

PROTECTING CIVILIANS AGAINST DIGITAL THREATS DURING ARMED CONFLICTS

THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS 75 YEARS ON

10 SEPTEMBER 2024, 12H15-13H15

BANGKOK MARRIOTT MARQUIS QUEEN'S PARK

CO-ORGANIZED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS AND THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

International humanitarian law (IHL) is a critical tool and the necessary legal framework to protect human life and dignity when armed conflicts arise.

2024 marks the 75th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. These Conventions are the bedrock of modern IHL, or as it is sometimes referred to, the law of armed conflict. These universally accepted rules seek to provide a guiding framework to limit the conduct of hostilities, in order to protect those who are not, or are no longer, participating in hostilities. The premise of these Conventions is simple, more than four hundred articles all come down to one fundamental agreement: even in armed conflict, at the worst of times, the core of our common humanity must be preserved. This agreement must be reflected in every interpretation of the Conventions.

Technology of warfare is also rapidly developing, raising questions regarding the application and interpretation of IHL. The use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for military purposes during armed conflict, in particular, can bring new dangers for the lives, safety and dignity of civilians and other protected persons and objects. While there's a need for States to further study, deliberate, and exchange views on how and when IHL applies to the use of ICTs, such as cyber and information operations, these questions are to be examined in light of the long-standing rules of IHL which need to be interpreted and applied in good faith, in ways that ensure adequate protection for civilians, civilian infrastructure, data, and other protected objects.

Seizing the opportunity of the 62nd Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) Annual Session, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand will host a panel discussion on "Protecting Civilians against Digital Threats During Armed Conflicts" to commemorate 75th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions.

The event will invite discussion among the participants on how and when IHL applies in the context of cyber and information operations, what measures States and other actors can undertake to ensure civilians and other protected persons and objects are safeguarded in the context of ICTs and encourage States to share best practices in this respect.

Agenda - Panel Discussion on “Protecting Civilians Against Digital Threats During Armed Conflicts”

12.15h-12.20h Keynote address (5 mins)

Mr. Nathapol Khantahiran,
Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand

12.20h-13.00h Panel discussion (40 mins)

Moderator: Dr. Suphanvasa Chotikajan Tang,
Director-General of the Department of Treaties and Legal Affairs

Panelists:

1. Ms. Margherita D’Ascanio, Regional Legal Advisor, ICRC Regional Delegation Bangkok
2. Dr. Mohamed Helal, Counsellor & Legal Adviser, Mission of Egypt to the United Nations and Special Rapporteur of the African Union on the Application of International Law in Cyberspace
3. Mr. Shayan Ahmed Khan, International Law Consultant

13.00h-13.15h Q&A (15 minutes)

13.15h End of event
