

GENEVA, NEW YORK, WASHINGTON

DISSEMINATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW TO DIPLOMATS AND INTERNATIONAL OFFICIALS

During the first half of 1995, several dissemination seminars on international humanitarian law were organized for diplomats accredited to the United Nations and officials of international organizations.

(1) The *twelfth annual seminar on international humanitarian law for diplomats accredited to the United Nations in New York* was held there from 17 to 19 January. Organized jointly by New York University and the ICRC and attended by some fifty diplomats, the seminar dealt with major aspects of international humanitarian law.

After speeches by Mr Hans Corell, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General and Legal Adviser, and Mr Paul Grossrieder, ICRC Deputy Director of Operations, the subjects were introduced by Mr T. Meron, professor at the New York University and the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, Mr Horst Fischer from the University of Bochum, Mr Robert K. Goldman from the American University School of Law, Washington, and Mr Roy Lee, Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations. On behalf of the ICRC, the head of the International Organizations Division and the head and deputy head of the delegation to the United Nations also took part in the discussions.

The work ended with two panels dealing, respectively, with individual responsibility for war crimes and the situation in Rwanda.

(2) The *fourth seminar on international humanitarian law for diplomats accredited to the United Nations Office in Geneva* took place on 21 and 22 March at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva. Jointly organized by the Institute and the ICRC, the seminar was attended by some 50 diplomats from about 30 Permanent Missions,

together with about 12 people sent by the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

The main purpose of this event was to familiarize diplomats with international humanitarian law and explain the work of the ICRC. It is in line with the seminars which have been organized at New York University for the past twelve years and the one organized in Addis Ababa last year together with the Organization of African Unity.

The seminar was opened by Mrs Brunschwig-Graf, a member of the State Council of the Republic and Canton of Geneva, and Professor Theodor Meron.

The ICRC's Deputy Director for Principles, Law and Relations with the Movement, the Legal Adviser to the Directorate and the head of the Legal Division introduced the following topics: origin and development of international humanitarian law (IHL); the operational activities of the ICRC; and restrictions on the means and methods of war. Law professors from the University of Geneva and from the Graduate Institute of International Studies presented other subjects, notably international human rights law and the relevance of humanitarian law in non-international armed conflicts.

When invited to speak at the end of the seminar, ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga described the challenges facing the ICRC. In particular, he stressed the need to maintain a humanitarian dimension in the midst of conflicts and ensure coordination amongst the institutions concerned. He also highlighted the importance of spreading knowledge of IHL in other cultures so as to promote non-violence, tolerance and solidarity. Mr Sommaruga went on to mention the financial challenge confronting the ICRC, namely to continue discharging its mandate without relinquishing its independence and autonomy. After reminding participants of the need for universal adherence to humanitarian law instruments, he emphasized that the time had come to revise the law on landmines, in particular anti-personnel mines, and urged that they be totally banned.

The seminar ended with a round table to consider ways of improving the implementation of international humanitarian law, including international tribunals. Mr Sandoz, Director for Principles, Law and Relations with the Movement, acted as moderator; he was assisted by panellists who introduced the following subjects: implementation by States of IHL in accordance with the obligation contained in Article 1 common to the 1949 Geneva Conventions; national measures to implement IHL; the question of a permanent international tribunal; and the dissemination of IHL.

The very lively discussions were concerned more specifically with non-international armed conflicts, the nature of humanitarian law and the ICRC's neutrality.

(3) A *seminar on international humanitarian law* took place on 10 and 11 April 1995 at the American University in Washington, D.C. This was the twelfth seminar of its kind and was organized by Professor Robert K. Goldmann and the American Red Cross, with the assistance of the ICRC; it was particularly geared to the diplomatic community, including diplomats accredited to the Organization of American States (OAS). In addition to representatives of NGOs, officials from the State Department and the Pentagon were invited.

The speakers included Mr Francis Deng, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Displaced Persons, Ms Roberta Cohen, Associate Director, Brookings Institute - Refugee Policy Group Project, Professor Tom J. Farer, Legal Adviser to the Pentagon, Professor Reismann of the Yale Law School and previous Chairman of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and Mr Roy Lee, Principal Legal Officer, United Nations, New York. The ICRC was represented by the Deputy Head of the Legal Division, the Deputy Head of the International Organizations Division, the Regional Delegate and the Deputy Head of the New York delegation.

The subjects most intensively discussed during the seminar related to displaced persons, the applicability of IHL to peace-keeping forces and the implementation of IHL.