

## **Statement of Canada**

### **Workstream 2 – National IHL Committees 3rd Round of Consultations**

I express my thanks to the co-chairs and the ICRC for the organization of this session. IHL committees are a vital part of the global toolkit for strengthening respect for IHL at the national level, and their collaboration can only amplify progress toward shared humanitarian objectives.

#### On a Common Purpose:

Canada remains committed to facilitating the implementation of IHL in Canada. This is achieved by the National IHL Committee through functions such as advising on trainings, providing recommendations on national implementation, and raising public awareness on IHL. We believe that strengthening respect for IHL does not mean new rules are needed. Rather it requires more rigorous understanding and implementation of existing obligations; across the armed forces, within political leadership, and among the public. We therefore support the development of a common purpose paper, including a shared commitment to coordinated advocacy efforts that promote awareness and implementation of IHL obligations as well as facilitate mutual learning and technical coordination among committees worldwide.

#### On International Cooperation:

Canada recognizes that there are benefits for mutual learning and exchange of practices, notably, joint advocacy and strategic partnerships are essential to strengthening IHL and advancing the protection of civilians. We support both bilateral cooperation between National IHL committees and the use of multilateral platforms, such as the International Conferences, to foster dialogue, coordination, and shared learning. Canada welcomes opportunities to engage bilaterally with other national committees through joint learning and cooperation. Canada is also open to exploring avenues to foster meaningful multilateral exchanges. The experiences of national committees operating in complex environments can offer practical lessons on how to adapt and innovate to advance respect for IHL under challenging circumstances. Building coalitions with partners who share common values and objectives ultimately reinforces our collective ability to uphold IHL and reduce human suffering during armed conflict.

#### On Monitoring:

Canada believes that regular, transparent reporting is an effective way to monitor the work and impact of national IHL committees. We were proud to complete our inaugural

voluntary report on the domestic implementation of IHL in the fall of 2024, a product of close collaboration within our national IHL committee. We encourage other states to consider undertaking similar voluntary reporting as a means of assessing progress and identifying areas for further engagement. In addition, Canada's practice of jointly preparing and reporting on pledges made at the International Conferences, again in collaboration between Global Affairs Canada, the Canadian Red Cross and the Department of National Defence , provides another valuable mechanism for tracking activities and measuring effectiveness over time.