

Translated from Arabic

**Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar
To the United Nations
New York**

The attachment of the note verbal dated 20 February 2015 of the Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar to the United Nations regarding the note verbal no. LA/COD/2 dated 21 January 2015 on General Assembly resolution 96/120 titled "Status of the Protocol and Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and relating to the protection of victims in armed conflicts".

The State of Qatar is a party to most of the principal conventions on international humanitarian law and other relevant instruments, including the four Conventions of 1949, relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts, and the two Protocols additional thereto of 1977, as well as the declaration stipulated in article 90 of the first Protocol, relating to the International Fact-Finding Commission.

The four Geneva Conventions and the two Protocols additional thereto represent a solid foundation of rules and principles that must continue to be applied during armed conflicts. However, the International Committee of the Red Cross has drawn attention on numerous occasions, especially within the framework of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, to serious challenges facing international humanitarian law.

The State of Qatar is of the view that these challenges, chief among them being the failure to comply with international humanitarian law, have resulted in destructive acts against civilians, the forced deportation of populations, destruction of infrastructure essential to the livelihood of civilian populations and use of starvation and blockade to achieve military gains on the ground. This has caused military conflicts to become more complex and made the achievement of lasting peace settlements more difficult.

The State of Qatar is of the view that the response to the serious and growing challenges to international humanitarian law requires States to fulfil the undertaking stipulated in common article 1 of the four Geneva Conventions to respect and ensure respect for the provisions of these Conventions, applying this to all international and non-international armed conflicts, without double standards. However, the main problem continues to be the lack of political will on the part of States to assume the responsibility of exercising their influence to avoid violations of international humanitarian law, and the support, assistance or encouragement given to other States to commit acts that are illegal under international law. This position has encouraged certain parties to commit war crimes and crimes against humanity, in the conviction that the international community lacks the capacity to condemn or impose sanctions against them. Indeed, they are expert in the use of internationally outlawed weapons, such as poison gas, which they use freely as they see fit, without paying any regard to international humanitarian law.

International humanitarian law, including the two additional Protocols, is still generally applicable to contemporary armed conflict and it has demonstrated

flexibility in the past. Now, however, it needs to be developed, taking into account the new realities of war, and States both great and small must abide by it. All parties to the conventions of international humanitarian law should implement the action plan adopted by the 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent for the implementation of international humanitarian law and declare their agreement to the provisions of article 90 of the first Protocol, relating to the International Fact-Finding Commission in order to accord it a global stamp.

The State of Qatar is keen to respect and apply the provisions of the aforementioned Conventions and the principles of international humanitarian law in all relevant fields, in implementation whereof:

- The Qatari Armed Forces have established a committee on international humanitarian law. The committee includes representatives of all the armed forces and seeks to strengthen implementation of the principles of international humanitarian law and disseminate the culture of international humanitarian law among all its members through its local office and in coordination with dedicated associations and organizations.
- In coordination with the International Committee of the Red Crescent (Regional Centre, Kuwait), the Qatari Armed Forces held a course and workshop attended by the relevant military and civilian bodies, within the framework of the endeavour to disseminate the culture of international humanitarian law and relevant conventions.
- International humanitarian law is taught as a curriculum subject at Ahmed bin Muhammad Military College within the academic programme.
- The military committee on international humanitarian law is developing training programmes and courses to be taught to officers and other ranks in the armed forces training institutes as a compulsory subject.
- The Department of Legal Affairs of the Qatari Armed Forces has issued a special publication containing the basic provisions of international humanitarian law to be taught as an academic course. It includes the provisions of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and two Protocols additional thereto.

Pursuant to Cabinet decree no. 27 (2012), the National Committee on International Humanitarian Law was established, with its membership drawn from relevant Qatari bodies. The committee seeks to enshrine the principles of international humanitarian law, work toward achieving the goals of the relevant international conventions and charters, foster international collaboration in this field and instruct and ensure respect for these principles at national level.
