

Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armies in the Field. Geneva, 6 July 1906.

(List of Contracting Parties)

Being equally animated by the desire to lessen the inherent evils of warfare as far as is within their power, and wishing for this purpose to improve and supplement the provisions agreed upon at Geneva on 22 August 1864, for the amelioration of the condition of the wounded or sick in armies in the field,

Have decided to conclude a new convention to that effect, and have appointed as their Plenipotentiaries:

(Here follow the names of Plenipotentiaries)

Who, after having communicated to each other their full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed on the following:

CHAPTER I

THE SICK AND WOUNDED

Article 1. Officers, soldiers, and other persons officially attached to armies, who are sick or wounded, shall be respected and cared for, without distinction of nationality, by the belligerent in whose power they are.

A belligerent, however, when compelled to leave his wounded in the hands of his adversary, shall leave with them, so far as military conditions permit, a portion of the personnel and ' matériel ' of his sanitary service to assist in caring for them.

Art. 2. Subject to the care that must be taken of them under the preceding Article, the sick and wounded of an army who fall into the power of the other belligerent become prisoners of war, and the general rules of international law in respect to prisoners become applicable to them.

The belligerents remain free, however, to mutually agree upon such clauses, by way of exception or favor, in relation to the wounded or sick as they may deem proper. They shall especially have authority to agree:

1. To mutually return the sick and wounded left on the field of battle after an engagement.

2. To send back to their own country the sick and wounded who have recovered, or who are in a condition to be transported and whom they do not desire to retain as prisoners.

To send the sick and wounded of the enemy to a neutral state, with the consent of the latter and on condition that it shall charge itself with their internment until the close of hostilities.

Art. 3. After every engagement the belligerent who remains in possession of the field of battle shall take measures to search for the wounded and to protect the wounded and dead from robbery and ill treatment.

He will see that a careful examination is made of the bodies of the dead prior to their interment or incineration.

Art. 4. As soon as possible each belligerent shall forward to the authorities of their country or army the marks or military papers of identification found upon the bodies of the dead, together with a list of names of the sick and wounded taken in charge by him.

Belligerents will keep each other mutually advised of internments and transfers, together with admissions to hospitals and deaths which occur among the sick and wounded in their hands. They will collect all objects of personal use, valuables, letters, etc., which are found upon the field of battle, or have been left by the sick or wounded who have died in sanitary formations or

other establishments, for transmission to persons in interest through the authorities of their own country.

Art. 5. Military authority may make an appeal to the charitable zeal of the inhabitants to receive and, under its supervision, to care for the sick and wounded of the armies, granting to persons responding to such appeals special protection and certain immunities.

CHAPTER II

SANITARY FORMATIONS AND ESTABLISHMENTS

Art. 6. Mobile sanitary formations (i.e., those which are intended to accompany armies in the field) and the fixed establishments belonging to the sanitary service shall be protected and respected by belligerents.

Art. 7. The protection due to sanitary formations and establishments ceases if they are used to commit acts injurious to the enemy.

Art. 8. A sanitary formation or establishment shall not be deprived of the protection accorded by Article 6 by the fact:

1. That the personnel of a formation or establishment is armed and uses its arms in self defense or in defense of its sick and wounded.
2. That in the absence of armed hospital attendants, the formation is guarded by an armed detachment or by sentinels acting under competent orders.
3. That arms or cartridges, taken from the wounded and not yet turned over to the proper authorities, are found in the formation or establishment.

CHAPTER III

PERSONNEL

Art. 9. The personnel charged exclusively with the removal, transportation, and treatment of the sick and wounded, as well as with the administration of sanitary formations and establishments, and the chaplains attached to armies, shall be respected and protected under all circumstances. If they fall into the hands of the enemy they shall not be considered as prisoners of war.

These provisions apply to the guards of sanitary formations and establishments in the case provided for in section 2 of Article 8.

Art. 10. The personnel of volunteer aid societies, duly recognized and authorized by their own governments, who are employed in the sanitary formations and establishments of armies, are assimilated to the personnel contemplated in the preceding article, upon condition that the said personnel shall be subject to military laws and regulations.

Each state shall make known to the other, either in time of peace or at the opening, or during the progress of hostilities, and in any case before actual employment, the names of the societies which it has authorized to render assistance, under its responsibility, in the official sanitary service of its armies.

Art. 11. A recognized society of a neutral state can only lend the services of its sanitary personnel and formations to a belligerent with the prior consent of its own government and the authority of such belligerent. The belligerent who has accepted such assistance is required to notify the enemy before making any use thereof.

Art. 12. Persons described in Articles 9, 10, and 11 will continue in the exercise of their functions, under the direction of the enemy, after they have fallen into his power.

