



## **International Fellowship of Reconciliation**

Internationaler Versöhnungsbund  
Mouvement International de la Réconciliation  
Movimiento Internacional de la Reconciliación

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# **PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES AND PRACTICES**

## **Introduction**

**IFOR expects member organisations [branches, groups and affiliates] to embrace the IFOR statement of purpose: The International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) is an international, spiritually based movement of people who, from the basis of a belief in the power of love and truth to create justice and restore community commit themselves to active non-violence as a way of life and as a means of transformation, personal, social, economic and political.**

IFOR encourages member organisations to seek opportunities to engage in dialogue and activities with diverse religious and faith communities.

## **1. IFOR Branches**

IFOR branches around the world are the fundamental organizing units of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation. Generally, IFOR branches have an active membership, which is regional or national in character, rather than strictly local. Historically, IFOR branches have, for the most part, been defined by the nation-state in which they are active, but this is not a requirement for branch status in IFOR.

### **1.1 Responsibilities as an IFOR Branch:**

- i. Although a branch may have its own basis statement, this will be compatible with the principles stated in the IFOR Statement of Purpose. Although a branch may not actually be called the Fellowship of Reconciliation, it will see itself as such in the region or country in which it is working.
- ii. In its literature and on its stationary, an IFOR branch will take note of its status as a branch of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation and will, where possible, list the address of the International Secretariat.
- iii. Although it will have its own program of work, an IFOR branch will see itself as being in partnership with the international movement as a whole and will seek,

where possible, to actively participate in or support requests for solidarity or common activity or action which come to it from the other branches or from the International Secretariat or from such IFOR Working Groups or regional structures as may exist.

- iv. An IFOR branch will support financially the work of the international structures of the International Fellowship, principally the work undertaken by the International Secretariat and the IFOR International Committee. This amount is calculated as 10.0% of the regular annual operating costs of the branch. If there are difficulties about paying cash or where there are legal or currency conversion impediments to an actual transfer of funds, the branch will seek to find ways to meet its responsibility for supporting the work of IFOR through provision of services or otherwise as agreed following discussion with IFOR.
- v. An IFOR branch will report annually on its activities to the International Secretariat. The contents of the report should include: accounts/activities/list of Board Members/the addresses of two contact people. Reports can be made in the local language. A summary in English or French for distribution to other BGA's would be appreciated.

## **1.2 Rights of IFOR Branches:**

As the principle units of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, IFOR branches have:

- i. the right to participate in the shaping of policies and programs of the International Fellowship. This is done principally through participation in the IFOR Council and through regular consultation with the branches by the International Secretariat.
- ii. The number of representatives from each branch authorized to participate in an IFOR Council is determined by the Process for a particular Council adopted by the Representative Committee prior to a Council. However, each branch will have the right to at least one representative to an IFOR Council, with full rights of participation.
- iii. Branches have the right to be included in such international activities and actions as may be undertaken by the IFOR Secretariat and International Committee or through the IFOR Working Groups or regional structures.
- iv. IFOR branches also receive automatically all publications which are issued by the International Secretariat.

## **1.3 Process of Engagement of a New IFOR Branch:**

There is no set formula for how a new IFOR branch is formed, but certain procedures and conditions do have to be met before IFOR Branch status is given to a group. In general, contact and engagement between IFOR and a group seeking branch status will have taken

place over a period of time, usually years rather than months. This contact and engagement will have included:

- i. correspondence between members of the group and the IFOR Secretariat or persons who can represent the work and interests of IFOR, with reports to International Committee
- ii. visits to the group by IFOR staff, members of the International Committee, or persons who can represent the work and interests of IFOR (preferably people with knowledge of the geographical region in which the group is working), with reports on such visits to the IFOR International Committee
- iii. a period in which the group has worked actively with the IFOR as an IFOR group
- iv. applications should be submitted at least a year in advance of Council
- v. a formal letter should be sent to IFOR accompanied by all documents required (constitution, statement of purpose, photocopy of legal accreditation/registration, most recent report, most recent financial report, name of the board members/list of the committee members, addresses of two contact people). In certain circumstances some of these documents may not be available or able to be provided. In such circumstances Council has the power to vary the requirements..

**1.4 The decision to grant IFOR Branch status to a group rests with the IFOR Council. This will follow the application by the group to the IFOR International Committee for IFOR branch status and the positive recommendation to the IFOR Council that this group be given IFOR Branch status. Such a recommendation will be based on judgments about:**

- i. the compatibility of the principles and aims of the group with those of IFOR
- ii. the extent to which the group sees itself as witnesses to the general principles and aims of IFOR in the setting in which it is operating
- iii. the extent to which the group is seen to be a viable one on more than just the local basis
- iv. the record of the relationship of the group with the IFOR during its period as an IFOR Group
- v. the ability of the group to undertake the responsibilities of an IFOR branch, as outlined above
- vi. The Council has the power to delegate to the Representative Consultative Committee the decision to admit specified new applicants to IFOR branch status.

