or units:

migration task force

human resources department

Capitalise the names of books, films and other major works in the usual way. Capitalise first words and all words apart from prepositions and conjunctions. These should also be italicised e.g. the *World Disasters Report*.

Always use lower case for rough descriptions or references.

the strategy (Strategy 2020, Strategy 2030)

the programme (the water and sanitation programme)

the Canadian development agency (Canadian International Development Agency)

the Chinese government

states parties to the Geneva Conventions

resolution 7 of the Council of Delegates

Use upper case for definite geographical places, regions, areas, titles and countries.

South-East Asia

Mexico City

The Hague

the Middle East

Western Europe (political concept) *but* eastern Europe (general description)

The Global South

South Africa *but* southern Africa

Eastern Cape (the name of the province)

Tourism is eastern Africa's main industry

Washington state *but* Orange Free State

New York city *but* Ho Chi Minh City

Quebec city *but* Oklahoma City

Use lower case for points of the compass.

east, west, north, south

Hospitals in the north-west of the country treat more than 900 patients a day.

Use lower case for seasons of the year in running text.

The strategy will be updated in spring 2018.

Use upper case for seasons in the title of a publication.

*Red Cross Red Crescent* Magazine, Autumn 2017

Use capitals for titles of people. Use lower case when referring to the office or appointment.

He saw Prime Minister Justin Trudeau *but* He saw the Canadian prime minister.

We met Queen Elizabeth II *but* We met the queen of England.

“Welcome, Chancellor Merkel.” *but* She was elected chancellor.

The chief executive of the British Red Cross

The Nigerian health minister

Use capitals for established labels (-isms, -ists, -ites etc.).

Buddhism, Christian, Hinduism, Islam

Also use: Koran, Bible

Hyphens

There are no simple rules for hyphens in English, but, as with capital letters, they should be used sparingly. However, there are some cases where hyphens must be used.

Hyphenate compounds when used attributively (before a noun). When using predicatively (after a noun), use space.

The out-of-date research paper

The research paper is out of date.

An 80-year-old woman

The woman is 80 years old.

Hyphenate fractions (whether nouns or adjectives).

two-thirds, four-fifths, one-sixth

Hyphenate quarters of the compass.

north-west, south-east

Words with prefixes such as anti-, neo-, non- and pro- should generally be hyphenated.

anti-American

non-existent

non-violent

pro-European

Neo-liberal

Exceptions are:

Nonconformist

Nonplussed

Neoclassicism

Neolithic

neologism

Hyphenate all nouns formed from prepositional verbs. A prepositional verb is one which is extended or changed in meaning by a preposition. When such a verb is used as a noun, it is always hyphenated.

At the end, the chair will round up the discussion. (verb)

The discussion ended with a round-up by the chair. (noun)

Hyphenate adjectives composed of two or more words.

day-to-day problems

up-to-date information

ten-year conflict

French- and Italian-speaking journalists

conflict-affected countries

best- and worst-funded disasters

Note the difference between simple adverbial use and the adjectival form.

IFRC is well organised.

A well-organised IFRC will be more effective.

Use hyphens with short adverbs only, for example, well, ill, most.

ill-advised action, most-favoured employee

Omit the hyphen with adverbs ending in -ly.

the relatively expensive drugs

the increasingly active youth programme

English has evolved so that two words have combined to become one word, and some prefixes have merged into their noun or adjective. If in doubt, refer to the Oxford English Dictionary (see also: Annex 1 – Preferred spellings).

One-word nouns:

ceasefire

coastguard

foothold

override

peacekeepers/peacekeeping

subcommittee

toolkit

Some nouns with two hyphens:

no-man's-land

prisoners-of-war

The presence of a hyphen can change the meaning of some words and phrases:

represent (= act as, stand for, fill the place of)

re-present (= present again)

resort to (= turn to)

re-sort (= sort again)

the little-used car (= the car is not used often)

the little used car (= the small second-hand car)

20-odd donations (= about 20 donations)

20 odd donations (= 20 donations that were odd)

Some examples of words made up of two unhyphenated words:

air force

case study

coal miner

common sense (noun) *but* common-sense (adjective)

death toll

think tank

Some examples of words made up of two hyphenated words:

information-sharing

life-long

know-how

knowledge-sharing

policy-maker

well-being

Another important use of the hyphen is to mark word breaks at the end of lines. Avoid using too many word breaks as they slow down reading speed. When you hyphenate, break words into their constituent parts and avoid making unintentional words such as butt-ress.

