

Translated from French

Contribution from Belgium to the report requested in paragraph 14 of General Assembly resolution 69/120 of 10 December 2014

In response to the note by the Secretary-General of the United Nations of 21 January 2015 on the status of the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts, Belgium wishes to refer, firstly, to its previous contributions transmitted in 2010, 2012 and 2014, which complement the comprehensive report issued in 2008 (A/63/118).

The most significant legislative developments since 2014 are as follows:

- On 12 May 2015, Belgium ratified the Protocol additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the adoption of an additional distinctive emblem (Protocol III), adopted on 8 December 2005;
- On 22 June 2016, a royal decree amending the royal decree of 6 December 2000 on the reorganization of the Interministerial Commission on Humanitarian Law was adopted in order to specify the composition of the Commission, enhance its functioning and publicize its work with a view to increasing its effectiveness and visibility. Among other amendments, the royal decree of 22 June 2016 specifies that the Interministerial Commission shall function as the national advisory committee for the protection of cultural property, within the meaning of resolution II adopted at the Intergovernmental Conference on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, held in The Hague in 1954.

With regard to its cooperation with international criminal courts, on 10 April 2014, Belgium concluded a new bilateral cooperation agreement with the International Criminal Court on the provisional release of detainees.

Belgium has also organized several national and international events on subjects relating to international humanitarian law, including:

- The International Conference on Genocide Prevention, held in Brussels on 31 March and 1 April 2014;
- An expert workshop held from 29 to 31 January 2014, in partnership with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Belgian Red Cross, on the vulnerability of health care, at which participants discussed the national legislative framework for the protection of health-care provision in situations of armed conflict and other emergency situations;
- A seminar on fact-finding mechanisms and humanitarian law, held on 2 June 2015.

In December 2015, Belgium was also re-elected, for a four-year term, to the UNESCO Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, which was established by the Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

The Belgian authorities have continued to work with the Belgian Red Cross, their partner in the humanitarian field, to enhance the dissemination and implementation of international humanitarian law. Thus, in addition to the dissemination activities that the Belgian Red Cross has carried out individually among both specialized audiences and the general public, it collaborated with the authorities on the following initiatives during the reporting period:

- Participation in field exercises organized by the Belgian military on 1 April 2015, 10 September 2015 and 26 February 2016, which were designed to raise awareness among the Belgian military of the mandate and operational approach of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the proper use of protective emblems and the protection of specific categories of civilians in the event of armed conflict (humanitarian actors, health workers, refugees and displaced persons);
- Organization with the Belgian military of an awareness-raising event on international humanitarian law at the École Royale Militaire [Royal Military College] for law students from Belgian universities and from the École Royale Militaire, held on 13 November 2015;
- Organization with the Belgian military and the Association of Professional Journalists of a training course for professional journalists on international humanitarian law and the security procedures to be followed when accompanying soldiers on a mission, held from 9 to 11 June 2015;
- Organization with the Federal Public Service for Foreign Affairs of a training course on international humanitarian law for trainee diplomats, held on 15 March 2016.

In general, since October 2015, the Belgian authorities and the Belgian Red Cross have been conducting a review within the Interministerial Commission on Humanitarian Law of the activities carried out to disseminate international humanitarian law in Belgium, and have been considering which potential audiences could benefit from greater dissemination efforts.

Furthermore, the Belgian authorities worked closely with the Belgian Red Cross to prepare the thirty-second International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (Geneva, 8-10 December 2015), including:

- Preparing resolutions, including those on international humanitarian law: resolution 1 on strengthening international humanitarian law protecting persons deprived of their liberty; resolution 2 on strengthening compliance with international humanitarian law; resolution 3 on sexual and gender-based violence: joint action on prevention and response; and resolution 4 on health care in danger: continuing to protect the delivery of health care together. Belgium also participated actively in the discussions of the drafting committee on these resolutions;
- Developing commitments that have been adopted by Belgium individually and jointly with its National Society for the next four years. These commitments relate to various aspects of international humanitarian law: the fight against sexual and gender-based violence; support for the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission; support for the International Criminal Court; the promotion, dissemination and implementation of international humanitarian law; the protection of health care; strengthening compliance with international humanitarian law; strengthening international humanitarian law protecting persons deprived of their liberty; the

16-13225E

protection of cultural property; humanitarian access; and the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.
