

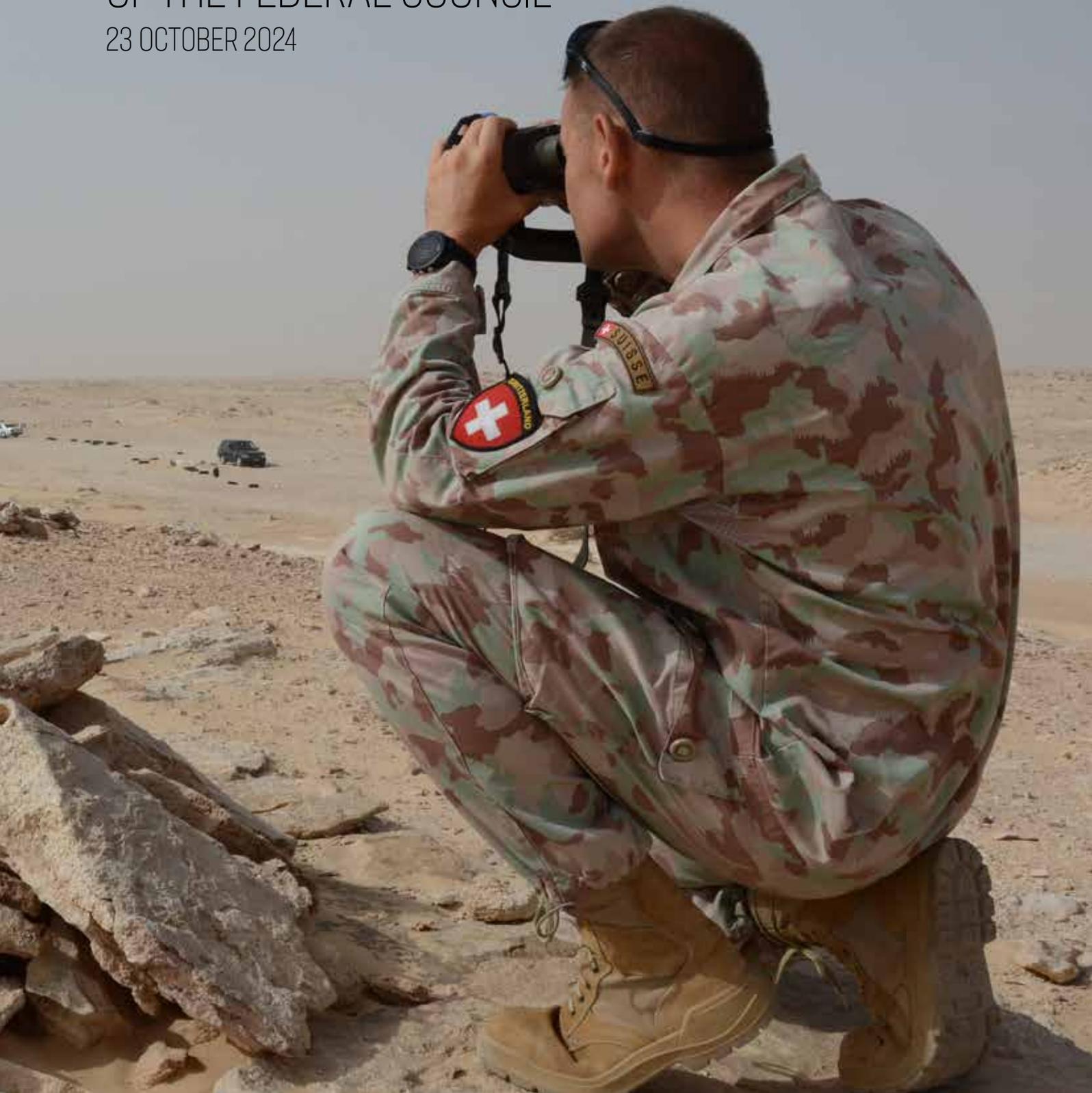


Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW BY SWITZERLAND

SECOND VOLUNTARY REPORT
OF THE FEDERAL COUNCIL

23 OCTOBER 2024



Foreword

During my address to the 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in Geneva on 9 December 2019, I encouraged states to draw up voluntary reports on the state of their national implementation of international humanitarian law (IHL). In 2020, Switzerland published its first voluntary report on the implementation of IHL. I am pleased to now present an updated version of our voluntary report, which demonstrates our determination to make continuous progress in implementing IHL at national level.

While the original report illustrates the Swiss approach, the updated version outlines the developments in our approach. This second voluntary report analyses how Switzerland has been implementing IHL at national level, identifies new challenges and proposes pragmatic measures to tackle them. As a stocktaking exercise, it fosters dialogue both within Switzerland and between states on how to strengthen respect for IHL, so as to better protect the victims of armed conflicts around the world. This is in line with common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions and also furthers the aim of the preamble to the Swiss Constitution to 'strengthen liberty, democracy, independence and peace in a spirit of solidarity and openness towards the world'. Respect for IHL is in the interests of us all, and depends on the actions we take and the responsibility we assume.

Thanks to its neutrality, its humanitarian tradition and its status as the depositary state of the Geneva Conventions, Switzerland has unique ties with IHL. Indeed, the Swiss government proposed the drafting of modern IHL's founding instrument, the first Geneva Convention of 1864, which is turning 160 this year. This year also marks the 75th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, key instruments that have been universally ratified. The Geneva Conventions as we know them today were adopted in the aftermath of the Second World War. Seventy-five years later, they are more relevant than ever. They represent a unique commitment by states to our shared humanity, underscoring our obligations in this regard and the importance of joining forces.



This report was prepared by the Interdepartmental Committee for International Humanitarian Law and adopted by the Federal Council. We encourage states to undertake similar initiatives, allowing for fruitful exchanges on ways of implementing IHL. Together, we can identify joint solutions to overcome current and future challenges, to ensure that IHL continues to serve as a beacon of protection in the darkest of times. Respecting and implementing IHL is not a choice but an obligation. It saves lives and fosters peace and security.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cassis', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ignazio Cassis
Federal Councillor

Head of the Federal Department
of Foreign Affairs

Contents

Foreword	3
Executive summary	5
Glossary	7
1 Introduction	9
1.1 Definition	9
1.2 IHL rules that apply to Switzerland	10
2 Special protection	11
2.1 Red cross emblem	11
2.2 Cultural property	12
3 Rules governing the means and methods of warfare	14
3.1 Specific rules governing certain weapons	14
3.2 Procedure for assessing new weapons	15
3.3 International arms trade	16
3.4 Private military and security companies	17
4 Prosecuting serious violations of IHL	18
4.1 National law enforcement authorities	18
4.2 Taking action at international level	20
5 IHL dissemination and training	21
6 Supporting IHL implementation	23
6.1 Interdepartmental Committee for IHL	23
6.2 Swiss Red Cross	23
6.3 International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission	25
7 Other measures to ensure respect for IHL	26
8 Current issues	28
8.1 New technologies	28
8.2 Security Council and IHL	28
8.3 Humanitarian exemptions to limit the impact of sanctions on humanitarian aid	28
8.4 Missing persons	28
Conclusion	29
Annex: Applicable treaties and implementation measures (Switzerland)	30

Executive summary

Under common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions and customary IHL, states have an obligation to respect and ensure respect for IHL. This obligation has both internal and external dimensions. Internally, it requires states to take measures to ensure IHL is respected by their armed forces, other persons and groups acting on their behalf, and their populations as a whole. Externally, states must not encourage, aid or assist parties to a conflict in committing violations. States must also do everything reasonably in their power to prevent IHL violations and bring them to an end.

An update of Switzerland's first voluntary report of 12 August 2020, this report provides a comprehensive overview of Switzerland's implementation of IHL. The report was prepared by the Interdepartmental Committee for International Humanitarian Law (ICIHL) and adopted by the Federal Council (Switzerland's government). Before drafting it, the ICIHL engaged in exchanges with civil society, including representatives of non-governmental organisations, academia, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Swiss Red Cross (SRC). Divided into eight sections, the report analyses the most prominent examples of best practice and the issues at stake, covering the following key topics:

- 1. Introduction:** the report provides an overview of the IHL treaties that apply to Switzerland. It explains how Switzerland incorporates IHL into its national legal system, and it sets out the applicable national rules.¹
- 2. Special protection:** Switzerland has taken measures to ensure the red cross emblem is used properly and to safeguard cultural property, making it possible to guarantee them the specific protection conferred under IHL.
- 3. Rules governing the means and methods of warfare:** the rules of IHL relating to the conduct of hostilities regulate and limit the methods and means of warfare that the parties to an armed conflict may use, including weapons. Switzerland is party to a series of treaties prohibiting or restricting the use of certain weapons and has established a procedure for assessing new means and methods of warfare. It also restricts the export of both war material and private security services.
- 4. Criminal prosecution of serious violations of IHL:** serious violations of IHL are war crimes. Prosecuting these serious violations is vital to ensuring respect for IHL. The perpetrators of such crimes must be prosecuted and punished by states. Switzerland has the necessary legislation, tools and mechanisms to prosecute war crimes at national level. At international level, it is committed to the fight against impunity.
- 5. IHL dissemination and training:** to ensure respect for IHL, states are required to disseminate information on IHL. Accordingly, Switzerland has incorporated IHL into its military training programmes. In addition, the Swiss Armed Forces has legal advisers specialised in IHL to assist commanding officers.
- 6. Support for IHL implementation:** certain entities can help the national authorities to implement IHL. Upon the recommendation of the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, Switzerland created the ICIHL to support its government in implementing and disseminating IHL. Switzerland also receives support from the Swiss Red Cross. Lastly, Switzerland runs the Secretariat of the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission (IHFFC) and actively supports its work.
- 7. Other measures to ensure respect for IHL:** Switzerland has adopted a set of legal and practical measures aimed at ensuring compliance with IHL at national and international level. It encourages parties to armed conflicts to respect IHL rules, particularly with regard to protecting the civilian population and persons *hors de combat*, medical missions and humanitarian access. It also supports processes designed to prevent and deal with mass IHL violations. In certain specific situations, Switzerland carries out diplomatic demarches and condemns the violations committed.
- 8. Current issues:** this new section, included in the update of the voluntary report, addresses a selection of topical issues that reflect some of today's challenges in implementing IHL. These issues include new technologies, IHL at the UN Security Council, humanitarian exemptions within the scope of implementing sanctions, and the question of missing persons in armed conflict. This section highlights what Switzerland is doing to address these challenges.

