

Chisinau, February 9, 2026

## **National IHL Committees – February 2026 Consultation**

Speech delivered by Mr. Eduard SERBENCO, Secretary of State,  
Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Moldova

‘Dear Moderator,  
Dear Co-Chairs,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, please allow me to welcome this inter-State initiative, supported and facilitated by the International Committee of the Red Cross, to galvanize political commitment to respect for international humanitarian law. The Republic of Moldova considers this initiative not only appropriate, but also necessary, in view of the proliferation of armed conflicts and their devastating impact on the civilian population, infrastructure, and cultural heritage.

Within this broader context, we reiterate the proposal previously advanced by the delegation of Moldova during the Regional Meeting of National IHL Committees in Warsaw, held in May 2025, concerning the establishment of a Global Forum of Chairs of National Committees on International Humanitarian Law.

In our opinion, such a Forum of Chairs should, first and foremost, provide a platform for strategic, leadership-level dialogue among National IHL Committees, aimed at identifying common priorities and shared challenges, as well as facilitating the exchange of good practices related to the implementation of international humanitarian law and the strengthening of national mechanisms. At the same time, the Forum of Chairs would enhance the visibility and relevance of National IHL Committees within the international IHL architecture and further reinforce cooperation and solidarity among States in this field.

As regards the coordination of the Forum of Chairs, we believe that a flexible and pragmatic model would be the most appropriate. At an initial stage, the coordinating role could be undertaken by the ICRC, in close cooperation with the interested group of States, without requiring the establishment of a permanent structure or a secretariat. We propose that the Global Forum of Chairs convene once every four years. For the first edition, on a voluntary basis and through self-nomination, a host State could be identified – preferably one where the National Committee has a strong institutional experience, valuable expertise, and adequate organizational and financial resources. Thereafter, as a standing operating principle, at each Forum session participants would select the host State for the next edition.

Secretariat functions should also remain minimal and should build on existing capacities. They could be carried out either by the ICRC or by the host State, with the ICRC support, and would include:

- convening Forum meetings and coordinating the calendar;
- drafting and circulating agendas;
- providing logistical support for meetings;
- facilitating the exchange of documents and good practices;
- drawing up summaries or conclusions of the discussions.

In terms of costs and administrative responsibilities, we suggest a balanced and predictable arrangement: local organizational costs (such as venue, logistics, technical support) would be assumed by the host State, with the ICRC support, within its available resources; while participating States would cover their own travel-related expenses. At the same time, the consistent use of hybrid formats should remain an essential measure to reduce costs and to ensure the broadest possible participation.

A Global Forum of Chairs would naturally contribute to the broader framework of international cooperation among National IHL Committees by complementing and reinforcing the existing platforms,

rather than duplicating them, through added strategic coordination and political momentum in support of stronger national mechanisms.

In conclusion, we believe that a Global Forum of Chairs would be a practical instrument capable of strengthening international cooperation, fostering solidarity among States, and contributing to more effective implementation of international humanitarian law at the national level.

Thank you for attention.'