

Mission of the ICRC Vice-President to the Far East

Mr. Maurice Aubert, Vice-President of the ICRC, went on mission from 8 to 28 February to the Far East and the Pacific which brought him to Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand and Australia.

In each of the countries visited, Mr. Aubert met government officials, members of parliament and senior staff members of National Red Cross Societies. He discussed various issues of humanitarian interest with them, particularly with regard to the activities of the ICRC in the world and the ratification of the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions.

Saint Christopher and Nevis: Declaration of succession to the Geneva Conventions and of accession to the Protocols

Saint Christopher and Nevis deposited with the Swiss Government, on 14 February 1986, an instrument of succession to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and of accession to the two Additional Protocols of 8 June 1977.

According to practice and to the final clauses, the four Conventions came into effect for Saint Christopher and Nevis on 19 September 1983, retroactively the date of its independence. The two Additional Protocols will enter into force on 14 August 1986, i.e. six months after registration of the instrument of accession.

Saint Christopher and Nevis is the 163rd State party to the Geneva Conventions, the 56th State party to Protocol I and the 49th to Protocol II.

Ratification of the Protocols by Italy

The Italian Republic ratified, on 27 February 1986, the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, relating to the protection of victims of international armed conflicts (Protocol I) and non-international armed conflicts (Protocol II), adopted in Geneva on 8 June 1977.

This ratification was accompanied by statements of which the original text is reproduced hereafter.

Pursuant to their provisions, the Protocols will enter into force for the Italian Republic on 27 August 1986.

This is the 57th State to become party to Protocol I and the 50th to Protocol II. It is the seventh State to have made the optional declaration accepting the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission (cf. Article 90 of Protocol I and relevant declaration below).

Italian Statements made at the time of ratification of the Additional Protocols to the 1949 Geneva Conventions

It is the understanding of the Government of Italy that the rules relating to the use of weapons introduced by Additional Protocol I were intended to apply exclusively to conventional weapons. They do not prejudice any other rule of international law applicable to other types of weapons.

The Italian Government understands, in relation to Articles 41, 56, 57, 58, 78 and 86, that the word "feasible" is to be understood as practicable or practically possible taking into account all circumstances ruling at the time, including humanitarian and military considerations.

The situation described in the second sentence of paragraph 3 of Article 44 can exist only in occupied territory.

The word "deployment" in paragraph 3(b) means any movement towards a place from which an attack is to be launched.

In relation to Articles 51 to 58 inclusive, the Italian Government understands that military commanders and other responsible for planning, deciding upon or executing attacks necessarily have to reach decisions on the basis of their assessment of the information from all sources which is available to them at the relevant time.

In relation to paragraph 5(b) of Article 51 and paragraph 2(a) (iii) of Article 57, the Italian Government understands that the military advantage anticipated from an attack is intended to refer to the advantage anticipated from the attack considered as a whole and not only from isolated or particular parts of the attack.

A specific area of land may be a "military objective" if, because of its location or other reasons specified in Article 52, its total or partial destruction, capture or neutralization, in the circumstances ruling at the time, offers definite military advantage.

The first sentence of paragraph 2 of the Article prohibits only such attacks as may be directed against non-military objectives. Such a sentence does not deal with the question of collateral damage caused by attacks directed against military objectives.