

ICRC Global Initiative to Galvanize Political Commitment to International Humanitarian Law

Launch of progress report

16 October 2025

Statement as co-chair of Workstream One

[Handling note: co-chairs have been asked to highlight progress and present emerging findings from the first round of consultations]

I would first like to express my appreciation to the ICRC and their co-hosts, Costa Rica, Slovenia and Switzerland, for bringing us together to mark this milestone in our work.

One year ago, States across the world joined the Global Initiative, marking our shared commitment to promoting compliance with IHL.

Since then, Australia has been pleased to work with the ICRC and our fellow co-chairs, Austria, Kenya and the United Arab Emirates on the ‘prevention good practices’ workstream.

Preventing IHL violations is at the heart of our work in the Global IHL Initiative.

Workstream one presents an opportunity to connect principles to practical actions that will prevent IHL violations and reduce suffering of those caught up in conflict. By identifying effective practices, strategies, and methodologies, we aim to develop practical guidance on fostering respect for IHL.

The **first consultation** was a step towards this. States shared their practical experience in preventing IHL violations, and explored what measures were most effective and why.

States identified a range of measures that were effective in promoting IHL compliance including: strong domestic legal frameworks, training and education, effective command structures, accountability, and political leadership.

This discussion also allowed us all to reflect more broadly on the political, structural and institutional conditions needed to build an environment of IHL compliance.

We would like to thank those States that participated for sharing their experiences with us.

We look forward to building on this work over the next year.

In the **second consultation**, we will further explore what factors may increase the risk of IHL violations, and how States may monitor and minimise these risks.

In the **third consultation**, we will focus on a key aspect of prevention: training. This will provide an opportunity to explore how training can instil the rules of IHL into society and its armed forces to ensure long-term and consistent compliance.

Speaking now in our national capacity, we welcome this opportunity to also highlight a separate initiative that Australia has been leading, which elevates political commitment to IHL and reinforces the aims of this workstream. Australia, together with a cross-regional group of States, has been working to drive global action to protect humanitarian workers in conflict zones. After a year-long effort, we recently launched the Declaration for the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel, joined by more than 100 States. Together we pledged to new, concrete measures to keep humanitarian personnel safe and enable them to do their lifesaving work in conflict and disaster zones. We encourage all States to join us in this commitment.

Now is a critical time for States to reaffirm their commitment to promoting compliance with IHL. We look forward to coming together again this time next year to mark a further milestone – a set of practical recommendations that will strengthen our efforts to uphold compliance with IHL.

Thank you.