

Palestine and the Geneva Conventions

On 21 June 1989, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs received a letter from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations Office at Geneva informing the Swiss Federal Council “that the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, entrusted with the functions of the Government of the State of Palestine by decision of the Palestine National Council, decided, on 4 May 1989, to adhere to the Four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and the two Protocols additional thereto”.

On 13 September 1989, the Federal Department sent a note of information concerning this letter to the Governments of the States party to the Geneva Conventions, together with the text of the letter.

The *Review* is publishing the text of the **note of information** to Governments by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, which reads as follows:

On 21 June 1989, the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the Office of the United Nations at Geneva transmitted to the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, through the intermediary of the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the international organizations in Geneva, a communication concerning the participation of Palestine in the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and their two Additional Protocols of 8 June 1977.

Due to the uncertainty within the international community as to the existence or non-existence of a State of Palestine, and as long as the issue has not been settled in an appropriate framework, the Swiss Government, in its capacity as depositary of the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, is not in a position to decide whether this communication can be considered as an instrument of accession in the sense of the relevant provisions of the Conventions and their Additional Protocols.

The Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, following the practice relating to the functions of the depositary State as codified in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties of 23 May 1969, transmits to the Governments of the States parties to the Geneva Conventions, for their

information, a copy of this communication attached hereto, in the original Arabic and in an English translation.

The unilateral declaration of application of the four Geneva Conventions and of Additional Protocol I made on 7 June 1982 by the Palestine Liberation Organization remains valid.

Berne, 13 September 1989

The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic ratifies the Protocols

On 23 October 1989, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic ratified the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and relating to the protection of victims of international (Protocol I) and non-international (Protocol II) armed conflicts, adopted in Geneva on 8 June 1977.

The instrument of ratification contained the following declaration:

"In accordance with Article 90, paragraph 2 (a) of Protocol I the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic declares that it recognizes ipso facto and without special agreement, in relation to any other High Contracting Party accepting the same obligation, the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission".

The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic is the **seventeenth** State to make this declaration concerning the International Fact-Finding Commission. The Commission will be set up when twenty States have made such a declaration.

In accordance with their provisions, the Protocols will enter into force for the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic on 23 April 1990.

The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic is the **92nd** State to become party to Protocol I and the **82nd** to Protocol II.
