



International Institute of Humanitarian Law  
Institut International de Droit Humanitaire  
Istituto Internazionale di Diritto Umanitario

Special Projects Department

Sanremo - Italy

2025

# Report of Activities Special Projects Department





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# Foreword

Gian Luca Beruto, Director, Special Projects Department

Since its establishment in 2022, the **Special Projects Department (SPD)** of the Sanremo Institute has worked in close complementarity with the Military and Refugee Law and Migration Law Departments, contributing to the consolidation of the Institute's role as a leading centre of excellence in **training, dissemination, and research** on the international legal regimes applicable to armed conflicts and major humanitarian crises.


In 2025, the added value brought by the dynamic and continuously evolving SPD team reached a new level of maturity. In its third year of activity, the Department **strengthened long-standing collaborations while launching innovative partnerships** with highly specialised and globally recognised actors, including the **ICRC, UNESCO, OSCE, IFRC, the UN Department of Peace Operations, the UN System Staff College, and the Italian Red Cross**, as well as governments, leading academic institutions (such as the **University of Geneva, Université Côte d'Azur, and the Network of Universities for Children in Armed Conflict**), and non-governmental organisations (e.g. **Médecins Sans Frontières**).

The successful outcomes of these partnerships have positioned the SPD as a trusted and forward-looking interlocutor for any organisation seeking to advance innovative approaches to IHL implementation, while further enhancing the Institute's international standing.

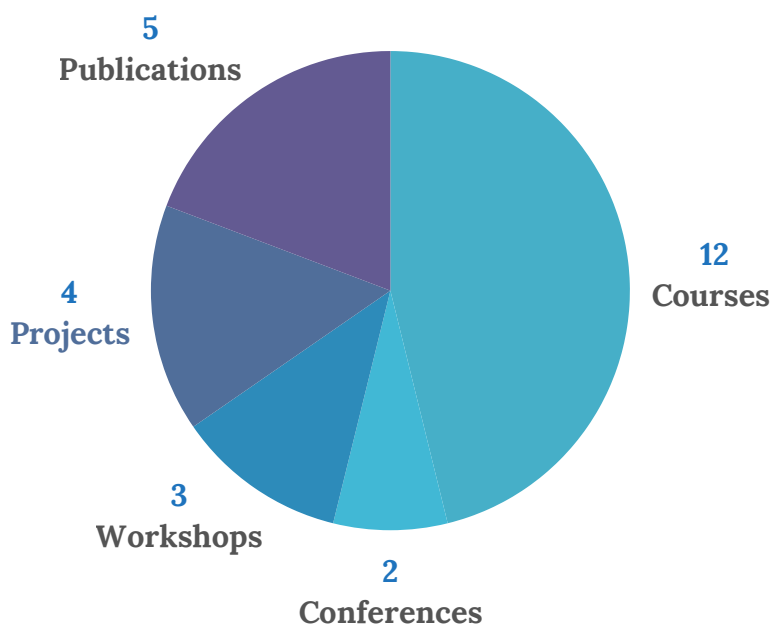
As a result, the SPD emerges from 2025 as a key contributor to addressing some of the most pressing transnational legal and humanitarian challenges of our time. During the year, its core thematic priorities encompassed the **gender dimensions** of humanitarian emergencies, the **protection of children, water and water-related infrastructure, medical care and personnel, civilian harm mitigation**, the safeguarding of **cultural property** in armed conflict, and **disaster risk prevention, preparedness, and response**. At the same time, the Department laid the groundwork for **future action in emerging areas such as counter-terrorism and the issue of missing persons**.

Looking ahead to 2026, the SPD will continue to anticipate global developments, engage closely with practitioners, and design high-level, tailored initiatives aimed at fostering critical reflection and generating meaningful impact in response to the world's most complex humanitarian crises

