



ICRC

WHAT IS THE NATIONAL COMPETITION ON INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW IN ISRAEL?

A FIRST IHL COMPETITION IN ISRAEL

In 2003, the Tel Aviv Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) boosted its cooperation with Israeli academic institutions and Law Faculties in particular. The ICRC and its partner institutions developed and implemented various projects aimed at improving and expanding knowledge of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) among Israeli teachers, students and the professional legal community. In this framework, in December 2007, the ICRC Delegation in Israel, the Occupied and Autonomous Territories held the first annual edition of the National Competition on IHL, in which students from four Israeli academic institutions trained with and competed against each other.

While international law competitions are common in the experience of many Israeli law schools, no such competition at a national level has ever been focused on IHL – despite the fact that IHL plays a prominent part in the country's academic, political and judicial agendas.

INTERNATIONAL LAW COMPETITIONS

In general, leaving aside essay competitions, international law competitions take two forms. The first, more common, is the moot court, in which participating students prepare written submissions and plead on this basis in front of judges. This kind of competition enables the students to develop their research and written abilities, but mostly their courtroom skills. Many international law careers, however, do not include litigation or necessitate such skills.

The second form of international law competitions - which characterize many IHL competitions - seeks to develop, train and test different sets of skills. Such competitions typically test knowledge of IHL *but also the ability to apply the law in a practical manner*. Rather than creating a simulation of a courtroom, such competitions create a series of simulations of real-life situations in which the students are tested on their knowledge of the law *and* their ability to apply it, through role-playing, in the given situation. In each test, the students and the jury, who assess their performance, play an assigned role: they may be legal representatives of government ministries, the armed forces, international organizations or NGOs; decision-makers; journalists and so forth. During each test, the students are expected to demonstrate a *relevant knowledge of the law* and an *ability to apply* it to the specific role they play within their instructions.

The Israeli Competition follows the second form of international law competitions.

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW COMPETITIONS

In recent years, a number of prestigious IHL competitions took place at national, regional and international levels, imbuing participants with a sense of belonging to the global professional community - and often giving them the record, experience and opportunity to pursue their careers within that community. Participation in an IHL competition is often what distinguishes a résumé and paves the way for an IHL career. The National Competition on IHL in Israel extensively builds on the experience and achievements of its precursors. Moreover, the

winning team of the Competition will be encouraged to apply to regional and international IHL competitions, and if admitted, their participation may be sponsored (subject to the Competition Regulations).

THE ICRC AND IHL COMPETITIONS

As an organisation mandated by international law to promote respect for and help States disseminate knowledge of IHL, the ICRC has both the IHL expertise and the practical experience to develop national, regional and international IHL competitions. The ICRC has acquired vast experience in organising and supporting such competitions worldwide. Such events are becoming increasingly popular, with more than a dozen national events and almost ten regional or international competitions (including the prestigious *Jean Pictet IHL Competition*, which is supported by the ICRC). These were created primarily to enhance and emphasize the teaching of IHL in universities around the world.