**1.5 Nothing in principle precludes the possibility of a group being given IFOR Branch status in a region or country where an IFOR Branch already exists. However, the process of contact and active engagement between IFOR and a group should be undertaken in consultation with the existing IFOR Branch and with a clearly articulated rationale as to why there should be more than one IFOR Branch in a particular setting.**

**1.6 The formal application for becoming an IFOR Branch should include:**

- i. a record of the group's formal decision to apply for IFOR Branch status, mentioning its acceptance of the IFOR Statement of Purpose and responsibilities as an IFOR branch and an explanation of its reasons for requesting branch status
- ii. a description of the group's activities, aims, structure, number of members, and a copy of the group's constitution (if any)

**1.7 The applications for Branch status should be received well in time for the IFOR International Committee to have met and made a judgment about recommending the group to the IFOR Council for Branch status and for such a recommendation along with accompanying documentation about the group to be circulated to IFOR Branches and Affiliates in the documents in advance of the Council.**

**1.8 Process of Exclusion of an IFOR Branch or an IFOR Group:**

The status of IFOR Branch or IFOR Group can be removed from an organisation by decision of the IFOR Council, upon the recommendation of the IFOR International Committee. Reasons for exclusion include:

- i. the decision by the IFOR Branch or IFOR Group to cease to be an IFOR Branch or IFOR Group.
- ii. the adoption of policies, positions, or activities dramatically at odds with the IFOR Statement of Purpose
- iii. the persistent inability without sufficient explanation of the branch or group to meet its responsibilities as an IFOR branch or group.

**1.9 Any recommendation to remove the branch status of an IFOR branch should be taken only after a period of careful consultation between the IFOR Secretariat and the branch concerned has taken place.**

An IFOR branch can be re-designated as an IFOR Group if it can no longer fulfill the definitions and responsibilities of an IFOR branch but wishes to maintain working links with the IFOR.

## **2. IFOR Groups**

- i. In the process of working with active nonviolence groups in different parts of the world, the relationship with certain groups may develop in such a way that they may be seen as groups likely to eventually become IFOR branches. A designation of 'IFOR Group' may be given to such groups, signifying the developing nature of the group and the wish of the IFOR to see the group as the Fellowship of Reconciliation 'in formation' in a particular area.
- ii. In addition, FOR groups of a local nature for whom there is no larger IFOR branch in the area with which to affiliate may also be designated as an IFOR Group.
- iii. Also, IFOR branches may return to the status of IFOR Group if they are no longer able to fulfill the obligations of being an IFOR branch.
- iv. The IFOR International Committee or IFOR Representative Committee can designate a group which is not currently formally associated with IFOR as an IFOR Group, upon the recommendation of IFOR staff, IFOR International Committee members, or others representing the work and interests of IFOR. This will usually follow an initial period of communication, visits, and other contacts, where the group does genuinely seem to be pursuing the general aims and purposes of the IFOR in reference to its own setting.
- v. IFOR group status carries with it the expectation of continued support from the IFOR in the development of the group. IFOR Groups may be invited to send a representative to the IFOR Council.

## **3. IFOR Affiliates**

The International Fellowship of Reconciliation is also open to groups and organizations working for nonviolent change and operating at whatever level whose spirit and program are seen to be compatible with those of the IFOR and with whom there is felt to be mutual advantage in being formally associated.

### **3.1 Responsibilities of IFOR and its Affiliates:**

- i. The IFOR and its affiliates undertake to distribute each other's literature and regularly publicize the work of the other.
- ii. The IFOR and its affiliates undertake to actively support and participate in, where possible, appropriate aspects of the work of the other.
- iii. The minimum contribution for an IFOR affiliate is €100 per year.
- iv. The amount of the annual contribution shall be reviewed and if necessary adjusted at each IFOR Council.

### **3.2 Rights of an IFOR Affiliate:**

- i. receives all publications issued by the International Secretariat
- ii. is informed of and invited to participate in relevant IFOR international programs and activities
- iii. is invited to send one representative to the IFOR Council, with rights of participation as defined by Process adopted for the Council

### **3.3 Process of Affiliation**

Upon the recommendation of the IFOR International Committee, the IFOR Representative Committee or the IFOR Council may admit groups to affiliate status with the IFOR. A positive recommendation by the International Committee will be based upon:

- i. the extent to which the principles and purposes of the group are seen to be compatible with those of the IFOR
- ii. the history of the relationship between the IFOR and the group concerned and an assessment of why the establishment of a formal relationship between the IFOR and the group would be of mutual advantage

Generally speaking, an application for affiliate status follows a period of active contact and joint work between the IFOR and the applying group. If there is an IFOR branch in the region in which the applying group is working, that branch should be consulted in the process of application assessment.

