



REPUBLIC OF POLAND
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STATEMENT BY

THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND

**79TH UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SIXTH COMMITTEE**

AGENDA ITEM 81:

**“STATUS OF THE PROTOCOLS ADDITIONAL TO THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS OF
1949 AND RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF VICTIMS OF ARMED CONFLICTS”**

NEW YORK, 5TH NOVEMBER 2024

Mr. Chairman,

Poland aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union on behalf of its Member States and would like to take this opportunity to present a few observations in its national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me first emphasize that international humanitarian law (IHL) represents a common and widely shared understanding amongst nations as to the rules and principles that govern the conduct of parties to an armed conflict. IHL protects persons who are not or are no longer participating in hostilities and limits the means and methods of warfare. Poland constantly and consistently emphasizes the importance and exceptional role of IHL, as compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law, is invariably one of Poland's priorities.

The 1949 Geneva Conventions, which the 75th anniversary we celebrated this year, enjoy universal acceptance. Many of the provisions contained in the 1977 Additional Protocols are today recognized as customary international humanitarian law. Taking that into account, we must find ways to enhance the implementation of international humanitarian law, despite the fact that it is unfortunately increasingly disregarded nowadays. The Geneva Conventions' norms and principles remain as relevant as ever. In this regard it is worthwhile to mention that executive duties of States Parties of the Geneva Conventions extend not only to respecting Geneva Conventions, but also to ensuring their respect, as clearly stated by the Common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions. We shall also reiterate that ensuring accountability is a significant element of this response – fighting impunity is of paramount importance not only to assure that violations of IHL and international human rights law do not go unpunished, but also to deliver justice to their victims.

Mr. Chairman,

We welcome the Report of the Secretary-General on the status of the Additional Protocols relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts (A/79/174), based on information received from Member States and the International Committee of the Red Cross on measures taken to strengthen the existing body of IHL, inter alia, with respect to its dissemination and full implementation at the national level.

This year we published our Fifth Report on the Implementation and Dissemination of International Humanitarian Law in the Republic of Poland, summarising the measures taken both at home and abroad by competent public authorities, public institutions and the Polish Red Cross between 2019 and 2023. This Report is a continuation of the Fourth Report on the implementation and dissemination of IHL in Poland in 2015-2018.

The current Report, demonstrating Poland's efforts toward the implementation of our international obligations and promotion of IHL, could not have been accomplished without the significant participation of and support from different ministries, the Polish Red Cross, civilian universities and military academies. Topics of IHL are disseminated through the curricula of the majority of civilian and military universities in the country. The release of a new edition of the Report affirms Poland's support for voluntary reporting. We are of the opinion that the activity of a larger number of states, popularizing their own good practices in the area of implementation and dissemination of humanitarian law, could translate into better mutual understanding, closer co-operation and harmonization of the practices and of the interpretation of the core instruments of IHL.

Mr. Chairman,

For many years, Poland has actively supported the actions of the International Committee of the Red Cross, both internationally and domestically. Our support includes not only financial assistance but also cooperation in the fields of education, training, and the promotion of international humanitarian law. This year we welcomed the decision of the ICRC to open its Regional Delegation in Warsaw. We will continuously support the ICRC's activities and their tireless efforts in providing humanitarian assistance and in addressing humanitarian problems and emerging new challenges.

Mr. Chairman,

I would also like to highlight that Poland, for the first time in history, has accepted the offer of good offices of the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission, in respect of investigation of the incident of 1st of April 2024 in Gaza, when seven persons working with the NGO World Central Kitchen were killed, including a Polish citizen. We have always supported the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission and we highly value its work and efforts toward the restoration of an attitude of respect for international humanitarian law.

Thank you.