Accents

Only include the accent on non-Anglophone words that have been absorbed into English if omitting the accent would change the pronunciation. Include the accent for café, cliché and façade, but not for elite. If in doubt, refer to the Oxford English Dictionary.

Accents should always be used on non-Anglophone names.

José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero

Prefixes

The normal rule is to use a hyphen to avoid a doubling of the same vowel:

re-elect, pre-empt

*but* readopt, coexist, prearrange

Usage has changed in recent years so that the Oxford English Dictionary and The New Fowler's Modern English Usage both abandon the hyphen in cooperate, coordinate, but retain it in words such as co-opt where pronunciation is a problem.

Double consonants

Consonants are often doubled when a suffix is added:

expel, expelled

fulfil, fulfilled

rebel, rebellious

quarrel, quarrelling

All other consonants are doubled when the pronunciation stress falls on the final vowel before the suffix:

regret, regretted, regrettable

commit, committed, committing

*but* credit, credited, creditable

Note: beware of some words which are both nouns and verbs, and pronounced differently, for example, object, project. The noun is stressed on the first syllable and the verb on the second. Here the rule does not apply - the suffix form is objected, projecting.

Standard usage

Apostrophes

The apostrophe is used in English to:

• indicate possession

• indicate that something is omitted or contracted

Do not confuse it's (it is), with its (the possessive pronoun).

It's not a successful institution. Its staff members are demotivated, and it’s no wonder that its programmes are not well planned.

Use the normal possessive ('s) after singular words, but not after names that end in s:

the delegate's report; the manager’s decision; the boss' car; The Italian Red Cross' headquarters, Dr Jones' lecture.

Use the normal possessive ('s) after plurals that do not end in s:

children's toys, people’s complaints, the women's hats, the media's attention

Use the plural possessive (s') on plurals that end in s, including plural names that take a singular verb:

the bosses' cars, Reuters' data, Barclays' corporate social responsibility

Although singular in other respects, the United States, the United Nations, the

Philippines etc., have a plural possessive apostrophe.

The United States' new training centre for first aid.

Use an apostrophe for the meaning ‘worth of’.

He has five years' experience.

He will go on mission in a month's time.

Sometimes in modern English, the possessive is avoided by using the noun as an adjective. For example:

The IFRC’s Regional Office in Nairobi (proper possessive)

The IFRC Regional Office in Nairobi

Both are common, but the first is preferred. The second form is sometimes used when there is no acceptable adjective.

Omission or contraction

The apostrophe is also used to show something is omitted. For formal writing, do not use contraction.

it's (it is), it'll (it will), I'd (I would)

It is no longer necessary to write 'phone, 'cello or 'plane.

Do not put apostrophes in decades or abbreviations which are straight plurals.

NGOs, the 2000s, USGs,

Punctuation

Full stops, commas, brackets, en dashes and exclamation marks.

1. Do not use full stops in abbreviations and acronyms.

UN, ICRC, WHO

*But* one important exception is for post office box numbers in addresses.

P.O. Box 372

Use full stops in lower case abbreviations such as e.g. and i.e.

Do not use full stops after titles such as Dr, Mr, Ms, Mrs

For royal titles, use the following abbreviations:

HH (His Highness or Her Highness)

HIH (His Imperial Highness or Her Imperial Highness) HIM (His Imperial Majesty or Her Imperial Majesty) HM (His Majesty or Her Majesty)

HRH (His Royal Highness or Her Royal Highness)

HSH (His Serene Highness or Her Serene Highness)

Do not abbreviate His Excellency to H.E., instead use the title in full, e.g. His Excellency Ambassador Smith

For information on the correct protocol to use when writing about high-level people or when addressing IFRC correspondence to them, please consult the IFRC Protocol Handbook [hyperlink to be added]

The position of the comma can change the meaning of a sentence:

However, we learned it was going to be a slow process.

