



PHILIPPINES



**GLOBAL INITIATIVE ON IHL
Fifth Round of State Consultations
23-25 June 2026**

Workstream 1 – Prevention Good Practices

Thank you, Co-Chairs.

The Philippines welcomes the revised outcome document on Prevention Good Practices and commends the Co-Chairs and the ICRC for presenting a thoughtful, ambitious and practical framework.

We strongly support the document's central premise: preventing violations of international humanitarian law requires more than legal rules. Respect for IHL must be embedded in institutions, professional standards, operational systems and the values that shape conduct, both in peacetime and during armed conflict.

The Philippines welcomes the integrated approach of strengthening institutions, anchoring identities in humanity and embedding safeguards capable of identifying and correcting risks before violations occur or escalate.

We appreciate the improvements reflected in the revised text.

The document now recognizes that implementation may be adapted to national contexts, institutional structures and legal systems. It identifies national IHL committees or equivalent focal points as practical mechanisms for coordinating implementation across government. It also strengthens inter-agency coordination, scenario-based training for urban operations, civilian-harm analysis and attention to the differentiated risks faced by children, women and persons with disabilities.

We particularly welcome the stronger provisions on trusted reporting channels, protection against retaliation, corrective action, institutional learning and domestic accountability. We also appreciate the recognition that misinformation and digitally amplified narratives may contribute to stigmatization, dehumanization and unlawful violence.

The Philippines respectfully offers several suggestions for further refinement.

First, the document could encourage States to develop or periodically update national IHL implementation plans or roadmaps, as appropriate. These could identify priorities, responsible institutions, measurable benchmarks and voluntary review mechanisms.

Second, the provisions on responsible narratives and misinformation could expressly recognize that relevant measures should remain consistent with applicable legal frameworks, including freedom of expression.

Third, the document could further recognize phased, scalable and resource-sensitive implementation, supported where appropriate by capacity-building and peer exchange. This would enhance its practical value for States with differing institutional capacities.

Fourth, we encourage express recognition of the contributions of national human rights institutions and of victim- and survivor-sensitive approaches to prevention, reporting and institutional learning.

Finally, we welcome the strong emphasis on accountability for grave breaches and other serious violations of IHL. For legal precision, it may be useful to clarify that this does not preclude lawful, context-sensitive amnesty or reintegration measures for persons who are not responsible for such violations, consistent with applicable international law.

The Philippines believes that the revised document provides a strong foundation for translating legal obligations into durable institutional culture, operational discipline and public responsibility.

We remain committed to engaging constructively in its finalization.

Thank you.



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Workstream 3 – IHL and Peace

Thank you, Co-Chairs.

The Philippines welcomes the revised outcome document on IHL and Peace and commends the Co-Chairs and the ICRC for presenting a comprehensive, practical and forward-looking framework.

We strongly support the document's central premise: respect for international humanitarian law is a strategic investment in sustainable peace. Protecting people, preserving essential services and maintaining public trust help create the conditions needed for recovery, reconciliation and long-term stability.

The Philippines particularly appreciates the document's full-cycle approach.

Before hostilities, the revised text strengthens preparedness through civil-registration systems, tracing mechanisms, detention safeguards, infrastructure mapping, continuity planning and civil-military coordination.

During armed conflict, it offers practical guidance for integrating humanitarian commitments into mediation and peace processes while preserving the importance of consent, national context and the integrity of humanitarian obligations.

After hostilities, the detailed implementation checklist provides a useful basis for coordinated action on missing persons, detention and release, the return of displaced persons, child protection, reintegration, explosive remnants of war, environmental safeguards, monitoring and accountability.

We welcome several improvements reflected in the revised document.

The text now expressly recognizes the role of local administration in post-conflict implementation. It strengthens women's full, equal and meaningful participation and adopts more inclusive approaches for children, persons with disabilities, older persons and affected communities.

