



World leaders united in defence of international humanitarian law to uphold humanity in war

21 September 2025

Alarmed by widespread violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) in conflicts around the world and the resulting unconscionable human suffering, we, the leaders of Brazil, China, France, Jordan, Kazakhstan and South Africa, together with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), urge States and the international community to act.

A year ago, we launched the Global Initiative to galvanize political commitment for IHL. We were driven by a deep sense of responsibility and urgency to act decisively to stem the tide of violations of international humanitarian law the world is witnessing.

To date, 89 states from all regions of the world have formally joined the Global IHL Initiative to uphold humanity in war. Twenty-seven states are co-leading seven thematic workstreams to develop practical recommendations on how to increase compliance with IHL and address challenges posed by contemporary evolutions of warfare.

Over the last year, more than 130 states participated in global and regional consultations on how to improve compliance with IHL. A common theme emerging from these consultations is a call from states for a protective interpretation of IHL. Findings will be published in an interim report next month.

The Global IHL Initiative speaks to all conflicts around the world, addresses all relevant stakeholders, and seeks to ensure an even and universal application of IHL. It also recognizes that the primary responsibility to uphold, implement, and apply the Geneva Conventions in practice lies with States.

We therefore call on all parties to armed conflict to uphold IHL. We reaffirm that all states, including in situations of occupation, are bound to fully respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law, including the rules related to the protection of civilians, civilian objects, medical and aid workers, and journalists. The United Nations, in line with the UN Charter, and the wider multilateral system play an important role in this regard.

Today we announce that we will co-host a global high-level meeting to uphold humanity in war in 2026.

In the lead up to the meeting, we ask all states to consider:

- Starting with IHL at home, by officially allocating adequate resources to invest in and ensure compliance with IHL, including in ongoing conflicts.
- Advancing the integration of IHL into national legislation and conflict preparedness, by means such as adequate training of military and security forces, and through empowering national IHL committees.
- Formally joining the Global IHL Initiative, engaging actively in the consultations, and encouraging others to do the same.

Seventy-six years after the adoption of the Geneva Conventions, we call on all world leaders to unite around a shared responsibility: to prevent atrocities and protect humanity in times of war. The world cannot stand idly as the basic tenets of international humanitarian law are routinely and deliberately being violated. Together, we can put an end to the inconceivable and unconscionable suffering and destruction that is the mark of today's conflicts, and steer the latter towards peaceful resolution.