

Adam Roberts and Richard Guelff (eds)

Documents on the Laws of War

3rd ed., Oxford University Press, 2000, 765 pages

The purpose of *Documents on the Laws of War* could not be better explained than by the editors' own words: it sets out to be "a comprehensive collection of documents and other basic factual information on the 'laws of war', that is, the part of international law relating to the conduct of armed conflict and military occupations, including the protection of civilians, wounded, and prisoners of war". This third edition of an already well-known compilation of legal texts follows that path with success.

The introductory chapter is in itself a fully-fledged review of some basic aspects of international humanitarian law. Historical origins, sources of the law, conditions of its application in different contexts, rationale of the law and criticism advanced against it — to cite but some of the subtitles — are set forth in a masterly way.

The main part of the book is, of course, made up of the texts of the main treaties and other relevant documents of the law of armed conflicts or international humanitarian law. Each entry consists of a prefatory note with information on the treaty's history, the text of the treaty, the list of States party to that treaty and the text of reservations and/or declarations of understanding. Information on the main protective emblems, the addresses of relevant Internet websites, a comprehensive bibliography and an index complete this voluminous reference work.

The new publication comprises 38 treaties and other legal texts. The first entry is the 1856 Paris Declaration Respecting

Maritime Law, and the last is the UN Secretary-General's Bulletin on Observance by United Nations Forces of International Humanitarian Law (12 August 1999).

The third edition of Roberts and Guelff's *Documents on the Laws of War* is an essential and invaluable working tool for all those who are interested in international humanitarian law.

LA REVUE/THE REVIEW