

Declaration of the “Regional Meeting of National Committees on International Humanitarian Law and Other Similar Entities of the Americas”

February 5th, 2021

The delegations¹ participating at the “*Regional Meeting of National Committees on International Humanitarian Law and Other Similar Entities of the Americas*”,

reaffirming that International Humanitarian Law (IHL) remains as valid today as ever before in international and non-international armed conflicts, even as contemporary warfare presents new developments and challenges;

recalling that the obligation, under any circumstances, to respect and ensure respect² for international humanitarian law, applies to all states parties to the four universally recognized Geneva Conventions of 1949 and to the states parties to one or more of the three protocols additional thereto;

highlighting the fundamental role of National IHL Committees and other similar entities for contributing with the dissemination and implementation of IHL in their respective States;

reaffirming the importance for National IHL Committees and other similar entities to strengthen their communication and the necessity of sharing experiences and building the adequate mechanisms to foster cooperation between them;

emphasizing the vital importance of building on existing efforts to achieve more effective implementation and dissemination of IHL and of demonstrating the benefits of IHL for all parties to armed conflict and for the protection of all victims of armed conflict;

recognizing the important role of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement as a whole, for the support they provide to and with States in the dissemination and implementation of IHL, particularly through their support to the National IHL Committees and other similar entities;

convinced that the measures recommended below provide a useful road map for effective implementation of IHL at the national level;

1. **Confirm** the importance of supporting the work of National IHL Committees and other similar entities, and identify measures to strengthen their organization and functioning;
2. **Recognize** the efforts and initiatives of National IHL Committees and other similar entities to disseminate, promote and respect IHL;

¹ The participants at the Regional Meeting are delegations of National IHL Committees and other similar entities. A list consisting of the participating delegations is included as an Annex.

² The Government of Canada’s position is that the Common Article 1 obligation to “ensure respect” refers to the legal duty of States that are party to an armed conflict to ensure that its forces and third parties under its jurisdiction respect international humanitarian law as set out in the 1949 Geneva Conventions and, as applicable, Protocols I and III.

3. **Firmly encourage** the National IHL Committees and similar entities to intensify the IHL dissemination work, acting in a proactive manner among organizations committed to such objectives, such as central and local governmental authorities, legislative and judicial authorities, the military, the security forces, professionals, academia and civil society members;
4. **Undertake** to intensively work to strengthen cooperation between National IHL Committees and similar entities on the international, regional and cross-regional levels, particularly through assistance and active participation in the universal, regional and other periodic meetings of such entities, and through the new digital community for National IHL Committees and other similar entities, created on the basis of the recommendations made by the participants at the universal meeting that took place in 2016;
5. **Agree** that for the purposes indicated in the previous paragraph, it is necessary to implement the appropriate mechanisms to optimize the necessary actions in order to make effective the cooperation schemes between the National IHL Committees and similar entities considering the emerging and critical situations that require specific collaboration, and in this sense, encourage the ICRC to continue playing a role as facilitator of these exchanges;
6. **Encourage** the exchange of experiences and good practices related to the work of National IHL Committees and other similar entities facilitating their operation and encourage States that have not yet done so to consider establishing such an entity;
7. **Welcome** the work of the ICRC and request that it keeps on providing its collaboration and support so that States can continue to carry out activities that make it possible to achieve the objectives of organic strengthening and development of the National IHL Committees and similar entities;
8. **Invite** its respective States to ratify, when relevant, IHL treaties, including the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions³;
9. **Encourage** their respective States to adopt necessary legislative, administrative and practical measures at the domestic level to implement IHL, promoting the participation of civil societies organizations when it is convenient and invites States to carry out, with the support of their National IHL Committees and other similar entities and the corresponding National Red Cross Societies, where possible, an analysis of the areas that require implementation at a national level;⁴
10. **Make an appeal** to continue promoting the work of the National IHL Committees and similar entities within the framework of the next International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, in following up on commitments adopted by their respective States in these meetings;

³ The Delegation of the Dominican Republic: Due to the advisory nature of the Permanent National Committee for the Application of International Humanitarian Law in the Dominican Republic, we cannot commit to the proposed text. The Permanent National Committee presents suggestions to the Executive Branch during treaty ratification processes, but it does not do so with other instances (Constitutional Tribunal and National Congress) involved in the decision-making process. (Unofficial translation)

⁴ The Delegation of the Dominican Republic: see note above. (Unofficial translation)

11. **Recognize** the importance of a continued conversation about how IHL applies to cyber operations as well as the challenges regarding its implementation in their respective States;
12. **Thank** the illustrious Government of the Republic of Ecuador and the ICRC for the valuable support provided for the organization and the development of the “*Regional Meeting of National International Humanitarian Law Committees and other similar entities of the Americas*”. Also recognize the technological work and logistical support provided by *Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja* for conducting this meeting;
13. **Agree** to reconvene in two years and encourage National IHL Committees and similar entities to come forward and offer to host the next meeting. To that end, the ICRC is requested to receive nominations for host countries for the next “*Regional Meeting of National International Humanitarian Law Committees and other similar entities of the Americas*” scheduled for 2023 and will notify the results of the designation to the remaining Committees.

