

United Nations Sixth Committee – 77th Session

Statement of Ireland

on agenda item 81:

**“Status of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949
and relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts”**

17 October 2022

Statement by legal adviser, Aoife Ní Chearbhaill

Chair,

1. Although international humanitarian law (IHL) provides a strong framework for the protection of those most vulnerable in situations of armed conflict, there continue to be widespread failures to implement and comply with it, and indeed serious violations of it. In Ireland’s view, therefore, it is important that the Sixth Committee continue to review the status of the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions and the implementation of IHL more generally.
2. Ireland welcomes the Secretary-General’s report on the status of the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions and measures taken to strengthen the existing body of IHL. The report usefully collates the information provided by states and the ICRC in accordance with the most recent resolution under this agenda item, including the information provided by Ireland on its relevant activities during the reporting period.
3. Ireland is firmly committed to the implementation of IHL, and to efforts to strengthen compliance with IHL and the protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict.
4. At the domestic level, Ireland has continued implementation and dissemination efforts through its National Committee on IHL, and is in the process of producing a voluntary report on the implementation of IHL. We encourage all states to consider doing so.
5. Ireland also recently established a National Advisory Committee on the Protection of Cultural Property in the event of Armed Conflict, which will be an important aspect of the implementation of the Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the event of Armed Conflict and its Second Protocol.
6. At the international level, for several years Ireland has led consultations on a Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian



Consequences arising from the use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas. The consultations concluded in June and the Declaration will be adopted at a high-level international conference in Dublin on 18 November. The Declaration recognises the immense humanitarian consequences of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, and sets out actions to be taken to strengthen compliance with IHL and the protection of civilians. Ireland encourages states to endorse the Declaration and to attend the adoption conference on 18 November.

7. Since beginning its term as an elected member of the UN Security Council in January 2021, Ireland has consistently called at the Council for compliance with IHL and accountability for IHL violations. It is essential that there be accountability for IHL violations, and that serious violations be prosecuted domestically or internationally as appropriate.
8. Ireland strongly supports the international criminal justice system, including the International Criminal Court (ICC). We urge all states to become parties to the Rome Statute. We have repeatedly called on states to cooperate with the ICC across its range of investigations, and emphasised the need to strengthen the relationship between the Security Council and the Court. The proper functioning of the international criminal justice system is essential to ending a culture of impunity for war crimes, and to ensuring respect for IHL.

Thank you Chair