The Director,



# 2025 Figures

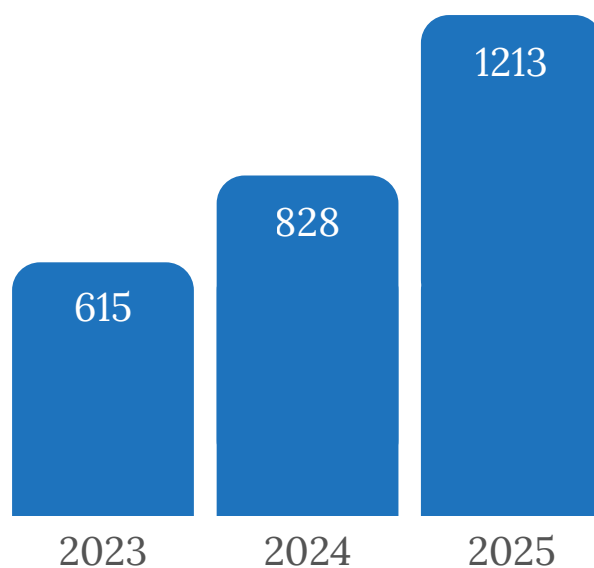


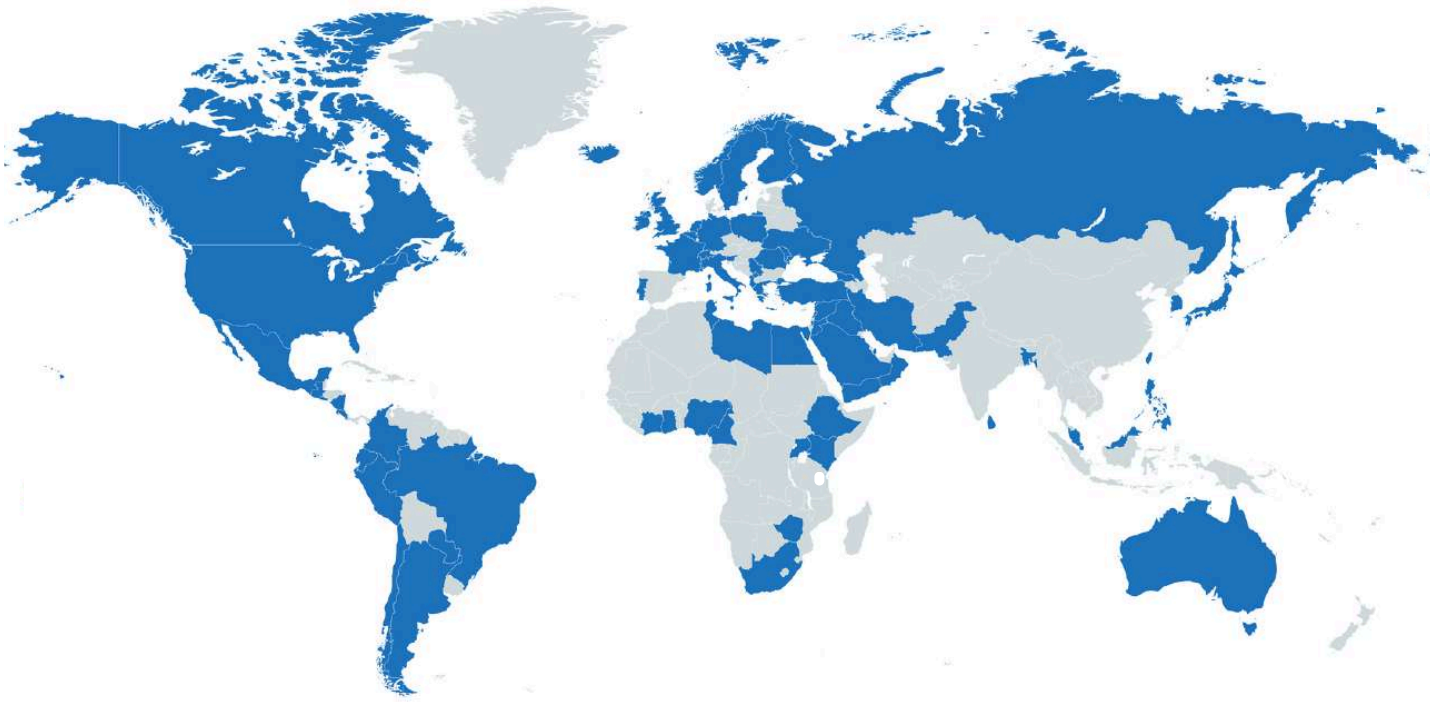
# 26

Initiatives, including **trainings, conferences, workshops, projects, and publications**, organised both on-site in Sanremo or other locations, and online through the IIHL virtual learning platform.

# 1213

Participants involved in training and dissemination activities, including **military officers, government officials, humanitarians, legal practitioners, academics, researchers, diplomats, and students.**





74

**Represented countries**, with participants and attendees from all continents

9.1

The **average feedback** for our online and on-site courses.

*To the IIHL staff, thank you for your tireless efforts in making everything run smoothly. [...] your hard work behind the scenes created the ideal atmosphere for focus, comfort, and community. The warm smiles, attention to detail, and kindness made us feel at home every day.*

# Sanremo Round Table

In cooperation with



-  **197** Participants
-  **41** Speakers
-  **45** Countries



## 48<sup>th</sup> edition, focusing on “From Peace to War and Back: Putting IHL at the Center”

*Sanremo and online, 10-12 September 2025*

The 48<sup>th</sup> Sanremo Round Table on Current Issues of IHL, traditionally organised in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), was held on 10-12 September 2025 in Villa Ormond, the Institute’s prestigious headquarters in Sanremo (Italy), in a hybrid format.

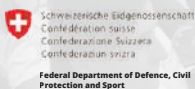
This year’s Round Table focused on “From Peace to War and Back: Putting IHL at the Center”, investigating the importance of International Humanitarian Law, and its application, before, during and after armed conflict.

