

EESTI VABARIIGI
ALALINE ESINDUS ÜRO JUURES

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

No 1031

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Estonia to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and with reference to the paragraph 11 of the General Assembly's resolution 61/30 on status of the protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and relating to the protection of victims of armed conflict, Estonia would like to inform the Secretary-General of the following:

✓ **Ratification and implementation of the III Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions**

Estonia ratified the III Protocol in December 11, 2007 and deposited the instrument of ratification in February 28, 2008, thus it enters into force for Estonia August 28, 2008. In due course, the draft amendments to the Penal Code and the Red Cross Law were introduced in order to ensure the protection of the Red Crystal emblem as well. The amendments should be adopted by the *Riigikogu* (Parliament of Estonia) in 2008.

✓ **Public dissemination of international humanitarian law**

The Estonian Youth Red Cross and the Ministry of Education organized a seminar in 2008 to introduce the educational program Exploring Humanitarian Law (EHL) in elementary and high-schools. The program should be implemented in schools since autumn 2008 and it will be used to give the pupils basic knowledge of the humanitarian law.

The students' organization ELSA in cooperation with the non-profit organization Martens Society organizes annual seminars on different topics of international humanitarian law where several academics and practitioners hold lectures. Both the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs actively support the annual seminars.

In 2007 the Ministry of Defence supported financially the initiative of the Martens Society to translate the book "Constraints on the Waging of War" by F. Kalshoven and L. Zegveld. Representatives from the Ministry of Defence and from the General Staff of the Defence Forces acted as consultants for the translation.

In November 2007 the International University Audentes established a Human Rights Centre. It is an independent research centre which aim is to disseminate and protect human rights through research, publications and co-operation between relevant institutions. So far there has been fruitful cooperation between the Centre and the Ministry of Defence and the General Staff of the Defence Forces.

✓ **Dissemination and training of international humanitarian law in armed forces**
Estonia has created a Committee for the Implementation of the Hague Conventions for the Protection of Cultural Property in 2005 with an aim to unify the Estonian legislation on protection of cultural property. Its competence was enhanced with the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Culture in January 2008, in order to ensure better protection of cultural property in peace-keeping operations by the National Defence forces.

The Committee organized an International Conference on the protection of cultural property in February 2008.

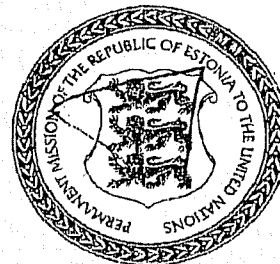
A military academy for high officials, the Baltic Defence College, situated in town Tartu, holds courses on international humanitarian law for the military officials from the Baltic States.

✓ **Support for the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia**

Estonia signed an Agreement with the United Nations on the Enforcement of Sentences of the ICTY on February 11, 2008. The Agreement should enter into force in autumn 2008.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Estonia 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, 4 June 2008



His Excellency
Secretary-General
of the United Nations
New York