

# INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

---

## MEMORANDUM ON THE IMPLEMENTATION AND THE DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS

*The International Committee of the Red Cross, on 16 December, sent the governments of States parties to the Geneva Conventions a memorandum on the implementation and the dissemination of knowledge of the Geneva Conventions. We quote that memorandum below:*

The Twentieth International Conference of the Red Cross at Vienna in October 1965, in its Resolution No. XXI entitled "Implementation and Dissemination of the Geneva Conventions" expressed the wish that Governments and National Societies submit periodic reports to the ICRC on the steps taken by them in this sphere. On the basis of information received pursuant to that resolution, the ICRC submitted to the International Conferences of the Red Cross at Istanbul and Teheran a report on the implementation of and the dissemination of knowledge of the Geneva Conventions.

The Twenty-second International Conference of the Red Cross at Teheran, in November 1973, renewed, in Resolution No. XII, the appeal to Governments and National Societies to inform the ICRC regularly of their achievements and their projects in order that it might centralize all information on the dissemination of, and instruction in, the Geneva Conventions in the world.

That resolution reads as follows:

The XXII<sup>nd</sup> International Conference of the Red Cross,

*convinced that, in a world torn by violence, there is a pressing need for a widespread dissemination of and instruction in the Geneva Conventions, as an expression of basic Red Cross principles, and hence a factor for peace,*

*aware* that, owing to its educational nature, such dissemination and instruction is particularly important among the armed forces and youth,

*recalling* the resolutions on the subject of dissemination adopted by previous International Conferences of the Red Cross and in particular Resolution No. XXI of the XXth International Conference held at Vienna in 1965,

*noting* with gratification the work already accomplished in the dissemination of the Geneva Conventions by some Governments, numerous National Societies and the ICRC,

*calls* upon Governments and National Societies to intensify their efforts with a view, on the one hand, to making known to the population as a whole the basic principles of the Red Cross and international humanitarian law by all effective means available to competent authorities at all levels, and on the other hand, to imparting clear concepts regarding the Geneva Conventions to specialized spheres such as the armed forces, civil administrations, institutes of higher learning, the medical and para-medical professions, etc.,

*appeals* to Governments and National Societies to inform the ICRC regularly of their achievements and their projects, in order that it may centralize all information on the dissemination of, and instruction in, the Geneva Conventions in the world,

*requests* the ICRC to support the efforts of Governments and National Societies in their dissemination of, and instruction in, the Geneva Conventions by:

- (a) preparing information material suited to the spheres and areas it is proposed to reach (specialized and popular publications in various languages, posters, slides and films),
- (b) advising National Societies who so wish regarding the establishment of their plans of action in this field,
- (c) systematically making the achievements of Governments and National Societies in the dissemination of, and the instruction in, the Geneva Conventions known in its reports and publications,
- (d) itself organizing, or participating in, seminars for the training of specialists in international humanitarian law,

*asks* the ICRC also to examine the desirability and possibility of convening an ad hoc Conference on dissemination and instruction

of the Geneva Conventions which would enable Governments and National Societies to compare their respective experiences and devise new methods of action,

*requests* Governments and National Societies to co-operate fully with the ICRC in its efforts to bring about wider dissemination of, and effective instruction in, the Geneva Conventions,

*thanks* the ICRC for its action, since the XXIst International Conference, in giving the dissemination of, and instruction in, the Geneva Conventions a fresh impetus and for the support it has lent National Societies and Governments.

The International Committee of the Red Cross therefore ventures to remind all Governments concerned of the foregoing resolution and to request the competent authorities to let it know the measures they have taken since 1973 for the dissemination of knowledge of the Geneva Conventions among the armed forces and the civilian population consistent with articles 47 of the First Convention, 48 of the Second, 127 of the Third and 144 of the Fourth. Replies to this appeal will be useful to enable the ICRC to draw up a report for submission to the Twenty-third International Conference of the Red Cross in October 1977 at Bucharest. They should therefore reach the ICRC not later than March 1977.

The International Committee holds in mind that, in response to an earlier memorandum, dated 15 August 1972 concerning the dissemination of the Geneva Conventions, thirty Governments had sent detailed replies on what they had done in this respect. The main points mentioned were summarized in a report on the dissemination of the Conventions which the International Committee had the pleasure of presenting to the International Conference of the Red Cross at Teheran. It would be grateful if those Governments would be so kind as to furnish any additional information which they might have on the pursuit of their efforts in this sphere.

The ICRC thanks the competent authorities in advance for any action they take in response to this request.

A copy of this memorandum is being sent also to the National Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies of the countries concerned.

FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE  
OF THE RED CROSS

Alexandre HAY  
President