



**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**Ms Nataša Šebenik, Minister Plenipotentiary and Legal Adviser at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Slovenia to the United Nations 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**

**79<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly**

**Sixth Committee**

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Mr/Madam Chair,

Slovenia aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union and would like to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report A/79/174 on the Status of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts, and the Member States for their contributions.

There are currently more than 120 ongoing conflicts around the globe, causing unspeakable levels of human suffering. When parties to the conflicts respect the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, millions of lives are saved. These conventions and their protocols form the core of international humanitarian law (IHL). The Additional Protocols contain more detailed IHL rules on the protection of civilians and other persons in both international and non-international armed conflicts.

Deliberate, indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks against civilians, particularly children and women, hospitals, schools, cultural property, journalists, medical and humanitarian personnel, intensify human suffering. Disruption of basic services such as clean drinking water, food, sanitation, energy and medical services too often leads to diseases, displacement, mental health problems, malnutrition and even starvation, particularly among children. Today more than 300 million persons need humanitarian assistance. There is an urgent need to enhance respect for IHL on the ground.

Mr/Madam Chair,

As a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council Slovenia draws special attention to the protection of civilians, particularly children and women and civilian objects, notably water infrastructure.

Slovenia recognized the need to mobilize countries and other relevant international actors to protect water and the environment from armed conflicts through the implementation of the IHL, and partnered with Switzerland and Geneva Water Hub to launch a Global Alliance to Spare Water from Armed Conflicts. The Alliance was launched in May 2024 at the Protection of Civilians Week side-event "Sparing Water from Armed Conflicts for Enhanced Protection of Civilians – A Launch of the Global Alliance" in New York. The Global Alliance will promote

respect for international law by protecting freshwater and water-related installations during armed conflicts through good practices, knowledge production, advocacy and partnerships.

Mr/Madam Chair,

The responsibility to respect IHL falls primarily on the States, who should also prosecute individuals responsible for grave breaches of IHL under their jurisdiction. We are convinced that States can contribute to building a global culture of compliance with IHL through a variety of tools.

First, our aim should be the universality of IHL legal and political instruments, and we are glad to inform you that Slovenia is a party to all IHL instruments. We would encourage all States that have not yet ratified the Additional Protocols to do so as soon as possible and all State parties to give full effect to their provisions.

Slovenia also strongly encourages States to sign and ratify the recently adopted the Ljubljana-The Hague Convention on International Cooperation in the Investigation and Prosecution of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity, War Crimes and other International Crimes. This Convention fills the legal gap and aims to facilitate and strengthen international cooperation in the investigation and prosecution of the most serious international crimes. The Convention also provides a basis for the provision of legal assistance, extradition, and the transfer of convicted persons. To date, 36 States have already signed the Convention and one State decided on its provisional application from the date of signature.

In addition, Slovenia calls on States to endorse the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences arising from the use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas, given the lethal effect they have on the civilian population.

Second, States must adhere to the UN Security Council Resolutions and implement the decisions of international courts and tribunals.

Third, it is important to promote and share awareness of IHL. We are pleased to inform you that the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovenia recently organized an international conference *Enhancing the Protection of Civilians: Challenges of Contemporary Armed Conflicts* in Ljubljana under the auspices of President of Slovenia Ms Nataša Pirc Musar. The conference underlined that the biggest challenge to IHL remains the lack of respect

for it. States have to redouble their efforts in this respect. As a common heritage of humanity, the Geneva Conventions and their Protocols remain as relevant today as ever.

I thank you, Mr/Madam Chair.