

## Joint statement by the Republic of South Africa and the ICRC on the occasion of the 20th annual regional seminar on International Humanitarian Law

The humanitarian and peacekeeping response in the region, the current challenges to international humanitarian law (IHL) and IHL from an African perspective were amongst the topics discussed during the 20<sup>th</sup> regional seminar on International Humanitarian Law.

The seminar, co-hosted by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was held under the theme, *Celebrating 20 years of the Regional Seminar on International Humanitarian Law: Reflecting on achievements and challenges in the region*.

'This year marks the 20th anniversary of the IHL Seminar. We are proud to be commemorating this remarkable anniversary. The Regional IHL Seminar for Southern African and Indian Ocean Island States started in 2001, making it one of the oldest of the kind in the world.' Mamadou Sow, Head of Delegation, ICRC Pretoria.

"In this 20th year, this is an opportune moment to not only conduct such a review but also chart a way forward to improve and enhance existing measures aimed at enhancing compliance to IHL. The Regional Seminar continues to provide a safe platform for participants represented, to reflect on progress made by Southern Africa and Indian Ocean Island States with regard to the implementation of IHL as part of the peer-to-peer engagement under a constructive environment of trust and mutual respect. This process focuses on honest exchanges of country reports on both the general implementation of States' obligations as well as actual challenges encountered during the implementation of IHL," Deputy Minister Alvin Botes stated at this seminar.

The seminar saw the participation of government representatives from Southern African countries including Indian Ocean Islands States. Representatives from the following states participated in the 20<sup>th</sup> edition of the Regional IHL Seminar: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the seminar was, for the first time, held virtually.

***For more information and interview requests please contact:***

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