



**Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States**

**by Mr. Fabio Cannizzaro**

**Counsellor**

**Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations**

**at the Sixth Committee**

**on the Agenda item 81:**

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

**United Nations**

**New York**

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**– CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY –**

Thank you, Mr./Madam Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries North Macedonia\*, Montenegro\*, Serbia\*, Albania\*, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and Bosnia and Herzegovina\*, as well as San Marino align themselves with this statement.

Mr./Madam Chair,

We thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/79/174) and all the Member States and the International Committee of the Red Cross that provided relevant information. We commend in particular the ICRC and all those humanitarian organisations, which are unwavering in their commitment to strengthening the implementation of International Humanitarian Law and delivering humanitarian assistance to the many affected by armed conflicts. We recognise the extremely difficult conditions in which they act, every day, and we pay tribute to them.

This is a time of unprecedented humanitarian needs and a critical moment in our history. As conflicts proliferate and become more complex, international humanitarian law is increasingly disregarded.

We are deeply concerned at the brutality of warfare in current conflicts in which IHL rules, including the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution, are not respected. This has appalling consequences for civilian populations and infrastructure, and a disproportionate impact on women and girls. We underscore the obligation to distinguish between civilians and combatants and between civilian objects and military objectives, as well as to refrain from attacks on

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\* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

civilians and civilian objects. The EU reiterates that in situations of uncertainty, any person and object should be presumed to be civilian.

We strongly condemn the recurring and targeted attacks on healthcare infrastructure and medical personnel. Protecting healthcare services, including mental health care, in armed conflicts is a priority for the EU. We support initiatives to strengthen protection for humanitarian and medical workers, in line with the UN Security Council Resolutions 2286 (2016) and 2730 (2024), as well UNGA resolution 74/116, calling on States to respect and protect United Nations and humanitarian personnel in accordance with their obligations under international law.

We also strongly condemn the targeting of journalists and media professionals in conflict areas and call on all States to uphold their protection, recognising their essential role in informing the public of the realities of armed conflicts.

In addition, we strongly condemn the ill treatment of detained persons, including prisoners of war, and the violations of rules pertaining to military occupation. We call upon all States and other parties to armed conflicts to comply with their obligations under IHL.

Mr./Madam Chair,

There must be no impunity for serious violations of IHL and other most serious crimes, throughout the world. The decisions and judgements of international courts and tribunals must be respected and implemented. States are primarily responsible for prosecuting individuals responsible for grave breaches of IHL under their jurisdiction. Should a State be unwilling or unable to prosecute the individuals responsible for these violations, we trust the ICC to act. The ICC is instrumental in the fight against impunity. We fully support the ICC and other relevant courts and tribunals' efforts in that regard.

The EU and its Member States remain committed to using all available mechanisms at national, regional, and international levels to ensure respect for IHL. This includes efforts to build close cooperation with regional organisations, to enhance and uphold the respect for IHL and International Human Rights Law. The EU Member States will continue to adopt the necessary legislative, administrative, and practical measures to ensure and further strengthen domestic implementation of IHL.

More than **300 million people** need humanitarian assistance. The EU together with its Member States is among the leading humanitarian donors in the world. We remain committed to ensure that, in all humanitarian settings, the needs of those in the most vulnerable situation are appropriately addressed in accordance with the humanitarian principles. For this, we are committed to continuing facilitating humanitarian access and supporting humanitarian organisations in their work. This entails continued support to increased data collection, better analysis and support of practical measures to enhance the protection of humanitarian and medical personnel.

At a time when it seems more important than ever to bring together States and other stakeholders to reaffirm our global commitment to IHL and to strengthen our commitment to principled humanitarian action, we were pleased to attend the 34th International Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference last week (28-31 October).

On that occasion, the EU and its Member States submitted 10 pledges corresponding to our policy priorities in alignment with the Conference thematic. These include *inter alia* a pledge to consolidate at the national and international levels the frameworks for combatting impunity for war crimes and other core international crimes wherever they occur. We also pledged to take actions in accordance with the EWIPA political declaration as well as to counter

Information and Communication technology (ICT) related measures against civilians and civilian infrastructure in the context of armed conflicts.

Mr./Madam Chair,

On their 75th anniversary, the EU and its Member States call on all States parties to the Geneva Convention to put their differences aside and to reaffirm their commitment to IHL and the humanitarian principles.

We also call on remaining states that uphold the humanitarian principles to ratify the Additional Protocols and underscore that most provisions contained therein have attained the status of customary international law.

Thank you.