We also welcome the stronger monitoring and review framework, including reporting tools, indicators and lessons-learned processes. The inclusion of national mechanisms to review military operations resulting in damage to civilian infrastructure, including through post-strike assessments and inter-agency review processes, is particularly valuable.

The Philippines respectfully offers several suggestions for further refinement.

First, it may be useful to distinguish more clearly between binding obligations, illustrative provisions and adaptable good practices. Implementation should remain consistent with applicable international law, national frameworks and institutional capacities.

Second, we encourage the inclusion of actionable warning systems wherever feasible, including clear guidance on safe locations, evacuation routes and access to functioning essential services. We also hope that migrants can also be included in listings of people in vulnerable situations pre-, during, and in post-conflict scenarios.

Third, the document could further recognize overlapping conflict, disaster and climate-related risks, and encourage alignment with disaster-risk-reduction, civil-defence and emergency-response systems.

Finally, while the document appropriately recognizes local administration after hostilities, local governments and relevant private-sector operators could also be acknowledged as important partners in preparedness, service-continuity planning and restoration.

The Philippines believes that the revised document provides a strong foundation for connecting humanitarian protection, peacebuilding, accountability and development.

We remain committed to engaging constructively in its finalization.

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Workstream 4 – Protecting Civilian Infrastructure

Thank you, Co-Chairs.

The Philippines welcomes the revised outcome document on protecting civilian infrastructure and commends the Co-Chairs and the ICRC for presenting a comprehensive and operationally grounded framework.

We strongly support the document's recognition that civilian infrastructure consists of interconnected systems that sustain essential services and human dignity. Damage or disruption in one sector may cascade across others, generating severe, cumulative and long-lasting humanitarian consequences.

The Philippines particularly appreciates the greater operational clarity in the revised text. The description of essential services is useful and appropriately recognizes that their continuity depends on people, infrastructure and critical consumables.

We also welcome the strong emphasis on the strict application of the definition of military objectives, robust verification procedures, no-strike and restricted-strike lists, precautions, proportionality and post-strike assessments.

The provisions on infrastructure used for both civilian and military purposes are especially important. We appreciate the recognition that targeting assessments must account for the loss of civilian function and the effects on services relied upon by civilian populations.

Section 12 remains particularly valuable. Its focus on essential-service personnel, coordination mechanisms, supply routes, spare parts, buffer stocks and priority-clearance procedures provides practical guidance for preserving access to services during armed conflict.

The Philippines respectfully offers several suggestions for further refinement.

First, the document could recognize more expressly that serious humanitarian harm may result from functional disruption and the loss of access to essential services even in the absence of physical damage.

Second, we encourage stronger reference to continuity-of-operations frameworks, including redundancy, decentralized or alternative service-delivery systems and prioritized restoration protocols.

Third, warnings to civilians should remain actionable. Where feasible, they should be linked to clear information on safe areas, evacuation routes, functioning services and appropriate shelter arrangements.

Fourth, the document could recognize the value of integrating IHL preparedness with disaster-risk-reduction, civil-defence and emergency-response systems. This is particularly relevant in contexts exposed to overlapping conflict, disaster and climate-related risks.

Finally, effective implementation requires a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. Local governments, law-enforcement actors, civil-defence authorities, essential-service providers and relevant private-sector operators all have important roles in maintaining access, supporting evacuations and restoring services. These efforts should be inclusive, gender-responsive and attentive to the needs of children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

The Philippines believes that protecting civilian infrastructure is not only about preventing destruction. It is about sustaining the systems that enable life, dignity and recovery.

We remain committed to engaging constructively in the finalization of this important document.

Thank you.



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Workstream 5 – Achieving Meaningful Protection for Hospitals in Armed Conflict

Thank you, Co-Chairs.

The Philippines welcomes the revised outcome document on achieving meaningful protection for hospitals in armed conflict and commends the Co-Chairs and the ICRC for presenting a comprehensive and operationally grounded framework.

