



**REPORT BY THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
ON THE**

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

Ljubljana, 30 May 2024

In the 2022–2024 period, the Permanent Coordination Group for International Humanitarian Law (hereinafter: the Slovenian national IHL committee) monitored the implementation of, and respect for, international humanitarian law, particularly the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their 1977 Additional Protocols.

As a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), Slovenia reaffirms its unwavering commitment to upholding the International Law, including the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and the fundamental principles of humanity.

The Slovenian national IHL committee has been particularly engaged in the drafting of programme of the international event on topical IHL issues organized on 19 January 2023 in Ljubljana.

Slovenia hosted the Diplomatic Conference that adopted the Ljubljana-The Hague Convention, which aims to fill the legal gap in mutual legal assistance and strengthen international cooperation in prosecuting core international crimes.

The report was drafted in accordance with the UN General Assembly resolution 77/107 of 7 December 2022 (Status of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts).

Slovenia consistently addresses IHL issues in multilateral and regional forums.

Slovenia as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council draws special attention to the protection of civilians in armed conflicts, particularly through the lens of the protection of water resources and water infrastructure.

Slovenia underlines the importance of respect for IHL on the ground, and strongly supports work of international courts and tribunals and the principle of accountability.

33rd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT

Slovenia for the second time reported on the progress made in the implementation of resolutions and pledges adopted by the 33rd International Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference held in Geneva between 9 and 12 December 2019.

In addition, Slovenia prepared a comprehensive report for the European External Action Service, detailing our steadfast commitment to the implementation of resolutions and pledges adopted at the 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

THE FIRST SLOVENIAN HUMANITARIAN FORUM

In Slovenia, a special milestone was reached in 2023 with the organisation of the 1st Slovenian Humanitarian Forum. The event, held in Ljubljana on October 2nd, was opened by the Republic of Slovenia Nataša Pirc Musar and included a high-level panel discussion between Janez Lenarčič, European Commissioner for Crisis Management, Mirjana Špoljarić Egger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Ute Klamert, Assistant Executive Director for Partnerships and Advocacy at WFP.

LJUBLJANA IHL EVENT

The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs organised an international humanitarian law (IHL) event entitled "Legal Challenges of the 21st Century: Humanitarian Crises, Protection of Critical Infrastructure and the Environment during Armed Conflicts and in Relation to Peacebuilding Measures", which took place in hybrid format on 19 January 2023 in Ljubljana. The event aimed to raise awareness on contemporary issues of IHL and promote the respect for international law.

The event attracted numerous high-level speakers. Following the welcoming words by the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, Ms Tanja Fajon, the participants were addressed by high-level speakers: Mr Gilles Carbonnier, Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Dr Danilo Türk, former President of the Republic of Slovenia, Dr Dominika Švarc Pipan, Minister of Justice of the Republic of Slovenia, and Janez Lenarčič, European Commissioner for Crisis Management.

The first panel addressed the importance of protecting critical infrastructure during armed conflict and in relation to peacebuilding measures. The panellists agreed that the IHL framework is clear; critical infrastructure is a civilian object and, under IHL, it must not be attacked. This infrastructure provides essential services for civilians (water, food, energy, health care, education).

The second panel focused on environmental degradation in armed conflict and its effects on human life and health. The panellists underlined that the legal framework for the protection of

the natural environment during armed conflict is sufficient, but must be respected on the ground. Soft law for the protection of the natural environment must be implemented at the national level and integrated into the military doctrine, strategy and training of the armed forces. States affected by climate change and environmental degradation can use the potential of new technologies (satellites).

The third panel discussed the provision of rapid and effective humanitarian aid to those most in need, in line with the existing legal framework. The panellists highlighted that the respect for IHL and humanitarian principles is a precondition for an effective, rapid, comprehensive and unimpeded humanitarian aid. Due to the increasing humanitarian needs, the international community must provide additional humanitarian resources. Humanitarian exemptions in the sanctions regimes are an essential tool for preserving humanitarian space.

Through this event, Slovenia helped strengthen the respect, implementation and dissemination of knowledge of IHL, and enhanced the visibility of the work of the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the EU and other global actors in the field of humanitarian diplomacy.

REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN NATIONAL IHL COMMITTEES

Slovenia actively participated in the Regional Conference of European National IHL Committees organized in Vienna on 13-14 March 2023. Slovenian chair of the national IHL committee gave an introductory presentation on the role of IHL committees.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING SIGNED BY SLOVENIA AND THE ICRC

2023 Memorandum of Understanding signed with ICRC, includes a provision of supporting, promoting and upholding of international humanitarian law.

A GLOBAL ALLIANCE TO SPARE WATER FROM ARMED CONFLICTS

In partnership with Switzerland and Geneva Water Hub, Slovenia launched an Alliance to Spare Water from Armed Conflict. The goal of the Alliance is to reduce water-related civilian harm. By marshalling the commitment and expertise of its members towards a jointly defined set of goals, the Alliance will promote respect for international law protecting freshwater and water-related installations, and deepen the base of knowledge and policy, which underpins the law. To define the mandate and the scope of the Alliance, Slovenia and Geneva Water Hub organized an expert workshop (November 2023) in Geneva.

The Alliance was launched 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 May 2024 in New York.

Protection of water in armed conflicts forms part of Slovenia's water diplomacy agenda under its priority item Water, Peace and Security. To strengthen the voice and visibility of Slovenia's water diplomacy, the Minister appointed Ambassador-at-Large for Water Diplomacy in September 2022.

DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE OF IHL AT THE DOMESTIC LEVEL

- **THE FIRST NATIONAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF IHL AT THE DOMESTIC LEVEL**

Slovenia is also drafting a national report on the implementation of the IHL at the domestic level.

