



PERMANENT MISSION OF FINLAND
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK

YKE7M0017-75

The Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, with reference to the note LA/COD/2 of 5 March 2014, has the honour to transmit the following information on the status of the Additional Protocols relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts, as well as on measures taken to strengthen the existing body of international humanitarian law, *inter alia*, with respect to its dissemination and full implementation at the national level:

Finland has ratified the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions. Finland actively supported the adoption of the III Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions in December 2005. In 2009, Finland ratified the Third Protocol, and concurrently passed an act on the implementation of the Protocol stipulating that the provisions of the Protocol, insofar as they are of a legislative nature, shall be in force as applicable law in Finland. At the same time, substantial provisions of other relevant Acts were amended to fully take into account the obligations imposed by the Protocol. Finland has also made the declaration provided for in Article 90 of Protocol I at the time of ratifying the Protocol and has thus recognised the competence of the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission. Finland is also financially supporting the work of the Commission.

Finland has ratified the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and the two Protocols thereto as well as the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. As regards this reporting period, the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty has entered into force for Finland on 1 July 2012. Finland has deposited its instrument of ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty on 2 April 2014.

At the 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent in 2011, Finland committed to altogether thirteen specific pledges. In its national pledge, Finland committed to renew the national publication on the Geneva Conventions and the Principal International Humanitarian Law Instruments as well as customary international humanitarian law. With this pledge, Finland underlined the need to ensure the effective dissemination of the Geneva Conventions as well as to increase efforts to spread knowledge of and to facilitate easily available information on International Humanitarian Law. These renewed publications will come out in 2014 or 2015.

Finland is also supporting the initiative and process launched by Switzerland, in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross, recognising the importance of exploring ways of enhancing and ensuring the effectiveness of mechanisms of compliance with international humanitarian law, with a view to strengthening legal protection for all victims of armed conflict (Resolution 1 adopted at the 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent).

To
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To complement its own dissemination activities, the Government of Finland financially supports the IHL dissemination activities of the Finnish Red Cross (FRC). The FRC engages in IHL dissemination in relation to a number of target groups, which include political decision makers, the armed forces, state civil servants, and the general public. The FRC carries out its dissemination through training, seminars, publications, a Finnish language IHL website, as well as general advocacy work. As to national committees, the Finnish National Committee on International Humanitarian Law continues to meet regularly to reflect on issues pertaining to the implementation of IHL in Finland. The Committee is chaired by the Director General for Legal Affairs of the Finnish Foreign Ministry, and brings together representatives from different branches of government, the Finnish Red Cross, NGOs and the academia.

The Finnish Defence Forces provide education and training in international humanitarian law to conscripts, officers and personnel participating in crisis management operations. Additionally, officers and other personnel take part in courses organized by the Finnish Red Cross in Finland, and to courses organized by the International Institute of Humanitarian Law, and others, abroad. Issues related to international humanitarian law are also included in military exercises. Consequently, all levels of personnel of the Finnish Defence Forces are trained in IHL, and officers receive in-depth training as they progress in the careers. The Defence Command is currently exploring ways of further enhancing IHL education and training. The Defence Command is currently drafting new IHL training materials for military personnel, conscripts and crisis management personnel.

The Defence Forces employ legal advisers in the Defence Command, in the headquarters of each branch of the military, in the National Defence University and in the unit responsible for training crisis management troops as well as in crisis management missions. Additionally, the Defence Forces trains lawyers in reserve to act as legal advisers in case of armed conflict.

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

New York, 2 June 2014

