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# 137<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly

St. Petersburg, Russian Federation  
14–18 October 2017



## OPEN SESSION OF THE IHL COMMITTEE

Panel debate on

***Forty years since the adoption of the Additional  
Protocol to the Geneva Conventions:  
How does the law still protect in contemporary war?***

*11:00 – 13:00, Tuesday, 17 October 2017  
Hall no.1 (ground floor), Tavrishesky Palace*

### Overview

Forty years ago, States adopted two Additional Protocols to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, and in doing so, reaffirmed the basic principles of international humanitarian law (IHL) and codified crucial principles and rules.

The Additional Protocols strengthened the protection of victims of international (Protocol I) and non-international (Protocol II) armed conflicts and placed limits on the way wars must be fought. Protocol II was the first-ever international treaty devoted exclusively to situations of non-international armed conflicts. Today, the Additional Protocols are among the most broadly ratified instruments in the world: there are 174 State parties to Protocol I and 168 State parties to Protocol II. Together with the Geneva Conventions of 1949, the Protocols form the foundations of IHL and are the cornerstone for the protection and respect of human dignity in armed conflicts.

Today, these contributions still stand at the frontline of contemporary conflicts, protecting civilians from the worst excesses of war and guiding parties to armed conflict as they navigate new realities. But four decades after their adoption, the question still arises: how are the Additional Protocols and IHL relevant in contemporary wars and what should be done to strengthen their respect?

### Objective of the panel debate and key topics

While the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is convinced that IHL remains a critical tool and the necessary legal framework to protect human life and dignity when armed conflicts arise and that strengthening its respect is in fact the single most

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important way to improve the lives of people affected by armed conflict, the panel debate will be an opportunity to:

- **Reflect on the current role and relevance of IHL** (with particular focus on the Additional Protocols) **in today's conflicts**
- **Discuss a number of challenges to the application of IHL posed by contemporary armed conflicts** (such as the applicability of IHL to the fight against terrorism; IHL and new technologies; Cyber warfare; or responsible arms transfers )
- **Discuss the role that parliaments can concretely play to strengthen the respect of IHL** (ratification of treaties, implementation of international law at national level, training and awareness raising, government oversight responsibilities, budgetary responsibilities and funding of humanitarian action).

**Duration:** 2h

**Panellists:**

- Mr. Juan Manuel Corzo, Senator, Colombia
- Ms. Monica Green, MP, Sweden
- Mr. Benjamin Charlier, Legal Adviser, ICRC
- Ms. Marie Lequin Coutin, Head of Eurasia Region, Geneva Call