

Draft Philippine Statement

Third Round of Consultations – Workstream 2 (National IHL Committees)
[4 mins delivery time]

Thank you, Co-Chairs.

The Philippines thanks the International Committee of the Red Cross for convening this third round of consultations under Workstream 2 of the Global Initiative to Galvanize Political Commitment to International Humanitarian Law, and is honored to co-chair this third consultations along with Germany, Peru and the UK.

The Philippines participates in this discussion from a whole-of-government perspective, informed by our experience that IHL is most effectively implemented when addressed through sustained inter-agency coordination and embedded within national policy, legal, and institutional frameworks. National IHL committees thus play an essential role as advisory and coordination mechanisms that support national authorities in fulfilling their international commitments.

On the first guiding question concerning a common purpose paper, the Philippines supports the development of a concise, non-prescriptive common purpose paper for national IHL committees. Such a paper should serve as a reference framework, rather than a binding instrument, and should respect the diversity of national mandates, legal systems, and institutional arrangements. The Philippines underscores that any common purpose paper should aim to strengthen—not standardize—the work of national IHL committees. Common commitments could include enhanced whole-of-government coordination on IHL implementation; regular review of national gaps in legislation, dissemination, and training; context-sensitive and preventive approaches across peace and conflict settings; and structured engagement with national Red Cross or Red Crescent societies, academia, and civil society, as appropriate. Importantly, the paper should reaffirm national ownership and support informed national decision-making.

Regarding international cooperation and solidarity, the Philippines supports efforts to facilitate cooperation among national IHL committees in a practical, voluntary, and non-duplicative manner. We do not see the need to establish a new organization. Instead, we support building on and strengthening existing platforms, with facilitation by the ICRC, through a voluntary network of national IHL committees. Such cooperation could be advanced through global or regional focal points, periodic thematic exchanges, and peer dialogues reflecting shared legal traditions or common implementation challenges. These modalities will encourage peer mentoring, South-South and triangular cooperation, and collective learning that can inform national policy and legislative processes.

On monitoring effectiveness, the Philippines believes that monitoring of national IHL committees should be self-reflective, non-punitive, and supportive, with the objective of strengthening effectiveness rather than ranking or naming states. Effectiveness should be assessed in light of national mandates, institutional capacities, and

operational contexts. Voluntary self-assessment tools, periodic self-reporting templates, and qualitative indicators—such as inter-agency participation, continuity of work, and concrete outputs including advisories, legislative initiatives, and trainings—may provide meaningful insights. Due to our experience in hosting the Regional conference on IHL last August in Manila, we see immense value in peer exchange and peer learning discussions as constructive means of reinforcing accountability while preserving national ownership.

On capacity-strengthening, the Philippines emphasizes the importance of accessible, modular, and collaborative approaches that support institutional continuity across government, particularly in light of frequent personnel rotation. In this context, the Philippines supports the joint development of an open-access online toolkit, coordinated by the ICRC and co-created by national IHL committees. Such a toolkit could include training modules for policy-level and technical officials, model terms of reference and legislative templates, compilations of practices by region or theme, and practical guidance for new committee members. Co-ownership of content would promote sustainability, while regional training hubs and blended learning approaches could further enhance capacity-building efforts.

Finally, on maximizing the potential of national IHL committees, the Philippines underscores the value of early and systematic engagement of committees in national policy-making, including in areas such as security, disaster preparedness and response, counterterrorism, and peacebuilding. Strengthening linkages with legislative bodies and national human rights institutions may further enhance coherence and effectiveness. National IHL committees have an important position as key national interlocutors in international reporting, peer review, and treaty processes, and of enhancing the visibility of their work in relevant global fora.

In closing, the Philippines reiterates its strong support for the Global IHL Initiative and for the continued work under Workstream 2. National IHL committees as durable, whole-of-government mechanisms that translate international commitments into national action and contribute meaningfully to the protection of human dignity in all situations. We forward to continued engagement with partners as this workstream advances toward practical, inclusive, and consensus-based outcomes.

Thank you.