However we learned, it was going to be a slow process.

Use commas after expressions of time when they begin a sentence:

Yesterday, the Secretary General met a delegation from the Colombian Red Cross Society.

On 16 April 2016, a powerful earthquake rocked Ecuador.

Do not use a comma before ‘and’ in lists (the Oxford Comma):

The emergency kit contained jerry cans, cutlery and blankets.

But the Oxford Comma should be used where appropriate to ensure what you have written makes sense:

The emergency kit contained jerry cans, knives and forks, and blankets.

I would like to thank my parents, Hillary Clinton, and Nelson Mandela.

The Oxford English Dictionary describes parenthesis as “a word, clause or sentence inserted as an explanation or afterthought into a passage which is grammatically complete without it, and usually marked off by brackets, dashes or commas”.

Use commas for a routine, weak parenthesis:

A survey conducted by FAO, in April 2017, found that…

All staff, including part-timers, can benefit from…

To mark a strong but unemphatic parenthesis, usually to explain rather than to comment, use round brackets:

The next growing season (January to March) is expected to…

When the parenthesis forms part of a sentence, the full stop comes after the second round bracket (as here).

(However, when the whole sentence is a parenthesis, as here, then the full stop comes before the second bracket.)

For a parenthesis that is added by the writer or editor, either to explain or to comment, use square brackets:

According to the report: “The reduced availability of transportation and curfew [due to the conflict] had a significant impact on…”

To mark a strong and emphatic parenthesis, to comment rather than to explain, use en dashes:

The other organizations – the vast majority NGOs – were prevented from operating in the area.

Do not use exclamation marks in serious, non-fiction writing.

Colons

Use a colon to separate a general statement from specifics, usually putting the general statement first.

The delegates distributed necessary relief items: blankets, stoves and hygiene parcels.

Use a colon before a whole quoted sentence, but not before a quotation that begins mid- sentence:

She said: “It will never work.”

He retorted that it had “always worked before”.

Use a colon for antithesis or contrasts.

The rich get richer: the poor get poorer.

Colons are also used to introduce bulleted lists and numbered lists.

Bulleted lists and numbered lists

Lists that are not whole sentences should start with lower case. Do not add full stops, semicolons or commas at the end of the bullet. Such lists should start with either all nouns or all verbs. Do not mix nouns and verbs.

In lists that include infinitive verbs, ensure ‘to’ appears before the colon (not semicolon) and is not repeated each time.

The regional conference is an opportunity to:

• identify and analyse major challenges

• coordinate Red Cross and Red Crescent action

• involve vulnerable communities

• tackle social exclusion and discrimination.

Use bullet points not numbers unless the number of items is relevant, e.g.:

Such an approach constitutes three main elements:

1. ensuring effective, evidence-based subsidies

2. enhancing market access

3. strengthening the links between science and policy.

If lists are whole sentences, start each item with a capital letter and end with a full stop.

The study highlighted the following issues:

• Strategy 2020 is felt to have helped focus activities to strengthen community-based responses.

• A regional or sub-regional focus and support network has been successful in some areas.

• There is a high degree of donor dependency and a lack of effective marketing.

Dates, time, numbers, measurements and currencies

Dates

Use the British date format, not the US one. Format dates in the following order and style: day, month, year.

2 May 2018, 12 August 2018 (not 2nd May 2018 or 12th August 2018 or August 12, 2018)

Note: 10.12.18 means 10 December 2018 in Britain and 12 October 2018 in the United States.

Do not use figures for dates.

When using a date range with a preposition, use ‘to’ and not an en dash.

From 2016 to 2018 (*not* From 2016–2018).

Write out date ranges in full, using an en dash (–) not a hyphen (-) to separate the years.

2014-2015 (not 2014-15)

Use: the 1990s (or nineties), a woman in her 30s, her 33rd birthday.

When writing about centuries, spell out to tenth century and use figures from 11th century onwards.

seventh century

21st century

Time

Use the 24-hour clock written as 16:30 (not 16h30 or 16.30).

