



**STATEMENT BY INDIA - THIRD STATE CONSULTATION ON
UPHOLDING INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW IN THE USE
OF ICTS DURING ARMED CONFLICTS DELIVERED BY MR.
SUDHEER K.J., FIRST SECRETARY, PERMANENT MISSION OF
INDIA GENEVA, 16 FEBRUARY 2026**

Distinguished Delegates,

India is pleased to participate in this Third State Consultation on upholding International Humanitarian Law in the use of information and communication technologies during armed conflicts. We commend the ICRC and Co-Chairs (*Ghana, Luxembourg, Mexico, and Switzerland*), for sustaining this important dialogue, which sits at the intersection of humanitarian protection, technological evolution, and international peace and security.

We would like to make the following general comments:

India's engagement with International Humanitarian Law is rooted in both principle and practice. Being one of the early States to become party to the Geneva Conventions, and as a nation with a long tradition of contributing to UN peacekeeping operations, India has consistently upheld the imperative of protecting civilians and ensuring that the conduct of hostilities remains bound by humanitarian considerations. Our historical experience reinforces our belief that the preservation of human dignity must remain central, even amidst the changing character of warfare.

The rapid expansion of ICT capabilities has transformed the strategic and operational environment of contemporary conflicts. Cyber operations can now have effects comparable to kinetic attacks, including on critical infrastructure, essential services, and civilian populations. Their speed, anonymity, and cross-border reach introduce new layers of complexity for the application of IHL.

India recognizes that while IHL applies to all means and methods of warfare including ICTs, the unique characteristics of the digital domain raise practical questions regarding attribution, distinction, proportionality, and precautions in attack.

We underscore the importance of preventing the misuse of ICTs in ways that could exacerbate human suffering. Cyber operations targeting medical facilities, humanitarian organizations, water systems, energy grids, or other civilian objects can have devastating humanitarian consequences. Such actions undermine the very foundations of IHL.

India has made robust advancements in digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, and emerging technologies. While India has not adopted a dedicated military cyber-operations doctrine in the public domain, its practice reflects a clear emphasis on protecting critical information infrastructure, ensuring the continuity of essential civilian services, and preventing ICT activities that could cause indiscriminate or disproportionate harm. Domestically, the Information Technology Act and its associated rules establish robust protections against unauthorized access, data tampering, and disruption of computer systems, which remain relevant during armed conflict.

We remain committed to ensuring that technological progress is accompanied by responsible governance, respect for sovereignty, and adherence to international law. We strongly advocate that that cyberspace must remain an arena of cooperation, not conflict.

India supports efforts to clarify how existing IHL principles apply to ICT operations while avoiding any expansion of current legal obligations, and emphasises the need for responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in line with the established principles of international law and UN charter. We strongly advocate that discussion in this august forum should not affect the national sovereignty, territorial integrity and interference in the internal affairs of any of States.

We also note the importance of strengthening international cooperation to prevent malicious ICT activities that could endanger civilians or disrupt humanitarian action, and highlight the need for enhanced capacity-building, especially for developing countries, to ensure all States can effectively implement IHL in the digital domain.

As we speak, the AI Impact Summit is taking place in India, addressing a wide range of issues related to artificial intelligence. While the programme focuses broadly on AI governance, societal impact, and responsible deployment, it is expected that concerns around AI-related harms will also feature in the discussions

Finally, we understand the need for this dialogue and therefore, we stand ready to engage constructively in this workstream and contribute to safeguarding civilians from the evolving risks posed by ICT activities during armed conflicts. We look forward to continued collaboration with all States and the ICRC in advancing this shared objective.

Thank you.