

Republic of Armenia
Information on implementation of the GA resolution 73/204 of 20 December 2018 entitled
“Status of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and relating to the
protection of victims of armed conflicts”

- The Republic of Armenia remains faithful to the principles of international humanitarian law and consistently implements these principles in practice. Armenia has ratified all Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions and, in accordance with article 90 of Additional Protocol I, it has recognized the competence of the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission. Armenia promotes and encourages **universalization** of the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts.

Armenia is a strong advocate of principles of international humanitarian law and its non-discriminatory character and of those reflected in the preamble to the 1977 Additional Protocol I, which, inter alia, reaffirm that the provisions of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and of Additional Protocol I must be fully applied in all circumstances to all persons who are protected by those instruments, without any adverse distinction based on the nature or origin of the armed conflict or on the causes espoused by or attributed to the Parties to the conflict. Armenia reiterates its commitment under the para 4 of the Article I of the 1977 Additional Protocol I “The situations referred to in the preceding paragraph include armed conflicts in which peoples are fighting against colonial domination and alien occupation and against racist régimes in the exercise of their right of self-determination, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Armenia values the presence of the ICRC both in Armenia and in the Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) and attaches importance to the implementation of the Trilateral agreement of 1994 on ceasefire, and of 1995 on the consolidation of ceasefire regime signed by Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia without time limitation. Armenia draws attention to the fact that its borderline civilian settlements are a constant object of attack from the Azerbaijani side which is a gross violation of international human rights law and serious violation of IHL, in particular Articles 51,52, 54, 76 and 77 of the Additional Protocol I.

In response to the COVID-19 crisis on 23 March 2020, the UN SG called for a global ceasefire which was fully supported by Armenia and Artsakh.

Armenia shares the global responsibility to protect civilians, particularly women, children and elderly and calls for action to ensure unrestricted humanitarian access for people residing in conflict areas.

Armenia remains concerned for ongoing and constant attacks by Azerbaijani troops on civilian settlements of borderline villages. As a result, the shootings caused significant damages to civilian’s houses and other properties, schools and administrative buildings. The combination of acts carried out by the Azerbaijani armed forces and the caused damages reveal the intention to target and harm civilians, especially women and children. The chosen time, manner and target of the shelling are grave violations of human rights and go against the obligations imposed by the standards, principles and protection mechanisms under the International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law.

On 30 March 2020, the Azerbaijani side attempted a subversive incursion in the direction of the Armenian positions in Tavush region, at the same time targeting the villages of Baghanis and Voskevan. As a result of the Azerbaijani actions, 2 servicemen and 1 child, a resident of Voskevan village, were injured.

On 13 May 2020, fire from large-caliber weapons was opened from Azerbaijani military bases in the direction of Berkaber village of Tavush region, as a result of which residential houses were damaged¹.

The ongoing violations of Humanitarian Law have been assessed and documented in the reports of Human Rights Defender of Armenia. In 2017, Human Rights Defender conducted fact-finding missions in villages Chinari², Vazashen and Barekamavan³, Voskepar, Baghanis, Voskevan and Koti⁴ of Tavush region, revealing gross violations of human rights as a result of Azerbaijani shootings towards these villages.

Another ad hoc report of 2018 on the fact-finding missions in Koti, Baghanis, Vazashen, Chinari, Voskevan and Ayegehovit villages of Tavush region of Armenia revealed that shootings from the Azerbaijani troops caused damages to civilian's houses and other properties, schools, kindergartens and administrative buildings leading to gross human rights violations. According to the documented information shootings and the damages resulting therefrom reveal an apparent intention to target and harm civilians, including children⁵.

The most egregious violations of IHL norms by Azerbaijan were recorded during the April 2016 aggression against Artsakh (see documents distributed)⁶. From the very beginning of the Azerbaijani offensive civilian infrastructures and civilian population, including women, children and the elderly became intentional and indiscriminate targets.

- Armenia attaches great importance to the **ICRC** activities as a neutral and independent organization and highlights with satisfaction the successful implementation of ICRC's projects to assist inhabitants along the border and encourages continuation of such projects. Armenian authorities continue to take efforts to include within the military doctrine of the country the principles of the international humanitarian law and organization of trainings for military personnel. Within the framework of its activities, the ICRC supports the efforts of the Armenian authorities to **integrate the IHL norms** into the national legal field and their application in the Armed Forces. The main partner of the ICRC in this sphere is the Defense Ministry. The **teaching of IHL** has also been included in the curricula of Yerevan State University and other universities of Armenia.
- Armenia actively participated in the thirty-third International Conference of the Red Cross and made a number of pledges, including fostering climate-smart disaster laws and policies ensuring that most vulnerable are reached; fostering first aid development, promotion and integration in Armenia; humanitarian education for resilience and promoting public health and social care.

