

Template Questionnaire relating to the status of the Protocols Additional to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and on measures to strengthen the existing body of international humanitarian law (IHL)

Submission from Austria on new developments and activities undertaken during the reporting period June 2024 – May 2026

Please set out briefly any new developments or activities undertaken in the following areas:

I. Ratifications or Accessions to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, their Additional Protocols and other relevant international humanitarian law (IHL) treaties:

N/A

II. Adoption of national legislation to implement the above-mentioned instruments:

The Austrian Federal Ministry of Defence has strengthened and reinforced its internal process to fulfil the legal obligation under **Article 36 of the 1977 Additional Protocol I** to the Geneva Conventions which stipulates that in the study, development, acquisition or adoption of a new weapon a Party must determine whether the employment of such weapon would be compliant with international (humanitarian) law. The implementation of this new **Legal Review** procedure is guaranteed through a **decree** issued in 2026. The procedure provides for a structured mechanism to ensure and reflect the obligation of upholding IHL.

III. Adoption of other measures of implementation and for the dissemination of IHL:

Austria is currently conducting a **Base-Line Study** on the implementation of the protection of civilians within the Austrian Federal Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces. This study intends to outline the current status of implementation, analyse relevant current and future developments in this field and draw concrete recommendations therefrom. The findings of the studies will serve as a foundation for the development of an **Internal Policy** on the protection of civilians, which is due to be finalized in the course of 2027.

IV. Domestic case law relating to the above-mentioned instruments:

N/A

V. Activities carried out by national commissions or committees to support the implementation or dissemination of IHL:

Austria works closely with the Austrian Red Cross and other relevant stakeholders at national level in order to promote observance and dissemination of IHL standards.

Austria organises **meetings of its National IHL Committee twice per year**, bringing together stakeholders including from the Federal Government (Foreign Affairs, Defence, Home Affairs, Justice, Arts and Culture), the Austrian Red Cross and universities.

The Austrian Foreign Ministry and the Austrian Red Cross together with the University of Salzburg organized a seminar in December 2024 in Salzburg on the topic “International Humanitarian Law and the Principle of Proportionality”.

VI. Other relevant initiatives to promote respect for the 1949 Geneva Conventions, their Additional Protocols and other relevant instruments:

Austria supports the **Global Initiative** to Galvanize Political Commitment to International Humanitarian Law, launched in 2024, and co-chairs the workstream on “Prevention Good Practices”.

At the **34th Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference**, Austria submitted seven **pledges** on the following topics: Educating Secondary School Students about International Humanitarian and Criminal Law, Fostering Exchange, Cooperation and Coordination among IHL Stakeholders, Establishment of Strategic Consultations between Austria and the ICRC (all three together with the Austrian Red Cross), Autonomous Weapons Systems: Working with Urgency Towards International Regulation (Open Pledge), EWIPA: Developing and Implementing the Political Declaration including Guidelines for the Austrian Armed Forces, and Universalising the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and its underlying rationale (Open Pledge).

Between 2024 and 2026, Austria contributed a total of **€36,4 Mio. to the International Committee of the Red Cross** to provide humanitarian protection and assistance to those suffering the devastating effects of armed conflict. The **first Strategic Consultations** between Austria and the ICRC were held on 24 June 2025 in Geneva. In addition, since 2025, Austria has supported the humanitarian organization **Geneva Call with €700.000** to increase the protection of the civilian population in armed conflict through engagement with armed groups and de facto authorities.

Regarding the use of new technologies and artificial intelligence for military equipment, Austria is at the forefront of promoting the thorough and meaningful regulation of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS), in particular through the annual General Assembly resolution (2025¹), which reflected the informal consultations on LAWS that took place at the United Nations in New York in May 2025 addressing humanitarian, security, human rights and ethical aspects, aiming to build momentum towards a future regulation of LAWS.

The ***Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas*** (EWIPA Political Declaration) was adopted in Dublin in June of 2022 by 83 States, following the initiative of Austria, which held an initial conference on EWIPA in October 2019. To further its implementation, Austria held workshops in

¹ A/RES/80/57

Vienna (2024), Geneva and Accra (2026) and supported the participation of survivors at the second military workshop on the Implementation of the Political Declaration that took place on 23-24 April 2026 in Geneva.

