

EVEN WARS HAVE LIMITS

What's 70 years old? Has saved millions of lives?
And, continues to protect people?
The Geneva Conventions.

The Geneva Conventions are a vital global pledge born out of the kind of suffering we see today in Syria, Yemen and South Sudan, among other conflicts around the world. In the aftermath of World War II and the Holocaust, the Conventions were universally agreed upon by States in 1949 because they reflect universal values of ethical behaviour. Universally agreed but not universally respected, they remain as necessary and life-saving as they were intended to be then. Today's wars would be **worse without them** and 70 years on, the Conventions are still **fit for purpose**.

This is not about anniversaries or debates on legal phrasing, it is about protecting people from the worst of the wars which rage today. It is about laws that assert that as long as conflict remains a reality, there also must be a limit to suffering.

- Peter Maurer

President, International Committee of the Red Cross

DID YOU KNOW?



THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS HAVE SAVED MILLIONS OF LIVES.

These include children, women, men, older people, injured, sick, detainees and people with disabilities. The Conventions protect all people affected by armed conflict, even non-international ones, regardless of race or religion.



EVEN WARS HAVE LIMITS.

The Geneva Conventions embody a basic principle – **war must be waged within certain limits that are respected to preserve the lives and dignity of human beings**. International humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions make no judgement on the motive of fighting. The Conventions state that every person who is not or no longer actively participating in the hostilities is entitled to protection and must be treated with humanity. Everyone, even the enemy, must be seen as a human being and protected.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN PRACTICALLY?

- No one shall be subjected to torture or other forms of ill-treatment.
- Rape and other forms of sexual violence are prohibited.
- The wounded and sick must be given medical care.
- Hospitals and medical personnel must not be attacked.
- People who are detained must be treated humanely.
- Family members have the right to know the fate of their relatives.
- The dead must be treated with dignity.



NO ONE AND NO TERRITORY IS OUT OF REACH OF THE PROTECTIVE SCOPE OF THE CONVENTIONS.

- The Conventions are **more than law**, intended to influence behaviour and not just increase knowledge.
- The universal ratification of the Geneva Conventions was completed in 2012.

The Geneva Conventions give a clear mandate to the ICRC and to the National Societies of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to prevent and alleviate suffering worldwide. Today, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is represented in virtually every country in the world, ensuring a global humanitarian network.



C. Von Troggenburg/ICRC

DID YOU KNOW?

AFGHANISTAN

- Afghanistan incorporated violations of IHL into its penal code in **2017**.
- The country trains its diplomats in IHL.

MALDIVES

- Maldives has ratified all four Geneva Conventions and their two Additional Protocols.

BHUTAN

- Bhutan trains its peacekeepers in IHL before their deployment.
- The country has the world's youngest National Society.

BANGLADESH

- **1972–1975**: The ICRC distributed around 2.8 million Red Cross messages, leading to several hundred families being reunited.

SRI LANKA

- Sri Lanka ratified the Geneva Conventions in February **1959**.
- The GCs have been translated into Sinhala and Tamil.
- The island nation is exploring the convergence between the principles of Buddhism and IHL.

PAKISTAN

- Pakistan ratified the Geneva Conventions in **1959**.
- More than 3,000 students have completed the IHL certificate courses and been trained in IHL at universities across Pakistan since **2011**.

INDIA

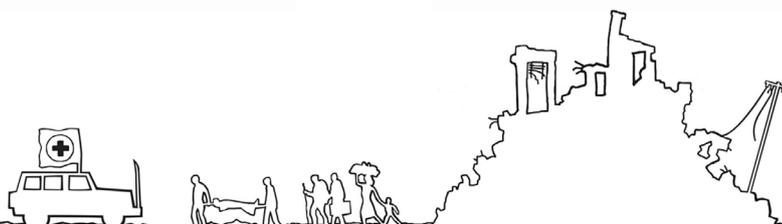
- India was the first State in Asia and the fifth in the world to ratify the Conventions.
- Modern-day IHL rules can be found in **ancient texts** like the Mahabharata, the Vedas, the Koran and the Bible.

NEPAL

- The Conventions have been translated into Nepali. The then minister for law and justice Prem Bahadur Singh unveiled the Nepali translation of the four GCs of 12 August 1949 and their three Additional Protocols in August **2009**.

IRAN

- Iran ratified the Geneva Conventions in February **1957**.
- Tehran has successfully held ten national rounds of the Henry Dunant Moot Court Competition in the past decade in which approximately 350 students have participated.



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