¹ The table in the Annex lists the implementing legislation and other measures taken by Switzerland, with references to relevant websites, including with regard to the protection of victims of armed conflict, of children and missing persons.

Writing and updating this voluntary report has enhanced discussions within the ICJHL on IHL implementation by Switzerland, leading to a shared understanding of best practice and of the main challenges. On that basis, the ICJHL has adopted an action plan setting out specific measures that will strengthen Switzerland's efforts to promote IHL. One of these measures is to support other national IHL committees as they prepare their own voluntary reports. Switzerland encourages all states to carry out this exercise, which makes it possible to foster intergovernmental dialogue on best practice and the measures needed to improve IHL compliance and implementation. Such a process would strengthen IHL and ensure better protection for the victims of armed conflicts.

Glossary

AP I	Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions of 1949
AP II	Additional Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions of 1949
Art.	Article
ATT	Arms Trade Treaty
CCW	Convention of 1980 on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects
CPPA	Federal Act on the Protection of Cultural Property during Armed Conflicts, Disasters and Emergencies
CWC	Convention of 1993 on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction
DDPS	Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport
ECPS	The FDFA's Export Controls and Private Security Services Section
FDFA	Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICIHL	Interdepartmental Committee for International Humanitarian Law
ICoC	International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers
ICoCA	International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers' Association
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IHFFC	International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission
IHL	International humanitarian law
IHRL	International human rights law
MCC	Military Criminal Code
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OAG	Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland
OPCW	Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
PCP	Protection of cultural property
PMSCs	Private military and security companies
PSSA	Federal Act on Private Security Services Provided Abroad
SCC	Swiss Criminal Code
SRC	Swiss Red Cross
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



1 Introduction

1.1 Definition

IHL, also called the law of war and *jus in bello*, is a set of rules that seek to limit the effects of armed conflict. It protects certain categories of people and property and restricts the means and methods of warfare.

IHL applies only to armed conflict. It is a legal term that refers to 'international' armed conflicts – between two or more states – and 'non-international' armed conflicts – between government forces and organised armed groups or between armed groups themselves. It does not cover situations of internal disturbance and tensions, such as isolated acts of violence. It is binding upon all parties as soon as an armed conflict breaks out, regardless of its legitimacy, the extent to which the parties acknowledge its existence, and the root cause of the violence.

IHL is based on international treaties and customary international law.² The four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their three additional Protocols of 1977 and 2005 are the pillars of IHL. These key instruments are supplemented by other IHL treaties that prohibit or limit the use of means and methods of warfare, protect certain categories of people and objects, or focus on criminal responsibility.

The obligation to implement IHL lies first and foremost with states. Under common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions and customary IHL, states must respect and ensure respect for IHL. They are required to take a series of both legal and practical measures – in times of peace and periods of armed conflict – designed to ensure that these rules are implemented.

→ For more information on IHL and its scope of application, sources and relationship with other branches of international law such as international human rights law (IHRL), see [The ABC of International Humanitarian Law](#) and the corresponding web pages of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the Swiss Red Cross (SRC).

² For an overview, see the ICRC's website: (i) [the IHL treaty database](#) and (ii) [the ICRC's study on customary IHL](#).

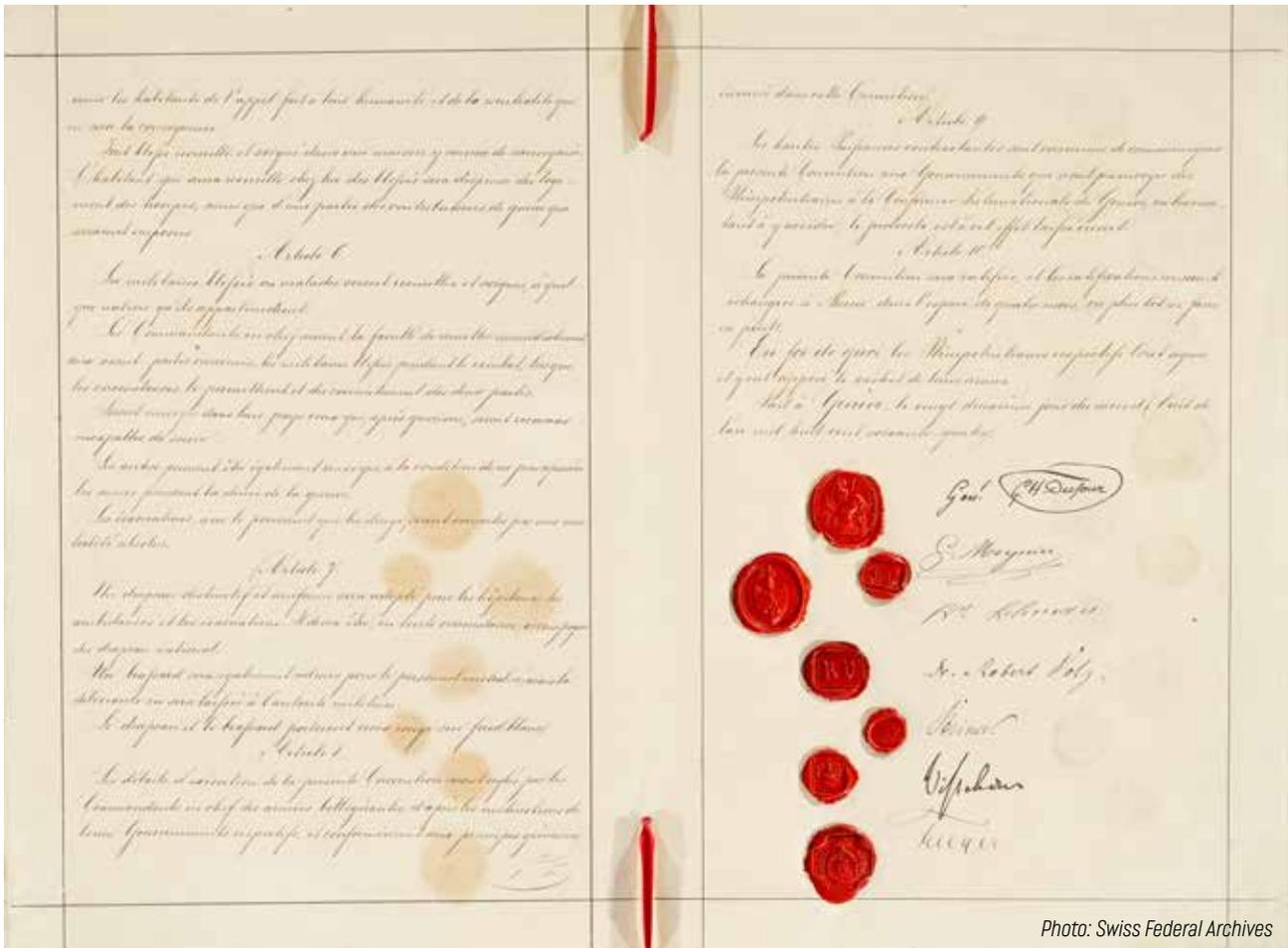


Photo: Swiss Federal Archives

1.2 IHL rules that apply to Switzerland

Switzerland is party to a series of IHL treaties in addition to the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. These include, for instance, the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention and the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Incorporating IHL into a national legal system is both a legal and a political endeavour that depends on national procedures. Switzerland has a monist legal system: the provisions of international treaties become an integral part of Swiss law as soon as the treaty enters into force and is ratified by Switzerland. Unlike in a dualist system,³ in general⁴ it is not necessary to transpose an international rule into national law

by enacting additional legislation. Furthermore, Switzerland is also bound by customary IHL, which is made up of norms that have arisen from the 'general practice accepted as law' and applies to states irrespective of their (non-)ratification of any given treaty.

Best practice

Many international treaties contain programmatic rules that need to be enacted in national legislation. This is why, before ratifying a treaty, the Federal Council makes sure that national law is in line with the treaty's provisions. A number of IHL treaties that have come into force have led to the adoption of Swiss implementing legislation.⁵

³ In a dualist system, international laws do not acquire the force of law until they have been incorporated into national law by way of an internal legislative instrument. The United Kingdom, for example, has a dualist system.

⁴ Rules of international law which are sufficiently specific and precise to create rights and obligations allowing individuals and legal entities to bring an action before the judicial or administrative authorities are directly applicable. Programmatic rules or provisions addressed to states are not directly applicable. Such provisions need to be integrated into legislation before they can be relied upon before the judicial or administrative authorities.

⁵ The Annex contains an overview of IHL treaties that apply to Switzerland along with the implementing measures, including relevant national legislation.

2 Special protection

In times of armed conflict, IHL protects people who are not, or are no longer, taking part in hostilities, as well as civilian objects. In addition, various categories of people⁶ and objects⁷ benefit from a specific protection. In some cases they must be marked with a distinctive sign to this end. Switzerland has taken measures to ensure that the red cross emblem is properly used (2.1) and cultural property is safeguarded (2.2).

2.1 Red cross emblem

IHL legal framework

Four distinctive emblems are recognised under IHL: the red cross, the red crescent, the red crystal and the red lion and sun on a white background. Only the first three are in use today. Under the Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols, the emblems have two main uses. In periods of armed conflict, the emblems are a visible sign of the protection afforded by IHL to medical personnel, units and transports ('protective use'). The emblems are also used by the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to identify themselves ('indicative use'). The emblems must be clearly defined so as to avoid any risk of confusion. It is also essential that the emblems are themselves protected given that any misuse, even in peacetime, can reduce the effectiveness of and the protection provided by health services and humanitarian aid. All states are therefore required to adopt national rules on the proper use of the emblems.

