

RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

(Resolution adopted at the seventh plenary session, held on June 5, 1997)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

CONSIDERING its resolutions AG/RES. 1270 (XXIV-O/94), AG/RES. 1335 (XXV-O/95), and AG/RES. 1408 (XXVI-O/96) on respect for international humanitarian law;

CONVINCED of the continuing value of the fundamental principles and established rules of international humanitarian law and of the need to respect and ensure respect for these rules in all circumstances;

STRESSING the need to consolidate the existing body of international humanitarian law by achieving universal acceptance thereof, the need for wide dissemination and full implementation of that law at the national level, and the need to repress all violations of its provisions;

CONSIDERING:

That the Organization of American States proclaims the fundamental rights of the individual and encourages the promotion of those rights; and

That all member states should raise awareness of international humanitarian law in their respective countries;

RECALLING the continuing efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to promote and disseminate knowledge of international humanitarian law and the activities it carries out in its capacity as a specifically neutral and independent intermediary; and

RECALLING ALSO the cooperation agreement signed by the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States and the International Committee of the Red Cross on May 10, 1996, in the city of Washington, D.C., as well as the Seminar on International Humanitarian Law, held jointly by the General Secretariat and the ICRC in January 1997,

RESOLVES:

1. To appeal to all member states that have not yet done so to consider becoming parties to the 1977 Additional Protocols I and II to the Geneva Convention at the earliest possible date.
2. To call upon all member states that are parties to the 1977 Additional Protocol I and those who have not yet signed it but intend to do so to make the declaration provided for under Article 90 thereof.
3. To urge member states to consider the possibility of examining the adoption, as necessary, of national enabling laws and regulations, to apply and disseminate international humanitarian law, and to monitor its implementation, with particular emphasis on:
 - The adoption of adequate criminal legislation to punish war crimes in international conflicts and other serious violations of international humanitarian law;

— The adoption of measures to prevent misuse of the red cross and red crescent emblems and other signs provided for in the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their 1977 Additional Protocols; and

— The dissemination of the appropriate humanitarian treaties among the armed forces, security forces, and the general public and the appointment and training of persons qualified in international humanitarian law including legal advisers within the armed forces.

4. To encourage member states to consider the possibility of examining the establishment of national advisory committees on international humanitarian law to ensure its effective implementation.

5. To invite member states to continue their cooperation with the ICRC in its various areas of responsibility and to facilitate its work.

6. To invite the member states to consider information submitted by the ICRC relating to the implementation of international humanitarian law.