Global IHL Dialogue
Statement of Italy
Geneva, 3rd November 2026
Rountable 3: ensuring technology upholds humanity and IHL

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Thank you Chair and thanks to all the panelists for their insightful contributions.

Italy was pleased to contribute to the Global IHL Initiative's workstream on ICT activities during armed conflict. I would like to highlight three points in this regard.

First, the application of IHL to cyber operations and the protection of civilian infrastructure.

Italy has consistently maintained that IHL applies to cyber operations conducted in the context of armed conflict, as reflected in our national position on international law and cyberspace. Cyber operations may qualify as attacks when they disable systems, depending on their effects, even in the absence of physical damage.

Second, we need to better anticipate the humanitarian consequences of the use of technology in warfare.

Civilian infrastructure is increasingly interconnected. An operation affecting one system may have cascading consequences for hospitals, water supplies, electricity networks, communications and humanitarian services.

Anticipating such effects requires both **legal and technical expertise**. Legal advisers therefore need to work closely with engineers, cybersecurity specialists and other relevant experts when assessing the possible consequences of an operation.

There is also an important **preventive dimension**. In Italy, the review of new weapons, means and methods of warfare in accordance with Article 36 of Additional Protocol I forms part of the broader national framework for ensuring compliance with IHL, while the ongoing updating of our Military Manual seeks to further translate IHL obligations into operational guidance.

Italy has also drawn attention to **harmful information activities**. Our National Cybersecurity Strategy identifies fake news, deepfakes and disinformation campaigns among the risks associated with the cyber domain. The growing use of artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies may further increase the speed and scale of such activities.

Third, implementation must keep pace with technological development.

IHL considerations should be integrated, where relevant, into the design, development, review and operational use of new technologies. **Technology companies also have an important role to play**, as their expertise can help States better understand the vulnerabilities and interdependencies of digital systems. For Italy, in the follow up of the Initiative, **continued exchanges based on concrete operational scenarios and national practice** can help translate the Initiative's recommendations into effective measures to reduce civilian harm.

Thank you.