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The FSM SUPPORTED ISRAEL IN THE
APPROVAL OF RED CRYSTAL AS THIRD EMBLEM
FOR THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

At about 2AM on the 8th of December 2005 in Geneva, Switzerland, the Diplomatic Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Conventions relating to the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies took a historic act by adopting a protocol that approved the addition of a third emblem for use by the member states of the International Federation. The third emblem is Red Crystal.

The Federated States of Micronesia is one of the approximately 190 signatories to the Geneva Conventions that govern the humanitarian organization whose origin dates back to the early 1860s. As a party to the Conventions, the FSM dispatched a delegation to the Diplomatic Conference. Its delegation was headed by Mr James A Naich, Deputy Chief of Mission at the FSM Embassy in Washington DC.

The FSM supported the addition of the Red Crescent as the third emblem. The adoption paved the way for the full admission of Israel's Magen David Adom (Red Shield of David) into the Red Cross and Red Crescent Federation and Movement.

When the humanitarian organization first started, the Red Cross was the only "distinctive and indicative" emblem that its workers used to identify themselves and display on their ambulances when performing humanitarian work on battlefields and in providing assistance to the wounded, sick, and victims of natural disasters. As the membership expanded, however, the Islamic countries began protesting the use of the Red Cross, stating that it was too closely affiliated with Christianity or the Christian Holy Cross. It was thus decided to add a second emblem, the Red Crescent.

For over 50 years, Israel has been pressing for the addition of a third emblem, distinct from the Red Cross and the Red Crescent. Its initial proposal was the Star of David, which was met with immediate objection of many members of the International Federation. As a compromise, Israel switched its proposed emblem to Red Crystal. Israel's

petition has consistently been opposed mainly by the member states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The OIC opposition continued during the recent Geneva conference when its members introduced amendments whose cumulative effect would be to marginalize the significance of the third emblem and the admission of the MDA in the Federation and the Movement.

The FSM has a standing policy to support the integrity of Israel's sovereignty and its full participation in the international arena. Besides, the FSM supports the proper application of the principle of universality in international relations. Universality of recognition is also a core principle of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Excluding Israel's MDA would be inconsistent with this principle.

Therefore when voting in the Geneva Diplomatic Conference took place, the FSM was one of the 72 member states to vote against the amendments by the OIC. That is the absolute minimum number of member states, present and voting in either the affirmative or negative, to defeat the OIC-sponsored amendments. In other words, if the FSM or any of the 72 member states did not vote or changed its vote, the OIC amendments would prevail and Israel's MDA would still be on the fringes, not fully admitted.

The second round of vote was on the adoption of the third emblem itself. Of those voting either yes or no, a minimum number of 86 affirmative votes was necessary to pass the protocol. The FSM was one of the 98 countries that voted in the affirmative.

OIC's opposition to the MDA has begun to be gradually tempered as a result of the MDA's positive involvement in the relief efforts to the Asian countries, some of which are Moslem, that were ravaged by a series of tsunami attacks last year. Moreover, less than three months before the Geneva Diplomatic Conference, the MDA and the Palestinian National Red Crescent Society executed an agreement of mutual recognition and support, ending decades of antagonism and suspicion.

The FSM and Israel established diplomatic relations on 23 November 1988. Excluding the US, Israel was the first non-Pacific island country to recognize the FSM's international statehood. Both countries have accredited diplomatic envoys to each other's capital. The FSM Ambassador to Israel is His Excellency Jesse B Marehalau. In June this year, President Joseph Urusemal visited Israel as an official guest of the Government of Israel. His predecessor, President Leo Falcam, made similar visit earlier.