
AGENDA OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
ON INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW
[AG/RES. 2650 (XLI-O/11)]

Friday, January 27, 2012
Liberator Simon Bolivar Room^{1/}
OAS Main Building – 17th St. and Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

(Document adopted by the CAJP at its meeting of November 10, 2011)

General Assembly resolution AG/RES. 2650 (XLI-O/11) entitled “Promotion of and Respect for International Humanitarian Law,” mandates the General Secretariat to continue organizing, within the framework of the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs, through the Department of International Law and in coordination with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), courses and seminars for member states, staff of the Organization of American States, and the general public, in order to promote knowledge of and respect for international humanitarian law (IHL) and related regional instruments, including measures for their effective implementation. Moreover, the resolution requests the Permanent Council to hold, prior to the forty-second regular session of the General Assembly, a special meeting on topics of current interest in international humanitarian law.

RATIONALE

The 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (31st Conference) will take place on 28 November – 1 December 2011 in Geneva. The 31st Conference is a unique forum where States Party to the Geneva Conventions and the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement including, the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies address the most pressing humanitarian issues of mutual concern. The agenda for the Special Meeting on International Humanitarian Law builds on the outcomes of the 31st Conference, and seeks to involve OAS diplomats, representatives of National Commissions on International Humanitarian Law in the Americas and experts in a discussion and consideration of present and future implementation of international humanitarian law.

The overall objective of this year's 31st Conference is to strengthen International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and humanitarian action by focussing on four areas: 1) strengthening legal protection for victims of armed conflicts; 2) strengthening International Disaster Relief Law; 3) strengthening local humanitarian action; and 4) addressing barriers to health care.

1. The meeting will be transmitted via webcast, subject to available resources.

The agenda for the 31st Conference builds on the achievements of the 30th International Conference Declaration "Together for Humanity" and other resolutions adopted in 2007. Working sessions will consist of plenary debates; work in commissions and workshops where States and the components of the Movement will be able to explore challenges and trends in the follow-up work, and to make new pledges in regards to the abovementioned four areas.

Member States with National IHL Committees are encouraged to consider the participation of Committee representatives in the Special Meeting on International Humanitarian Law.

I. Opening Remarks: 9:40 – 10:00 a.m.

Ambassador María Isabel Salvador

Chair of the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs and
Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the Organization of American States

Markus Geisser

Deputy Head of the Regional Delegation for United States and Canada of the International
Committee of the Red Cross

Dante Negro

Director, Department of International Law
Organization of American States

II. Enhancing the Protection of Persons Deprived of Their Liberty in Situations of Armed Conflict: 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

The 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (31st Conference) will consider how to overcome gaps and weaknesses identified in the existing legal frameworks to adequately protect persons deprived of liberty in armed conflicts. Moreover, the 31st Conference seeks to adopt resolutions and to secure voluntary pledges to strengthen normative frameworks, both at the international and domestic levels; to provide humanitarian services to people who need them; and to sustain and develop an environment conducive for humanitarian work.

10:00 – 11:15 a.m.

- The First Part will discuss the consensus reached during the 31st Conference on the identification of gaps and weaknesses regarding humane treatment and adequate conditions of detention, the particular needs of children, women and persons with disabilities, and the procedural safeguards to be made available to persons detained and how States agreed to address these gaps and weaknesses.

Presentations:

Dr. Mariana Salazar

International Humanitarian Law Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico

Sylvain Vité

Legal Advisor for the International Committee of the Red Cross at Headquarters in Geneva

11:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m

- The Second Part will provide an opportunity for representatives of Member States to present the pledges made at the 31st Conference and the follow-up actions to enhance the protection of persons deprived of their liberty.

III. Challenges of Contemporary Armed Conflict: 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

The 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent will debate the humanitarian and legal implications of several challenges to international humanitarian law, foremost in non-international armed conflicts that proliferate around the world.

2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

- The First Presentation will discuss violence, attacks and illegal obstruction of health care provision.

Mark Steinbeck

Medical Delegate of the Regional Delegation for United States and Canada of the International Committee of the Red Cross

3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

- The Second Presentation will discuss the interplay of international humanitarian law and international human rights law governing the regulation of the use of force and non-criminal detention for security reasons.

Daniel Cahen

Legal Advisor of the Regional Delegation for United States and Canada of the International Committee of the Red Cross

IV. Overview and Highlights of IHL Implementation by National Committees on International Humanitarian Law in the Americas: 4:00 – 5:30 p.m.

The Third Panel will offer an overview of the progress in implementation of IHL into domestic law, with discussion of ICRC's 2010-2011 report on activities undertaken for the national implementation of IHL in the region. Representatives of National IHL Committees and representatives of Member States will also have the opportunity to highlight recent and future plans pertaining to the implementation of IHL.

Presentation:

Patrick Zahnd

Legal Advisor for Latin America and the Caribbean of the International Committee of the Red Cross

V. **Closing Remarks:** 5:30 – 5:40 p.m.

Ambassador María Isabel Salvador

Chair of the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs and
Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the Organization of American States