Overview of IHL implementation by Switzerland

The emblem is protected primarily by the [Federal Act of 25 March 1954 on the Protection of the Emblem and Name of the Red Cross](#) (SR 232.22). This Act defines the individuals and objects that may use the emblems for protective purposes in times of armed conflict. It also provides that only international and Swiss Red Cross entities are permitted to use the emblems for indicative purposes. Finally, the Act seeks to prevent misuse of the emblems by prohibiting their unauthorised use and imposes penalties for contravention. The two main types of misuse concerned are the use of an imitation (using a sign that, because of its shape and/or colour, may cause confusion with one of the distinctive emblems) and



Photo: ICRC (Thierry Gassmann)

improper use (the use of the emblem by people or entities that are not entitled to do so, such as pharmacies and private doctors).

Best practice

The SRC plays a key role in ensuring the emblem is used correctly. In the event of misuse, Article 7 of the [Regulations of 28 June 2014 Governing the Red Cross Emblem](#) (SR 232.221) sets out the measures that may be taken by the SRC, including issuing a written notification. Once it becomes aware of an instance of imitation or improper use, the SRC sends a written notice to the person, company or organisation concerned, requiring them to stop displaying the sign (for example by withdrawing a product or modifying a logo). If it is met with a refusal to take the requested measures, civil or criminal judicial proceedings are initiated. The Federal Supreme Court, which is Switzerland's highest judicial authority, ruled that the SRC, as the National Society of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, had the exclusive right to use the red cross in Switzerland and was the only organisation that could authorise third parties to use it, subject to certain conditions.⁸ Third parties are therefore prohibited from using any type of red cross, regardless of shade or shape, on any type of white background, for their own purposes.

⁶ This includes medical workers, the sick and wounded, missing persons, women, children, refugees, journalists and others.

⁷ Medical transport vehicles and units, cultural property, civil defence facilities, objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, the natural environment and works and installations containing dangerous forces (such as nuclear power plants and dams).

⁸ [Excerpt from the First Civil Law Division's ruling](#) (fr only) in the case A. SA v. Verein Schweizerisches Rotes Kreuz (civil law appeal) 4A_41/2014 of 20 May 2014.

2.2 Cultural property

IHL legal framework

IHL affords various levels of protection to cultural property (PCP). The 1954 Hague Convention (Art. 2; SR 0.520.3) and its two Additional Protocols of 1954 (SR 0.520.32) and 1999 (SR 0.520.33) provide that all cultural property must be afforded general protection in armed conflict. This protection is based on the obligation to respect and safeguard cultural property.⁹ Preparatory measures to be taken in peacetime to safeguard cultural property include compiling inventories, planning emergency measures, affixing a distinctive emblem (a blue and white shield, Art. 16 of the Convention) and designating authorities responsible for PCP.¹⁰ Some types of cultural property may, in addition to general protection under Article 2, be afforded special or enhanced protection.¹¹

9 The 1977 Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions also contain provisions on protecting cultural property in times of armed conflict (see Art. 53 AP I and Art. 16 AP II).

10 See Article 5 of the Second Protocol of 1999 to the 1954 Hague Convention.

11 Cultural property that is not used for military purposes and is situated at an adequate distance from military objectives may be placed under **'special protection'**. This provides such property with immunity from any act of hostility directed against it and any use for military purposes (see Chapter II of the Convention). The Second Protocol of 1999 set out a new system of **'enhanced protection'** that applies only to cultural property that is of the greatest importance for humanity and is not used for military purposes. For cultural property to be placed under enhanced protection, the authorities of the state in which it is located must request its inclusion in the [list of cultural property under enhanced protection](#) kept by the Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (see Chapter 3 of the Second Protocol).

Overview of IHL implementation by Switzerland

Switzerland is party to all IHL treaties addressing PCP in the event of armed conflict (Annex). The implementation of its international obligations is ensured in particular by the [Federal Act of 20 June 2014 on the Protection of Cultural Property during Armed Conflicts, Disasters and Emergencies](#) (CPPA, SR 520.3).¹² The federal government and the cantons have responsibilities in this regard, with the support of numerous cultural institutions and associations.

To protect cultural property from the potential impact of an armed conflict, those responsible for PCP have taken various preventive measures.¹³ In order to ensure compliance with these measures, the CPPA sets out the criminal penalties applying in the event that the distinctive emblem is misused or the implementation of protective measures is impeded or opposed.

12 The scope of this Act is broader than just armed conflict. It also includes PCP in the event of natural disasters or emergency situations.

13 These measures include (i) drawing up a Swiss inventory of cultural property of national and regional importance, (ii) making copies and compiling back-up documentation on microfilm and storing it in a secure location so that damaged or destroyed cultural property can be reconstructed, (iii) setting up and maintaining technically equipped shelters and safe havens for the storage of movable cultural property of the utmost importance, (iv) managing risks and drawing up emergency plans in the event of a catastrophe or disaster, (v) marking cultural property in peacetime – in accordance with the CPPA and the DDPS Ordinance on the Identification of Cultural Property and Staff Responsible for Protecting Cultural Property (SR 520.312), and (vi) PCP instruction and training for members of the military, civil defence staff, cultural institutions and the civilian population.



Photo: DDPS

Best practice

Over the years, Switzerland has developed innovative measures in the field of PCP. The PCP inventory includes some 3,436 items of cultural property of national importance which may also be accessed in the [geographical information system](#). This platform makes it easier for users to locate cultural property on Swiss territory and identify potential natural hazards. In addition to meeting the requirements set out in IHL treaties, the CPPA includes the option for Switzerland to offer safe havens for endangered cultural property from other countries. Under these provisions, Switzerland can make safe havens available to third countries for cultural property threatened by an armed conflict, natural disaster or any other emergency situation. Currently, some 327 such safe havens throughout the country are available to protect tangible cultural property of national significance.

Internationally, Switzerland promotes the universal adoption and implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention and its two protocols. It participates in the work of the governing bodies and in related events,¹⁴ and supports the actions of UNESCO, the Convention's depositary. Switzerland supports the political dialogue surrounding PCP,¹⁵ PCP training in peacekeeping operations, and the adoption of national implementing legislation through the efforts of national IHL committees.¹⁶ It also supports the Geneva-based International alliance for the protection of heritage in conflict areas (ALIPH), the main global fund that promotes heritage protection in conflict or post-conflict zones. At the same time, Switzerland offers its expertise in protecting endangered cultural heritage. It shares its expertise in inventories, microfilm and the provision of training to civilian and military personnel with a number of governments, cultural institutions and universities.

The Federal Council adopted a [Strategy for the Protection of Endangered Cultural Heritage 2019–23](#). This strategy was aimed at encouraging synergies within the Federal Administration, steering Switzerland's areas of action in terms of expertise, support, and participation in international bodies in this domain. By way of example, Switzerland's support for tangible projects aimed at protecting and reconstructing cultural heritage in Ukraine and Lebanon was based on this strategy. There are plans to consolidate its principles and to pursue related developments within a renewed framework.



Photo: DDPS

Challenges

The long-term preservation of digital cultural property requires new strategies and methods that differ significantly from those used to preserve tangible property. The issue of how to handle digital collections was raised within the framework of the 2016–21 PCP inventory review. The Strategy for the Protection of Endangered Cultural Heritage 2019–23 also proposes the development of a project to provide a safe haven for digital cultural property which would establish the necessary infrastructure to protect data in the event of a disaster or emergency. Consolidating the principles of the Strategy for the Protection of Endangered Cultural Heritage 2019–23 includes efforts to address today's challenges in protecting cultural property in armed conflicts, including in the area of protecting digital cultural heritage. These initiatives will be continued within the renewed framework.

¹⁴ For example, the Cultural Heritage and Peace conference in The Hague to mark the 70th anniversary of the Convention in May 2024.

¹⁵ For example, Switzerland hosted an [international UNESCO conference](#) in Geneva to mark the 20th anniversary of the Second Protocol in April 2019. This event brought together government representatives, experts and other stakeholders to discuss PCP-related challenges and achievements.

¹⁶ For more information on the role of the national IHL committees, see section 6.1.

3 Rules governing the means and methods of warfare

IHL rules on the conduct of hostilities regulate and limit the means and methods of warfare, including weapons, that the parties to an armed conflict may use.¹⁷ Switzerland is party to a series of treaties that prohibit or limit the use of certain weapons (3.1) and has a procedure for assessing new means and methods of warfare (3.2). It also restricts the export of both war materiel (3.3) and private security services (3.4).¹⁸

3.1 Specific rules governing certain weapons

IHL legal framework

In general, weapons that are indiscriminate or cause unnecessary suffering are banned under IHL.¹⁹ It is also prohibited to use means or methods of warfare which are designed to cause, or can be expected to cause long-term, widespread and severe damage to the natural environment.²⁰ Over the years, specific treaties have banned the use of certain weapons because of their devastating effects,²¹ including, for example, biological weapons, chemical weapons, blinding lasers, anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions. Some of these prohibitions are now deemed to form part of customary international law.²²

Overview of IHL implementation by Switzerland

Switzerland is party to a series of treaties prohibiting or restricting the use of certain weapons and has adopted a number of national implementing measures at legislative and administrative level to ensure that its obligations are met (a complete list of the treaties and implementing measures in force is provided in the Annex). For example, Switzerland amended the [Federal Act of 13 December 1996 on War](#)

[Materiel](#) (SR 514.51) after ratifying the Convention on Cluster Munitions in 2012.²³ It has also destroyed its stocks of cluster munitions. Switzerland has adopted the criminal provisions necessary to prosecute serious violations of IHL that constitute war crimes under the applicable weapons treaties.²⁴

Best practice

Switzerland's commitment is set out in the [Arms Control and Disarmament Strategy 2022–25](#) which defines five priority fields of action (i) nuclear weapons,²⁵ (ii) chemical and biological weapons, (iii) conventional weapons, (iv) autonomous weapons, and (v) cyberspace and outer space.

