



**DRAFT STATEMENT ON THE HIGH-LEVEL LAUNCH EVENT ON THE PROGRESS
REPORT**

FOR THE GLOBAL INITIATIVE TO GALVANIZE POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO IHL

TO BE HELD ON

THURSDAY 16 OCTOBER 2025

**AT THE PALAIS DES NATIONS, GENEVA
Room Tempus**

Mr. Moderator,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Permit me to commence by expressing my Delegation's gratitude to Costa Rica, Slovenia, Switzerland, and the International Committee of the Red Cross for convening this High-Level Launch Event on the Progress Report for the Global Initiative to Galvanize Political Commitment to IHL.

We thank the co-chairs for their insightful reports from the work streams, and welcome the findings and recommendations contained therein which reflect the collaborative, inclusive, transparent, and consultative manner of this process.

As one of the co-founders of the Global Initiative, South Africa is deeply committed to the principles of human dignity, peace, and justice. In the context of ongoing conflicts, we recognise the critical importance of elevating International Humanitarian Law (IHL) as a political priority to address the growing challenges posed by armed conflicts worldwide.

South Africa values its involvement in this Initiative, as we believe that the centrality of the African voice in shaping normative frameworks to protect civilians in the context of armed conflict is essential. For too long, Africa has been and continues to be disproportionately affected by armed conflict, and its invaluable experience and leadership in the global dialogue on this matter is therefore critical.

Having said this, we wish to reflect on some of the key elements of the report.

- (a) First, South Africa fully supports the report's call to strengthen multilateral cooperation and National IHL Committees. This aligns closely with our commitment to regional cooperation and collective capacity-building across the African continent and other conflict-stricken regions. By promoting peer exchange and investing in domestic and regional IHL mechanisms, we aim to advance Africa's role in upholding international law and reinforcing a culture of respect for humanitarian principles.
- (b) Second, the report's emphasis on linking IHL to peace and mediation reflects a cornerstone of South Africa's foreign policy, the peaceful resolution of conflicts through dialogue and negotiation. We believe that integrating humanitarian principles into mediation and post-conflict reconstruction not only saves lives but also lays the foundation for reconciliation and sustainable peace. This includes the maintenance of international peace and security.
- (c) Third, the recommendation to protect civilians and essential infrastructure speaks directly to South Africa's enduring advocacy for the security of civilians and the protection of life and dignity in war. Ensuring stronger IHL protections for hospitals, schools, and humanitarian services reflects our constitutional values and reinforces South Africa's role as a champion of human rights and justice globally.

With this said, South Africa reaffirms its commitment to working with all partners to strengthen respect for IHL, and ensure that the principles of humanity, neutrality, and impartiality guide our collective actions.

Finally, we reiterate the call made during the High-Level Week of the UN General Assembly in New York for a renewed global political commitment to International Humanitarian Law (IHL), emphasising the essential responsibility of States to uphold, implement, and fully apply the Geneva Conventions in practice.

I thank you.