

Draft Joint Statement – Workstream 1 (Prevention good practices)

Monaco and IIHL

Global Initiative on IHL

Distinguished Co-Chairs,
Excellencies,
Colleagues,

I would like to express our appreciation to the co-chairing States and the ICRC for their continued leadership in advancing the Global Initiative on International Humanitarian Law, and in particular for guiding the important work on Workstream 1 on prevention good practices.

The focus of this workstream, understanding how and why different preventive measures effectively translate into compliance on the ground, is both timely and essential.

As highlighted repeatedly throughout the consultations, the mere existence of legal frameworks and institutional mechanisms alone is not sufficient; what ultimately matters are their real impact on social norms, on the behaviour of all actors, particularly weapon-bearers, and on decision-making in the event of armed conflict.

The Government of Monaco is firmly committed in this regard, specifically through its proactive engagement in multilateral fora and thanks to several constructive cooperations with international centres of excellence in the study of IHL and related matters.

Among such collaborations, we would like to highlight the recently consolidated synergy with the International Institute of Humanitarian Law, the Sanremo Institute, freshly renewed and enhanced as a further signal of the continued effort undertaken by the Government of Monaco to promote training as a core, preventive instrument against grave violations of IHL and war crimes.

The International Institute of Humanitarian Law in Sanremo (IIHL) has been actively engaged in supporting this process, including through its longstanding work on training, capacity-building and dialogue with States and armed forces. The Institute's approach, bridging legal knowledge, operational practice and professional ethics, closely aligns with the objectives of Workstream 1, particularly the emphasis on prevention through institutional strengthening, leadership and the internalization of IHL norms.

In this framework, the Principality wishes to recall that references to dissemination and training as cornerstones of prevention are indeed enshrined in all four Geneva Conventions of 1949 (notably Articles 47, 48, 127, and 144), with their principles reflected across all the main IHL instruments. This obligation applies in peacetime as well as in times of armed conflict and extends to both military personnel, relevant civilian authorities, and the civilian population. Ensuring that all those who may be called upon to apply or influence IHL are properly trained before crises arise, as previously mentioned, is essential to translating legal norms into consistent behaviour in practice.

This also resonates strongly with the findings of Workstream 1, which underscore that knowledge and training must go beyond formal instruction and should help shape professional conduct, institutional culture and decision-making processes.

Building on the discussions held across the consultations reflected in the draft document under review, the Monaco believes that three elements are particularly critical for effective prevention:

1. strong and coherent institutions, capable of integrating IHL into decision-making processes at all levels.
2. leadership and professional cultures that promote respect for IHL as a core value and an operational standard, supported by systematic and continuous training.
3. mechanisms that allow for early identification of risks and ensure timely corrective action.

These elements, taken together, shall contribute to creating an environment in which compliance with IHL becomes not only a legal obligation, but a sustained and internalized practice, a necessity.

In closing, I would like to reiterate our gratitude to the co-chairs and the ICRC for their leadership in this initiative, and to assure you of Monaco's continued unwavering support.

Thank you.