Red Cross Declares HIV a Global Disaster

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HIV should be considered a “global disaster,” says the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in its *World Disasters Report 2008*. An editorial published in the July 5 edition of U.K.-based medical journal *The Lancet* responds to this assessment—as reported by AIDSmap.com—urging an increased humanitarian effort (aidsmap.com, 7/4).

The IFRC report highlights three central messages. First: Prevention efforts are being aimed at the wrong groups. Second: Donor money is being misdirected. And third: people at high risk for HIV—such as men who have sex with men, sex workers and injection drug users—are highly stigmatized across cultures and even criminalized.

“The IFRC is right to raise these points,” says *The Lancet*. “25 years after the start of the epidemic, governments should focus HIV/AIDS programmes on those most in need, donors should ensure their aid is effective and public-policy decisions should be based on evidence rather than moral judgments.”

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