
Republic of Belarus: measures for the implementation of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949

1. Enhancement of national legislation

- By decree No. 70 of 8 February 2008, applicants under the age of 18 seeking admission to higher educational institutions which train personnel for service in the army or security bodies are required to have the written consent of a parent or legal guardian.
- On 8 July 2008, article 33 of the act "On the rights of the child" was amended to prohibit the recruitment or involvement of children in armed conflicts.
- Article 21 of the act on the granting of refugee and asylee status, which entered into force in June 2009, provides for additional protection for one year for foreign or stateless persons who are not otherwise eligible for refugee status but who legitimately fear for their lives if they return to their normal place of residence because of international or internal armed conflict.
- Decree No. 24 of the Ministry of Defence, of 6 May 2009, established instructions concerning the application of the norms of international humanitarian law in the armed forces and transport units.
- Following a review of the acts on the Belarusian Red Cross society and on the protection of the emblems of the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, a new law is being drafted to establish a clear legal foundation for the work of the Belarusian Red Cross society.

2. Participation in international treaties

-
- On 28 February 2008, amendments were adopted to article 1 of the Convention on prohibitions or restrictions on the use of certain conventional weapons.
 - On 30 April 2008, Belarus acceded to Protocol V.
 - On 28 December 2009, Belarus acceded to Protocol III; Belarusian legislation is being amended accordingly.
 - In 2008-2009, international agreements on cooperation in the prevention and elimination of emergency situations were adopted with the United Nations and with Poland, China, Viet Nam, Armenia, Bulgaria and Tajikistan. In 2009, humanitarian assistance was provided to Ukraine and Tajikistan.

3. Dissemination of knowledge about international humanitarian law

- In 2008, a syllabus on humanitarian law was adopted for schools and for vocational and secondary specialized institutions, along with a guide for teachers. The course is taken by over 12,000 students every year.
- Every year, conferences on international humanitarian law are held in Belarus, as well as an international youth olympiad "Youth for Peace". In 2008, the Belarusian Red Cross Society held a conference on enhancing student awareness of international humanitarian law. In 2009, a number of events were organized to celebrate significant anniversaries of the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

• In December 2009 a round table was organized on the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict. Measures are planned in 2010 to enhance Belarusian legislation on the subject. The Ministry of Culture is preparing a catalogue of all museum collections, which is expected to be completed in 2013. A register of historical and cultural treasures is also being drawn up, and a knowledge bank about the historical and cultural heritage of Belarus is being established.

• In 2008-2009, a great deal of work was carried out to disseminate international humanitarian law among military personnel, including through seminars, conferences, contests, and training courses in other countries.

• In 2008-2009, four meetings of the Commission on the implementation of international humanitarian law were held under the auspices of the Council of Ministers, with the participation of representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross. In 2008, decisions were adopted on measures to inculcate among schoolchildren respect for the memory of those who defended the Fatherland and of war victims; and in 2009, the Commission recommended the inclusion of a course on international humanitarian law in the curricula for students of law, medicine and the military, as well as students in other humanitarian fields.

• Other measures included the dedication of a statue of Henry Dunant, the founder of ICRC, in Minsk on 7 May 2010.

• In October 2009, the topic of Belarus' experience in the implementation of international humanitarian law was taken up at the fourth session of the Council of Ministers of Justice of the Commonwealth of Independent States.
