

Emanating from the believe of the League of Arab States (LAS) in the importance of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 in protecting victims of armed conflict, LAS, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), during the period from 14 to 16 November 1999, convened the Arab Regional Meeting to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, which are the bedrock for International Human Law (IHL).

By the end of this conference, «Cairo Declaration» was issued with recommendations to strengthen efforts to implement IHL at the national level. According to the final recommendation No. 14, a follow-up commission would be created, gathering different stakeholders to put the declaration into force.

At the sidelines of this conference, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed on 15 November 1999 between the ICRC and LAS on cooperation in all IHL-related topics.

Since then, in order to follow up the implementation of «Cairo Declaration», the first Regional Meeting of Arab Government Experts was held in Cairo from 7 to 9 May 2001. The meeting was attended by official delegations of fifteen Arab countries and representatives of LAS and the ICRC. At the conclusion of the meeting, the first regional plan of action for the implementation of IHL at the Arab level was adopted. The ICRC, in cooperation with LAS, organized eleven Regional Meetings of Arab Government Experts, which contributed directly to the establishment of the National Committees on International Humanitarian Law (NCsiHL) in eighteen Arab countries, striving to integrate IHL conventions into the national legislation.

In implementation of the cooperation agreement concluded between the two institutions, the ICRC, in cooperation with LAS, represented in the Department of Legal Affairs and the Arab Center for Legal and Judicial Research, has organized, since 2004, several IHL regional courses (two courses annually) in Beirut and Tunis. These are specialized ten-day courses targeting government cadres, members of the NCsiHL, and academic circles in various universities; twenty-five courses have been carried out so far.

All of these efforts have contributed to building the capacities of government and academic cadres at the Arab level in the field of IHL, which helped in the dissemination of this branch of public law in the Arab region and contributed to building cadres that Arab governments draw on as experts in this field.

LAS is honored today to contribute to this panel in cooperation with the ICRC and the NCiHL, which of course will further enrich the Arab region with a better understanding of IHL.