Numbers

Write out in full numbers up to ten.

There were six refugee camps in the country.

We needed ten trucks to make the deliveries.

Use figures for numbers from 11 and above.

The river was 15 kilometres from the camp.

Use figures for numbers below and above ten in the same sentence.

There were 19 small ones, 10 medium-sized and 8 large.

Use figures with percentages.

7 per cent, 8.2 per cent, between 5 and 15 per cent

Use figures for sums of money.

The centre cost 60,000 Swiss francs to build.

Use figures for resolutions and articles.

Article 1 states that…

Resolution 12 of IFRC’s code.

Use figures for the results of a vote.

Resolution 15 was adopted with 45 votes for, 7 against, and 3 abstentions.

Use figures with the words million, billion, etc.

6 million people, 1 billion Swiss francs

Never start a sentence with a figure. Write the number in words instead, or turn the sentence around.

Seventeen children were rescued.

The number of children rescued was 17.

Write out in full numbers used figuratively.

I’ve told them a hundred times.

Write million in full. Use billion to mean a thousand million. Do not use “mio” to represent “million”.

Use commas with numbers of four digits and over in general text.

19,650

12,000,000

Use figures for decimals, using a full stop.

6.7, 120.33, 0.25 (not .25)

Hyphenate fractions and spell out in words.

two-thirds, one-eighth, thirteen-sixteenths

Use common fractions or percentages rather than decimals where possible.

Three-quarters of the staff members at the school are women.

Write per cent, percentage. In tables, use the % sign to save space.

Do not use Roman numerals. Not everyone is familiar with them and their use is unnecessary. However, there are situations where convention requires them to be used, e.g. Queen Margrethe II of Denmark

Where Roman numerals appear in the title of a conference or other events, they should be maintained.

VII International Conference (not 7th International Conference)

XII Asian Games (not 12th Asian Games)

Note: Second World War (not World War II)

Measurements

Except when the specific context demands it, use metric forms in the English spelling.

metres, litres, not meters, liters

tonnes, not metric tons or MT (Ton = US or Imperial ton)

kilometres (km), kilograms (kg), hectare (ha)

centimetres (cm), millimetres (mm)

When writing out measurements, the figure should be followed by a space then the unit of measurement.

300 kilometres, 50 kilograms, 20 hectares

When using the abbreviated form, there should be no space after the figure.

300km, 50kg, 20ha

Currencies

IFRC mainly works in Swiss francs and uses this currency in its documents and publications. For ease of comprehension, please include a conversion of the amount in US dollars and euro.

The IFRC is appealing for 100,000 Swiss francs (100,082 US dollars/93,604 euro).

Note: never use the symbol ‘$’ on its own to represent the dollar, as the dollar is also the name of the official currency of other countries and regions, including Australia, Canada, Hong Kong and New Zealand. For greater clarity, write out in full, e.g. 750,000 Australian dollars.

Leave a space between the currency and the amount.

6 billion euro; 70,000 Swiss francs, 15 US dollars.

If using CHF in a table, add a footnote explaining CHF = Swiss francs.

For less common currencies, use the full name with the abbreviation\* in round brackets at the first mention.

20 Malawi kwacha (MWK)

The abbreviation should be used thereafter, followed by the amount.

MWK 3,000

\*Refer to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) list for currency names and their associated three-letter codes. [Hyperlink to be added]

Italics and quotations

Italics

Italics are used for the titles of publications. Use sparingly if writing for the web – italicised text is read with a strong emphasis, as text in all capitals is perceived as shouting.

Use italics for the titles of books, newspapers and publications, plays, radio and television programmes, and films. If the definite article (the) is part of the title, then this should also be italicised.

*The Times of India*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Economist*

but the *Financial Times*, the *New Straits Times*, the *Yorkshire Post*

Use italics for the names of IFRC publications and documents. However, a distinction needs to be made between publications and documents, which take italics, and policies, guidelines and initiatives, which do not.

*Strategy 2020, World Disasters Report, Red Cross Red Crescent* magazine

*but* Global Water and Sanitation Initiative, emergency response policy

Quotations

IFRC style is to use double quotation marks.

