

**Statement by Mr. Mohamad Ghorbanpour
The Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Before
The Sixth Committee of the
75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
on**

“Status of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts”

(Agenda item 83)

New York, 4 November 2020

Mr. Chairman,

The four 1949 Geneva Conventions, which are universally ratified, represent a unique commitment to a common humanity and constitute the core of international humanitarian law. Over the course of decades, the 1949 Geneva Conventions and its 1977 additional protocols have been effective in saving millions of lives in hundreds of conflicts around the world through the protection of a wide variety of people.

In this regard, the Islamic Republic of Iran fully recognizes the indispensable role of international humanitarian law, especially the provisions of the four Geneva Conventions, in minimizing the negative impact of armed conflicts. As such, cognizant of the horrible consequences of IHL violations, the Islamic Republic of Iran has made consistent efforts in promoting, publicizing and disseminating the knowledge of IHL norms, including among its armed forces.

Iran joined the 1949 Geneva Conventions in 1949 and is the signatory of the additional protocols of 1977. The establishment of Iran’s National Committee of Humanitarian Law in 1999 within the Iranian Red Crescent Society has been a significant step towards incorporating the rules of IHL into Iranian domestic law. The National Committee has played a pivotal role in raising public awareness, with respect to humanitarian rules as the primary key element for the effective implementation of that body of international law. We believe that in order to

protect victims of armed conflict, more respect for IHL is needed, and respect for IHL requires implementation at the national level.

With respect to national legislative measures, the Iranian Parliament ratified an Act in 1939 entitled “Criminal Procedure and Penal Act for Army” before adoption of the Geneva Conventions. The Act was amended in 2003 and entitled “Act on Military Forces Crimes”. According to the latter Act, a directive on the disciplinary regulations of the armed forces was adopted to ensure implementation of the Geneva Convention’s provisions regarding the treatment of prisoners of war, the wounded and civilians by Iranian military forces.

Furthermore, in order to ensure the effective implementation of the IHL’s rules by the armed forces, an ad hoc working group was established in the Iranian Judiciary for the preparation of a draft law addressing national criminalization of the most serious international crimes, including war crimes. The Draft Law is under consideration and will be submitted to the Iranian Parliament for ratification.

Mr. Chairman,

The Islamic Republic of Iran hosted the 8th South Asian Conference on International Humanitarian Law entitled “New Technologies and IHL” on 17 to 19 November 2018. The Conference, which was co-organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the ICRC, provided States and relevant stakeholders in the region with a platform to discuss various aspects of IHL and issues related thereto, including methods to enhance interaction between States, other partner organizations and the ICRC as well as to strengthen institutional dialogue and collaboration on IHL and related issues.

Mr. Chairman,

At the 9th South Asian Regional Conference on International Humanitarian Law in Sri Lanka, the Islamic Republic of Iran shared its experiences on the implementation of national legislation as well as the activities of Iran’s “National Committee of Humanitarian Law” in the dissemination of IHL at the national level.

Furthermore, the National Committee of IHL organized a “National Seminar on current issues and challenges for IHL” on 27 February 2019. In this seminar, the various topics and aspects of IHL were discussed by the academic society in Iran that included topics ranging from methodological approaches to IHL, ensuring of implementation of IHL, Humanitarian organizations, new technologies, terrorism and non-state actors as well as human rights.

Moreover, the Islamic Republic of Iran, along with the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, commemorated the 70th Anniversary of the 1949 Geneva Conventions on 16 December 2019. Academia, religious scholars and military forces aiming to raise public awareness and promote the knowledge of IHL convened, and the necessity of incorporating more IHL rules into national legislation was reviewed.

On a global context, at the 33rd Red Cross and Red Crescent International Conference held in Geneva from 9 to 12 December 2019, the Islamic Republic of Iran played a go-ahead role for adoption of the Resolutions, in particular Resolution 1 entitled “bringing IHL home: a roadmap for better national implementation of international humanitarian law”.

Desperately, while universally ratified, the Geneva Conventions are not universally respected. Contemporary conflicts are challenging not just the validity but the applicability of IHL. Whilst the nature of warfare has changed, the rules of IHL remain as relevant as ever; after all, the successful implementation of the IHL depends on how much the state parties take concrete steps forward to ensure that the law is applied and respected.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.