When their assistance is no longer indispensable they will be sent back to their army or country, within such period and by such route as may accord with military necessity. They will carry with them such effects, instruments, arms, and horses as are their private property.

Art. 13. While they remain in his power, the enemy will secure to the personnel mentioned in Article 9 the same pay and allowances to which persons of the same grade in his own army are entitled.

CHAPTER IV

MATERIEL

Art. 14. If mobile sanitary formations fall into the power of the enemy, they shall retain their ' matériel, ' including the teams, whatever may be the means of transportation and the conducting personnel. Competent military authority, however, shall have the right to employ it in caring for the sick and wounded. The restitution of the matériel shall take place in accordance with the conditions prescribed for the sanitary personnel, and, as far as possible, at the same time.

Art. 15. Buildings and ' materiel ' pertaining to fixed establishments shall remain subject to the laws of war, but cannot be diverted from their use so long as they are necessary for the sick and wounded. Commanders of troops engaged in operations, however, may use them, in case of important military necessity, if, before such use, the sick and wounded who are in them have been provided for.

Art. 16. The ' matériel ' of aid societies admitted to the benefits of this convention, in conformity to the conditions therein established, is regarded as private property and, as such, will be respected under all circumstances, save that it is subject to the recognized right of requisition by belligerents in conformity to the laws and usages of war.

CHAPTER V

CONVOYS OF EVACUATION

Art. 17. Convoys of evacuation shall be treated as mobile sanitary formations subject to the following special provisions:

1. A belligerent intercepting a convoy may, if required by military necessity, break up such convoy, charging himself with the care of the sick and wounded whom it contains.

2. In this case the obligation to return the sanitary personnel, as provided for in Article 12, shall be extended to include the entire military personnel employed, under competent orders, in the transportation and protection of the convoy.

The obligation to return the sanitary ' matériel, ' as provided for in Article 14, shall apply to railway trains and vessels intended for interior navigation which have been especially equipped for evacuation purposes, as well as to the ordinary vehicles, trains, and vessels which belong to the sanitary service.

Military vehicles, with their teams, other than those belonging to the sanitary service, may be captured.

The civil personnel and the various means of transportation obtained by requisition, including railway ' matériel ' and vessels utilized for convoys, are subject to the general rules of international law.

CHAPTER VI

DISTINCTIVE EMBLEM

Art. 18. Out of respect to Switzerland the heraldic emblem of the red cross on a white ground, formed by the reversal of the federal colors, is continued as the emblem and distinctive sign of the sanitary service of armies.

Art. 19. This emblem appears on flags and brassards, as well as upon all ' matériel ' appertaining to the sanitary service, with the permission of the competent military authority.

Art. 20. The personnel protected in virtue of the first paragraph of Article 9, and Articles 10 and 11, will wear attached to the left arm a brassard bearing a red cross on a white ground, which will be issued and stamped by competent military authority, and accompanied by a certificate of identity in the case of persons attached to the sanitary service of armies who do not have military uniform.

Art. 21. The distinctive flag of the convention can only be displayed over the sanitary formations and establishments which the convention provides shall be respected, and with the consent of the military authorities. It shall be accompanied by the national flag of the belligerent to whose service the formation or establishment is attached.

Sanitary formations which have fallen into the power of the enemy, however, shall fly no other flag than that of the Red Cross so long as they continue in that situation.

Art. 22. The sanitary formations of neutral countries which, under the conditions set forth in Article II, have been authorized to render their services, shall fly, with the flag of the convention, the national flag of the belligerent to which they are attached. The provisions of the second paragraph of the preceding article are applicable to them.

Art. 23. The emblem of the red cross on a white ground and the words ' Red Cross ' or ' Geneva Cross ' may only be used, whether in time of peace or war, to protect or designate sanitary formations and establishments, the personnel and ' matériel ' protected by the convention.

CHAPTER VII

APPLICATION AND EXECUTION OF THE CONVENTION

Art. 24. The provisions of the present Convention are obligatory only on the Contracting Powers, in case of war between two or more of them. The said provisions shall cease to be obligatory if one of the belligerent Powers should not be signatory to the Convention;

Art. 25. It shall be the duty of the commanders in chief of the belligerent armies to provide for the details of execution of the foregoing articles, as well as for unforeseen cases, in accordance with the instructions of their respective governments, and conformably to the general principles of this convention.

Art. 26. The signatory governments shall take the necessary steps to acquaint their troops, and particularly the protected personnel, with the provisions of this convention and to make them known to the people at large.

