

**Fourth State Consultation Round**  
**Workstream 1 on Prevention Good Practices**  
**Statement of Italy**

Geneva, 6<sup>th</sup> May 2026

The document's integrated approach, combining institutional, cultural and operational dimensions, reflects a sophisticated understanding of how IHL violations occur and how they can be prevented.

On the **first pillar**, Italy supports the emphasis on political ownership and the systematic integration of IHL into governmental structures and decision-making processes. In this regard, we would suggest three specific additions to the text.

- First, a more explicit reference to the importance of the periodic review and updating of rules of engagement, building on the existing references in the text, and framing this as a standing institutional practice;
- Second, a more explicit articulation of the role of inter-institutional coordination mechanisms, including IHL National Committees, in ensuring coherence across Government, particularly in ministries beyond the defence sector. Italy's experience suggests that structured interministerial cooperation, involving foreign affairs, justice and other relevant ministries, is essential to translate political ownership into consistent implementation;
- Third, stronger emphasis on the development and use of practical operational tools, such as doctrine, manuals and guidance, to ensure that IHL is effectively translated into operational practice. In this regard, Italy is currently finalising a Military Manual on the Application of International Law to Military Operations, as a comprehensive reference aimed at integrating IHL into doctrine and operations.

On the **second pillar**, Italy appreciates the document's attention to the psychological and social drivers of behaviour in conflict. The identification of stress, group dynamics and prolonged exposure to hostilities as risk factors is well-placed. Italy would suggest, however, that this analysis be complemented by more concrete references to mitigation measures, including personnel rotation, structured post-deployment debriefings and psychological support, framed explicitly as components of IHL compliance rather than ancillary welfare considerations.

Italy would also highlight the value of structured pre-deployment preparation, including scenario-based exercises that reflect realistic operational dilemmas. On civic education, Italy would welcome stronger language on the role of civil society and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as active implementation partners. Italy's experience with its annual National IHL Competition for secondary school students, organized in partnership with the Italian Red Cross, illustrates how such partnerships can translate civic education commitments into concrete and sustained outreach.

On the **third and last pillar**, Italy considers this pillar to have the greatest potential for further development. The document articulates clearly what safeguards should achieve. Italy would encourage greater attention to how they should function in practice. In particular, Italy suggests the section on risk indicators to be developed to include reference to concrete, trackable operational signals, such as patterns of civilian harm or incident reporting rates. Additionally, the link between detection and corrective action would benefit from more procedurally explicit language, encouraging states to establish pre-defined escalation procedures.