“This is the worst earthquake this decade,” the Secretary General said, “and the people affected will require long-term help.”

Whether the punctuation at the break comes within the quotation marks or outside is determined by the punctuation in the original statement.

“The challenge is enormous,” he said; “we have to meet it.”

“The challenge is enormous”, he said, “and we have to meet it.”

Quotations within quotations take single quotation marks.

He said: “I really meant to say, ‘I’m sorry’.”

References and bibliographies

Published works should be listed in alphabetical order. Examples of IFRC style for references and bibliographies, covering a range of different types of sources, are listed below. Follow the formatting given, depending on the type of source quoted.

For books:

Ariyabandu, Madhavi Malalgoda and Wickramasinghe, Maithree. *Gender Dimensions in Disaster Management*. New Delhi: Zubaan Books, 2005.

Foy, C. and Helmich, H. (eds.). *Public Support for International Development*. Paris: OECD, 1996.

For articles in journals and magazines:

Marcus, D. ‘Famine Crimes in International Law’ in *American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 97, pp. 245–281, 2003.

For newspaper articles:

Bowcott, O. ‘4,000 refugees believed drowned at sea every year’, *The Guardian*, 9 October 2004.

Steinhauer, J. ‘Storm Evacuees Strain Texas Hosts’, The *New York Times*, 20 April 2006.

For news reports:

BBC. Chad refugee crisis ‘overlooked’, BBC News, 10 May 2005.

Reuters. Malawi leader declares disaster over food crisis. London, 15 October 2005.

For official papers and reports:

UNICEF. Humanitarian Situation Update. Paper presented to the National Food Crisis Task Force, Lilongwe, April 2006.

European Parliament, Directorate General – External Policies Human Rights Unit. Report on the visit of an ad hoc delegation to Tripoli, Libya on 4 to 6 December 2005.

Place names

Countries

Use the English form in the IFRC Directory, which includes the correct formulation in English of National Society names.

Gambia *not* The Gambia

Lebanon *not* the Lebanon

Myanmar *not* Burma

Sudan *not* The Sudan

Timor-Leste *not* East Timor

Ukraine *not* The Ukraine

Viet Nam *not* Vietnam

Cities and other places

Use the standard English spelling, not the original language.

Basle, Berne, Lyons, Marseilles, Antwerp, Hanover

Use the modern form of spelling in English for certain place names.

Beijing not Peking

Mumbai not Bombay

If in doubt, refer to the Oxford English Dictionary.

Collective nouns

Some English writers use a plural verb after some nouns with a collective sense, for example, "the government are…“. Do not imitate. If the sense is a single entity, use a singular verb. This is true for all governments, companies and organizations.

The IFRC’s General Assembly is…

The United Nations is…

The Philippines is…

The government has…

The management is…

For the word ‘number’ itself.

The number of casualties is increasing by the hour.

but

A number of villagers are prepared to relocate.

Titles

Because national usage varies so greatly, do not use titles if possible. On second mention, repeat the person's full name or use the personal pronoun.

Mark Duffield has written an interesting book on humanitarian aid. He looks at the problems facing…

This is Mark Duffield’s fourth academic work related to…

IFRC departments and job titles

In general, use lower case when referring to the specific names of departments.

The communications department has…

Use lower case when referring in general terms to the role or function of a department.

IFRC’s finance department has…

Use lower case when referring to the department in general terms.

The department has…

Use capitals for job titles when writing out the person’s name, followed by their job title.

Cristina Estrada, Team Leader.

When referring to their job title in passing, use lower case.

Cristina Estrada, the IFRC’s team leader responsible for…

Miscellaneous points

That or which?

Use ‘that’ in defining clauses.

The houses that IFRC built have provided a new home for more than 200 families.

Use ‘which’ in informative clauses.

The houses that IFRC built, which are made of bamboo, have provided a new home for more than 200 families.

As a general rule, if a clause cannot be deleted without removing information essential to the sentence, preface it with ‘that’. If the information in the clause can be omitted without rendering the main clause meaningless, then preface it with ‘which’.

Never use ‘that’ or ‘which’ to refer to a person.