We strongly support the document's central message: protecting hospitals requires not only preventing attacks, but also ensuring that medical facilities remain functional, accessible and capable of delivering care under complex conditions.

The revised text provides valuable guidance on the specific protection afforded to medical facilities, personnel and transports. We welcome its emphasis on mapping, no-strike and restricted-fire lists, coordination platforms, access routes and the essential services that enable hospitals to function.

We also appreciate the strengthened guidance on the exceptional circumstances in which a medical facility may lose specific protection. The document correctly emphasizes that all cumulative legal conditions must be fulfilled, that acts harmful to the enemy should be interpreted narrowly and in good faith, and that warnings must be effective.

The Philippines particularly welcomes the provisions requiring consideration of foreseeable direct and indirect harm to patients, medical personnel and the health system as a whole. The involvement of medical and public-health experts in proportionality assessments, the prioritization of alternatives to attack, and the detailed guidance on medical evacuation and continuity of care are especially valuable.

We also appreciate the stronger attention to maternal and paediatric health, as well as the expanded accountability provisions, including domestic review, monitoring, investigation, judicial training and remedial measures.

The Philippines respectfully offers several suggestions for further refinement.

First, hospital-protection strategies should safeguard the digital core of healthcare, including patient records, hospital information systems, treatment protocols and logistics platforms. Contingency plans should include secure backups and alternative arrangements for maintaining continuity of care.

Second, medical neutrality should be reinforced as a core operational principle across all relevant security actors, including through continuous and context-specific training.

Third, coordination platforms could more expressly recognize the roles of local governments, law-enforcement actors, emergency-response agencies and humanitarian partners in facilitating safe access, medical transport and the continuity of essential services.

Fourth, accountability measures could be strengthened through independent technical mechanisms composed of legal, medical and forensic experts, together with appropriate reparative measures to support affected facilities and personnel.

Finally, implementation should remain context-sensitive, particularly in non-international armed conflicts and urban environments, where fragmented command structures and the proximity of hospitals to fighting create additional challenges.

The Philippines believes that meaningful protection for hospitals requires legal compliance, operational clarity, health-system resilience and community trust.

We remain committed to engaging constructively in the finalization of this important document.

Thank you.



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Workstream 6 – Upholding International Humanitarian Law in the Use of Information and Communication Technologies During Armed Conflicts

Thank you, Co-Chairs.

The Philippines welcomes the revised outcome document on upholding international humanitarian law in the use of information and communication technologies during armed conflicts.

We commend the Co-Chairs and the ICRC for presenting a comprehensive, forward-looking and human-centred framework.

The Philippines particularly appreciates the document's recognition that ICT systems underpin governance, economic activity, medical services, humanitarian action and civilian life. Harmful ICT activities may have severe humanitarian consequences even without physical destruction, including through the disruption of essential services, compromise of sensitive data and erosion of public trust.

We welcome the greater attention given to disparities in technological capacity and cybersecurity resilience. These asymmetries may result in disproportionate humanitarian consequences, particularly for developing countries with limited capacity to protect critical infrastructure, respond to incidents and ensure continuity of essential services.

The revised text contains valuable operational guidance.

We appreciate the provisions on civilian data and infrastructure, rigorous procedures for ICT operations, network segmentation, redundancy, contingency planning, geographic and system-based limitations, and technical safeguards such as kill switches.

We also welcome the sections on civilian involvement in ICT activities, the responsibilities of technology companies, and the protection of medical and humanitarian services, including their data and communication systems. The stronger provisions on online recruitment and use of children in hostilities, sexual violence, artificial intelligence and harmful information activities are especially important.

The Philippines respectfully offers several suggestions for further refinement.

First, continued discussion remains important on the scope of protected civilian data, thresholds for functional disablement, direct participation in hostilities through ICT activities and the treatment of civilian infrastructure used for both civilian and military purposes. The document should preserve legal clarity while supporting further exchanges of national views.