¹ <https://www.ombuds.am/images/files/c9c98327bd3a1f7a7a05d753d2aa0012.pdf>

² <https://www.ombuds.am/images/files/d070281bddf6eee5e8d61c5706b35f31.pdf>

³ <https://www.ombuds.am/images/files/4b88eb405541ba4a783ce47bec13de5c.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.ombuds.am/images/files/f08d8331e1cfb18b22e88e6dd9a6883d.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.ombuds.am/images/files/16da8e65d3b3418835712176caaeda63.pdf>

- The **National Strategy for Protection of Human Rights and its Action Plan** for 2020-2022 adopted by the Government on 26 December 2019. Among the main goals of The National Action Plan of the National Strategy for the Protection of Human Rights are:
 - To carry out trainings on the right to life in accordance with the international standards, including for Armed Forces Commanders, Military Police, Investigators, Prosecutors, Judges, Lawyers and Penitentiary Service Employees;
 - To raise awareness about the right to life among conscripts, servicemen;
 - To improve personal data protection mechanisms;
 - To encourage women's involvement in the Armed Forces.

- In March 2017, Armenia joined the **Safe Schools Declaration**, reaffirming its commitment to strengthening the protection of children's education and other rights during hostilities. In May 2019, Armenia participated in the third conference of "Safe Schools". At present, Armenia is taking efforts to raise awareness among the Armenian authorities about the provisions of the Declaration - "Guidelines for Schools and Universities for Protection from Military Exploitation during the Military Conflict".

- Armenia acknowledges the necessity of the protection of **cultural heritage** from intentional destruction as an important part of the realization of IHL norms. Armenia is party to the following conventions on cultural property protection:
 - "The 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two (1954 and 1999) Protocols,
 - "The Paris Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property",
 - "Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage",
 - "Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage",
 - "Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions".

- Armenia is one of the strongest advocates of the prevention of genocide and has traditionally been presenting resolutions relating to this issue. The most recent resolution "Prevention of genocide" was unanimously adopted by the UN Human Rights Council in March 2018. The resolutions draw the attention of the international community to the issue of early warning in situations that can lead to genocide and cover such areas as genocide education, regional and sub-regional cooperation for genocide prevention, the role of justice, accountability of perpetrators, etc. Armenia initiated the resolution "International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of Prevention of This Crime", adopted by consensus by the UN GA on 11 September 2015. During the same year, in order to encourage international discourse on the issue of prevention, Armenia initiated and hosted the 1st Global Forum against the Crime of Genocide, bringing together prominent scholars and practitioners of genocide prevention, hereby taking the lead in building a global community against the crime of genocide. The 3rd Global Forum "Against the Crime of Genocide" took place on 9-11 December 2018. It was organized by the Foreign Ministry of Armenia with the support of the UN office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, in cooperation with the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS). Armenia stated its intention to host the 4th Global Forum on December 9-10 of this year under the title "Women and Girls: Challenging Victim Paradigm".

- On 13 May 2020, the Agreement between UNESCO and Yerevan State University concerning "The Establishment of a **UNESCO Chair** on Education and Prevention of Genocide and other Atrocity Crimes" was signed. The purpose of the Chair is to promote an integrated system of research, training, information and documentation on education and prevention of genocide and other atrocity crimes. It will facilitate collaboration between high-level, internationally-recognized researchers and teaching staff of the University and other institutions in Armenia, as well as elsewhere in Europe and North America, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and in other regions of the world. The specific objectives of this Chair are: promote both formal and non-formal education on the prevention of genocide and other atrocity crimes; raise public awareness of genocide prevention and massive violations of human rights through events, information campaigns, sharing of good practices and knowledge etc.

The UNESCO Chair in Genocide Education and Prevention will be key in promoting Global Citizenship Education and providing for Genocide Education not only as an academic discipline, but also as education aimed at promoting tolerance among different cultures, religions, nations and peoples.

- In February 2019, Government of Armenia approved the first National Action Plan on implementation of the UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Armenia became the 80th UN member state to have adopted NAP. The elaboration of the NAP was a year-long exercise engaging Government agencies, civil society and international organizations.

The Armenian National Action Plan takes into account the situation on the ground with a view to accelerating political participation and economic empowerment of women in peace-building and conflict prevention and conflict resolution context. Among other things, the NAP focuses on promoting the programmes aimed at ensuring the involvement of women in economic, social, educational and environmental spheres. Particular focus has been given to vulnerable population groups, including women from border communities, women affected by conflict, women displaced or under the risk of displacement.

The NAP is built on four foundational pillars: prevention, protection, participation, relief and recovery. NAP includes a three-year period from 2019 to 2021, following which it will be revised in accordance with its performance.

