



Status of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and relating to the Protection of Victims of Armed Conflicts

Report for the period 2008-2010

Reference: K 910.2-0-8 - SIF

Bern, 17 May 2010

Swiss activities in the context of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions

1. Switzerland is a party to the three Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions.
2. The Federal Council established at the end of 2009 a national committee for the implementation of international humanitarian law called "Interdepartmental Committee on International Humanitarian Law".
3. The International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission (IHFFC) was granted observer status at the United Nations General Assembly. Switzerland, in its function as Secretariat of the IHFFC, introduced the corresponding resolution which was adopted by the General Assembly at the end of 2009.
4. Switzerland joined forces with the ICRC to organize a conference of experts in Geneva entitled "60 Years of the Geneva Conventions and the Decades Ahead" in 2009. This conference was a unique opportunity to discuss the future of international humanitarian law. Switzerland also organized in 2009 a Ministerial Working Session on the same topic at the United Nations in New York.
5. Switzerland actively participated in the work of a group of international experts who elaborated a Manual on international law applicable to air and missile warfare. The Manual was launched in March 2010.
6. Since 2009, Switzerland has run a project to develop practical resources for humanitarian actors, State actors, national authorities and international organizations on humanitarian access in situations of armed conflict. The project will result in the development of two important resources: a handbook and field manual on humanitarian access.
7. With the purpose of better protecting civilians in armed conflicts, since 2009, Switzerland is carrying out a project aiming at the elaboration of a document on the ownership of international norms by non state armed groups. The project will result in the development of practical resources for international and non governmental organisations, as well as State actors, who are willing to improve the compliance with international law by non state armed groups.
8. In 2009 Switzerland organised the second competition on international humanitarian law for officers of intermediate rank (battalion commanders) of the countries of the Council of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership/Partnership for Peace.

9. Switzerland signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions in December 2008. The ratification process is on-going.

10. In September 2008, 17 States finalised the so-called "Montreux Document on Pertinent International Legal Obligations and Good Practices for States related to Operations of Private Military and Security Companies during Armed Conflict" which is the result of an initiative launched jointly by Switzerland and the ICRC in early 2006. Today, 34 States support the Montreux Document. Switzerland also encourages industry to adopt a global code of conduct.

11. Switzerland is taking the necessary measures to integrate the Rome Statute in its national legislation. Since 2008, Parliament has discussed the amendments to the criminal code and the military penal code. This would involve including crimes against humanity in Swiss law and defining war crimes more precisely.