

Speech of Dr. Farida Khamlichi

Head of the National Committee on International Humanitarian Law in the Kingdom of Morocco

It is my pleasure and honor that the Moroccan National Committee on International Humanitarian Law (NCIHL) takes part in organizing this distinguished panel celebrating the ICRC's updated Commentary on the Third Geneva Convention related to the Treatment of the Prisoners of War. We are truly honored to contribute in this panel along with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the League of Arab States (LAS), whose effective role in disseminating and raising awareness of IHL in our Arab region is highly appreciated.

We have also to praise the efforts exerted by the ICRC in the service of IHL through disseminating the noble human values enshrined therein. The ICRC has always supported all efforts aiming at promoting the pivotal role of the IHL provisions in deterring any behavior leading to the unfortunate reality that we witness in many conflicts worldwide and that this law has been developed to limit the woes arising therefrom.

The ICRC's Commentaries on the Geneva Conventions since 2016 and their Arabic translation are only part of this effort, which contributes to digging deeper into the international instruments forming the core of IHL, and to creating a discussion that enriches the understanding of these commentaries from the perspective of Arab experts.

We shall also pay warm tribute to LAS, and its Legal Division, which has taken upon itself to develop and support the dissemination of IHL among all its members, especially after joining efforts with the ICRC to hold the Arab Regional Meeting in November 1999 in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and the subsequent regional initiatives to promote IHL in the Arab region.

Since the formation of the Moroccan NCIHL, it has worked for nearly ten years on the efforts aiming at the implementation of IHL and has become one of the most active national committees in the Arab region, by organizing activities and establishing partnerships and cooperation with Arab counterparts. The Moroccan NCIHL also enhances the exchange of expertise and experiences and encourages convergence of IHL Arab experts' ideas.

Moreover, the Moroccan NCIHL has a rich archive of seminars, symposia and roundtable meetings that it has organized in an effort to disseminate IHL at the national level, supported by the ICRC, which has thankfully provided the technical assistance.

The Moroccan NCIHL has always contributed in holding similar events at the regional level or in Arab countries which has partnerships with the NCIHL. It has also actively participated in a number of regional and international events.

In the same context, and in addition to the advisory role the NCIHL has with the Moroccan Prime Minister on legal issues related to further engagement in the IHL system and adapting national legislation accordingly, the Moroccan NCIHL was keen to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, via a number of events that had great resonance.

The participation of the Moroccan NCIHL in organizing this panel discussion is an opportunity to reiterate its firm belief in disseminating and promoting IHL. Thus, we aspire that this panel would be a fruitful occasion for the Arab experts, who contributed to the development of the Commentaries on the Geneva Conventions, to express their thoughts and opinions with a view to buttressing the development of IHL.