In the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution, Armenia attaches importance to ensuring the active participation of women in all stages of conflict cycle and protection of women affected by the conflict.

- The success of the non-violent Velvet Revolution in Armenia in April 2018 was greatly facilitated by the wide involvement of women and active political participation. Armenia's experience reaffirms the central role of women's involvement in the socio-political life of the state and society, and therefore the priority of ensuring and developing equal rights and opportunities for women and men.

The "**Women for Peace**" campaign initiated by the spouse of the Prime Minister of Armenia provides an inclusive platform for women and mothers to promote peace and reconciliation in our region and beyond. This is a good example of women's participation in peacebuilding efforts.

Armenia has supported the UN Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping Initiative and the efforts taken towards equal and meaningful participation of women in all stages of peace processes. Ensuring solid and meaningful involvement of women in conflict prevention, post conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation processes is key to amplify the chances of credible and sustainable peace. The involvement of **women in peacekeeping** missions is among the priorities of reforms implemented by the Armenian Armed Forces.

- Armenia strongly supports the **Global Compacts for Refugees and Migrants** and believes that the Comprehensive refugee response framework (CRRF) can become an important guidance for further implementation of collective commitments towards refugees. It should be emphasized that a number of goals included in these documents are already included in the 2017-2021 RA Migration Policy Strategy.
- Non-governmental organizations, women’s networks and grassroots initiatives are instrumental for women’s engagement in peace and security related activities through supporting their involvement in reconstruction and rehabilitation activities. Since 2015, the **HALO Trust** (the world’s largest humanitarian mine clearance organization) has been training and employing local women in humanitarian demining missions in the affected areas of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Armenia is concerned with the existence of a large amount of landmines along its border with Azerbaijan. Furthermore, there are heavily mined areas along the line of contact between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. Moreover, according to reliable international sources, Azerbaijan is a country which still stores significant quantity of cluster munitions. The demining program allows the Armenian population to grow into previously heavily mined areas that would not have been possible otherwise. Most international organizations decline to operate in Nagorno-Karabakh because doing so usually results in being blacklisted by Azerbaijan. This further underscores the need for continued functioning of the HALO Trust. Therefore termination of US funding will force the HALO Trust to considerably reduce its activities in Nagorno-Karabakh, which in turn will leave hundreds of people there without jobs, and moreover, will indefinitely delay the prospect for a Nagorno-Karabakh without landmines.

- Armenia attaches great importance to universal application and effective implementation of all treaties and regimes, dealing with non-proliferation of the **weapons of mass destruction** (WMD), regarding them as instrumental mechanisms to prevent the proliferation of WMD.

There is a wide range of legal instruments to prevent the proliferation of WMD both on international and national levels.

Thus, the pillars of this legislative framework are as follows:

- Armenian Parliament has adopted a resolution on accession to the “Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons” (NPT) on 24 September 1991, just three days after adopting the Declaration of Independence on 21 September 1991.
- “Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction” (CWC) was ratified by the Republic of Armenia on 29 April 1997.
- “Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction” entered into force on 7 June 1994, after Armenia deposited the instruments of accession with the Russian Federation and the USA.
- On 1 October 1996, the Republic of Armenia signed and on 12 July 2006 ratified “The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty” (CTBT).
- In 1993, Armenia joined the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). As a country using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, Armenia recognizes the central role that the International Atomic Energy Agency should play in nuclear non-proliferation, and we are working very closely with the above-mentioned organization.

- The Republic of Armenia ratified the “Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material” on 23 September 1993. Armenia also joined the 2005 Amendment to the Convention⁷. “Convention on Nuclear Safety” entered into force for Armenia on 20 December 1998.
- On 12 October 2004, the Republic of Armenia signed the “Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation”.
- The Republic of Armenia signed the “International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism” on 15 September 2005 (entered into force on 22 September 2010).

The CFE/ Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe/ Treaty is a major arms control multilateral arrangement with purpose of minimizing concerns and challenges and, at the same time, strengthening confidence, openness and security between the participating states. Armenia perceives the CFE as a very important component of European stability and security. The Republic of Azerbaijan has openly and continuously demonstrated its negligent attitude toward the implementation of the CFE Treaty. Armenia has constantly stated that the CFE Treaty is a legally binding document with concrete tasks, specific provisions and principles aimed at ensuring military balance, predictability and transparency in the common security framework. **Armenia is concerned by systematic violations of conventional arms control regime by Azerbaijan, which further endangers the volatile security environment of the region.** Existing political issues cannot serve as a justification for non-compliance with the Treaty provisions.

⁷ Neighboring Azerbaijan declared that it does not consider to be bound by dispute settlement procedures provided for in Article 17 paragraph 2 and does not accept the competence of the International Court of Justice in settlement of the disputes.