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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
СТАЛНА МИСИЈА РЕПУБЛИКЕ СРБИЈЕ ПРИ УЈЕДИЊЕНИМ НАЦИЈАМА
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The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, with reference to the latter's Note No. LA/COD/2 of 29 February 2008, has the honour to forward, enclosed herewith, the information requested by the said Note provided by the Ministry of Defence and the Red Cross of the Republic of Serbia.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretary-General of the United Nations the assurances of its highest consideration.

New York, 9 June 2008

Secretary-General
United Nations
New York



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THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA: INFORMATION ON THE STATUS AND
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROTOCOLS ADDITIONAL TO THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS OF 1949
AND RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF VICTIMS OF ARMED CONFLICTS

The Serbian military, as part of the defence system of the Republic of Serbia, fully complies with the provisions of international humanitarian law. To implement those provisions, it educates its members, organizing regular courses and expert specialist group training, and cooperates actively with the competent authorities of the Republic of Serbia in drafting and adopting the legislation regulating this matter.

Within the general subject entitled *Military Law and Regulations*, international humanitarian law is included in the curriculum of the Military Academy. Consideration is currently being given to the idea to include international humanitarian law in the concrete and applicable form into the system of tactical and combat training of the students of the Academy of all specialties and directions.

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THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA: REPORT OF THE RED CROSS OF SERBIA
ON ITS ACTIVITIES REGARDING THE PROTOCOLS ADDITIONAL TO THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS
OF 1949 AND RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF VICTIMS OF ARMED CONFLICTS

The Republic of Serbia is a State party to the Protocols Additional to the 1949 Geneva Conventions adopted in June 1977 and is fully bound by their provisions. In fulfilling its obligations in good faith, Serbia considers that those provisions represent an important effort by the international community to reduce the suffering and destruction in armed conflicts and affirm the rules of international humanitarian law. A valuable contribution to the adoption of the Protocols was made also by Serbian experts, then members of the Yugoslav delegation to the 1974-1977 Geneva Diplomatic Conference.

Consequently, the compliance with the provisions of the Protocols is highly rated in Serbia and the competent authorities, in cooperation with stakeholders in civil society, particularly the Red Cross of Serbia, Serbia's national Red Cross society, take consistent measures to improve the implementation and promote the knowledge of the Protocols and other international treaties and the rules of international humanitarian law.

The promotion of knowledge of the Protocols and international humanitarian law is of particular importance. It is done by the Red Cross of Serbia on the basis of its mandate as Serbia's national Red Cross society, Statute of the Red Cross of Serbia and the Law on the Red Cross of Serbia. Programmes designed within these activities include various social groups and are tailored to suit the roles that those groups may play in the implementation of the Protocols and the law. The training programmes for the members of the Serbian military, carried out by its units and institutions in cooperation and assistance of the Red Cross of Serbia and the International Committee of the Red Cross, have proved particularly successful. At the meeting of its Management Board of 22 December 2006, the Red Cross of Serbia adopted a Strategy related to these activities, covering a period of four years.

As had been done in the preceding years, the Annual Cooperation Plan was signed by the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia, International Committee of the Red Cross and the Red Cross of Serbia in April 2008 on promoting the knowledge of international humanitarian law. The Cooperation Plan provides, among others, for the organization of seminars on international humanitarian law, participation of the Red Cross of Serbia in military exercises, promotion of international humanitarian law and Red Cross activities and mandate in the publications of the Serbian military and cooperation in the elaboration of a new manual for the implementation of international humanitarian law in the units of the Serbian military to complement the existing manual which has been rendered obsolete by the adoption of new rules of international humanitarian law. A substantial part of the manual will be devoted to the implementation of the rules contained in the Protocols. The work on it is expected to be completed by the end of 2008.

Under an agreement with the Emergencies Directorate of the Ministry of Defence, the Red Cross of Serbia has been engaged in teaching persons in the Civilian National Service the main precepts of international humanitarian law, while the programmes devised for that purpose accentuate the need and importance of the implementation of the Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols.

