

Human Rights in Armed Conflicts. Resolution XXIII adopted by the International Conference on Human Rights. Teheran, 12 May 1968.

The International Conference on Human Rights,

' Considering ' that peace is the underlying condition for the full observance of human rights and war is their negation,

' Believing ' that the purpose of the United Nations Organization is to prevent all conflicts and to institute an effective system for the peaceful settlement of disputes,

' Observing ' that nevertheless armed conflicts continue to plague humanity,

' Considering, ' also, that the widespread violence and brutality of our times, including massacres, summary executions, tortures, inhuman treatment of prisoners, killing of civilians in armed conflicts and the use of chemical and biological means of warfare, including napalm bombing, erode human rights and engender counter-brutality,

' Convinced ' that even during the periods of armed conflict, humanitarian principles must prevail,

' Noting ' that the provisions of the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 were intended to be only a first step in the provision of a code prohibiting or limiting the use of certain methods of warfare and that they were adopted at a time when the present means and methods of warfare did not exist,

' Considering ' that the provisions of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 prohibiting the use of "asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases and of all analogous liquids materials and devices" have not been universally accepted or applied and may need a revision in the light of modern development,

' Considering ' further that the Red Cross Geneva Conventions of 1949 are not sufficiently broad in scope to cover all armed conflicts,

' Noting ' that States parties to the Red Cross Geneva Conventions sometimes fail to appreciate their responsibility to take steps to ensure the respect of these humanitarian rules in all circumstances by other States, even if they are not themselves directly involved in an armed conflict,

' Noting also ' that minority racist or colonial régimes which refuse to comply with the decisions of the United Nations and the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights frequently resort to executions and inhuman treatment of those who struggle against such régimes and considering that such persons should be protected against inhuman or brutal treatment and also that such persons if detained should be treated as prisoners of war or political prisoners under international law,

1. ' Requests ' the General Assembly to invite the Secretary-General to study:

(a) Steps which could be taken to secure the better application of existing humanitarian international conventions and rules in all armed conflicts;

(b) The need for additional humanitarian international conventions or for possible revision of existing Conventions to ensure the better protection of civilians, prisoners and combatants in all armed conflicts and the prohibition and limitation of the use of certain methods and means of warfare;

2. ' Requests ' the Secretary-General, after consultation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, to draw the attention of all States members of the United Nations system to the existing rules of international law on the subject and urge them, pending the adoption of new rules of international law relating to armed conflicts, to ensure that in all armed conflicts the inhabitants and belligerents are protected in accordance with "the principles of the law of nations derived from the usages established among civilized peoples, from the laws of humanity and from the dictates of the public conscience;"

3. ' Calls ' on all States which have not yet done so to become parties to the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, the Geneva Protocol of 1925, and the Geneva Conventions of 1949.