

The Global Initiative to Galvanize Political Commitment to International Humanitarian Law

WORKSTREAM 2: NATIONAL IHL COMMITTEES

THIRD STATE CONSULTATION ON NATIONAL IHL COMMITTEES

9 February 2026

Statement by Finland

I wish to thank the ICRC and all the co-chairs – Germany, Peru, Philippines, and the UK – for their work on this work stream under the Global IHL initiative. Finland participated in the first consultations on National IHL committees and in the regional consultations in Warsaw and we are pleased to take part also today.

Finland has had a working group on international humanitarian law, i.e. the national IHL committee, since 1993, and the working group is chaired and coordinated by the Finnish MFA. In addition to the reconstitution and broadening of the working group in 2009, we continuously seek to develop the group and improve its effectiveness. We appreciate the work done under this workstream and the possibility to learn from others in this regard.

On the guiding questions, we especially would wish to highlight the importance of **international cooperation**. We very much value the meetings between national IHL committees, whether regional or in broader groupings, to share experiences and best practices. Peer-to-peer learning and networking is particularly useful when done in person. These meetings also function as **a form of capacity building**. The ICRC also already provides ample material, training and an online platform/tool.

Voluntary commitments and practical recommendations that would support national IHL committees in their work and to better promote the implementation of IHL are very welcome. It is important that such suggestions would take into consideration the different mandates of the national IHL committees. For instance, the Finnish IHL committee is tasked with promoting and coordinating the dissemination and implementation of IHL, exchanging information, and monitoring the development of international humanitarian law and assessing their domestic level implications.

Understanding the challenges of limited time and resources as highlighted in the background paper and the progress report, the recommendations should also take these into account so as not to overburden the committees or take away time from their substantive work. In our experience, it is also essential for a committee's effectiveness that it can adapt and operate flexibly within the mandate it has been given.

Thank you.