CHAPTER VIII

REPRESSION OF ABUSES AND INFRACTIONS

Art. 27. The signatory powers whose legislation may not now be adequate engage to take or recommend to their legislatures such measures as may be necessary to prevent the use, by private persons or by societies other than those upon which this convention confers the right thereto, of the emblem or name of the Red Cross or Geneva Cross, particularly for commercial purposes by means of trade-marks or commercial labels.

The prohibition of the use of the emblem or name in question shall take effect from the time set in each act of legislation, and at the latest five years after this convention goes into effect. After such going into effect, it shall be unlawful to use a trade-mark or commercial label contrary to such prohibition.

Art 28. In the event of their military penal laws being insufficient, the signatory governments also engage to take, or to recommend to their legislatures, the necessary measures to repress, in time of war, individual acts of robbery and ill treatment of the sick and wounded of the armies, as well as to punish, as usurpations of military insignia, the wrongful use of the flag and brassard of the Red Cross by military persons or private individuals not protected by the present convention.

They will communicate to each other through the Swiss Federal Council the measures taken with a view to such repression, not later than five years from the ratification of the present convention.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Art. 29. The present convention shall be ratified as soon as possible. The ratifications will be deposited at Berne.

A record of the deposit of each act of ratification shall be prepared, of which a duly certified copy shall be sent, through diplomatic channels, to each of the contracting powers.

Art. 30. The present convention shall become operative, as to each power, six months after the date of deposit of its ratification.

Art. 31. The present convention, when duly ratified, shall supersede the Convention of August 22, 1864, in the relations between the contracting states.

The Convention of 1864 remains in force in the relations between the parties who signed it but who may not also ratify the present convention.

Art. 32. The present convention may, until December 31, proximo, be signed by the powers represented at the conference which opened at Geneva on June 11, 1906, as well as by the powers not represented at the conference who have signed the Convention of 1864.

Such of these powers as shall not have signed the present convention on or before December 31, 1906, will remain at liberty to accede to it after that date. They shall signify their adherence in a written notification addressed to the Swiss Federal Council, and communicated to all the contracting powers by the said Council.

Other powers may request to adhere in the same manner, but their request shall only be effective if, within the period of one year from its notification to the Federal Council, such Council has not been advised of any opposition on the part of any of the contracting powers.

Art. 33. Each of the contracting parties shall have the right to denounce the present convention. This denunciation shall only become operative one year after a notification in writing shall have been made to the Swiss Federal Council, which shall forthwith communicate such notification to all the other contracting parties.

This denunciation shall only become operative in respect to the power which has given it.

In faith whereof the plenipotentiaries have signed the present convention and affixed their seals thereto.

Done at Geneva, the sixth day of July, one thousand nine hundred and six, in a single copy, which shall remain in the archives of the Swiss Confederation and certified copies of which shall be delivered to the Contracting Parties through diplomatic channels.

(Here follow signatures)

FINAL PROTOCOL

(List of the Contracting Parties)

The Conference called by the Swiss Federal Council, with a view to revising the International Convention of 22 August 1864, for the Amelioration of the Condition of Soldiers wounded in Armies in the field, met at Geneva on 11 June 1906. The Powers herein below enumerated took part in the Conference to which they had designated the delegates herein below named:

(Here follow the names of Plenipotentiaries)

In a series of meetings held from 11 June to 5 July 1906, the Conference discussed and framed, for the signatures of the Plenipotentiaries, the text of a Convention which will bear the date of 6 July 1906.

In addition, and conformably to Article 16 of the Convention for the peaceful settlement of international disputes, of 29 July 1899, which recognized arbitration as the most effective and at the same time, most equitable means of adjusting differences that have not been resolved through the diplomatic channel, the Conference uttered the following wish:

The Conference expressed the wish that, in order to arrive at as exact as possible an interpretation and application of the Geneva Convention, the Contracting Powers will refer to the Permanent Court at The Hague, if permitted by the cases and circumstances, such differences as may arise among them, in time of peace, concerning the interpretation of the said Convention.

This wish was adopted by the following States:

Argentine Republic
Austria-Hungary
Belgium
Brazil
Bulgaria
Chile
China
Congo
Denmark
France
Germany
Greece
Guatemala
Honduras
Italy
Luxemburg
Mexico
Montenegro
Nicaragua
Netherlands
Norway
Persia
Peru
Portugal
Romania

Russia
Serbia
Siam
Spain ' (ad referendum) '
Sweden
Switzerland
United States of America
Uruguay

The wish was rejected by the following States:

Great Britain
Japan and Korea

In witness whereof, the Delegates have signed the present Protocol.

Done at Geneva, the sixth day of July, one thousand nine hundred and six, in a single copy which shall be deposited in the archives of the Swiss Confederation and certified copies of which shall be delivered to all the Powers represented at the Conference.

(Here follow signatures)