

BACKGROUND NOTE

FOURTH ROUND OF STATE CONSULTATIONS ON THE WORKSTREAMS OF THE GLOBAL IHL INITIATIVE

MONDAY, 4 MAY 2026, TO THURSDAY, 7 MAY 2026

FORMAT: IN PERSON (GENEVA) AND ONLINE (ZOOM)

Background

- Three rounds of state consultations have been organized on the seven workstreams of the Global Initiative to Galvanize Political Commitment to International Humanitarian Law (Global IHL Initiative) in 2025 and early 2026.
- Over 150 states attended these consultations and shared views on how they understand the existing rules of IHL as well as practices and proposals to support those rules' implementation and application in good faith.
- Following the first three rounds of consultations, the co-chairing states and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have drawn up a **draft outcome document for each of the seven workstreams** of the Global IHL Initiative.
- All states are now invited to **consider the draft outcome document** for each workstream (available in the [documentation section](#) of the Humanity in War website and in the agenda provided at the end of this background note) and to **share their views**, including any input they may wish to provide to further refine the text.
- During the fourth round of consultations, states will be invited to present their comments in the form of **oral statements**, which should focus on the following:
 - presenting general feedback on the outcome document of that workstream
 - highlighting the specific elements that the state believes are most useful
 - suggesting any additional practical measures to further improve implementation
 - making suggestions on any aspects that could be refined.

- In addition to presenting their oral statements during the fourth round of consultations, states are kindly asked to send **written input no later than 7 May**. This written input may reflect their oral statements or provide further details, including, where relevant, annotated versions of the draft outcome documents.

Participation

- The consultations will be held in a hybrid format with participation in person and online.
- The consultations are **open to all states that are interested** – any state can contribute ideas to further improve the outcome documents.
 - States that have not joined the Global IHL Initiative are still encouraged to participate and share their views and suggestions on the draft outcome documents.
 - State that did not participate in the first three rounds of consultations are equally encouraged to participate in the fourth round.
- **Other representatives with specific expertise** in the subject matter (e.g. members of international organizations, civil society and academia) will also participate upon invitation.
- Please register no later than **30 April 2026**, using this link: <https://forms.office.com/e/ptkWLMDEJu> or this QR code:



Procedure

- The working languages will be **Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish**, with simultaneous interpretation.
- We ask participants to limit their statements to **four minutes** to ensure sufficient time for all participants to take the floor.
- The **inclusive, constructive, non-politicized and solution-oriented** nature of the discussions will be maintained throughout the consultations.
- To facilitate interpretation, we invite participants to share a copy of their oral statements by **30 April 2026**, via email at ihlinitiative@icrc.org, with “Fourth round of consultations – Workstream [please specify the workstream]” in the subject line.
- The full written input **must be sent no later than 7 May 2026**. Written input will not be made public.
- The consultations will be recorded, but the recording will not be made public.

Agenda

Fourth Round of Consultations

4–7 May 2026
ICRC Humanitarium, 17 avenue de la Paix, 1202 Geneva
(simultaneously on Zoom)

Monday, 4 May 2026	
Welcome coffee and tea	8:30–9:00
Introduction and overview of the process	9:00–9:30
<p>Part I: International humanitarian law (IHL) and sustainable peace</p> <p>The consultation will start with the overarching theme of IHL and peace, highlighting the importance of preserving pathways to peace throughout the conflict cycle. Participants will be invited to share comments on the proposed outcome document for Workstream 3, which presents ways to leverage the links between respect for IHL and sustainable peace.</p>	
Workstream 3: IHL and peace <i>See draft outcome document here</i>	9:30–12:30
Lunch break	12:30–14:00
<p>Part II: Limiting harm in contemporary armed conflicts</p> <p>This section of the consultation will address some concrete humanitarian challenges faced in contemporary armed conflicts by examining ways to implement the existing rules of IHL in a manner consistent with its protective purpose. Participants will be invited to provide comments on the proposed outcome documents for Workstreams 4 to 7.</p>	
Workstream 4 – Protection of civilian infrastructure <i>See draft outcome document here</i>	14:00–17:00
Tuesday, 5 May 2026	
Welcome coffee and tea	9:00–9:30
Workstream 5 – Achieving meaningful protection for hospitals <i>See draft outcome document here</i>	9:30–12:30
Lunch break	12:30–14:00

Workstream 6 – Upholding IHL in the use of information and communications technologies in armed conflict <i>See draft outcome document here</i>	14:00–17:00
Wednesday, 6 May 2026	
Welcome coffee and tea	9:00–9:30
Workstream 7 – Naval warfare <i>See draft outcome document here</i>	9:30–12:30
Lunch	12:30–14:00
<p style="text-align: center;">Part III: Investing in implementation capacities to support meaningful commitment</p> <p>This section of the consultation will examine concrete actions that states can take to strengthen the implementation of IHL, both domestically and through international cooperation. Participants will be invited to comment on the proposed outcome documents of Workstreams 1 and 2.</p>	
Workstream 1: Prevention good practices <i>See draft outcome document here</i>	14:00–17:00
Thursday, 7 May 2026	
Welcome coffee and tea	9:00–9:30
Workstream 2 – National IHL committees <i>See draft outcome document here</i>	9:30–12:30
Concluding remarks and next steps	12:30–13:00