Switzerland is committed to the total elimination of atomic, biological, chemical and radiological weapons ('ABC' weapons). In terms of chemical weapons, Switzerland is committed to strengthening the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), based in The Hague. The OPCW is an international organisation that ensures that member states implement the 1993 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (CWC). Switzerland supports mechanisms to investigate allegations of chemical weapons use and identify the parties responsible, such as the [Investigation and Identification Team](#) in Syria. In 2021, a decision taken by the OPCW Conference of States Parties, at the instigation of several countries including Switzerland, reaffirmed that the aerosolised use of central nervous system-acting chemicals was incompatible with the CWC.²⁶

In terms of conventional weapons, for many years Switzerland has been committed to achieving a world free of anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions and to clearing areas contaminated by explosive remnants of war. The [Action Plan on Mine Action 2023–26](#) is a measure following up on the Arms Control and Disarmament Strategy 2022–25. The Action Plan, which was produced jointly by the FDFA and DDPS, sets out three fields of action (i) **promotion of the normative framework** with the aim of ensuring that

17 Article 22 of the Regulations Concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land annexed to the Hague Convention (IV) and Article 35 AP I.

18 The emphasis here is on the restrictions imposed to ensure compliance with IHL, although Switzerland also imposes restrictions on exports of war materiel and private security services on other legal grounds, such as IHR.

19 Articles 35(2) and 51(4)(b) AP I, the Declaration Renouncing the Use, in Time of War, of Explosive Projectiles (also called the St Petersburg Declaration), and rules 70 and 71 of the ICRC's study on customary IHL, see footnote 2 above.

20 Article 35(3) AP I and rule 45 of the ICRC's study on customary IHL, see footnote 2.

21 These treaties also contain provisions that extend beyond IHL and address non-proliferation and disarmament issues.

22 Chapter IV of the ICRC's study on customary law, see footnote 2 above.

23 In 2021, Switzerland chaired the Second Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

24 For further information on the criminal prosecution of IHL violations, see section 4.

25 In accordance with decisions of the Federal Council in 2018, 2019 and 2024, Switzerland has not signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

26 OPCW, Conference of States Parties, Decision on aerosolised use of central nervous system-acting chemicals for law enforcement purposes dated 1 December 2021.

states comply with international agreements, encouraging non-parties to adhere to the basic principles laid down in the applicable agreements, and supporting efforts to investigate alleged violations; (ii) **humanitarian mine action on the ground** and (iii) **innovation**. Switzerland is working closely with other governments and international organisations, the ICRC, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) and civil society on implementing the Action Plan. It invests between CHF 18 and 20 million a year in mine clearance efforts, mine-risk education, victim support and local capacity-building, and in facilitating the implementation of existing international agreements. Awareness-raising efforts include activities to disseminate information on IHL to non-state armed groups that use mines.²⁷ Switzerland has also stepped up efforts in support of Ukraine, for example by making substantial financial contributions in 2023. It has also approved a large budget earmarked for humanitarian demining in the 2024–27 period. As chair of the Second Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), Switzerland coordinated the drafting of the Lausanne Declaration and the Lausanne Action Plan with the aim of promoting the universalisation and implementation of the CCM in the 2021–26 period.

Switzerland also called for the inclusion of certain measures during the consultation process which led to the adoption, in 2022, of a Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas.²⁸



Photo: DDPS

²⁷ For further information on disseminating information on IHL, see section 5.

²⁸ EWIPA Dublin Conference 2022, [Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas](#), adopted under the leadership of Ireland.

Challenges

In today's world, technological advances have given rise to new means and methods of warfare. The challenge lies in knowing how they can be used in a manner consistent with IHL. Switzerland is actively involved in the work of various forums to help clarify these issues. Section 8 of this report and the related factsheet specifically address the issue of new technologies.

3.2 Procedure for assessing new weapons

IHL legal framework

Article 36 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, which partly reflects customary international law,²⁹ provides that each state party is required to assess the legality of any new weapon, means or method of warfare that it studies, develops, acquires or adopts. It must determine whether its employment would, in some or all circumstances, be prohibited by Additional Protocol I or any other rule of international law. In particular, any weapons system to be acquired must comply with the following IHL principles: (i) it must not cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering, (ii) it must be capable of being directed against military targets and must not have indiscriminate effects, and (iii) it must not cause widespread, long-term or severe damage to the natural environment. In addition, each state must ensure that it is not party to a treaty that would prohibit or restrict the use of the weapons system to be acquired (e.g. incendiary weapons, munitions involving non-detectable fragments, anti-personnel mines).³⁰

²⁹ For Switzerland, as a party to AP I, Article 36 is the applicable rule under which it must determine the lawfulness of new weapons. Various factors suggest that Article 36 may now be deemed to form part of customary international law. Switzerland believes that there is at least a general obligation to determine the lawfulness of new weapons and methods of warfare under common Article 1 to the Geneva Conventions and in line with the general *pacta sunt servanda* principle. Because states are prohibited from using means and methods of warfare in contravention of IHL, Switzerland believes that good faith implementation of the relevant provisions requires states to systematically assess new weapons and new means and methods of warfare to ensure that they can be used in compliance with IHL in international and non-international armed conflicts.

³⁰ See the specific prohibitions and restrictions in Protocol III on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Incendiary Weapons (SR O.515.091) and Protocol IV on Blinding Laser Weapons (SR O.515.091.1) to the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW; SR O.515.091) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (SR O.515.092).

Overview of IHL implementation by Switzerland

The procedure for assessing new weapons is set out in the [DDPS Ordinance of 26 March 2018 on the Acquisition, Use and Decommissioning of Military Equipment](#) (Art. 11, SR 514.20). Under the Ordinance, the 'Law of Armed Conflict' section of the Armed Forces Staff (the supervisory body) is responsible for making such assessment. The body overseeing the needs of the Swiss Armed Forces or procuring weapons must consult the supervisory body early in the procurement process. The supervisory body must then carry out an independent assessment and have access to relevant information and documents. At the request of the supervisory body, the project manager may arrange for studies to be undertaken or bring in experts in the fields of medicine, physics, chemistry and environmental protection to assess the potential impact of the weapon.

Best practice

Under the aforementioned DDPS ordinance, the procedure for assessing new weapons in the light of international law involves three stages. It provides that a weapons system must be declared compliant with international law before it is designed, developed or procured and ultimately introduced into the Swiss Armed Forces:³¹

- Before the weapon is designed, the supervisory body must identify all applicable rules of international law and determine whether the requirements can be met. Any requirements for assessing the type of weapon and carrying out specific studies/tests must be factored into the project.
- Before the weapon is developed or procured, the supervisory body must assess whether the new weapon can be used in compliance with international law. If necessary, it must stipulate conditions and future amendments to regulations and draw up engagement concepts and training plans.
- Before the weapon is introduced into the Swiss Armed Forces, the authority must determine whether the regulations, engagement concepts and training planned for the new weapon incorporate and meet the requirements of international law, thus ensuring that any use of the weapon system will be lawful.

The DDPS also supports training and booster training for national and international experts who are responsible for weapons control under international law or other arms-related issues.³²

31 Article 11 paragraph 2 defines weapon systems as any means designed to kill, injure or temporarily incapacitate persons or to destroy, damage or render objects temporarily unusable, including ammunition, projectiles and substances that have the same effects.

32 For example, the 'Weapons Law and the Legal Review of Weapons' course provided by the Geneva Centre for Security Policy.

3.3 International arms trade

IHL legal framework

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT, SR 0.518.61) governs international trade in conventional weapons, ammunition, weapon parts and components, with a view to reducing human suffering and contributing to international and regional peace, security and stability. Articles 6 and 7 of the ATT lay down strict criteria for the transfer of weapons specifically with a view to avoiding serious violations of IHL. These rules derive in part from states' duty to respect and ensure respect for IHL (section 7), as set out in common Article 1 to the Geneva Conventions and restated in the preamble to the ATT. Article 6(3) provides that a state party shall not authorise any transfer of arms covered under the ATT if it has knowledge that the arms could be used to commit genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. If an export is not prohibited under Article 6, the state party must apply the risk assessment criteria set out in Article 7(1)(b): it must not authorise the export if there is an 'overriding' risk that the exported arms could be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of IHL (Article 7(3)).³³

Overview of IHL implementation by Switzerland

In Switzerland, export controls on war materiel are laid down in the [Federal Act on War Materiel \(WMA; 514.51\)](#). Article 22 of the Act provides that the manufacture, brokerage, export and transit of war materiel for recipients abroad shall be authorised if this is not contrary to international law, international obligations, and the principles of Swiss foreign policy. International obligations include the rules laid down in the ATT, which Switzerland ratified in April 2015. The export of war materiel is subject to authorisation. Such authorisations are issued by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), which must first consult other relevant offices within the Federal Administration. Article 22a paragraph 2 of the WMA provides that export trade may not be authorised if, for example, the country of destination is involved in an internal or international armed conflict or there is a high risk that the war materiel to be exported will be used against the civilian population in the destination country.

33 When ratifying the ATT, Switzerland deposited a [declaration clarifying its understanding of certain provisions of the ATT](#) and, in particular, its interpretation of the phrases 'grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 1949' in Article 6(3) and 'overriding risk' in Article 7(3).

3.4 Private military and security companies

IHL legal framework

Some states assign services to private military and security companies (PMSCs), including guarding buildings, protecting people, maintaining and operating weapons systems, detaining prisoners and training armed forces. PMSC operations are subject to a number of rules under international law including, in particular, IHL and IHRL. While some rules apply directly to PMSCs and their staff, others apply to states that have dealings with such companies. These include countries that hire PMSCs (contracting states), countries on whose territory PMSCs operate (territorial states) and countries in which the PMSCs are based (home states).