**Reunión Regional de Comisiones Nacionales de
Derecho Internacional Humanitario y Organismos Afines de las Américas**

**Regional Meeting of National Committees on International Humanitarian Law and Other Similar Entities of the
Americas**

**Lista de Participantes
List of participants**

País Country	Comisión nacional u organismo afín National committee or similar entity	Nombre Name	Institución Institution
Argentina	Comisión de Aplicación de Derecho Internacional Humanitario (CADIH)	Eduardo Jozami	Ministerio de Defensa de la Nación
		Mariana Maurer	Ministerio de Defensa de la Nación
		Laura Masson	Ministerio de Defensa de la Nación
Bahamas		Jewel Major	Office of the Attorney-General & Ministry of Legal Affairs
		Vincent Wallace Whitfield	Bahamas Red Cross
Bolivia	Comisión Nacional Permanente para la Aplicación del Derecho Internacional Humanitario (CNPADIH)	Maysa Ureña Menacho	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
		Elizabet Chipana Ramos	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Brasil	Observadores	Ricardo Rizzo	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Canadá	Canadian National Committee for Humanitarian Law	Thomas Fetz	Global Affairs Canada
		Sarah O'Blenes	Global Affairs Canada
		Catherine Gribbin	Canadian Red Cross

Chile	Comisión Nacional de Derecho Humanitario (CNDH)	Franco Devillaine	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
		Álvaro Arévalo	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
		Carlos Crisóstomo Del Pedregal	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Colombia	Grupo Técnico de DIH y Conflicto Armado Subsistema de Derecho Internacional Humanitario y Conflicto armado Comisión Intersectorial de Derechos Humanos y Derecho Internacional Humanitario Sistema Nacional de Derechos Humanos y DIH	Miguel Eduardo Ruiz Botero	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
		David Iván Fernández Barreto	Consejería Presidencial para los Derechos Humanos y los Asuntos Internacionales
		Juan Felipe Wills Romero	Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
Costa Rica	Comisión Costarricense de Derecho Internacional Humanitario	Linyi Baidal Sequeira	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto
		Milton Chaverri	Cruz Roja Costarricense
		Dyanne Marengo	Colegio de abogados de Costa Rica
Ecuador	Comisión Nacional para la Aplicación del Derecho Internacional Humanitario del Ecuador (CONADIHE)	Verónica Aguilar	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana
		Juan Pablo Valdivieso	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana
		Vicente Medina Morocho	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana
		Víctor Calderón Medina	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana
		Juan Carlos Montesdeoca	Ministerio de Defensa Nacional

		María Fernanda Carrillo	Cruz Roja Ecuatoriana
		Marcelo José Jurado	Ministerio de Inclusión Económica y Social
El Salvador	Comité Interinstitucional de Derecho Internacional Humanitario de El Salvador	Elizabeth Cubias	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
		Elsa Morales	Ministerio de la Defensa Nacional
		Celina Ganuza	Ministerio de Cultura
Guatemala	Comisión Guatemalteca para la Aplicación del Derecho Internacional Humanitario (COGUADIH)	María José del Águila Castillo	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
		Walter Jesús Pérez Tomás	Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
		Erick Ortiz	Ministerio de Cultura y Deportes
Honduras	Comisión Hondureña de Derecho Internacional Humanitario	Mario Israel Martínez López	Ministerio de la Defensa
		Yovany Alberto Arriaga Barahona	Ministerio de la Defensa
		Walter Alcantara Canales	Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores
México	Comisión Intersecretarial de Derecho Internacional Humanitario (CIDIH-Mexico)	Salvador Tinajero Esquivel	Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores
		Oscar Genaro Macías Betancourt	Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores
		Ramiro Lobato Camacho	Secretaría de Marina
Nicaragua	Comisión Nacional para la Aplicación del Derecho Internacional Humanitario	Paul Hebert Oquist Kelly	Secretaría de la Presidencia de la República
		Valdrack Ludwing Jaentschke Whitaker	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores

Panamá	Comisión Nacional Permanente para la Aplicación del Derecho Internacional Humanitario	Carmen Inés Ávila Ortega	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
		Portugal Falcón Moreno	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
		Nadia Montenegro	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Paraguay	Comisión Interministerial de Estudio y Aplicación del Derecho Internacional Humanitario (CEADIH)	Amalia Quintana	Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
		Carmen Ovelar	Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
		Noelia Pavon	Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
Perú	Comisión Nacional para el Estudio y Aplicación del Derecho Internacional Humanitario (CONADIH)	Tania Elizabeth Arzapalo Villón	Ministerio de Justicia y Derechos Humanos
		Hugo Torres Armas	Ministerio de Justicia y Derechos Humanos
		Ana Vergara Lamadrid	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
República Dominicana	Comisión Nacional Permanente para la Aplicación del Derecho Internacional Humanitario	Mariel Vílchez Bournigal	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
		Gladys Michelle Rojas Volquez	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
		Silvana Cotes Pascual	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Trinidad and Tobago	Inter-Ministerial Committee on International Humanitarian Law	Kristan Jhagroo	Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs
		Tiffany Bethel	Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs
		Kristi-Ann Baggan	Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs

Uruguay	Comisión Nacional de Derecho Humanitario (CNDH)	Marina Sande	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Venezuela	Comisión Nacional de Derecho Internacional Humanitario (CNDIH)	Yeferson Forero	Ministerio de Poder Popular para las Relaciones Exteriores
		Enzo Bitetto	Ministerio de Poder Popular para las Relaciones Exteriores