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**First State Consultation on Workstream 1  
Prevention Good Practices****New Zealand Submission  
July 2025**

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New Zealand has always supported the development and implementation of international humanitarian law (IHL). At the current time, IHL has never been more relevant.

For this reason, New Zealand would like to thank the ICRC, alongside France, Brazil, China, Jordan, Kazakhstan, and South Africa for launching the Global Initiative to Galvanise Political Commitment to International Humanitarian Law.

In this submission, New Zealand highlights five international instruments that support states' compliance with IHL. Universalisation and implementation of these instruments is preventive good practice.

*The Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas*

As part of a core group of states and in consultation with the UN, ICRC and civil society, New Zealand pushed for international focus on enhancing civilian protection from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA). We were motivated by concern about the high rate of civilian casualties that explosive weapons continue to cause in populated areas in recent conflicts. Our efforts culminated in the negotiation and adoption of the Political Declaration on EWIPA. The Political Declaration focuses on enhanced implementation of existing obligations under IHL, as well as international cooperation and data collection.

The EWIPA Declaration is a political-level commitment, but it is intended to be implemented in practical ways. The New Zealand Government largely implements this through New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) policies and practices. For example:

- A comprehensive briefing package is delivered at New Zealand Defence Force recruit training and officer training on Geneva Conventions obligations. This includes coverage of the Law of Armed Conflict through the [Manual of Armed Forces Law – Law of Armed Conflict – DM 69 \(2 ed\) Volume 4](#).
- [Defence Force Order 35 – New Zealand Defence Force Response to Civilian Harm](#) requires the NZDF to investigate and report civilian harm caused by military operations. As a transparency initiative, the Chief of Defence Force publishes an annual report on all civilian harm reports involving NZDF and NZDF's response.
- NZDF prioritises the inclusion of Legal Advisers in each deployment in which kinetic

targeting may be involved, to ensure compliance with our obligations during the planning of operations.

The EWIPA Political Declaration is also factored into export application assessments under New Zealand's [export controls regime](#).

*The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM)*

The APMBC and the CCM are humanitarian disarmament treaties which comprehensively prohibit certain types of weapons. Anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions, as defined in the respective Conventions can be difficult to use in compliance with IHL, and the use of these weapons has a high incidence of civilian harm. The comprehensive prohibitions of these weapons are examples of prevention as good practice. New Zealand calls on all States not Party to the Conventions accede to them without delay.

*The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)*

The ATT was adopted with the purpose, inter alia, of reducing human suffering. This humanitarian imperative drives New Zealand engagement in the Treaty, and we recognise that there is more to be done to realise this ambition.

As an example of preventive good practice, the ATT prohibits States Parties from authorising any transfer of conventional arms covered by the Treaty, "if it has knowledge at the time of authorization that the arms or items would be used in the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, attacks directed against civilian objects or civilians protected as such, or other war crimes as defined by international agreements to which it is a Party." New Zealand calls on all States not Party to accede to or ratify the Arms Trade Treaty without delay.

*The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)*

The CCW exists as a mechanism to adopt protocols on specific means and methods of warfare for which there is concern that general IHL rules and prohibitions might not be sufficient. Several Protocols have been agreed under the CCW framework, and any High Contracting Party can suggest amendments or new Protocols. This flexibility allows the Convention to evolve with changing warfare technologies and humanitarian concerns. New Zealand calls on all non-High Contracting Parties to accede to or ratify the CCW without delay. New Zealand, for its part, is a High Contracting Party to all the CCW's protocols.

**ENDS**