The event’s Opening Ceremony was attended by numerous dignitaries and leading figures

from the civilian and military words, as well as local and regional representatives such as the Mayor of Sanremo, Mr Alessandro Mager, and Mr Claudio Scajola, Councillor of the Liguria Region, representing the President of the Region, Mr Alessandro Piana.

Their addresses were followed by a recorded message from the President of the ICRC, Ms Mirjana Spoljaric, and institutional greetings from the President of the Italian Red Cross, Mr Rosario Maria Gian Luca Valastro, welcoming an audience of around 200 government representatives, international organisations and experts from military, diplomatic and academic circles, from 45 countries and 5 continents.

Organised with the support of



The Conference offered a **critical analysis of the relationship between IHL applicability and peace**. In addressing key issues of this interaction, academics, legal advisers, humanitarian personnel and senior military officers animated a deeply constructive debate, expertly moderated by representatives of the Institute both in the room and online.

The discussion addressed the **importance of disseminating and respecting IHL** to prevent the escalation of violence and the outbreak of armed conflict, including through disarmament and arms control measures.

Part of the debate focused on the challenges of defining contemporary armed conflicts and on the long-term humanitarian and societal impacts of IHL compliance.

The sessions also examined the complexities surrounding the cessation of armed conflicts, considering practical and legal criteria and the role of IHL and specific weapons treaties in preventing and addressing harm in post-conflict settings. Finally, the debate explored the link between transitional justice and accountability in post-conflict contexts.

The first day of the Conference was concluded with a speech by **Brigadier Joanne Bowen, Head of Operational Law in the UK Army Legal Services, and Vice President of the**

**Institute**, who stressed the importance of disseminating and internalizing IHL rules to enhance their respect.

At the conclusion of the final debate, devoted to IHL obligations after armed conflict, **Ms Audrey Purcell O'Dwyer, Legal Adviser at the International Committee of the Red Cross**, highlighted that IHL obligations do not end when hostilities cease. Although often sidelined by political, reconstruction and security concerns, duties forthcoming from IHL obligations must continue to be respected and carried forward, as they have direct consequences on post-conflict societies.

Following the end of the Conference, the Institute has worked on the **Sanremo Call to Action for International Humanitarian Law**, which condensed the intensive and constructive dialogue of the event into a shared commitment to **translate reflections into concrete measures that reinforce humanitarian protection and uphold the enduring principles of IHL**.

The *Sanremo Call to Action* seeks to represent a shared **commitment to turn knowledge into practical action**, reaffirming Sanremo's role as an open and neutral space for the study, dissemination, and development of law and practice.

*IHL will survive because it represents the difference between crime and war. In both, people are killed and property destroyed, but what makes the difference for war and is defining it, is that it is conducted according to rules. IHL will therefore survive as long as the unfortunate reality it governs, war, exists. Hopefully, we one day no longer need it because war will have disappeared.*

Marco Sassòli

Professor of International Law, University of Geneva; Member, IHL

# Courses

In cooperation with



## Course on the "Law Applicable in Armed Conflict and Other Violent Situations"

*Hybrid (Online and in Brasilia), 31 January – 26 February 2025*

The second edition of the course on “Direito Aplicável em Cenários de Conflito Armado e Outras Situações de Violência”, organized by the **Special Projects and Training Activities for Latin America Department** in cooperation with the **Brazilian Escola Nacional de Formação e Aperfeiçoamento de Magistrados da Justiça Militar da União (ENAJUM)**, took place online and in Brasilia (Brasil) from 31 January, to 26 February 2025.

The course trained over **40 magistrates, members of the Public Prosecutor's Office, lawyers, civil servants and military personnel** in general in the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC), covering the sub-areas of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), International Human Rights Law (IHRL) and International Criminal Law (ICL). Graduates can identify the general principles of LOAC, apply them in times of armed conflict and understand the role of the Federal Military Justice in these situations.

The **first phase of the course**, which took place between 31 January and 14 February, was carried out entirely **online**. The **second phase** lasted 8 days and took place in person at **ENAJUM's headquarters in Brasilia**.

The course's faculty included: Prof. Roberto A. Moreno (IIHL); Col. Eduardo Bittencourt Cavalcanti (Brazilian Armed Forces); Col. Víctor J. González Jáuregui (Peruvian Armed Forces); Col. Juan Francisco Rivera Castro (Chilean Armed Forces); Col. José Romero Muros (Spanish Armed Forces); Col. Mario Lanz Raggio (Spanish Armed Forces); Col. Luis A. Rocca Erquiaga (Peruvia Armed Forces); Mr. Mario Alberto Esparza Zamora (Instituto Nacional Electoral); Dr. Pedro S. Páez Pirazán (Professor at the University of Boyacá); CMeG Alexandre Pérez Teixeira (Military Tribunal of Brasil); Dr. Linda D. Castro Calvo (Human Rights Lawyer); Dr. Luisa López Peña (Jurisdicción Especial Para la Paz, Colombia).