Second, States could be encouraged to strengthen national continuity frameworks for critical data and essential digital services, including mapping mechanisms, secure backups, recovery protocols and alternative arrangements where central systems are disrupted.

Third, the document could refer more expressly to accountability and oversight frameworks for ICT activities involving proxy actors, contractors and private entities.

Fourth, capacity-building should be practical, equitable and accessible to developing countries. This includes technical assistance, incident-response capacity, regional cooperation, legal and technical training, and community-level digital literacy.

Finally, measures addressing harmful information should remain consistent with applicable international law and domestic legal frameworks, including relevant protections for freedom of expression and access to reliable information.

The Philippines believes that upholding IHL in the ICT domain requires legal clarity, technical resilience, inclusive cooperation and a sustained commitment to protecting human dignity.

We remain committed to engaging constructively in the finalization of this important document.

Thank you.



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Workstream 7 – Naval Warfare

Thank you, Co-Chairs.

The Philippines welcomes the revised outcome document on naval warfare and commends the Co-Chairs and the ICRC for presenting a comprehensive, balanced and operationally relevant framework.

As an archipelagic and maritime State, the Philippines has a direct interest in strengthening the protection of civilians, civilian vessels, seafarers, fisheries, sea lines of communication, critical maritime infrastructure and the marine environment during armed conflict.

We particularly welcome the document's recognition of the special geographical, legal and security circumstances of archipelagic and coastal States. Archipelagic sea lanes, territorial seas and the Exclusive Economic Zones are essential not only for national security, but also for livelihoods, food security, and economic stability of coastal states, and are operational zones for global maritime trade.

The Philippines also appreciates the emphasis on the interaction between the law of naval warfare, maritime neutrality and the law of the sea, particularly the UNCLOS.

The revised text contains several important improvements.

We welcome the clearer guidance on protecting merchant vessels, fishing vessels and civilian seafarers; the stronger target-verification requirements; and the recognition that precautions and proportionality assessments must take into account the effects of naval operations on crews, passengers, nearby vessels, civilian populations on land and the marine environment.

We also welcome the detailed provisions on blockades and maritime interdiction operations, including the need to monitor civilian harm, protect humanitarian relief, preserve the flow of essential goods and minimize disruption to lawful neutral trade.

The sections on emerging technologies, naval mines, jamming, spoofing and unmanned maritime systems are especially valuable. We likewise support the stronger protection of submarine communication cables, pipelines and offshore infrastructure, as well as the attention given to search and rescue, shipwrecked persons, detainees at sea and environmental protection.

The Philippines respectfully offers several suggestions for further refinement.

First, the guidance on safe harbours, safe areas and navigation corridors could be further operationalized. Where feasible, the document could encourage technical arrangements on designation criteria, notification procedures, coordination with coastal and neutral States, protection against misuse and support for stranded civilian seafarers.

Second, the strong focus on neutral trade should be preserved with careful legal precision. References to safe passage, blockade, contraband control, visit and search, maritime exclusion zones and related measures should remain clearly anchored in applicable international law, including the law of naval warfare, maritime neutrality and the law of the sea.

Third, the document should continue to distinguish carefully between binding legal obligations and enhanced good practices, particularly in relation to blockade-like measures, naval mines, protected zones, emerging technologies and environmental safeguards.

Fourth, the section on submarine cables, pipelines and offshore infrastructure could further encourage resilience planning. This may include mapping critical dependencies, strengthening redundancy, preparing repair and restoration protocols, coordinating with private-sector operators and assessing cascading effects on communications, finance, energy and essential services.

Finally, we encourage practical and equitable capacity-building for developing maritime States. This could include maritime-domain-awareness tools, search-and-rescue technology, mine-clearance expertise, environmental-response capacity, legal training and regional information-sharing.

The Philippines believes that the revised document provides a strong foundation for protecting humanity at sea while respecting the legitimate security considerations of States.

We remain committed to engaging constructively in its finalization.

Thank you.