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**Betreff:** COVID-19: GRC International Cooperation Health, Business Continuity and Travel Advisory

Dear Colleagues,

We all know that there are a lot of questions and concerns about the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. We here in Berlin are working closely with our national authorities, the ICRC and the IFRC to ensure the most up-to-date information is always available. In addition we have been in direct contact with many of you in the last weeks. Please find below some essential information and guidance on staff health, insurance, business continuity and travel.

**Staff Health Guidance**

The IFRC has been creating and regularly updating information on the outbreak and preventive measures. The IFRC COVID-19 staff guidance attached is a good example and we are happy to share this further rather than creating our own. There is nothing to add to that guidance rather than to remind you all that these easy measures for personal and hand hygiene are the most effective way of preventing the spread and protecting yourself and your families. All information and materials from the IFRC can be found on the IFRC [GO platform](https://eur04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fgo.ifrc.org%2Femergencies%2F3972%23additional-info&data=02%7C01%7CDelegatesAll%40drk.de%7Cfb267042e76343e293e008d7c061b73e%7C66c0f1339bc34a188aadf1c705b54c64%7C0%7C0%7C637189398244992683&sdata=fb8n1N%2FEYYFLLhd70qTWhM46QqctAgnNI5w4RzJgAow%3D&reserved=0).

We also would like to inform you that we mandated our Senior Health Advisor, Jürgen Ebbing – based in Bangkok – to serve as GRC International Cooperation Staff Health focal point. You may contact him anytime via Email: [hansjuergen.ebbing@germanredcross.de](mailto:hansjuergen.ebbing@germanredcross.de)

**Insurance coverage/MedEvac**

Our health insurer Barmenia confirmed that there aren‘t any restrictions on the applicable insurance cover resulting from risks such as the COVID-19. This also includes necessary testing.

We are also in contact with the GRC Air Ambulance Service (DRK-Flugdienst) to ensure Medical Evacuations. So far, no restrictions have been reported from their side. But with the continuation of quarantine measures imposed by States, challenges might be foreseen.

**Business Continuity**

However, as the Red Cross we have to especially look into not only our own protection, but that of the population we serve. Business continuity measures are therefore of utmost importance for us as a National Society and for the wider movement. Both the ICRC and the IFRC have just informed staff that all international travel, other than operationally essential travel are to be cancelled (ICRC) or very much to be reconsidered (IFRC). We agree with these recommendations for the following reasons:

* WHO does not recommend any travel restrictions, however, we need to look at business continuity and ensuring that GRC staff are able to work.
* As with recent examples on cruise ships and hotels around the world, a single positive case of COVID-19 in a venue may trigger quarantine measures for concerned staff. Finding yourselves in such a situation would cause not only enormous stress to staff members, families and colleagues but limit your and therewith the GRC’s international cooperation.
* The rapid and uncertain evolution of the outbreak and of measures taken by States (see updated information on IATA website: [IATA Travel News](https://eur04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.iatatravelcentre.com%2Finternational-travel-document-news%2F1580226297.htm&data=02%7C01%7CDelegatesAll%40drk.de%7Cfb267042e76343e293e008d7c061b73e%7C66c0f1339bc34a188aadf1c705b54c64%7C0%7C0%7C637189398245002634&sdata=OI1timXOqkPQPkuUngUvokEutKJu02d0FbnMOdo0RwI%3D&reserved=0))

**Travel Instructions**

To ensure GRC’s International Cooperation operational continuity and duty of care we are issuing the following temporary travel instructions (valid until further notice):

All GRC staff in International Cooperation needs to take an **informed decision** on the possibility of postponement/cancellation in **all** duty travel planning, considering the following:

1. Relevance of travel for the delivery of essential services to affected population
2. Business continuity: Ensuring operational continuity of own duty station
3. Risk of travel service disruptions and quarantine measures

All travel decisions are to be discussed/agreed within the respective line management and need to be documented.

**In all cases, and considering this advisory cannot cover all possible scenarios, GRC staff members are requested to exert caution when planning professional and private trips, inform themselves and use common sense.**

Best regards and stay safe

Christof & Christian