17 Participants



10 Countries



8,6 Av. feedback

## 1<sup>st</sup> Online Course on Cultural Property Protection in the Event of Armed Conflict

Online, 9 - 30 May 2025

The 1st Online Course on Cultural Property Protection in the Event of Armed Conflict gathered **17 participants from 10 different countries**.

The program, developed over 3 weeks, was composed of **7 modules**, each comprising a **live session and self-paced activities**, including readings specifically selected from the facilitators, and exercises and case studies to apply the content of the course.

The modules explored the **international legal framework** of cultural property protection and the **criminal responsibility for its violations**, focusing on the impact of armed conflict on cultural heritage and on the **operational challenges which may arise**. The course also dived into the possibilities for **cooperation among different actors** and into **best practices to ensure protection of cultural heritage**, as well as the **role of CPP in peacebuilding and enhancing peace**, and that of **new technologies** in protecting cultural property.

The teaching staff was composed of different experts in cultural property protection, with diverse backgrounds and expertise: Anne-Marie Carstens (University of Baltimore); Joris Kila (Independent); Kristen Hausler (British Institute of International and Comparative Law); Tim Purbrick (British Army); Zeynep Gul Unal (ICOMOS ICORP); Amra Hadzimuhamedovic (International Forum Bosnia); Emma Cunliffe (Blue Shield International).

*“The course provided not only valuable theoretical and practical insights but also a profound sense of responsibility towards the protection of cultural heritage in times of conflict. The knowledge and connections gained during this experience will undoubtedly support my work and inspire further engagement in the protection of cultural property and the promotion of international humanitarian principles.”*



 **24** Participants

 **13** Countries

 **9,1** Av. feedback

## 25<sup>th</sup> Sanremo Summer School

Sanremo, 30 June – 11 July 2025

The 25<sup>th</sup> edition of the **Sanremo Summer School on International Humanitarian Law** gathered military officers, UN representatives, ICRC personnel, government officials, staff members of different NGOs, independent experts, and students from all over the world.

The **24 participants from 13 different countries** spent two weeks in Sanremo attending lectures, workshops, and cooperating in thematic exercises based on real-life scenarios.

The course was directed by Brig. Gen. (ret'd) Karl Edlinger (Austrian armed forces), who led a team of high-level lecturers among whom Colonel Mark Dakers, (United Kingdom Armed Forces); Dr. Gaia Pergolo (European External Action Service); Dr. Lara Scarpitta (OSCE); Mr Martin Dexborg (OSCE); Professor Mara Tignino (Geneva Water Hub); Professor Michel Veuthey (Switzerland); Dr. Tommaso Natoli (IFRC Disaster Law Focal Point for EU); Mr Claudio Delfabro, Mr Kristijan Mihajlovski, Ms Abigail Stoffer and Ms Martina Ranieli, (Department of International Refugee Law and Migration Law, IIHL).

Throughout the training, participants were provided with a **unique overview of the most current challenges related to the implementation of IHL, Human Rights Law, and the many related bodies of law applicable in the context of humanitarian crises.** Sessions included lectures, presentations, case studies, group work, and various interactive activities, catering to diverse learning styles.

During the last two days of the course, participants had the opportunity to **apply the knowledge** they gathered throughout the program and **share their expertise and know-how** through the preparation and presentation of case studies on current challenges of International Law.

*“The first week alone has already become one of the most valuable and intellectually rich learning experiences I have ever had. I deeply appreciate the generosity of knowledge shared, the openness of the community, and the respectful space for reflection, exchange and dialogue”*

In cooperation with



-  **30** Participants
-  **23** Countries
-  **9** Av. feedback



## 10<sup>th</sup> International Disaster Law Course

Hybrid (Online and in Sanremo), 03 – 30 October 2025

The 10<sup>th</sup> International Disaster Law Course, organized by the Sanremo Institute and the **International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC)** with support from the **Italian Red Cross**, hosted **30 participants from 23 countries**.

The four-week hybrid course included an **online segment** composed of **6 modules** covering **International and Regional Disaster Law**, human rights Law, disaster risk reduction, and disaster response.

This was followed by **one week of self-paced session** introducing the “EU basics” of Disaster Law. The course ended with a **five-day residential workshop** addressing **region-specific Disaster Law issues in Europe**.

The training was co-directed by Prof. Giulio Bartolini (Roma Tre); Ms Isabelle Granger (IFRC); and Mr Grega Grobovsek (DG-ECHO).

The faculty of the course was composed by Dr. Marie Aronsson-Storrier and Dr. Dug Cubie (University College Cork); Prof. Emanuele Sommario (University Sant’Anna); Prof. Marlies Hesselmann (University of Groningen); Prof. Walter Kaelin (University of Bern); Ms Martina Ranieli (IIHL); Ms Stella Ngugi (IFRC); Mr Steven Alan Solomon (WHO); Ms Nevenka Addo (WFP); Mr Stéphane Michaud (IFRC); Ms Marina Skuric Prodanovic (OCHA); Prof. Federico Casolari and Prof. Susanna Villani (University of Bologna); Mr Sepehr Marzi (JRC); Ms Sandra Romero Ruiz (DG ECHO); Ms Miriam Alba Reina (Red Cross EU).

