



Permanent Mission of Italy  
UN - Geneva

## Statement of Italy

### 34<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

#### For the Record: Voices from the Conference

Geneva, 29 October 2024

Delivered by Ambassador Vincenzo Grassi,  
Permanent Representative of Italy in Geneva

\* \* \* \* \*

*Thank you Chair for giving me the floor.*

Excellences, Distinguished Delegates,

It is an honor and a privilege to address you on the 34th Conference of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent. As we gather in the spirit of solidarity and humanity, we reflect on the crucial importance of International Humanitarian Law, in our increasingly complex world.

International Humanitarian Law is not just a set of rules; it is a moral compass that guides us during times of conflict and crisis. It exists to ensure that even in war, humanity is upheld, and dignity is preserved.

Yet, as we witness ongoing conflicts and humanitarian crises, it is clear that IHL faces significant challenges. We see violations that threaten not only the lives of millions but also the shared principles of humanity. In these moments, the commitment of states, organizations, and individuals to uphold and strengthen IHL is more vital than ever. The role of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent in this process cannot be overestimated.

Italy stands resolute in its commitment to IHL. Its very origins are deeply rooted in our Country's history, when the horrors of the battle of Solferino in 1859 inspired the Swiss

citizen Henry Dunant in starting an initiative aimed at protecting all victims from cruelty and inhuman suffering. We understand that, as a member of the international community, it is our duty to not only adhere to the laws which have been developed and extended since then but to actively promote and strengthen them. Italy has a long-standing tradition of humanitarian assistance and advocacy for human rights, and we are dedicated to reinforcing our efforts in this regard. In this framework, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has published the first “voluntary report on the implementation of IHL”, reaffirming the commitment to all key international treaties, including the Geneva Conventions, in the 75th anniversary of their signature. Education is paramount. By equipping our military personnel and humanitarian workers with knowledge of IHL, we are laying the groundwork for a culture of respect and accountability. Italy, furthermore, supports international cooperation with regard to disasters’ preparedness and disaster response, including through the development of appropriate legal instruments.

Moreover, Italy actively participates in international forums, collaborates with NGOs and international organizations to share best practices and raise awareness about IHL. I would like to remind in particular, the role in analysis, study and promotion played for more than 50 years by the International Institute of Humanitarian Law based in San Remo. Together, we can advocate for compliance, raise awareness about violations, and support those who are striving to uphold the tenets of humanitarian law.

On the occasion of this International Conference Italy proposes two pledges: the first one, open to the adhesion of every RCRC Member and State Party, is aimed at encouraging a more comprehensive and efficient protection of persons with disabilities during conflicts and humanitarian crises through public diplomacy and awareness raising initiatives; the second, on a national level, is related to the strengthening of IHL in the domestic domain.

As we look to the future, let us remember that the strength of IHL lies in our collective commitment to its principles. We must work tirelessly to ensure that humanitarian considerations remain at the forefront of decision-making, even amidst the most challenging circumstances.

In conclusion, Italy reaffirms its dedication to promoting and strengthening International Humanitarian Law. Together, let us strive to create a world where humanity prevails, where the suffering of civilians is alleviated, and where the principles of IHL are not merely aspirational but are honored in practice.