



PERMANENT MISSION OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT BY THE CUBAN DELEGATION UNDER ITEM 83 "STATUS OF THE PROTOCOLS ADDITIONAL TO THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS OF 1949, AND RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF VICTIMS OF ARMED CONFLICTS."

New York, 4 November 2020

Mr. Chairman,

The delegation of Cuba welcomes the Report of the Secretary-General A/75/263, drawn up from contributions submitted by Member States and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on the Status of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts; and the measures adopted to strengthen, disseminate and implement the existing international humanitarian law regime.

Cuba believes that there is no justification and it is unacceptable to violate the norms of international humanitarian law on the grounds of the fight against

international terrorism, transnational crime and other scourges that are besetting humanity. We oppose attempts by certain countries to reinterpret those norms in order to evade their strict observance.

Increasingly often, civilians become victims and direct targets of all kinds of abuses by the armed forces involved in conflicts, in violation of the principle of distinction.

Similarly, civilian facilities, including hospitals and schools, have been indiscriminately attacked. The situation is aggravated by the increasing use of highly sophisticated weaponry, in particular unmanned aircraft, which do not guarantee compliance with obligations under international humanitarian law.

Mr. Chairman,

Cuba honors its status as a State party to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their two Additional

Protocols of 1977. In order to ensure their proper implementation, the Military Criminal Law is currently in force to regulate actions or omissions which may constitute offenses under international humanitarian law. The Cuban national legislation also contains the necessary guarantees for the protection of civilians.

Since 1994, the Center for the Study of International Humanitarian Law (CEDIH) has been operating in Cuba. It was created upon the signing of a Collaboration Agreement between the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Cuban National Society of the Red Cross, with the aim of disseminating IHL and promoting, through education and scientific research, the ideals and fundamental principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The functions of the Center include the training at the national level of heads and officers of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) and the Ministry

of the Interior (MININT), as well as health leaders and professionals, jurists, professors and the media. Accordingly, basic courses on IHL have been given, in addition to diploma courses, as well as master's degrees and virtual courses on international humanitarian law.

Moreover, International Workshops on IHL are held in Havana, sponsored by the Cuban Society of International Law of the Union of Jurists of Cuba, which constitute spaces for exchange on the current challenges facing this branch of Law.

Mr. Chairman,

Cuba strongly supports the broad and transparent debate on this issue without double standards in the framework of the Sixth Committee and believes that today, more than ever, it is imperative to consolidate the legal regime applicable to armed conflicts through its universal acceptance.

The international community must hold accountable any State that violates IHL, as well as those States that promote internal conflicts within other sovereign States in order to impose external agendas.

Cuba reiterates its willingness to work for the global implementation of the norms of IHL and will continue to collaborate with the International Committee of the Red Cross and its various associations in the noble endeavor to disseminate education and respect for international humanitarian law.

Thank you