*“These two weeks in virtual mode exceeded my expectations. Not only it was educational but it was inspirational.”*

In cooperation with



 20 Participants

 18 Countries

 8,8 Av. feedback

## 4<sup>th</sup> Online Course on **Integrating Gender perspectives into International Operations, Armed Conflicts and other Crisis Scenarios**

Online, 06 – 30 October 2025

The training, designed to address the most topical gender-related issues currently affecting humanitarian crises worldwide, was created in collaboration with the **OSCE Gender Issues Programme**, and involved **20 participants from 18 different countries**.

The Course was opened by Mr Gian Luca Beruto, IIHL Secretary-General, and Dr. Lara Scarpitta, OSCE Senior Adviser on Gender Issues, with keynote speeches by Lt. Col. Melanie Lake, Military Attaché at the Office of the Ambassador for Women, Peace, and Security in Canada and by Ms Grace Chen, Consultant Legal Advisor and Research Coordinator for the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture.

The Course, composed of **8 modules**, addressed key gender-related aspects of **armed conflict and humanitarian crises scenarios**, including gender mainstreaming; conflict-related sexual violence; human trafficking, smuggling of migrants and their gender dimensions; sexual exploitation and abuse, with a practical focus on prevention, investigation, reporting and accountability; the gendered impacts of terrorism and counter-

terrorism; and the gender-related risks of detention and deprivation of liberty.

The sessions were facilitated by prominent international practitioners, including: Martin Dexborg (OSCE); Paolina Massidda (ICC); Ryszard Piotrowicz (Aberystwyth University); Elmaja Bavčić (OSCE); Ulrich Garms (UNODC); and Etienne Chénier-Lafèche (ICRC).

The course ended with an online Round Table on **Women's Engagement in Peace Processes and Integration of Gender Perspectives in Peacebuilding**, moderated by Prof. Gabriella Venturini and enriched by contributions from Loredana Teodorescu (Women in International Security Italy), Maryam Ranjbar (peace practitioner), Henri Myrntinen (Lead Associate, Gender Associations) and Hanna Manoilenko (Feminist researcher, Consultant).

*"I appreciated the way the dialogue was conducted, presenting situations or facts and analyzing gender-related issues in practical ways, turning obstacles into means for solving problems with great flexibility."*

In cooperation with



## Special Course on "Naval Surveillance Operations at Sea"

Online, 3 October – 7 November 2025

The fourth edition of the Special Course on "Naval Surveillance Operations at Sea", **in cooperation with the Armada de la República de Chile**, was held online in **"b-learning" mode, with synchronous and asynchronous activities**, developed on the IIHL's virtual platform.

Over the course, **three weekly synchronous sessions** (on Monday, Wednesday and Friday) were held with a standard duration of one hundred and twenty minutes (120') each.

The asynchronous activities of the programme consisted of **recorded lectures, videos, interactive exercises, readings, assignments** on the platform and various modes of verification and evaluation.

The main target audience of the course was of personnel of shipowners and shipping companies, ship carriers or others involved in maritime trade; members of public and private organisations related to the subject; lecturers

in related subjects; and undergraduate students.

It aimed to consider a broad set of capabilities to **address and mitigate the impact of terrorism; proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; piracy; illegal migration; human trafficking; illicit drug and arms trafficking; cyber threats**; as well as **attacks on marine resources**.

The faculty included: Prof. Roberto A. Moreno (IIHL); Dr. Guillermo J. Bartoletti (General Coordinator); Dr. Lina M. Munar Guevara (IIHL); Prof. Víctor J. González Jáuregui (Escuela Superior de Guerra Naval); Dr. Guillermo A. Fonseca Atrio (Argentinian Armed Forces; Navy Capt. Pablo M. Bonuccelli (Argentinian Military Navy); Dr. Leopoldo M. A. Godio (Consejo Argentino para las relaciones Internacionales); CCJT Rodrigo Poblete Vio (Chilean Navy), Capt. Juan Álvaro Palacios Aguilar (Peruvian Armed Forces; Capt. Jesús A. Menacho Piérola (Peruvian Armed Forces).



In cooperation with



-  12 Participants
-  9 Countries
-  9 Av. feedback

## 1<sup>st</sup> Course on International Humanitarian Law and Children in Armed Conflict

Sanremo, 8 - 12 December 2025

The **Special Projects Department** of the Sanremo Institute, together with the **Universities Network For Children in Armed Conflict (UNETCHAC)**, developed the **1<sup>st</sup> Course on International Humanitarian Law and Children in Armed Conflict**, which took place at the headquarters of the Institute, and gathered **12 participants from 9 countries**.