Overview of IHL implementation by Switzerland

Switzerland is committed to promoting respect for IHL and IHRL in situations involving PMSCs, including armed conflicts. Together with the ICRC, it led the process that resulted in the adoption of the [Montreux Document](#) in 2008. This document is divided into two parts: part one clarifies how existing international obligations related to PMSC activities apply, while part two sets out various best practices to help states implement their obligations. It also encourages states to adopt national rules on PMSCs with a view to achieving greater compliance with international law. Some 59 states and three international organisations currently support the Montreux Document. [The Montreux Document Forum](#) was created in 2014. This provides a platform for informal consultation among Montreux Document participants, in order to support the national implementation of the document. It is currently co-chaired by Switzerland and the ICRC. In this context, Switzerland and the ICRC are committed to encouraging national regulatory bodies to exchange information on the issue of private security services. States that do not yet support the Montreux Document are also encouraged to take part in discussions within the forum.³⁴

On a parallel basis, the FDFA encourages PMSCs to follow up on the Montreux Document, in particular, by signing the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers (ICoC). This document is the fruit of a multi-stakeholder initiative launched by Switzerland in 2010. Companies adhering to the ICoC undertake to respect IHL and IHRL in providing security services in regions where the rule of law has been compromised. The Geneva-based Responsible Security Association (ICoCA) monitors compliance with the ICoC. In Switzerland, the best practices set out in the Montreux Document have been incorporated into the [Federal Act of 27 September 2013 on Private Security Services provided Abroad](#) (PSSA; SR 935.41).



Photo: ICoCA

Best practice

The PSSA has four main aims: to safeguard Switzerland's internal and external security, achieve Switzerland's foreign policy objectives, preserve Switzerland's neutrality, and ensure compliance with international law, in particular IHRL and IHL (Article 1). The PSSA prohibits any individuals and legal entities falling within its scope from carrying out an activity in connection with direct participation in hostilities abroad. It also bans a number of activities that are inconsistent with the aims of the Act, which include ensuring compliance with IHL and IHRL. It aims to promote respect for international law by requiring companies subject to the PSSA to become signatories to the ICoC and prove that their employees have received adequate training in IHL and IHRL.

The Federal Council has assigned responsibility for implementing the PSSA to the FDFA State Secretariat. The Export Controls and Private Security Services Section (ECPS), which is attached to the International Security Division, is responsible for the operational implementation of the Act. Companies that wish to provide, from Switzerland, private security services abroad must first disclose information to the ECPS. The ECPS considers the declarations submitted and initiates a review procedure where there are indications that the planned activities could be in conflict with the aims of the Act.³⁵

³⁴ The Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF) acts as its secretariat, calling on states to submit requests for assistance and advice on the regulation of private military and security companies.

³⁵ Further information is provided in the [annual activity reports](#) published by the ECPS.

4 Prosecuting serious violations of IHL

Serious violations of IHL, such as deliberately attacking civilians or civilian property, using prohibited weapons, torturing and illegally detaining people, causing forced displacement and recruiting child soldiers, constitute war crimes. To ensure respect for IHL, it is absolutely essential that serious violations such as these are prosecuted. Under IHL, the principle of individual criminal responsibility applies and states are required to prosecute and punish the perpetrators of war crimes. Switzerland has the tools and mechanisms necessary to prosecute war crimes at national level (4.1). Internationally, Switzerland is committed to combating impunity (4.2).

4.1 National law enforcement authorities

IHL legal framework

The four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Additional Protocol I of 1977, along with other treaties and customary international law,³⁶ set out states' obligations with regard to the prosecution of war crimes. The nature and extent of these obligations vary from treaty to treaty, including in terms of their substantive scope and application to individuals. Under IHL, states have a duty to investigate war crimes, irrespective of the perpetrator's nationality. Moreover, statutes of limitation may not apply to war crimes under customary international law.³⁷

36 Rule 157 of the ICRC's study on customary IHL provides that 'states have the right to vest universal jurisdiction in their national courts over war crimes'. Rule 158 provides that 'states must investigate war crimes allegedly committed by their nationals or armed forces, or on their territory, and, if appropriate, prosecute the suspects. They must also investigate other war crimes over which they have jurisdiction and, if appropriate, prosecute the suspects' (see footnote 2 above). These rules of customary international law apply to both international and non-international armed conflicts. In terms of treaty rules, the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol I require states to establish universal jurisdiction for war crimes, known as 'grave breaches', in their national courts (see Arts 49, 50, 129 and 146 of Geneva Conventions I-IV, and Art. 85(1) AP I). Other treaties also require state parties to provide for universal jurisdiction for certain crimes, including those committed during an armed conflict. These include the 1984 Convention against Torture (Article 5), the 2006 International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Article 6) and the 1999 Second Protocol of the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property (Article 16(1)).

37 Rule 160 of the ICRC's study on customary IHL, see footnote 2 above.

Overview of IHL implementation by Switzerland

In addition to the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols, Switzerland is party to a series of treaties that criminalise serious violations of IHL, including with respect to weapons and cultural property.³⁸ Between 1 March 1968 and 31 December 2010, Switzerland prosecuted war crimes in reliance on applicable IHL provisions in its [Military Criminal Code](#) (MCC).³⁹ After ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Switzerland incorporated war crimes provisions into the [Swiss Criminal Code](#) (Art. 264b to 264j).⁴⁰ The legislation established the principle of a uniform system for prosecuting war crimes, irrespective of the nature of the conflict, that is whether the conflict is international or non-international (Art. 264b SCC). It also introduced equivalent provisions into the MCC (Arts 110 to 114).

There are two distinct features in the way war crimes are prosecuted under Swiss law. Firstly, there is no statute of limitations on war crimes.⁴¹ Secondly, Switzerland applies the principle of universal jurisdiction. This means that it can prosecute war crimes committed abroad even if the perpetrator is not a Swiss national and the crime was not committed against Swiss nationals.⁴² However, two conditions must be met: the perpetrator (1) must be in Switzerland when the legal proceedings are initiated, and (2) is not extradited or delivered to an international criminal court. The Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland (OAG) is responsible for prosecuting war crimes, although in times of war the military tribunal system has that authority.⁴³ In 2023, the Court of Appeal of the Federal Criminal Court handed down the first conviction in Switzerland for crimes against humanity.⁴⁴ These proceedings underline the importance of the universal jurisdiction principle and demonstrate Switzerland's commitment to combating impunity for the gravest crimes.

38 These include the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property and its Second Protocol of 1999; the 1972 Convention on Biological Weapons; the 1976 Convention on Environmental Modification Techniques; Amended Protocol II to the 1980 Convention on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons (with regard to mines, booby-traps and other devices); the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention; and the 1997 Ottawa Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines.

39 SR 321.0.

40 SR 311.0.

41 Article 101 paragraph 1 letter c SCC. No statute of limitations applies unless the right to prosecute or execute the sentence had become time barred by 1 January 1983 in accordance with the law applicable until that point in time (Art. 101 para. 3 SCC).

42 Article 264m paragraph 1 SCC.

43 The military tribunal has jurisdiction in times of war and/or if the alleged offender or victim is a member of the Swiss Armed Forces.

44 Federal Criminal Court, Criminal Chamber, [Judgment of 18 June 2021 SK.2019.17](#); Federal Criminal Court, Court of Appeal, [Operative part of the judgment dated 30 May 2023 CA.2022.8](#), upholding the conviction of Aliou Kossiah for war crimes.



Photo: ICC-CPI

Best practice

The codification of war crimes in Swiss legislation allowed criminal behaviour to be defined with greater clarity and predictably. Given the considerable effort involved in enacting such legislation, Switzerland has retained a catch-all provision covering other violations of IHL.⁴⁵ This provision is designed to catch future developments in war crimes-related customary international law or in treaties or amended treaties ratified by Switzerland. Switzerland recently ratified the amendment to the Rome Statute which made it a war crime to intentionally starve civilians in non-international armed conflicts.⁴⁶

Challenges

Prosecuting war crimes poses a number of challenges. The task of gathering evidence for crimes committed abroad is often challenging, in particular when the events took place long ago. Cooperation between judicial authorities, for example courts in other countries and international judicial bodies, is essential. Switzerland may provide mutual legal assistance in war crimes cases on the basis of the [Federal Act of 20 March 1981 on International Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters](#) (SR 351.1). Recent amendments have extended the scope of the Act to cover mutual assistance in criminal matters, not just to states, but also to international courts and other intergovernmental or supranational bodies serving as criminal authorities.⁴⁷ Switzerland also actively supported the Mutual Legal Assistance Initiative ('MLA Initiative'), which advocated the adoption of a new agreement aimed at strengthening cooperation on the investigation and prosecution of international crimes.⁴⁸ Switzerland signed this agreement on 14 February 2024 and will be able to ratify it once it has been approved by Parliament.

4.2 Taking action at international level

Overview of IHL implementation by Switzerland

The fight against impunity remains one of Switzerland's foreign policy priorities, as stated in its latest [Foreign Policy Strategy 2024–27](#), and forms part of its broader approach to dealing with the past and preventing atrocities. In its position statements, bilateral demarches and contributions to multilateral forums, Switzerland regularly calls for serious violations of IHL and IHRL to be investigated and for those responsible to be punished. Switzerland backs the work of international criminal tribunals such as the ICC and supports efforts by

various states to strengthen their own criminal courts. The Swiss authorities keep the general public informed of their work in this area.