Avoid the unnecessary use of ‘that’.

She said she was going to…

*not* She said that she was going to…

Forward slash

Do not use / (forward slash) to mean ‘or’.

Fewer, less

For countable nouns, use ‘fewer’.

There were fewer children than teachers.

For non-countable nouns, use ‘less’.

There was less wine than water.

Ampersands

Do not use the ampersand (&) unless for book titles and authors, or if it forms part of an organization’s name. Use ‘and’ for running text.

Web addresses

Most (but by no means all) web addresses and the online locations of documents, etc. begin with http://www. Write all such addresses without this prefix as it is generally assumed that the full address will begin with http://www. When writing for an online audience, add a hyperlink to the text so that readers can click through.

ifrc.org (not http://www.ifrc.org)

icrc.org (not http://www.icrc.org)

Write out all other addresses in full.

https://fednet.ifrc.org (not fednet.ifrc.org)

Use a full stop after a web address when this appears at the end of a sentence.

For more information, visit www.ifrc.org.

Email addresses

A person’s name is not always apparent from their email address. When quoting an email address as a contact, quote the person’s name. Add a full stop when the email address appears at the end of a sentence.

For more information, contact Stephen Wainwright at stephen.wainwright@ifrc.org.

Due to, owing to, because

At the beginning of a sentence, use ‘owing to’ or ‘because of’.

Owing to a lack of funding, the project had to close.

Because of the sensitive nature of the subject, little reliable data is available.

Use ‘due to’ mid-sentence.

He resigned due to differences of opinion.

Trade marks

A trade mark is a brand, symbol or word registered and protected by law to safeguard a manufacturer’s product or intellectual property and prevent competitors and others from using it, e.g. Fibreglass, Land Rover, Scotch Tape.

Do not use trade marks unless they are important to the text. Use a generic equivalent instead.

Over, more than

Use ‘more than’ rather than ‘over’.

The earthquake affected more than 75,000 people.

*not* The earthquake affected over 75,000 people.

References

[to follow]

Annex 1

IFRC preferred spellings

This is an alphabetical list of some common problem words and expressions. If a word is not in this list, consult the New Oxford Dictionary of English. The most important point to bear in mind is that usage should be consistent throughout a manuscript.

A

ad hoc (not italic)

advertise/advertisement

advice (noun)

advise (verb)

ageing

analyse

anglocentric

antenatal

anti-personnel

anti-retroviral therapy (ART)

apprise

Aral Sea (*but* the Black and the Aral seas)

arise

Atlantic Ocean (*but* the Pacific and the Atlantic oceans)

audiovisual

authorise/authorisation

awareness-raising

B

back-up (noun)

back up (verb)

better- (adjective, as in better-coordinated disaster response)

bilingual

billion = thousand million

blood donor (*but* blood-donor centre)

Bosnia and Herzegovina

break-up (noun)

break up (verb)

by-law

C

capacity building

capitalise

cardiopulmonary resuscitation

caregiver/caregiving

case study

cash for work

catalyse

categorise

ceasefire

central Africa

Central African Republic

central America

Central Asia

central Europe

centralise

centre

century: from first to tenth century, number spelled out; thereafter in figures: 20th century, etc.

Chancellor Merkel (*but* the chancellor said... )

changeover (noun)

change over (verb)

childbirth

childcare

coastguard

coexist

co-management

community-based first aid

community-based health worker

comprise

compromise

computerise

Congo, the Democratic Republic of the

Congo, the Republic of the

cooperate/cooperation

coordinate/coordination

Côte d’Ivoire (not Ivory Coast)

criticise

D

data (treat as singular, as in “the data reveals” and “the data was collected”, not “the data reveal” and “the data were collected”.)

data bank/database

dates: always day, month, year (for example, 20 March 2018)

death toll

debt relief (noun)

debt-relief process (adjective)

decision-maker/decision-making

demise

department(s) (in the IFRC): always lower case, so health department, communications department, etc. (see also: IFRC departments and job titles)

dependant (noun)

dependent (adjective)

despise

destabilise

devise

diarrhoea

disenfranchise

disguise

E

East (*but* the earthquake struck the east of the province)