The program, developed over the course of **5 days**, dived into the most current challenges related to the protection of children in armed conflict, starting with an overview of the **relevant provisions and treaties** at the international level. Several sessions focused on specific topics, such as the **prohibition of child recruitment and use of children** under IHL; the relationship between **AI and New Technologies** on specific vulnerabilities of children; the legal framework for children protection in **detention operations and in displacement situations; accountability for**

**violations** against children in relation to armed conflict.

The course combined **lectures, presentations, case studies, group work, and interactive activities**, enabling participants to apply what they had learned, particularly through a **scenario** prepared by the SPD team and tailored for each session by the teaching staff.

The teaching staff included Prof. Fausto Pocar (UNETCHAC; IIHL); Prof. Laura Guercio (UNETCHAC); Ms Federica Sola (UN Liaison Office of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict); Prof. Marco Pedrazzi and Prof. Federica Favuzza (University of Milan; IIHL); Col. Géry Balcerski (French Armed Forces; IIHL); Lt. Col. David Kemmis-Betty (UK Armed Forces); Dr. Ezequiel Heffes (UNICEF); Dr. Mikiko Otani (International Human Rights Lawyer); Prof. Vasilka Sancin (ECtHR); Prof. Paolina Massidda (ICC).

# Collaborations

In cooperation with



## Expert Workshop on International Humanitarian Law and Civillian Harm Mitigation

Sanremo, 29 September - 1 October 2025

In collaboration with the **United Nations Department of Peace Operations (UNDPO)**, the Special Projects Department team of the Sanremo Institute developed and organized the **Expert Workshop on International Humanitarian Law and Civillian Harm Mitigation**.

The event, which took place at the Institute's headquarters in Sanremo, took place **from 29 September to 1 October**, and gathered together **36 people** between humanitarians, academics, military personnel and experts of International Humanitarian Law.

In response to the United Nations Secretary General's call for a holistic approach to the Protection of Civilians (POC), the workshop aimed at exploring whether and how **better integration of IHL principles with Civillian Harm Mitigation (CHM) strategies** can more effectively reduce civilian harm in contemporary armed conflict.

During this three-day workshop, participants took part in a series of **sessions examining CHM, POC, and IHL**. The discussions focused on identifying linkages and approaches, clarifying roles and responsibilities, exploring the application of CHM in targeting operations, and analyzing the relationship between civilian harm assessments and investigations of IHL violations. The workshop also addressed how CHM and IHL training may differ or overlap.

In addition to **presentations**, the workshop featured **group exercises based on a common scenario**, designed to apply CHM and IHL in practice and to encourage discussion, and exchange of perspectives.

The workshop concluded with a **brainstorming session that captured key ideas**, which were later used to draft a **short report** circulated within the UNDPO and serving as a basis for several thematic follow-up activities within the United Nations and beyond.

In cooperation with



## 21<sup>st</sup> Stabilization and Reconstruction Management Senior Course

*Turin, 3 - 7 November 2025*

The **Stabilization and Reconstruction Management Senior Course**, is organized and delivered by the **United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC)**, in collaboration with the **Italian Army's Post-Conflict Operations Study Center**. It aims to provide participants with an in-depth understanding of stabilization and reconstruction environments, emphasizing policy coherence and operational coordination. The programme equips participants to design and implement context-specific strategies in the field, fostering alignment across diverse institutional mandates.

Within this framework, the IIHL played a significant role in strengthening the legal and humanitarian dimensions of the programme. Addressing **contemporary global challenges to peace and stability**, this course examines the relevant legal frameworks and promotes a collaborative, cross-sectoral approach to post-conflict recovery. A key area of focus is **Security Sector Reform**, present as a critical instrument for effective post-conflict recovery. Emphasizing the **"Comprehensive Approach"**, the programme aligns with the United Nations multidimensional strategies aimed at tackling the root causes of conflict.

The IIHL contributed substantively to the course through the expertise of its teaching staff. In particular, **Colonel (ret.) Jerry Lane**, Member of the Institute, participated as a speaker and delivered a dedicated session on Monday, 3 November, entitled **"International Law: the Value of Compliance with International Provisions During and After Armed Conflict"**. This session highlighted the central role of international legal norms in stabilization and reconstruction efforts, reinforcing the importance of compliance with international law in post-conflict environments.

Furthermore, building on the long-standing and close cooperation between the IIHL and the **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)**, the Institute acted as an intermediary in facilitating the participation of **Mr. Pierre Apraxine**, Head of the Protection of the Civilian Population Unit at ICRC Headquarters. Mr. Apraxine delivered a session on **"International Humanitarian Law and Vulnerable People in Post-Conflict Settings"**, further underscoring the IIHL's role as a bridge between academic expertise, operational practice, and key humanitarian actors.

In cooperation with



**UNIVERSITÉ  
DE GENÈVE**



## Module on the **Protection of Water in International Humanitarian Law**

*Online, January - November 2025*

The e-learning course on ***The legal Protection of Water in Armed Conflicts***, organized by the **Geneva Water Hub** of the University of Geneva, in collaboration with the Sanremo Institute, was held online from **3 November to 19 December 2025**, and brought together **20 experts from different fields**.

