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BANGLADESH

Statement under Agenda Item 83:

Status of the protocols additional to the Geneva conventions on 1949 and relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts.

Delivered by: Mr. Faiyaz Murshid Kazi, Minister (Political)

Date and venue: Thursday, 18 October 2018, Trusteeship Council Chamber

Mr. Chair,

As a State Party to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the two Additional Protocols of 1977, Bangladesh continues to remain concerned over recurrent reports of serious violation of international humanitarian law by both States and non-state actors in different conflict situations around the world. We join others in condemning such violations and the resulting humanitarian crises, and stress the need for holding the perpetrators accountable for alleged violations in order to prevent their recurrence. We also hope that the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the Additional Protocols of 1977 last year would have generated further impetus toward their universalization.

Mr. Chair,

In the aftermath of atrocity crime suffered by the Rohingya civilians in Myanmar Rakhine State and their eventual forced displacement to Bangladesh last year, we have witnessed general outcry in the international community about the egregious violations of the IHL

and International Human Rights Law under the pretext of counter terrorism offences by the Myanmar armed forces aided by local vigilante groups. The International Committee on Red Cross (ICRC) stepped up its efforts to advocate for protection for the remaining Rohingya in Rakhine State and for restoring rights and freedoms for the forcibly displaced population so that they can return to their homes in safety and dignity. We particularly appreciate the information on ICRC conducting confidential dialogue on bilateral basis on the protection of civilians with Myanmar authorities including the Tatmadaw and the Myanmar border police pursuant to its mandate to speak to all sides in a conflict to identify problems and to identify humanitarian spaces in which the committee and its partners can work. We cannot agree more with the ICRC President when he said at a high-level UN event last month and I quote 'With its religious, security, economic and political divides, the Rakhine crisis has become one of the most visible internationalized and also politicized situations. The international community needs to move out of political deadlock and find answers to important questions of accountability, but also to find long-term political solutions.'

We strongly condemn sexual and gender-based violence in all circumstances and recall the obligation to protect and assist survivors of such violence in armed conflict. A gender-sensitive approach is needed to ensure the equal and non-discriminatory application of humanitarian law and provide effective humanitarian assistance, including safe and accessible health care. We are pleased to see that 2018 Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Mr. Denis Mukwege and Ms. Nadia Murad for their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict. Recently, Bangladesh signed a framework agreement with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict to address conflict-related sexual violence committed against members of the Rohingya population.

Mr. Chair,

In our national context, in 2014 we established a National IHL Committee with the support of the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC). The National Committee remains engaged with the possibility of concluding a further comprehensive national implementing legislation for the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. It also advocates further dissemination of IHL among people in general, including through its suitable incorporation into national education curricula. As a lead contributor of troops and police to UN Peacekeeping Operations Bangladesh gives importance to train our peacekeepers on fulfilling their mandates relating to protection of civilians.

To conclude, we reiterate our thanks to ICRC for its sustained investment in training representatives from both our public and private sectors on IHL related issues.

I thank you.