On the **Anti-Personal Mine Ban Convention**, Austria actively participated at the 5th Review Conference in Siem Reap in 2024 and the 22nd meeting of State Parties in 2025 with the aim to strengthen the implementation of the Convention and to address compliance issues. As co-coordinator for Victim Assistance from December 2024 to December 2026, Austria advocated for a human-rights based approach to victim assistance and the meaningful participation of survivors in the work of the Convention. In this regard, particular focus was also given to gender perspectives and diverse populations.

On the **Convention on Cluster Munitions**, Austria actively participated in the implementation and universalization of the Convention as a member of the coordination committee for Victim Assistance (September 2022-September 2024) and on General Status and Operation (September 2024-September 2026). Austria further engaged in the discussions of the 12th and 13th Meeting of States Parties in 2024 and 2025 respectively.

In light of the withdrawals from the Anti-Personal Mine Ban Convention and the withdrawal from the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Austria held discussions on these withdrawals and possible efforts to strengthen the Conventions in the framework of the 2025 sessions of the Austrian National IHL Committee. The implementation of the EWIPA Political Declaration was also presented in this framework.

In order to strengthen these humanitarian disarmament instruments and their aim to reduce human suffering, Austria joined the group of champion states in support of the initiative by the United Nations Secretary General on Humanitarian Disarmament and Mine Action in 2024/2025. In this regard, Austria issued and coordinated a joint statement in support of the Anti-Personal Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions during the intersessional meeting of the Anti-Personal Mine Ban Convention in June 2025 that was supported by a cross-regional group of 26 States, and co-sponsored the advocacy event of the initiative organized by UNMAS on 3 December 2025 in New York.

Regarding nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, Austria continued to champion the prohibition of nuclear weapons with a particular focus on the inconsistency of these weapons with IHL. Through the **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)**, Austria was at the forefront of articulating the security concerns of non-nuclear weapons states in relationship to the existence of nuclear weapons and their role in security doctrines of some states. In this context, Austria proposed and then chaired an intersessional process on Security Concerns of TPNW States Parties, highlighting IHL-compliance questions and avenues to address this. A report was presented to the 3rd Meeting of TPNW States Parties.² Austria also addressed IHL-related aspects of nuclear weapons at the 11th Nuclear Non-

² TPNW/MSP/2025/7

Proliferation Treaty Review Conference through joint working papers,³ joint statements⁴ and side events.

The Austrian Armed Forces are continuously integrating the commitments set out in the ***Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas*** (EWIPA Political Declaration) in their strategy, training and documentation.

In 2024/2025, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Defence hosted a three-week **Course on International Law for Military Legal Advisers (LEGAD)** under the auspices of the European Security and Defence College (ESDC). The aim was to ensure thorough and detailed knowledge of the core principles and rules of IHL, operational law and human rights law applicable in situations of armed conflict and internal violence, as well as crisis management operations. The course consisted of three modules each of a week's duration. It is planned that the "Austrian LEGAD Course" will be held on a regular basis at intervals of two years. The upcoming course is scheduled to take place in the first half of 2027.

The Austrian Defence Academy offers **trainings, workshops and seminars on IHL** and specific aspects thereof on a regular basis to members of the Austrian Armed Forces. These are often also open to other (civilian) stakeholders.

As a part of Austria's military cooperation program with other states, Austrian LEGADs and staff of the International Law Directorate of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Defence conduct **lectures and courses on IHL** within the Armed Forces of those partners. These trainings play a vital role in strengthening the understanding and practical application of IHL principles and the prevention of violations during military operations.

The Austrian Red Cross offers trainings, workshops and seminars on IHL and specific aspects thereof on a regular basis to relevant stakeholders.

³ NPT/CONF.2026/WP.56

⁴ [Joint Humanitarian Statement submitted by Austria, Brazil, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, South Africa, Thailand, the original sponsors of the annual UN General Assembly Resolution on "The Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons"](#).