As part of the course, which addressed the pressing issues of attacks on water and water-related infrastructure during armed conflicts, the Special Projects Department developed and delivered Module 1 of the course, focused on ***The Protection of Water in International Humanitarian Law***.

Beginning in January 2025, the Department conducted in-depth research to compile relevant materials and develop a **comprehensive handout on the protection of water under IHL**, which focused on the importance of protecting water during armed conflict; on the protection of water under IHL; on the specific provisions of IHL applicable to

water and related violations; on the challenges and mitigating factors in compliance of IHL impacting water.

Building on this handout, the Department also developed a self-evaluation questionnaire enabling participants to assess their understanding of the topic.

Finally, in collaboration with the Geneva Water Hub, the Department organized the Webinar on **“How does IHL Protect Water and Water Infrastructure? Examining the Legal Realities”**, chaired by Colonel Mark Dakers (UK Armed Forces), the discussants, Col. (rtd) Godard Busingye (Ugandan Armed Forces), Dr. Sandra Krähenmann (Geneva Call); Dr. Mara Tignino (Geneva Water Hub), presented their expertise and knowledge on the topic, offering valuable **insights into the practical application of IHL, highlighting key challenges and good practices in safeguarding water and water-related infrastructure**.

In cooperation with



## Workshop on **International Humanitarian Law and Independent Medical-Humanitarian Action in Armed Conflicts**; Feasibility and Dilemmas in bridging military and humanitarian perspectives.

Rome, 15 December 2025

On **15 December 2025**, the Workshop on *International Humanitarian Law and Independent Medical-Humanitarian Action in Armed Conflicts; Feasibility and Dilemmas in bridging military and humanitarian perspectives*, took place in Rome, in Sala Isma of the Senate of the Italian Republic. The event was organized by the Special Projects Department in cooperation with **Médecins Sans Frontières**.

The workshop was attended by a total of **59 participants**, among which experts of International Humanitarian Law, medical personnel, academics, humanitarians, and representatives of different International Organizations, States, and Italian Institutions.

The workshop was organized over **three different sessions**, starting from the challenges and grey zones of International Humanitarian Law application in contemporary

armed conflicts, going to the legal frameworks, ethical dilemmas, responsibilities and operational realities of medical action and humanitarian access in conflict zones, and ending with a discussion on the communication and positioning in armed conflicts and the instrumental use of IHL.

In each session, the **participants were called to ask questions, make comments and express opinions**, with the aim of creating a meaningful discussion and delivering impactful ideas.

The workshop was characterized by an harvesting of the most relevant points that were raised during the event, which will then be used by the organizers to produce a **white paper**, intended to contain recommendations related to the possible solutions to most pressing challenges regarding medical action and humanitarian access in contemporary armed conflicts.

# Academic Initiatives



## Diplôme Universitaire en Droit International Humanitaire

2024-2025 and 2025-2026

In cooperation with  
**UNIVERSITÉ  
CÔTE D'AZUR**  
INSTITUT THÉMATIQUE  
**INSTITUT DE LA PAIX  
ET DU DÉVELOPPEMENT**  
 IdPD

Building on its long-standing and successful collaboration **with the Institute for Peace and Development (IdPD) at the University of Côte d'Azur**, the Institute offers a Cross-Border University Diploma (DU) in International Humanitarian Law. This program, available exclusively through online registration, combines **the expertise of IdPD and the Institute to deliver a comprehensive postgraduate curriculum** tailored to both students and professionals from international organizations, governments, and NGOs.

The program is **delivered in English and French, covering both theoretical and practical dimensions of International Humanitarian Law, human rights, and related fields**. It offers two flexible modalities for its **enrolled students**: in-person and online learning. The in-person option features training modules held in Sanremo and Nice, focusing on practical aspects of humanitarian law, refugee law, disarmament and non-proliferation, the use of force, and international security.

The online modality provides access to the same modules through a digital platform hosted by the University of Côte d'Azur, **enabling self-paced learning with expert support for guidance and clarifications when needed**.

The 2025-2026 curriculum includes:

- 2 courses on International Refugee Law and Migration Law:
  - 45<sup>ème</sup> Cours en ligne sur le Droit international des réfugiés;
  - 48<sup>th</sup> International Refugee Law Course.
- 6 courses on International Humanitarian Law:
  - 197<sup>ème</sup> Cours militaire international sur le DIH;
  - 59<sup>ème</sup> cours avancé de DIH;
  - 198<sup>th</sup> International military Course on LOAC;
  - 57<sup>th</sup> Advanced course in IHL;
  - Course on Detention and Captured persons;
  - Course on Protection of civilians.

In cooperation with



UNIVERSITÀ  
DI TORINO



## Master in Cultural Property Protection in Crisis Response

Academic year 2025-2026

The Institute is contributing to the Master in "Cultural Property Protection in Crisis Response". The program is part of the activities of the **UNESCO Chair on Economics of Culture and Heritage: Strategies for Protection and Development** at the **University of Torino**.