Best practice

Switzerland works to fight against impunity by encouraging other states to ratify the Rome Statute of the ICC and incorporate it into national law. Switzerland provides strong support to the ICC, so that it can carry out its activities independently, impartially and effectively. In particular, it has supported the work of the ICC by deploying forensic experts to Ukraine and regularly deploys specialists to the ICC in The Hague. It also proposed amending Article 8 of the Rome Statute to make it a war crime to intentionally use starvation of civilians as a method of warfare in non-international armed conflict. In 2019, the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute unanimously adopted the proposed amendment,⁴⁹ helping to strengthen the protection of civilians. The fact that the ICC is now able to prosecute such acts as a war crime will help to prevent this crime in future and bring justice to victims. Switzerland is working to promote the ratification of this amendment and has produced a [guidebook](#) setting out best practice in furtherance of this aim.⁵⁰ In general, Switzerland encourages states to ratify all amendments to the Rome Statute with a view to extending the ICC's jurisdiction both substantively and geographically.

At the same time, Switzerland provides political and financial support to international investigative mechanisms.⁵¹ Finally, it assists in the development and promotion of best practice for the protection of archives at risk, in order to ensure the preservation of information and documents relating to potential IHL violations. It initiated the drafting of the 'Guiding Principles on Safe Havens for Archives at Risk' by a group of experts, which was adopted by the International Council on Archives in October 2019.

45 This provision is incorporated into Article 264j of the Swiss Criminal Code.

46 [BBl 2022 708](#), Federal decree on approving the amendment dated 6 December 2029 to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (intentional starvation of civilians – de, fr, it).

47 Introduction of Article 1, paras 3^{bis} and 3^{ter} IMAC, in force since 1 June 2021.

48 Ljubljana-The Hague Convention on International Cooperation in the Investigation and Prosecution of the Crime of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity, War Crimes and Other International Crimes dated 26 May 2023.

49 See [Resolution ICC-ASP/18/Res.5](#) dated 6 December 2019.

50 See [Guidebook on Ratifying and Implementing the Starvation Amendment to the Rome Statute](#), 2022.

51 These include the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) on Syria established through UN General Assembly Resolution A/71/248 and the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, established through Resolution 39/2 of the Human Rights Council.

5 IHL dissemination and training

IHL legal framework

In order to ensure compliance with IHL, states have an obligation to spread knowledge of IHL. The obligation of dissemination applies in both peacetime and wartime.⁵² It requires states to translate IHL instruments into their national languages. States must also incorporate IHL into military training and, if possible, civilian education programmes. Additional Protocol I also provides that states must ensure legal advisers are trained to advise commanders in applying the four Geneva Conventions and the Protocol, as well as in the appropriate instruction to be given to the armed forces on this subject.⁵³

⁵² The obligation to disseminate IHL is set out in several instruments, such as the Geneva Conventions (I–IV, Arts 47/48/127/144), Article 83 AP I, Article 19 AP II, Article 25 of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, Art. 6 of the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and Article 42 of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child.

⁵³ Article 82 AP I.

Overview of IHL implementation by Switzerland

In Switzerland, various entities are involved in raising awareness about IHL, such as the Armed Forces and the SRC. IHL was incorporated into military training programmes within the Armed Forces on the basis of Regulation 51.007.04 'Legal Bases for Conduct During an Engagement'. All members of the Swiss Armed Forces must attend an online course on IHL as part of their basic training. IHL is also integrated into combat exercises as part of operational training and training within military formations. The Swiss Armed Forces also has legal advisers who have received advanced IHL training at different levels (brigades, divisions, special forces units and Armed Forces Staff). Academic training and research in IHL are extensively developed and promoted in Switzerland, in particular to disseminate IHL knowledge among the general population. A large number of universities and institutes offer IHL courses and specialised training.



Photo: DDPS

Best practice

The Swiss Armed Forces uses a range of practical tools, including an online training programme, to disseminate IHL knowledge. It has also created specific rules and pocket cards, for example on IHL basics in medical service, on regulations relating to prisoners of war and interned persons, and on the protection of cultural property (Annex). Furthermore, it runs in-depth IHL courses specially designed for different groups, including senior officers and senior non-commissioned officers, medical units, legal advisers and commanders, as well as military peace support personnel.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ The Swiss Armed Forces also organises courses, notably in collaboration with the UN and NATO (e.g. on the law of engagement and the rules of engagement in peace operations for senior non-commissioned officers, courses for future military observers and the seminar offered by legal advisers of the International Society for Military Law and the Law of War, as well as the Central Role of the Commander course).

IHL is also incorporated into practical exercises and training at all levels of the army, for example at the armour and artillery officer training school.⁵⁵ For training in the field of cultural property, for example, the army teams up with the Federal Office for Civil Protection. These courses are also of interest for civil defence staff and people who work for cultural institutions with close links to cultural property. Because IHL applies to all parties to a conflict, including organised armed groups in non-international armed conflicts, it is also essential that these groups learn about IHL.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ In 2023, an IHL 'Training of Trainers' was also organised for those responsible for training in all armed forces. In addition to general IHL, participants were also able to learn about issues such as explosive weapons in populated areas.

⁵⁶ Switzerland has for many years supported the work of the ICRC and [Geneva Call](#) in this area. The latter engages in dialogue with non-state armed groups in order to promote respect for IHL by these groups.



Photo: DDPS

6 Supporting IHL implementation

National authorities can draw on the support of certain entities in implementing IHL. Within Switzerland, the government set up the Interdepartmental Committee for International Humanitarian Law (6.1). It also receives the support of the Swiss Red Cross (6.2). Internationally, Switzerland actively supports the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission (6.3).

6.1 Interdepartmental Committee for IHL

IHL legal framework

To properly implement IHL, states must adopt both legal and practical measures that require coordinating various government ministries and other institutions and securing their support. The 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent recommended that states create national committees tasked with advising and helping governments to implement and disseminate IHL.⁵⁷ The Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols do not oblige states to set up such committees, which means that states are free to decide whether to do so and, if they do, who their members will be and how the committees will operate.

Overview of IHL implementation by Switzerland

In 2009, the Federal Council created the ICIHL in response to the above recommendation. It gave the ICIHL internal regulations defining its objectives, composition, powers and working methods. The ICIHL consists of representatives of the FDFA, the DDPS, the Federal Department of Justice and Police, the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research, the Federal Department of Home Affairs, and the OAG. At the national level, the ICIHL is responsible for the exchange of information and the coordination of activities and issues relating to IHL. It thus promotes and coordinates the consistent implementation of Switzerland's IHL-related obligations. It coordinates the activities carried out by the various federal authorities and maintains relations with academia, civil society and other organisations working in the area of IHL, including the SRC and the ICRC.

⁵⁷ See Resolution 1 of the [26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent](#), which took place in 1995. The resulting recommendations were approved by a panel of experts that was set up by Switzerland.

Best practice

Every year the ICIHL draws up an action plan setting out its priorities and objectives. These action plans set out its priority issues in the area of IHL implementation and the measures and activities that it intends to carry out in order to address them. At the start of every year, the ICIHL assesses the extent to which the previous year's action plan was implemented so that it can evaluate progress on the objectives set. The ICIHL has familiarised itself with the ICRC's online platform, which aims to promote interactions between national IHL implementation committees. This tool facilitates exchanges with other national IHL committees and aims to strengthen respect for IHL by sharing examples of best practice and challenges relating to the implementation of IHL at national level. At international level the ICIHL works to promote national IHL initiatives by sharing its expertise and experience, particularly with regard to its mandate, its founding, and the drafting of voluntary reports.⁵⁸ In particular, the ICIHL plays an active role in regional meetings of national IHL committees, the last of which took place in 2023.

6.2 Swiss Red Cross

IHL legal framework

IHL implementation is one of the primary objectives of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The Movement consists of the ICRC, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the National Societies. The National Societies occupy a privileged position as auxiliaries to the public authorities. Under the Movement's statutes, the role of the National Societies is to support their respective governments in carrying out their humanitarian duties, which include providing emergency relief to victims of armed conflicts, disseminating IHL, protecting the distinctive emblems⁵⁹ and promoting IHL compliance.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ The ICRC and the ICIHL have organised inter-state exchanges for this purpose.

⁵⁹ For more information on the SRC's role in protecting the distinctive emblem, see section 2.1.

⁶⁰ Article 3 of the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which were adopted at the 25th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in Geneva in 1986 and amended in 1995 and 2006.

Overview of IHL implementation by Switzerland

The SRC was established in 1866. Under the [Federal Decree of 13 June 1951 on the Swiss Red Cross \(SR 513.51\)](#), the SRC is recognised as the sole National Red Cross Society in Switzerland. As such, it is required to assist the medical service of the Armed Forces in the event of war. The decree also sets out other activities of the SRC, including voluntary medical services, a blood transfusion service for military and civilian needs, promoting nursing care and other humanitarian tasks. The SRC also includes the Red Cross Service – consisting of some 250 Swiss citizens with professional medical training – which assists the Swiss Armed Force’s medical service with training and supports it in the field. In addition to its medical services, the SRC helps to search for missing people, including in connection with an armed conflict. The SRC’s tracing service can be called on by anyone who lives in Switzerland and has lost contact with a family member or other loved one. It conducts searches in conjunction with the ICRC and the tracing services of the 191 National Societies. Lastly, the SRC plays a key role in IHL dissemination and training.

Best practice

As part of its duty to disseminate IHL, the SRC, with the support of the ICJHL, published an [IHL manual for members of Parliament](#), which describes measures that parliamentarians can take to improve IHL compliance. For example, members of Parliament can advocate for the ratification of IHL treaties, ensure IHL obligations are incorporated into national law and monitor implementation by the various authorities concerned. In schools, the SRC uses workshops and role playing to [teach the fundamental principles of IHL in a fun way](#).

Challenges

There is currently no agency or programme that systematically raises awareness of IHL among the civilian population. In view of this situation, the SRC and the Swiss delegation [pledged](#) to cooperate more closely on disseminating IHL at the 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. Part of their commitment is to use modern and effective communication tools to improve the dissemination of IHL. To that end the SRC and Switzerland have supported the development of an interactive film on IHL entitled [‘If War Comes to You’](#). The film is an immersive experience that invites viewers to consider the varying perspectives of those most directly affected by armed conflict.



