



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Global Initiative to Galvanize Political Commitment to International Humanitarian Law

Second State Consultation: Workstream “Prevention Good Practices”

IPU Intervention

25 November 2025

As this is the first time that the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is taking the floor, allow us to thank the ICRC for organizing this consultation, together with the co-chairs Australia, Austria, Kenya and United Arab Emirates, and for the invitation extended to international organizations such as the IPU.

The IPU, the global organization of national parliaments, has long promoted respect for international humanitarian law (IHL) and provided its 183 Member Parliaments with expertise and technical support to implement IHL at the domestic level.

In this context, we would like to contribute to this workstream with a perspective on how parliaments can contribute to the prevention of IHL violations. This contribution is based on the Geneva Declaration on *Upholding humanitarian norms and supporting humanitarian action in times of crisis*, which was adopted at the closing of the 151st IPU Assembly last October. Our intervention here addresses questions pertaining to sessions 1, 3 and 4.

Firstly, the Declaration highlights that weak or incomplete legal and regulatory frameworks, dehumanization of the enemy and limited openness to scrutiny do increase the risk of IHL violations. This is exactly where the role of parliaments can be crucial to put systems and structures in place in response to these challenges.

Key measures that parliaments and parliamentarians can take to contribute to the prevention of IHL violations include:

- Ensuring the full incorporation of IHL into domestic legislation by adopting new legislation and/or reviewing and amending legislation to enshrine IHL obligations in national legal frameworks, including appropriate criminal legislation, and ensuring that national judicial authorities have the legislative means to prosecute those who are responsible for serious IHL violations and war crimes.
- Supporting the establishment or strengthening of national IHL committees that assist the government in implementing, monitoring compliance with and spreading knowledge of IHL.
- Strengthening parliamentary oversight functions to ensure that all government decisions related to the use of armed force, arms transfer or peace operations are based on evidence and consistent with IHL obligations and that the humanitarian impact of decisions taken is clearly considered.
- Allocating predictable and multi-year financial resources for IHL capacity-building and national implementation, including by integrating IHL into military training by ensuring that defence budgets include provisions for recurrent IHL training for armed and security forces.

- Integrating IHL expertise into States' parliamentary research and legislative services to ensure that new or incomplete laws are compatible with these States' obligations under IHL, including by establishing a parliamentary body dealing with matters pertaining to IHL or at least equipping concerned parliamentary committees and their staff with such expertise.
- Shaping public understanding of IHL norms by using their influence as opinion leaders and representatives of the people to speak out to reaffirm the relevance of IHL, counter misinformation, and promote mutual respect and dialogue. This includes combating the "dehumanization" that often accompanies conflict and polarization and leads to the erosion of empathy and the normalization of suffering in armed conflict.

We will end by placing emphasis on the importance of building political will and speaking out in defense of IHL norms and principles. This is key for prevention and an objective to which parliaments can also contribute.