### **3.4 The formal application for becoming an IFOR Affiliate should include:**

- i. a record of the group's formal decision to apply for IFOR Affiliate status, acknowledging its general compatibility with the IFOR Statement of Purpose and acceptance of its responsibilities as an IFOR Affiliate, and an explanation of its reasons for accepting Affiliate status
- ii. a description of the group's activities, aims, structure, number of members, and a copy of the group's constitution (if any)

The application for Affiliate status should be received well in time for the IFOR International Committee to have met and made a judgment about recommending the group to the IFOR Council or IFOR Representative Consultative Committee for Affiliate status and for such a recommendation along with accompanying documentation about the group to be circulated in the documents in advance of the IFOR Council or Representative Committee.

### **3.5 Exclusion of an IFOR Affiliate**

The status of IFOR affiliate can be removed from a group by decision of the IFOR Council, upon the recommendation of the IFOR International Committee. Reasons for exclusion include:

- i. the decision by the IFOR Affiliate to cease to be an IFOR Affiliate
- ii. the adoption of policies, positions or activities dramatically at odds with the IFOR Statement of Purpose
- iii. the persistent inability of the Affiliate to meet its responsibilities as an IFOR Affiliate

Any recommendation to remove Affiliate status of a group should be taken only after a period of careful consultation between the IFOR Secretariat and the group concerned has taken place.

## **4. Individual Membership**

It is the working practice of IFOR to encourage individuals to become actively involved in the work of the Fellowship of Reconciliation by joining the IFOR Branch in the area or the country in which they live. In some cases, however, such participation is not possible, e.g., because there is no branch or because the constitution of a branch makes it difficult for someone of a different religious persuasion to join. In such cases, the IFOR will consider accepting individuals into membership of IFOR.

- i. Individual members are people who commit themselves to IFOR by declaring themselves in accord with the IFOR Statement of Purpose and who have formally applied and been accepted into membership of IFOR by the IFOR International Committee.
- ii. Some financial contribution to the work of IFOR is expected from the individual member, wherever possible.
- iii. Individual IFOR members are asked to support the work of IFOR in their area and to seek actively to work towards the formation of an IFOR group.

## **5. IFOR Regions**

- i. Where desired by the branches, affiliates, and groups of IFOR in a particular world geographic region, they may form themselves into an IFOR Region to undertake joint work of transnational concern. The specific structure and ways of operating (e.g., through regional conferences between IFOR Councils, a regional Secretariat, newsletters, etc.) is left

to the regions to determine, with the help and encouragement of the IFOR International Committee and Secretariat.

- ii. Each region will be asked to appoint two representatives to the Representative Consultative Committee
- iii. Each regional representative shall be chosen at Council by the representatives of branches, groups and affiliates from the appropriate region present at Council.  
Vacancies shall be filled by election at BGA regional meetings  
Should this not be possible then the International Committee is empowered to appoint representatives after having asked for nominations from the branches, groups and affiliates in the appropriate region.
- iv. Where the International Committee feels a voice from a particular part of the world is desired, it may itself appoint a representative or suggest a method for the selection of a representative.

## **6. Working Groups**

The international work of the IFOR may also be undertaken through the activities of international Working Groups established around particular themes or concerns.

- i. Working Groups are seen as a means for expanding and strengthening the transnational work of the IFOR, increasing the involvement of branches and related groups in this work, and improving communication and coordination among IFOR branches and groups.
- ii. Working Groups should develop around particular priority areas as outlined by the International Council.
- iii. The working groups will be appointed by the International Committee or the International Council. The working groups are accountable to the International Committee. Each working group will be provided guidelines and criteria for their work. They will report to the International Committee on a semi-annual basis.
- iv. Where appropriate and where possible the International Committee and the Secretariat assist in the establishment and development of the work of these groups.

## **7. Cooperation with Other Organizations and Institutions**

The IFOR, mainly through the work of its Secretariat, seeks also to undertake its work internationally through its relations with a range of international non-governmental and intergovernmental institutions, organizations, and networks. Of particular note are the following four categories:

### **1. Relations with the United Nations Institutions**



Through its consultative status with ECOSOC and its operational relations status with UNESCO, the IFOR seeks actively to bring its concerns to the institutions of the United Nations and to support the work of those institutions where appropriate, mainly through the activities of its representatives at the United Nations in Geneva, New York, and Vienna and at UNESCO.

## **2. SERPAJ-AL**

There are strong historic bonds between the IFOR and the network of national organizations in Latin America working together as Servicio Paz y Justicia-America Latina. Although not formally a part of IFOR, IFOR sees this network as its 'sister' organization in Latin America, and seeks to work in close alliance with SERPAJ-AL.

## **3. Partner Internationals**

IFOR seeks also to develop working alliances with a range of other international non-governmental organizations whose purposes and aims are compatible with its own. Examples of such organizations are War Resisters International, the World Conference on Religion and Peace, the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, Peace Brigades International, and Pax Christi International.

## **4. Network and Groups**

IFOR also seeks to pursue its work by cooperating actively with other international and regional networks, for example, the World Council of Churches, Church and Peace and Eirene, and national or local organizations and groups. Representatives of cooperating organizations may be invited to attend the IFOR Council and other international programs and activities organized by IFOR.

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