Photo: Swiss Red Cross – SRC

6.3 International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission

IHL legal framework

Article 90 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions provides for the creation of an International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission (IHFFC). Its main purpose is to investigate allegations of grave breaches and serious violations of the Geneva Conventions and the Protocol, and to facilitate, through its good offices, the restoration of an attitude of respect for IHL. Its 15 members serve in a personal capacity and are elected to five-year terms by those states parties which have accepted the competence of the [IHFFC](#). The IHFFC is the only permanent body set up under an international treaty that is responsible for investigating IHL-related incidents.

Overview of IHL implementation by Switzerland

When it ratified Additional Protocol I, Switzerland issued a declaration recognizing the competence of the IHFFC as provided in Article 90. In so doing, Switzerland authorised the IHFFC to carry out investigations upon request in connection with any conflict between it and another party that

has made the same declaration. In addition, in its capacity as the depositary state for the Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols, Switzerland runs the Secretariat of the IHFFC.⁶¹

Best practice

Switzerland is committed to ensuring that the IHFFC is able to carry out its mission and improve compliance with IHL. It encourages states to use the IHFFC's services and is working to raise awareness of the IHFFC and its role, and increase the number of states recognizing its competence.

⁶¹ As at 1 January 2024, 76 states had recognized the competence of the IHFFC.



Photo: IHFFC

7 Other measures to ensure respect for IHL

IHL legal framework

Under both common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions and customary international humanitarian law, states must respect and ensure respect for IHL. This obligation has both internal and external dimensions. Internally, it requires states to take measures to ensure IHL is respected by their armed forces, other persons and groups acting on their behalf, and their populations as a whole. Externally, it means that states must not encourage, aid or assist in violations of IHL by parties to an armed conflict. It also demands that third states do everything reasonably in their power to prevent and bring to an end IHL violations by parties to a conflict.

Overview of IHL implementation by Switzerland

Switzerland has put in place a series of legal and practical measures aimed at ensuring respect for IHL both internally and externally. In addition to the areas referred to above, Switzerland calls on parties to an armed conflict to comply with IHL, notably the rules on the protection of civilians, the protection of the medical mission and on humanitarian access. It also supports processes designed to prevent and address massive violations of IHL and works to ensure that women are able to contribute actively to peace processes and conflict prevention.⁶² Under certain circumstances, Switzerland makes diplomatic demarches and publicly condemns violations. It also provides financial support to a large number of projects aimed at strengthening IHL.⁶³

Best practice

Promoting respect for IHL and its implementation requires exchanges between states, particularly through the sharing of best practice. Switzerland regularly organises discussions on IHL.⁶⁴ In 2021 and 2023, Switzerland and the ICRC organised meetings of government experts to help bring about realistic and pragmatic progress in the application of IHL at national level.⁶⁵ These meetings enabled government experts

to discuss the challenges involved in implementing IHL and to share best practice for overcoming them.

Switzerland was the first country to adopt a [strategy](#) on protecting civilians in armed conflict. At the multilateral level, Switzerland chairs in New York an informal group of countries called the 'Group of Friends on the Protection of Civilians'. Through this role, it is able to positively influence UN Security Council debates and decisions involving the protection of civilians. Switzerland made this issue one of its strategic priorities during its mandate as a non-permanent member of the Security Council in 2023–24. In addition to its commitment at global level, Switzerland implements the obligation to ensure respect for IHL by using its presence in contexts of armed conflict to remind parties to armed conflicts of their obligations (protection of civilians and humanitarian access). In addition, assessments regarding civilian protection and appropriate responses must now be incorporated into new bilateral cooperation programmes in contexts where IHL applies. The aim is to use Switzerland's presence in highly fragile contexts more systematically to promote respect for IHL, including the protection of civilians.

In the area of humanitarian access, Switzerland takes concerted action at the political, legal and operational levels. It is actively committed to rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access to populations in need, both in UN forums and in its bilateral interactions with the parties concerned. Furthermore, in collaboration with partner organisations, Switzerland has developed instruments to help secure and maintain humanitarian access. These instruments clarify legal issues and provide practical advice to humanitarian actors on obtaining and preserving humanitarian access.⁶⁶ On the ground, Switzerland seeks to assist and protect conflict victims through its own humanitarian actions and by supporting humanitarian organisations such as the ICRC and the [Centre of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation](#).⁶⁷ The latter promotes the exchange and analysis of experiences and practices in humanitarian negotiations to enable humanitarian aid and support to reach people in need rapidly and without hindrance.

62 [Switzerland's National Action Plan to Implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325](#).

63 For example, Switzerland supports research projects, particularly in Geneva, and supports a number of IHL-related initiatives – in the digital field in particular – aimed at strengthening IHL and clarifying its application in practice.

64 In 2024 Switzerland is organising a series of discussions on IHL for diplomats in Geneva, in collaboration with the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, as part of the 75th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions.

65 Protection of medical activities in times of armed conflict (2021), Protection of the environment in armed conflicts (2023).

66 For more information, see the [Handbook on the International Normative Framework](#) and the [Practitioners' Manual on Humanitarian Access in Situations of Armed Conflict](#).

67 This centre is a joint initiative of the ICRC, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Food Programme, Médecins Sans Frontières Switzerland and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.

Switzerland has also incorporated humanitarian exemptions into the Swiss Criminal Code (Arts 260^{ter} and 260^{quinquies}).⁶⁸ Article 260^{ter} paragraph 2, which came into force in 2021, provides that the prohibition against supporting the organisations referred to in Article 260^{ter} paragraph 1 'does not apply to humanitarian services provided by an impartial humanitarian organisation, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, in accordance with common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949'.⁶⁹

Switzerland plays a leading role in the area of preventing atrocities. It takes action to encourage states to strengthen national mechanisms aimed at preventing gross violations of IHRL and IHL. It was on the initiative of Switzerland that, in 2013, the international network Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes was created. Both states and civil society organisations are represented within this network. It operates a platform for dialogue, knowledge transfer and best practices in the context of preventing atrocities.

Switzerland has played a pioneering role on the issue of dealing with the past. Its work includes running an annual course on this topic for high-level delegations from other countries. At the bilateral level and upon request, the FDFA advises and supports political processes such as the implementation of transitional justice as part of the peace agreement in Colombia, and cooperation between Kosovo and Serbia in the search for people who disappeared during the conflict. At the multilateral level, Switzerland is recognised for its role in developing the normative framework for dealing with the past. Switzerland was also behind the initiative that led to the mandate of a UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence.

68 SR 311.0.

69 Inserted by No I of the FA of 18 March 1994 (AS 1994 1614; BBl 1993 III 269). Amended by Annex No II 2 of the FedD of 25 September 2020 on the Approval and Implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism and its Additional Protocol and the Strengthening of Criminal Justice Instruments for Combating Terrorism and Organised Crime, in force since 1 July 2021 (AS 2021 360; BBl 2018 6469).



Photo: DDPS

8 Current issues

Applying and respecting IHL can pose challenges in a number of areas. Switzerland is currently focusing on the following thematic areas: new technologies (8.1), IHL in the Security Council (8.2), humanitarian exemptions (8.3) and the issue of missing persons in armed conflicts (8.4). For further information, please click on the link in the footnote.⁷⁰

8.1 New technologies

Increasing digitalisation and technological developments (e.g. robotics, sensors, artificial intelligence) are affecting the way in which armed conflicts are conducted and hence also the implementation of IHL. In armed conflicts, cyberspace has been added to traditional areas of operation (space, air, ground, etc.). Advancements in artificial intelligence are creating new areas of military application, including increasingly autonomous weapons systems. On the one hand, these developments open up the possibility of waging war more effectively (e.g. by increasing speed, protecting troops) and even ensuring greater respect for IHL (e.g. by improving precision). On the other hand, these technologies raise legal, ethical, humanitarian and practical questions. Switzerland is involved in a number of processes dealing with the risks arising from these technologies and their developments, particularly with regard to the application of IHL.

8.2 Security Council and IHL

The protection of civilians in armed conflicts is one of Switzerland's four priorities during its 2023–24 term on the UN Security Council. In this context, it is systematically committed to full compliance with and promotion of IHL, in keeping with its long-standing policy in this area. More specifically, Switzerland is working actively to ensure that the Security Council's outputs correctly reflect IHL. Since assuming its seat on the Security Council in 2023, Switzerland has observed a trend towards the relativisation of international law, in particular IHL, in the output and communications of this body. This development raises concerns about the recognition of the binding effect of these rules and calls for increased vigilance to preserve the integrity of IHL.

8.3 Humanitarian exemptions to limit the impact of sanctions on humanitarian aid

Switzerland has long been committed to limiting the adverse effects of sanctions on civilian populations and humanitarian activities in accordance with IHL. In December 2022, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2664 ([S/RES/2664 \(2022\)](#)), which provides for a humanitarian exemption to the asset-freezing measures contained in the sanctions regimes established by the Security Council. The aim of this resolution is to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and other humanitarian activities to populations in need. Switzerland therefore welcomes the adoption of Resolution 2664 and has incorporated it into its national legislation (entry into force on 1 June 2023).⁷¹ The EU's sanctions regimes taken over by Switzerland provide for numerous exceptions for humanitarian actors. If necessary, Switzerland can introduce additional ones.

8.4 Missing persons

As part of its peace policy, Switzerland is committed to the identification of and search for missing persons at multilateral and geographical levels. Ukraine, the Caucasus, Kosovo and the Middle East are among the priority countries and regions for programmes in this area. Switzerland also supports the ICRC's Central Tracing Agency – a cornerstone of the Swiss humanitarian tradition – and co-founded the [Global Alliance for the Missing](#).

⁷⁰ For more information on the issues discussed in this section, please go to the [following link](#) to find the detailed factsheets.

