

Translated from Spanish

Status of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Convention of 1949 and relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts

Republic of El Salvador

Report of El Salvador pursuant to General Assembly resolution 73/204

The Republic of El Salvador is submitting this report in response to General Assembly resolution 73/204, in which States are requested to provide information on the status of the Additional Protocols relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts and on measures taken to strengthen the existing body of international humanitarian law, inter alia, with respect to its dissemination and full implementation at the national level.

At the national level, in 1997 the Salvadoran Government created the Inter-institutional Committee on International Humanitarian Law of El Salvador, which is an advisory body of the Government of the Republic on measures for the implementation and effective dissemination of information on international instruments in the field of international humanitarian law, as well as national and international legal rules that arise in that area, in particular the provisions of the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols of 1977.

Representatives of the ministries responsible for foreign affairs, justice and security, education, defence and public health participate in the Committee, as well as representatives of the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic, the Office of the Counsel General of the Republic, the Office of the Human Rights Advocate and the Salvadoran Red Cross. To support the Committee in performing its functions effectively, the participation of the above-mentioned institutions is coordinated by a permanent secretariat and working subcommittees that specialize in legislation, dissemination of information and training, and protection of cultural property.

In line with its mandate, the Inter-institutional Committee has carried out the following activities related to international humanitarian law:

- Training for personnel of the armed forces, other State institutions and university students in: (a) the work of the Inter-institutional Committee and its phases of marking of cultural property; (b) the application of the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the

Event of Armed Conflict, adopted at The Hague in 1954; (c) human rights and international humanitarian law; and (d) international humanitarian law and emblems of international protection.

- Commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols, and of the twenty-second anniversary of the creation of the Inter-institutional Committee. Specific activities included: (a) various presentations on the subject for government officials and students; (b) a rapprochement meeting with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), with the aim of strengthening cooperation and joint work to achieve the goals established by the Inter-institutional Committee; (c) a photography exhibition on the operations of the ICRC during armed conflict and the prevention work of the Inter-institutional Committee; (d) a meeting of mayors to strengthen the protection of marked cultural property, at which it was agreed to form a mayoral cooperation network that will serve to share good practices implemented to ensure the protection of cultural property in all situations.
- Production of a manual on international humanitarian law for the armed forces of El Salvador, which contains information relating to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols, as well as other relevant instruments.
- Dissemination of printed materials on international humanitarian law, such as information brochures and a compilation of international humanitarian law instruments.
- Updating of the Inter-institutional Committee's website with topics related to international humanitarian law.

In terms of normative efforts, the Inter-institutional Committee has prepared a preliminary draft of a special law against war crimes and crimes against humanity, which refers to, inter alia, the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols.

In addition, in the context of the thirty-third International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the Inter-institutional Committee is working on four country pledges that will provide an international humanitarian law road map, with a view to the involvement of more State institutions. The pledges refer to the protection of cultural property with the Blue Shield emblem, the updating of national legislation, the development of a diploma course in international humanitarian law for trainers of senior officers and legal personnel of the armed forces, and joint actions under the country's national plan for international humanitarian law.

El Salvador has also continued to mark cultural property with the Blue Shield to indicate the need for its protection in the event of an armed conflict. Currently, with the support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 44 properties are protected in times of peace; the latest to be marked was the Luis Alfaro Durán Museum and Library of the Central Reserve Bank.

Lastly, it is important to highlight the value that training in international humanitarian law has had as part of the training provided to police and military appointees prior to their deployment in peacekeeping operations under the mandate of the Security Council. Since 2012 an inter-institutional agreement on such training has been in place with a view to enhancing the capacity of Salvadorans who apply to serve in peace operations around the world.

The agreement, signed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence and the General Directorate of the National Civilian Police Force, which reports to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, provides for police officers to receive training in different areas at the Specialized Higher Education Institute for Diplomatic Training, including training in international humanitarian law and particularly the protection of civilians in conflict, with a special focus on gender.

In addition, the Peace Operations Training Centre of the Salvadoran Armed Forces is responsible for training personnel in human rights, international humanitarian law and United Nations guidelines on conduct, and in other areas, which El Salvador will include in its report pursuant to United Nations General Assembly resolution 74/181.

In short, all of these activities reflect the determination of the Republic of El Salvador to comply with the various obligations that arise from the rules of international humanitarian law, and also its intention to continue making its best efforts for their dissemination and implementation.
