



**Sixth Committee**  
**United Nations General Assembly 79<sup>th</sup> 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’**

Delivered by James Kirk  
Legal Adviser, Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations

*New York, 5 November 2024*

*– CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY –*

1. Chair,
2. Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union.
3. We welcome 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 international humanitarian law (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.
4. In the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the Geneva Conventions, there is an urgent need to improve respect for IHL. The pervasive challenge for IHL is the frequent – and often shocking – failure to respect the existing rules. Unfortunately, there is a very concerning tendency to seek to interpret the rules so permissively that their protective effect is hollowed out. Ireland is firmly committed to the implementation of IHL and to efforts to strengthen compliance with it.
5. In the reporting period, Ireland 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 (EWIPA), which seeks to strengthen compliance with IHL and the protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict involving the use of EWIPA. The Declaration was adopted at a high-level international conference in Dublin in November 2022 and has been endorsed by 87 States from all regions. Since then, Ireland has continued to engage in universalisation efforts.
6. Ireland's National Committee on IHL has continued to meet regularly. The National Committee provides an effective means of promoting wider knowledge of IHL within the State system. Ireland will soon publish a voluntary report on the implementation of IHL at the domestic level.

7. Ireland's National Advisory Committee on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict has also continued to meet regularly since its establishment in 2022. The National Advisory Committee is an important element in the implementation of the Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the event of Armed Conflict and its Second Protocol.
8. In July 2023, Ireland published a national position paper on the application of international law to cyberspace, which affirms amongst other things that cyber operations which take place in the context of, or themselves amount to, an armed conflict are regulated by IHL.
9. Ireland continues to be a strong supporter of the International Criminal Court and of the universality of the Rome Statute. Our support has taken the form of voluntary financial contributions and cooperation with the Court in its investigations and prosecutions. Ireland also signed the Ljubljana-The Hague Convention on International Cooperation in the Investigation and Prosecution of the Crime of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity, War Crimes and Other International Crimes in February 2024. A strong international criminal justice system is essential to ensuring respect for IHL and to ending a culture of impunity for the most serious international crimes.
10. Thank you Chair.