⁷¹ Ordinance governing exceptions to specific coercive measures for the purposes of supplying humanitarian aid or supporting other activities aimed at meeting basic human needs ([AS 2023 236](#)).

Conclusion

Seventy-five years after the adoption of the Geneva Conventions, the current international political landscape is marked by growing polarisation, while armed conflicts continue to cause great human suffering, coupled with economic, environmental and health crises. In this context, the implementation of IHL remains an ongoing challenge.

Aware of the challenges involved in implementing IHL and the need to take action, Switzerland has adopted a resolutely proactive approach to respecting and ensuring respect for IHL. It has taken concrete measures to prevent the causes and reduce the consequences of armed conflict, repress violations of IHL and disseminate the rules of IHL. This report identifies and explains all the measures adopted by Switzerland to ensure that IHL is respected and implemented.

Updating the voluntary report has made it possible to analyse developments in the national implementation of IHL, identify new challenges and propose updated measures to address them. This updated report illustrates Switzerland's ongoing commitment to respecting IHL, highlighting the progress made as well as emerging and remaining challenges.

Domestically, drafting and updating this voluntary report have facilitated a better common understanding of IHL implementation measures and issues between the authors of the report (the members of the ICiHL), thus encouraging the development of synergies, the identification of best practices and ultimately strengthening the effectiveness of Swiss action (whole-of-government approach). This initiative also led to the adoption by the ICiHL of new action plans to consolidate Switzerland's implementation of IHL. Implementing IHL at the national level requires action, and the voluntary report is a concrete example of this.

The Federal Council is convinced that this updated voluntary report will help to strengthen respect for IHL in Switzerland and beyond. The Federal Council encourages other countries to draw up their own voluntary reports, thereby enriching the exchange of best practices at both the national and international levels. Such an outcome would strengthen IHL and ensure better protection for the victims of armed conflicts.

Annex

Applicable treaties and implementation measures (Switzerland)

Topic	IHL treaty	Date of ratification/ accession by Switzerland	Implementing legislation	Other measures
Protecting victims of armed conflict	Geneva Conventions (I–IV), 1949	31 March 1950	→ Federal Civil Protection and Civil Defence Act	<p>On the implementation of the Geneva Conventions in peacetime:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Council Decree on the Application of the Geneva Conventions in the Armed Forces <p>On the protection of civilians:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy on the protection of civilians in armed conflicts <p>On humanitarian access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanitarian Access in Situations of Armed Conflict – Practitioners’ Manual • Humanitarian Access in Situations of Armed Conflict – Normative Framework
	Protocol (I) additional to the Geneva Conventions, 1977	17 February 1982		
	Protocol (II) additional to the Geneva Conventions, 1977	17 February 1982		
	Protocol (III) additional to the Geneva Conventions, 2005	14 July 2006		
Children	Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989	24 February 1997		FDFA Action Plan for the protection of children associated with armed forces or groups in armed conflict
	Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts, 2000	26 June 2002		
Missing persons	Rules contained in the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the additional Protocols		→ DDPS Ordinance on Military Identification → Federal Act on the Use of DNA Profiles in Criminal Proceedings and for the Identification of Unknown and Missing Persons	
	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, 2006	2 December 2016	→ Federal Act on the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance	
Red cross emblem	Rules in the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the additional Protocols		→ Federal Act on the Protection of the Emblem and the Name of the Red Cross → Regulations Governing the Use and Protection of the Emblem and the Name of the Red Cross	

Topic	IHL treaty	Date of ratification/ accession by Switzerland	Implementing legislation	Other measures	
Protection of cultural property	Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, 1954	15 May 1962	→ Federal Act on the Protection of Cultural Property During Armed Conflicts, Disasters and Emergencies → Ordinance on the Protection of Cultural Property During Armed Conflicts, Disasters and Emergencies	Strategy for the Protection of Endangered Cultural Heritage 2019–23	
	Hague Protocol for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, 1954	15 May 1962	→ DDPS Ordinance governing the identification of cultural property and staff responsible for protecting cultural property		
	Second Protocol of the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, 1999	9 July 2004	→ Federal Act on the International Transfer of Cultural Property		
Weapons	Declaration Renouncing the Use, in Time of War, of Explosive Projectiles (also called the St Petersburg Declaration), 1868	29 December 1868 (adopted by the Federal Council)			
	Hague Conventions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hague Convention (II) on the Laws and Customs of War on Land, 1899 • Hague Convention (IV) on the Laws and Customs of War on Land, 1907 • Hague Convention (VIII) on Submarine Mines, 1907 • Hague Convention (IX) on Bombardment by Naval Forces, 1907 	20 June 1907			
			12 May 1910		
			12 May 1910		
			12 May 1910		
	Hague Declarations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hague Declaration (IV, 2) Concerning Asphyxiating Gases, 1899 • Hague Declaration (IV, 3) Concerning Expanding Bullets, 1899 • Hague Declaration (XIV) on Explosives from Balloons, 1907 	29 December 1900			
		29 December 1900			
		12 May 1910			
	Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, 1925	12 July 1932			
	Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction, 1972	4 May 1976	→ Federal Act on the Control of Dual-Use Goods, Specific Military Goods and Strategic Goods → Ordinance on the Export, Import and Transit, of Dual Use Goods, Specific Military Goods and Strategic Goods	Arms Control and Disarmament Strategy 2022–25	

Topic	IHL treaty	Date of ratification/ accession by Switzerland	Implementing legislation	Other measures
	Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques, 1976	5 August 1988		
	Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons, 1980 CCW Protocols: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocol (I) on Non-Detectable Fragments, 1980 • Protocol (II) Prohibiting Mines, Booby-Traps and other Devices, 1980 • Protocol (III) Prohibiting Incendiary Weapons, 1980 • Protocol (IV) on Blinding Laser Weapons, 1995 • Protocol (VI) Prohibiting Mines, Booby-Traps and other Devices, as amended, 1996 • CCW, amended Article 1, 2001 • Protocol (V) on Explosive Remnants of War, 2003 	20 August 1982 20 August 1982 20 August 1982 24 March 1998 24 March 1998 19 January 2004 12 May 2006		A 'Compliance-Based' Approach to Autonomous Weapon Systems (working paper submitted by Switzerland to the CCW Group of Governmental Experts) Annual reports on Switzerland's commitment to humanitarian demining Arms Control and Disarmament Strategy 2022–25
	Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons, 1993	10 March 1995	→ Ordinance on the Control of Chemicals with Civilian or Military Uses → Federal Act on the Control of Dual-Use Goods, Specific Military Goods and Strategic Goods → Ordinance on the Export, Import and Transit, of Dual Use Goods, Specific Military Goods and Strategic Goods	Arms Control and Disarmament Strategy 2022–25
	Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, 1997	24 March 1998		Arms Control and Disarmament Strategy 2022–25 Action Plan on Mine Action for 2023–26
	Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Cluster Munitions, 2008	17 July 2012		
	Arms Trade Treaty, 2013	30 January 2015	→ War Materiel Act → War Materiel Ordinance → Federal Act on Weapons, Weapons Accessories and Ammunition → Ordinance on Weapons, Weapons Accessories and Munitions	Switzerland's Initial Report on Measures Undertaken to Implement the Arms Trade Treaty, 2016

Topic	IHL treaty	Date of ratification/ accession by Switzerland	Implementing legislation	Other measures
Procedure for assessing new weapons	Rule set out in Article 36 of Protocol (I) additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949	17 February 1982	→ DDPS Ordinance on the Acquisition, Use and Decommissioning of Military Equipment	
Private military and security companies			→ Federal Act on Private Security Services Provided Abroad → Federal Ordinance on Private Security Services Provided Abroad	Montreux Document International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers
Criminal proceedings	Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, 1998 Amendments to the Rome Statute: • Article 8 (2010) • Articles 8 ^{bis} , 15 ^{bis} and 15 ^{ter} (2010) • Article 8 (2019)	12 October 2001 10 September 2015 10 September 2015 18 March 2022	On the criminalisation of war crimes: → Federal Act Amending Federal Legislation Implementing the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court → Swiss Criminal Code, Article 264b to 264j → Military Criminal Code, Articles 110 to 114 Criminal procedure: → Swiss Criminal Procedure Code → Military Criminal Procedure Code → Federal Act on the Organisation of Federal Criminal Justice Authorities Mutual legal assistance → Federal Act on Cooperation with the International Criminal Court → Federal Act on International Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters	

Topic	IHL treaty	Date of ratification/ accession by Switzerland	Implementing legislation	Other measures
Translating, disseminating and teaching IHL	Rules set out in the Geneva Conventions of 1949, the additional Protocols and other IHL treaties (see footnote 49)			<p>Regulation 51.007.04 'Legal Bases for Conduct during an Engagement', Part 4</p> <p>Document 51.007.03 f 'Basic rules of the international law of armed conflict'</p> <p>Document 51.007.06 f 'Use of Force in Armed Conflicts (Targeting-Law)'</p> <p>Regulation 51.002 f 'Règlement de service de l'armée (RSA)'</p> <p>Regulation 51.006 d 'Prisonniers de guerre et internés civils'</p> <p>Document 51.034 'Aide-mémoire pour les adjudants (Grandes Unités & Corps de troupe)'</p> <p>Regulation 51.011 f 'Armed Forces rules of engagement'</p> <p>Regulation 51.007.05 f 'The ten basic rules for the protection of cultural property'</p> <p>Documentation 59.020.01 f 'Basic rules of the international law of armed conflict applying to medical services'</p> <p>Regulation 69.003 d 'Military Assistance Service'</p> <p>Document 51.034 f 'Documentation for warrant officers'</p> <p>E-learning course 'International law of armed conflict – basic knowledge for all military personnel'</p> <p>E-learning course 'Commanders' responsibilities under the international law of armed conflict'</p>
Supporting IHL implementation	Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement		<p>→ Federal Decree on the Swiss Red Cross</p> <p>→ Ordinance on the Red Cross Service</p>	

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