East Africa

eastern Africa

east Asia

Eastern (of or relating to the East)

Eastern bloc (historical)

eastern Europe

e-commerce

economise

e.g., (with full stops and followed by a comma)

El Salvador (capital: San Salvador)

email

emergency obstetric care

emphasise

en bloc (not italic)

enfranchise

enquiry (Note: use enquiry for the act of asking a question, especially of a person; use inquiry when referring to an investigation, especially an official one)

en route (not italic)

enterprise

equalise

etc. (with full stop and followed by a comma in the middle of a sentence)

euro (currency)

eurocentric

excise

exercise

ex officio (not italic)

extranet

F

far-reaching

feedback

female genital mutilation (FGM)

fertilise

finalise

first aid (*but* first-aid courses, and never First Aid)

first-class

first-hand

first-rate

flood waters

flood plain

floodgate(s)

...fold (as in twofold, tenfold)

focused, focusing (*not* focussed, focussing)

food security

follow-up (noun)

follow up (verb)

foothold

forego (to precede)

forever

forgo (to relinquish, give up)

formalise

formulas

formulae (scientific or mathematical)

forums (never fora)

front line (*but* front-line operations)

fulfil/fulfilment

full time (*but* full-time job)

Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (*but* the fundamental principles)

fundraise, fundraising, fundraiser

G

galvanise

generalise

General Assembly (of the IFRC, but the Malaysian Red Crescent's general assembly. Note: to avoid confusion, always specify United Nations General Assembly/UN General Assembly)

goodwill (of a firm, *but* good will)

grass roots (*but* at the grass-roots level)

guideline(s)

H

haemorrhage/haemorrhagic

half-hour (*but* half an hour)

handbook

hand-picked

hard-line

hardest-hit countries (*but* the hardest hit countries are....)

harmonise

health care (*not* healthcare)

high-income countries

high-quality products (*but* the product is of high quality)

high-risk areas (*but* the community is at high risk)

hi-tech material

HIV-positive

home-based care

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China

human development index

Hurricane Matthew (*but* a hurricane hit the region)

I

i.e., (with full stops and followed by a comma)

ill-advised

ill health

immunise

improvise

incise

industrialise

infant mortality rate

information-sharing

inquiry (Note: use inquiry when referring to an investigation, especially an official one; use enquiry for the act of asking a question, especially of a person)

insecticide-treated net

institutionalise

interact/interaction

intergovernmental

internally displaced people

international non-governmental organization (INGO)

internet (lower case i)

interpersonal

interrelate

intertribal

intranet (lower case i)

Iran, the Islamic Republic of

J

jeopardise

K

Kazakhstan

Korea, Democratic People’s Republic of (North Korea)

Korea, Republic of (South Korea)

Kosovo (N.B. refer to Kosovo as a territory, not a country or State)

know-how

Kyrgyzstan

L

labour-intensive

laissez-faire (not italic)

laissez-passer (not italic)

Lao People’s Democratic Republic

landlocked

landmine

landslide

large-scale operation (*but* on a large scale)

Latin America

learned (not learnt)

least developed countries

leukaemia

licence (noun)

license (verb)

life- (as in life-threatening illness)

life-saving/life-saver

lifestyle

localise

long-lasting insecticidal net

long term (*but* long-term trends)

loophole

low-income countries

low-tech

M

Macau Special Administrative Region, China (or Macau, China in non-official texts)

Macedonia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of (never Macedonia)

macroeconomics

Maghreb (as in the Maghreb region)

Marketplace

market research

materialise

maternal and child health

maximise

medium-sized organization (*but* a small organization, a large organization)

megacity

memorise

micro-bank

microcredit

microeconomics

microfinance

micro-project

micro state (no hyphen)

Middle East North Africa (MENA)

middle-income countries

Millennium Development Goal(s)

minimise

Ministry of Health, Ministry of External Affairs (*but* the ministries of health and external affairs)

mobilise

Moldova, the Republic of

mother-and-child clinic

mother-to-child transmission

mudslide

multicultural

multidisciplinary

multilateral

multinational

multi-purpose

multiracial

N

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

National Society/Societies (*but* the society/societies)

nationwide

needs-assessment survey (*but* a needs assessment was carried out…)

non-cooperation/non-cooperative

non-governmental organization (NGO)

no one (no hyphen)

