

- presenting general feedback on the outcome document of that workstream
 - highlighting the specific elements that the state believes are most useful
 - suggesting any additional practical measures to further improve implementation
 - making suggestions on any aspects that could be refined
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Global Initiative to Galvanize Political Commitment to International Humanitarian Law – Fourth state consultation on IHL and peace (Workstream 3)

Netherlands intervention

Word count: 508

First of all, the Netherlands wishes to express appreciation for the thorough work undertaken to arrive at this draft.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands is firmly committed to strengthening respect for international humanitarian law and to prevention and resolution of conflicts. International humanitarian law indeed provides a pathway to peace, and the Netherlands welcome how this is elaborated in the document.

We echo that we need to ensure that the systems necessary to fulfil IHL obligations remain functional throughout hostilities and during transitions toward peace. In addition, we aim to render these systems more effective where possible, and better used where needed. We have a few suggestions to that end.

The **first** focuses on the importance of **adequate duty of care for staff working on all the processes covered by this workstream**. This deserves to be incorporated in all phases addressed:

- *Before* hostilities, when building the systems needed during conflict, ways in which to maintain adequate duty of care for all professionals involved should also be developed. If we do not plan beforehand how to live up to this duty of care when conflict evolves, we can not expect those professionals to be able to always carry the weight of their responsibilities. This deserves a fourth action point in the first chapter.
- *During* hostilities, ensuring robust duty of care is an imperative if we want all the actions mentioned in the second chapter to have impact. This merits a seventh commitment in the second chapter.

- Once hostilities cease, the release of the immediate conflict-related tension may well trigger earlier repressed emotions and reflections and cause physical as well as mental issues. Among civilians and certainly also among professionals. Physical and mental duty of care therefore should also be required in the strategies and processes referred to in the third chapter.

A **second** point that can **increase the impact** of measures committed to, is **structural integration of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)**. Allow me to highlight:

- Each and every person should be treated in a dignified manner. Many of the processes focused upon in this workstream require accompaniment of, and engaging with persons affected by conflict. In accompanying people, in interviewing them, in keeping them informed about the possible fate of their relatives, it is of utmost importance to avoid doing further harm. If mental wounds, fears and psychosocial dynamics are not taken into account, it will be far more difficult to be effective in these actions.
- And if in mediation or post-conflict efforts psychosocial aspects and dynamics are ignored, it will be hardly possible to help communities overcome grievances, rebuild trust and regain social cohesion. Applying a psychosocial lense and making use of well-developed and evidence based MHPSS-approaches helps find and follow a pathway to lasting peace.

The potential of MHPSS is increasingly recognized, locally and internationally. But it is still a reality which is suppressed by stigma or by an - ill-informed and counterproductive - wish to economize. This is why it is important to explicitly include MHPSS across this document. We will submit some practical propositions to this end.