

Discussion of ways and means of combat clearly showed that new weapons technology renders meaningless many of the legal rules applicable to armed conflict at sea, including those on blockade, which are made virtually inapplicable by submarine warfare; or the rules regulating the rights of neutrals and merchant vessels, which can no longer be applied because of the use of missiles. Similarly, the question was raised whether the very long range of present weapons makes it possible to respect the fundamental principle of distinguishing between combatants and non-combatants.

Thus, at every mention of the problems raised by the use of mines, missiles, damage to the environment, exclusion zones and submarine warfare the question arose whether existing rules could be applied and/or whether new rules should be adopted.

The examination of humanitarian protection in armed conflicts at sea led to recapitulation of the principal technical developments relating to identification, starting with the rather summary procedures instituted by the Second Geneva Convention of 1949. The important gains made at the Diplomatic Conference of 1974-1977, and the instruments adopted by the competent international organizations, were also discussed.

Lastly, the participants discussed mechanisms for the implementation of the law of armed conflict at sea. It was urged that basic humanitarian regulations should be added to the "rules of engagement" forming the essential part of the instructions to be followed by officers commanding naval units.

To sum up, the Round Table meeting made a preliminary inventory of matters relating to the law of armed conflict at sea and singled out areas appearing to require further study.

In the final document, adopted by consensus, the group of experts pointed out the applicability of certain humanitarian principles to conflict at sea and stressed the need for further research in preparation for the difficult task of revising the law of armed conflict at sea.

● *AT HAMMAMET*

First North African Symposium on International Humanitarian Law

The first symposium to be held on international humanitarian law in the Maghreb area took place at Hammamet (Tunisia) from 6 to 12 July 1987. The meeting was arranged by the Tunisian Red Crescent, with the active co-operation of Professor Habib Slim, the Tunis University Law

Faculty, the ICRC and an American Foundation, which sponsors training programmes in the Middle East and North Africa.

The symposium was organized for the staff of the Ministries concerned, the universities and National Societies of the Maghreb and was attended by dissemination officers from the Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian Red Crescent Societies, by representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs in Tunis and Algiers, the Ministries of the Interior and Health in Tunis and by lecturers from the Law Faculties of Tunis, Algiers and Oran. The International Committee of the Red Cross was represented by Mr. René Kosirnik, Head of the ICRC's Legal Division, and by Mr. François Gillioz, who is the ICRC's dissemination officer for the Middle East and North Africa desk.

Lecturers from European and North African universities were asked to present various topics of international humanitarian law, ranging from studies of relations between international humanitarian law and human rights, Moslem law or refugee law, to the protection of medical doctors in international humanitarian law, wars of national liberation and international humanitarian law, combatants in armed conflicts, internal disturbances and tensions, and the dissemination of international humanitarian law.

Several lecturers from European universities responded to the Tunisian Red Crescent's invitation: Professor Antonio Cassese, Director of the Florence Public Law Institute, Professor Maurice Torrelli of Nice University, Professor Pierre Bringuier of Clermont-Ferrand University, and Professor Jean Mallein from Brest University Law Faculty. Mrs. Rosemarie Abi-Saab and Mr. Mohammed El Kouhène, who are the authors of two outstanding doctoral theses in the field of international humanitarian law, also took part in the meeting.

All the participants were impressed by the quality and high academic standard of the lectures and discussions and by the excellent contacts they had established during the meeting.

The outcome of this symposium will be the creation of two study and documentation centres to be set up at Tunis and Oran Universities. There are also plans to organize two local seminars covering more specialized subjects and open to all concerned by the dissemination of international humanitarian law. The first seminar will be held in Tunis in February 1988 and the second in Algeria in the course of 1988.