

## Statement of Canada

### Workstream 3: IHL and Peace 4<sup>th</sup> Round of Consultations

Canada is grateful for the extensive work undertaken thus far by the ICRC and the co-chairs. The document provides a basis for translating the political momentum generated by this initiative into recommendations to reinforce respect for IHL. Protection cannot be improvised in the chaos of conflict. By laying groundwork before war begins and sustaining it after conflicts end, we ensure that IHL is translated into an operational reality.

We would first like to highlight that pragmatism is important to delivering on the promise of IHL. Our engagement and positions are guided by our firm conviction that IHL's strength is based on combining a commitment to preserving humanity with a strong grounded pragmatism.

Canada wishes to propose an additional point for consideration; highlight aspects of the recommendations that we have found valuable and provide concrete suggestions to further refine the text:

On the additional point for consideration:

- Canada recommends highlighting that respect for IHL also comes with an economic factor. IHL sets rules to limit the impact of war on civilians (and other protected persons) and civilian objects. When the laws of war are ignored - more humanitarian assistance must be mobilized, significant funds are required to rebuild infrastructure, and the generational costs of displacement are widely felt. However, when IHL is respected, the financial toll of war can be measurably reduced – for everyone.

Canada notes two recommendations that are worth highlighting:

- On page 4, Canada welcomes the acknowledgment of independently conducted negotiations. We believe that this text has an opportunity to more fully capture the critical and often decisive role that States can play, through dialogue, diplomacy, and principled engagement, in moving parties to conflict toward cessation of hostilities and, ultimately, sustainable peace.
- Canada welcomes the recognition of the particular vulnerabilities of women and children under IHL, and underscores that these rules must remain central considerations in the conduct of hostilities.

Three further points could merit being refined:

- On point 3 – “Humane treatment, registration and oversight of detention”. Canada would welcome the addition of “relevant expertise of the neutral intermediary” as a component for consideration.

- On point 6 – “Dignified burial treatment of the dead during hostilities “: Canada would suggest highlighting consideration for religious traditions in the management of the dead.
- On point 7 – “Humanitarian Access”. It would be useful to note that in situations of occupation, the occupier cannot use control as a pretext to block or unduly delay humanitarian assistance.

Canada looks forwards to engage constructively with the second draft of the recommendations. Thank you very much.