➤ **THE TRANSLATION OF THE GENEVA LIST OF PRINCIPLES ON THE PROTECTION OF WATER INFRASTRUCTURE INTO THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE**

With a view to integration into military policy and training, Slovenia is preparing the translation of the Geneva List of Principles on the Protection of Water infrastructure into the Slovenian language.

➤ **PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS TRAINING CENTRE (POTC)**

The Slovenian ministries of foreign affairs, defence and the interior established the Peacekeeping Operations Training Centre (POTC), which implements certified training and education for the military, police, civilian functional specialists and other civilian personnel prior to their deployment to peacekeeping operations and missions within the UN, EU, NATO and the OSCE.

From 6 to 7 November 2023, the 2nd module of the training on IHL took place at the Joint Training Centre in Postojna, organised by the Slovenian Armed Forces and POTC. Two leading experts from the Faculty of Law, University of Ljubljana delivered their lectures to the participants of the training.

POTC has contributed to the promotion and understanding of international humanitarian law by training personnel deployed to peace operations. The centre addressed IHL as part of two Gender Mainstreaming Trainings (March 2022 and March 2023), as part of three Protection of Civilians Trainings (April 2022, May 2022, October 2023), as part of two specialised trainings on IHL and Military Targeting Rules (November 2022, November 2023) and as part of the Specialised Climate, Peace and Security Training.

➤ **FACULTY OF LAW, UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA**

Members of the Department of International Law of the Faculty of Law of the University of Ljubljana regularly teach courses addressing IHL issues. In addition to a significant proportion of hours devoted to IHL within the mandatory Public International Law course (Bachelor Level), they also teach an elective course titled International Law of Armed Conflicts (Master Level). Individual professors also regularly actively participate in conferences, seminars, workshops etc. on IHL issues abroad, publish works on IHL issues and mentor students writing their master and doctoral theses in the field of IHL.

In 2021 and 2023 the Faculty of Law of the University of Ljubljana continued *The Responsibility to Protect in Theory and Practice Conference Series*, which is a series of biennial international interdisciplinary conferences. The conferences are organised as a forum where international experts and researchers have the opportunity to participate in a discourse on issues related to R2P, including relevant IHL framework (www.R2Pconference.com).

From 21 to 24 November 2023, the annual *All-European International Humanitarian and Refugee Law Moot Court Competition* (<https://www.pf.uni-lj.si/en/international-cooperation/all-european-international-humanitarian-and-refugee-law-moot-court-competition/>) took place, organised by the Faculty of Law, University of Ljubljana in partnership with International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

(UNHCR) and Slovenian Red Cross. This competition addresses the most pertinent and topical questions relating to international humanitarian and refugee law, drawing on the current crisis situations. It is designed to encourage students to study and understand the fundamental concepts of international humanitarian and refugee law by addressing concrete legal problems and practice their legal argumentation in front of experienced judges and panel members.

On December 14, 2023, the Faculty of Law, University of Ljubljana in collaboration with the ICRC co-hosted an online Roundtable of IHL Academics in Europe: Shaping the discussion on IHL in complex times. The event gathered 40 academics from different European universities which discussed teaching and disseminating IHL in Europe, war in cities and the role of academics in countering negative narrative on IHL.

FIGHT AGAINST IMPUNITY

ICC

In promotion of the respect for humanity and human rights, Slovenia supports the operation of international criminal justice, mutual legal assistance and activities aimed at the rule of law, accountability and prevention of breaches of rights and law.

Slovenia supports full implementation of the Rome Statute, its universality and integrity. It upholds the work and effective functioning of the International Criminal Court, its independence and impartiality.

Slovenia responds in a timely manner to the adoption of the amendments to the Rome Statute. In 2022 Slovenia ratified the amendments to the Rome Statute regarding employment of weapons, which use microbial or other biological agents or toxins, of weapons the primary effect of which is to injure by fragments which in the human body escape detection by X-rays, of laser weapons, and regarding intentionally using starvation of civilians as a method of warfare. These amendments entered into force for Slovenia on 1 December 2023. The last amendment from December 2023 was ratified in May 2024.

The Agreement on the Enforcement of Sentences of the ICC, concluded in 2019, entered into force on 1 April 2022.

Slovenia regularly participates in the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute. At the 22nd Session in December 2023 in New York, Slovenia was elected a member of the Bureau of the Assembly for the third time, with a mandate until and including the 25th Assembly in 2026.

At this session, Ms Beti Hohler, a nominee from Slovenia was elected a judge of the ICC. She solemnly swore as the judge of the ICC in March 2024.

The protection of victims is at the heart of the Rome Statute system. In this regard, Slovenia further contributed voluntarily to the Trust Fund for Victims in 2022 and 2023 to assist in redressing the harm suffered by victims of atrocities, through reparation ordered by the Court and other programmes for their benefit.

Slovenia regularly voices its support for both, the ICC and the fight against impunity in general bilaterally and in multilateral fora.

THE LJUBLJANA-THE HAGUE CONVENTION

In May 2023, Slovenia hosted the Diplomatic Conference that 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.

The purpose of the convention is to fill the legal gap in the field of mutual legal assistance and to facilitate and strengthen international cooperation in the investigation and prosecution of core international crimes, taking into account the fact that all states are primarily responsible for the investigation and prosecution of such crimes. When other multilateral or bilateral international treaties do not offer an effective legal framework, the Ljubljana-Hague Convention provides a basis for the provision of legal assistance, extradition, and the transfer of convicted persons.

To date, 34 States have already signed the Convention and one State decided for its provisional application from date of signature.