North (*but* the people live in the north of the country)

North Africa

North America

Northern (of or relating to the North)

northern Europe

O

official development assistance (ODA)

offshore

ongoing

online

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

organisation

organise

orphans and vulnerable children

overrate

P

Pacific islands (but a Pacific Islander)

Pacific Ocean (but the Pacific and Atlantic oceans)

paralyse

patronise

peace talk(s)

peacekeeper/peacekeeping

peacetime

people living with HIV

people-smuggler

people-smuggling

per cent (use % in tables to save space)

policy-maker/policy-making

politicise

post-natal

post-traumatic stress disorder

post-war

power-sharing

practice (noun)

practise (verb)

premise

prenatal

primary health care

Prime Minister Lee Nak-Yeon (but the prime minister agreed...)

prioritise

prise (to force open)

privatise

prize (to value highly)

problem-solving

programme (*but* a computer program)

profit-sharing

promise

-prone (as in a disaster-prone area)

pro rata (*but* on a pro-rata basis)

psychosocial

publicise

R

radioactive/radioactivity

raise

realise

real time (*but* real-time evaluation)

recognise

Red Cross and Red Crescent (*never* RCRC, RC/RC or Red Cross Red Crescent, unless referring to *Red Cross Red Crescent* Magazine)

regionalise

-related (as in pregnancy-related diseases)

Represent but re-present (to present again)

-resistant (as in multi drug-resistant tuberculosis)

revise

revitalise

rise

River Thames (*but* the Indus and Amazon rivers)

round table (*but* round-table talks)

Russian Federation

S

Sahel (as in the Sahel region)

scale up (verb)

scaling-up (noun)

schoolchild/schoolchildren (*but* a pre-school child)

search and rescue (*but* a search-and-rescue team)

Second World War (not World War II)

secretariat (of IFRC)

Secretary General Elhadj As Sy (*but* the secretary general said…)

secretaries general (plural)

United Nations Secretary-General

self-interest

Senator Jones (*but* the senator said…)

sensitise

sexually transmitted infection (STI)

short-term losses (*but* in the short term)

sister society/societies (see page 6)

small-scale project (*but* on a small scale)

South Africa (the country, *but* southern Africa the region)

South America

South Asia

South (the, *but* the south of the region was flooded)

South-East Asia

Southern (of or relating to the South)

specialise

stabilise

standardise

starting point

state(s)/states party (*but* New York State, the State of New South Wales)

stationary (not moving)

stationery (paper, envelopes, etc.)

Strategy 2020/Strategy 2030

subcommittee

subcontinent

subnetwork

subregion/subregional

sub-Saharan Africa

subsidise

sub-standard

subtotal

summarise

supervise

surmise

Sustainable Development Goal(s)

Syrian Arab Republic

T

Taiwan, China (refer to as ‘area’ not ‘country’)

Tanzania, United Republic of

task force

team player

team spirit

teamwork

televise

think tank

Timor-Leste (not East Timor)

toolkit

traumatise

tsunami

U

ultra- (as in ultra-expensive airlifts)

uncooperative

underpay

underrate

under way (as in negotiations are under way...)

underuse

up-to-date information (*but* the information is up to date)

urbanise

V

Viet Nam (*not* Vietnam, *but* Vietnamese)

visualise

vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA)

W

wartime

water and sanitation (always write out in full, not WatSan or watsan)

water, sanitation and hygiene promotion (WASH)

web

website

well-being

well-established programme (*but* the programme is well established)

well-functioning National Society/well-functioning National Societies

well-known organization (*but* the organization is well known)

well-established programme (*but* the programme is well established)

West (the, *but* the programme was carried out in the west of the country)

West Africa

western Africa

western Europe

Western (of or relating to the West)

worldwide

X

X-ray

Annex 2

Official names of all recognised National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies listed by country.

Annex 3

Movement Style Guide (to be added in 2018)