



**Informal interactive dialogue on “Preserving human dignity in armed conflict:  
Promoting compliance with international humanitarian law”**

**Tuesday, 28 January 2025**

**10 a.m. – 1 p.m.**

**Trusteeship Council Chamber, United Nations Headquarters, New York**

**CONCEPT NOTE**

Armed conflicts continue to cause devastating humanitarian consequences, disproportionately affecting civilians. The world faces a significant increase in armed conflicts, with over 120 conflicts involving more than 60 states and 120 non-state armed groups. The number of non-international armed conflicts has tripled since the early 2000s. More than 300 million people are dependent on humanitarian assistance, the great majority in armed conflict situations.

Violations of international humanitarian law, including targeting of civilians and unlawful destruction of essential infrastructure and denial of humanitarian access, exacerbates suffering by causing not only death and injury of civilians - including women and children - but also displacement, food insecurity, and lack of medical care. Such violations persist in today’s armed conflicts and are direct drivers of widespread humanitarian needs, and their human, social and economic cost is unsustainable. Addressing the root causes of humanitarian needs in conflict zones requires strengthening compliance with international humanitarian law.

Preserving human dignity amidst conflict is central to international humanitarian law, which balances military necessity with humanitarian considerations. Respect for and compliance with international humanitarian law also fosters conditions for peace. Protecting civilians and essential infrastructure helps preserve the social fabric and institutions necessary for post-conflict recovery and sustainable peace. It limits the human toll of armed conflicts, reducing grievances, maintaining the dignity of affected populations, and promoting accountability and trust among warring parties.

The Geneva Conventions, at the core of international humanitarian law, protect victims of armed conflict. Universally ratified, they embody humanity’s shared conscience, values that transcend borders and creeds. Since their adoption in 1949, the Geneva Conventions have contributed to protect the lives and dignity of millions. Yet, the suffering we witness today in armed conflicts around the world is proof that respect for and better compliance with their most fundamental rules is essential.

The General Assembly has repeatedly affirmed the importance of upholding international humanitarian law in numerous resolutions. In the Pact for the Future, Member States also reaffirmed their commitment to international humanitarian law and to protect all civilians in armed conflicts. Under Action 14 of the Pact for the Future which envisages to protect all civilians in armed conflict, Member States reaffirmed their commitment to their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law. These obligations include rules relating to the conduct of hostilities, the protection of the medical mission, and the prevention of violations of armed conflict more generally.



It is therefore imperative for the international community to reiterate its political commitment for and support to upholding international humanitarian law, both in letter and in spirit, in order to alleviate the impact of conflicts, including on civilians and civilian objects.

### **Objectives**

In alignment with the theme of the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly “Unity in Diversity for the Advancement of Peace, Sustainable Development, and Human Dignity for Everyone Everywhere”, the informal interactive dialogue aims to raise awareness about the importance of strengthening compliance with international humanitarian law in preserving human dignity during armed conflicts and to identify challenges and gaps in its implementation as well as to promote multilateral and national efforts to enhance compliance with international humanitarian law.

### **Guiding questions**

- How can states contribute to galvanize political commitment to international humanitarian law in their own domestic systems and globally?
- What is needed to ensure respect for international humanitarian law?
- How can states contribute to upholding the protective object and purpose of international humanitarian law?
- What can be done in domestic and international systems to prevent violations of international humanitarian law from occurring in the first place?
- What are the greatest challenges to international humanitarian law in today’s conflicts?
- What will be the greatest challenges in the conflicts of the future?
- How can respect for international humanitarian law contribute to find pathways to peace?

### **Format and outcome**

The informal interactive dialogue will take place on Tuesday, 28 January 2024, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., in the Trusteeship Council Chamber, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. It will consist of an opening segment and an interactive panel discussion. A detailed programme will be circulated in due course.

The United Nations Webcast services will provide live streaming coverage of the high-level meeting in all 6 official languages as well as on-demand coverage (recorded video) in English and original language, through the UN Web TV website at: <http://webtv.un.org>.

The President of the General Assembly will prepare an informal summary of the discussion, which will be circulated to all Member States.

### **Participation**

Participation in the informal interactive dialogue will be open to Member States and observers of the General Assembly, the United Nations system, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations with consultative status in ECOSOC.

### **Accessibility arrangements**

Delegations are requested to inform the Secretariat of the accessibility requirements of their delegates to facilitate participation in meetings. Upon request, adjustments can be made to



seating arrangements with a view to enabling the participation of persons with disabilities. For individual requests, please contact the Meetings Support Section of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (email: [accessibilitycentre@un.org](mailto:accessibilitycentre@un.org); phone: 212 963 7348/9) no later than three working days prior to the meeting.