Alongside its work with the Serbian military, the Red Cross of Serbia, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the support of national Red Cross societies of other

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countries, has been engaged in promoting the knowledge of the Additional Protocols and international humanitarian law to the general public. Programmes within these activities, tailored to suit various groups, are put in practice through eight Centres in large university cities and cover the entire territory of the country. The Centres have properly trained education personnel, technical assets and necessary literature. The programmes are also designed to teach the public to recognize the emblems of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, as well as the Red Crystal, the additional distinctive emblem of Protocol III. Also, special programmes are devised for Red Cross personnel and volunteers at all levels, as well as for students and teachers, doctors and nurses, those employed in the judiciary and NGO representatives. One of them, called *Research of Humanitarian Law*, is particularly attractive: designed by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Centre for Education Development and supported by the Danish Red Cross, it features Red Cross volunteers tutoring the young, 16 – 20 years old, on an inter-active basis in which the participants discuss and decide the most desirable and correct procedure to be followed in a given situation.

Particularly popular is the competition in international humanitarian law organized annually by the Red Cross of Serbia with the support of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Staged for the seventh year in a row in 2008, it was participated in by student teams from the Faculties of Law in Niš, Novi Sad and Belgrade and the Faculty of Political Science and Military and Police Academies from Belgrade (the Schools that have international humanitarian law on its curricula) and was given wide media attention and coverage.

Also, the Red Cross of Serbia cooperates very closely with the Faculty of Political Science and the Centre for International Humanitarian Law and International Organizations in Belgrade on a regular basis. It signed with the Faculty and the International Committee of the Red Cross a cooperation agreement and a special project agreement on joint edition of a number of publications and on continuing the already traditional Regional Course on international humanitarian law at the Faculty of Political Sciences. The publication of the second, amended edition of *Sources of International Humanitarian Law*, a collection of documents from this field, has been the result of the cooperation of these three institutions in 2007.

In the pursuit of its commitments and in maintaining dynamic international cooperation, the Red Cross of Serbia is a regular participant in many international events in the field of international humanitarian law, including, among others, the Round Table at the Istituto internazionale di diritto umanitario, Sanremo, Italy, and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Conferences in Geneva, Switzerland. In addition, the Red Cross of Serbia has been involved in activities related to reducing the use of cluster munitions within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the representatives of the Red Cross of Serbia participated in the Lebanon and Oslo Conferences on Cluster Munitions, held in February and September 2007 respectively at the initiative of the Norwegian Red Cross. It also cooperated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia in organizing the Conference of States Affected by Cluster Munitions in Belgrade on 3 and 4 October 2007 and the NGO Forum that preceded the Conference.

Cooperation is also maintained with the Advisory Service of the International Committee of the Red Cross in the implementation of the provisions of the Additional Protocols and other rules of international humanitarian law, the effective expert assistance of which has made a significant contribution to identifying and implementing the necessary measures in the Republic of Serbia. In that context, it is of particular importance to point out that a comprehensive study of the implementation of international humanitarian law in Serbia has been elaborated with the assistance of the Regional Delegation of the Service in Budapest. The study defined Serbia's obligations as a State party to international treaties in this field in a clear way, reviewed the quality of the laws and other legal measures that Serbia has taken so far and, more importantly, identified the measures that Serbia still has to take in order to fulfil all the obligations it has assumed by ratifying the Additional Protocols and other treaties from the field of international humanitarian law. It has been made available to the Government and competent Ministries which have been provided a clear roadsign to follow.

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The state union of Serbia and Montenegro established the National Commission to implement international humanitarian law and a Government inter-ministerial advisory body. The Commission included the Society of the Red Cross of Serbia and Montenegro. Following the dissolution of the state union of Serbia and Montenegro, the Commission ceased to exist and Serbia has since taken measures to establish a Commission again within the next couple of months.

The Red Cross of the Republic of Serbia has its own Commission on International Humanitarian Law. It is convened under the plan and programme of the Red Cross to discuss its activities on disseminating the knowledge of international humanitarian law and other issues from that field.

In lieu of a conclusion, it is pointed out that the Republic of Serbia is firmly committed to ensuring a strict implementation of the Additional Protocols and other rules of international law. There is also clear awareness that continuous measures must be taken to make the implementation more efficient and effective.