The Master is aimed at **strengthening the international efforts and enhancing cooperation** to face emerging challenges towards the protection of cultural heritage from conflicts, illicit activities, natural disasters and climate change impact, and for enhancing the social and economic recovery capacity of the affected communities.

The Special Projects Department curated the distance-learning module "**Foundations of Cultural Heritage Protection**" by carrying out research activities and preparing three dedicated handouts addressing the legal, political, and economic dimensions of cultural heritage protection. The team also designed and delivered the course on the **IIHL**

**E-Learning Platform**, organized and moderated **live online sessions**, developed **multiple-choice assessments and open questions**, and provided **continuous tutoring** through the distance-learning phase to prepare students for the subsequent in-person component of the program.

On **20-21 November 2025**, the Institute had the pleasure of welcoming students from the master's program. During the visit, the Institute's experts addressed the **Realities of War, the Nature of Military Objectives, and CPP implications in the targeting process**, with valuable contributions from Colonel Nigel Heppenstall, Director of the Military Department, and Colonel Géry Balcerski, Deputy Director of the Military Department.

The study visit was enriched by an **interactive group exercise based on a scenario on the crucial topic of targeting**, offering specific insights into the military decision-making process at the operational level.

## IHL under pressure? Looking backwards to move forwards

Launched during the celebrations of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Institute of Humanitarian Law, the "**Sanremo Lectures on International Humanitarian Law**" are designed to advance the Institute's mission of disseminating and increasing awareness of IHL regulations and principles. These lectures highlight contributions from international scholars and globally recognised experts in the field of IHL, Human Rights and other related bodies of law.

### 4<sup>th</sup> Sanremo Lecture on "IHL under pressure? Looking backwards to move forwards"

26 November 2025

On 26 November, the International Institute of Humanitarian Law hosted the fourth edition of the Sanremo Lecture, focused on: "*IHL under pressure? Looking backwards to move forwards*".

The Conference, held online via Zoom, was delivered by **Dr. Helen Durham AO**, Professorial Fellow at Melbourne Law School and CEO of RedR Australia. The event was inaugurated by **Lieutenant General (Ret.) Giorgio Battisti**, President of the Institute, and was moderated by **Professor Mariangela La Manna** from the Catholic University of Milan. It also featured the participation of **Dr. Boyd van Dijk**, Senior Researcher at Sciences Po.

The Special Projects Department was delighted to welcome **140 participants from 58 countries**, who had the opportunity to engage with its esteemed speakers.



In cooperation with



## Collaboration with UNESCO for the development of the content of a MOOC on Cultural Property Protection

*June 2023 - ongoing*

In 2023, the Special Projects Department of the Institute was informed by the UNESCO Secretariat that its project proposal submitted in January in response to a call for the development of the content of a **MOOC on Cultural Property Protection**, had been selected and approved.

The Special Project Department has carefully **selected and managed a Group of Experts** (one senior practitioner, one academic representative, and one military expert) leading the thematic and scientific aspects of the Project, as well as producing **an intensive calendar for the creation of the learning materials and assessment tools** required by UNESCO in the call for proposals.

The Department is also coordinating the work of technicians, video-makers, translators and graphic designers supporting the action at different stages of development (video tutorial recordings, translations of content, digital editing of videos, and development of advanced graphic solutions). In the **last months of 2025**, the Department supervised the **recording of video tutorials** and oversaw the **translation of the content into French**.

Thanks to the work of the Group of Experts and the one of the Department's staff, **the MOOC is set to be released in 2026**, offering a publicly-available window into the legal dynamics surrounding the protection of cultural property in armed conflict.

# Projects - Latin America



## Security and Democratic Life in Latin America: community and police working in harmony

*Hybrid (Online and in El Salvador), January - August 2025*

The Project **Security and Democratic Life in Latin America: community and police working in harmony**, was conducted from **January to August 2025**, with the collaboration and financial support of the **Direzione Generale per la Mondializzazione e le Questioni Globali (DGMO)**, of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

The objective of the project was to **strengthen democratic life and public security in El Salvador** by fostering cooperation between communities, youth and police institutions, with a strong emphasis on soft skills, capacity building and institutional equality.

From **9 June to 2 July 2025**, different activities were carried out in **San Salvador, San Miguel, La Paz and Santa Ana**, engaging a wide range of local stakeholders. Activities with **Community Leaders and Local Officials** aimed at supporting their capacity to address social and security challenges affecting their communities. A total of **46 community leaders and 60 local officials** participated.

Activities with **local youth** aimed to strengthen youth capacities and skills and promote their positive role in community development. **104 young adults** took part in these initiatives.

Activities with **officers from the National Civil Police (PNC) and National Public Security Academy (ANSP)** were carried out to complement community work through police training focused on capacity building, soft skills, and professional development. A total of **125 officers** participated.

Additionally, **from 9 to 13 June**, activities were conducted with **Senior Officers of PNC and ANSP** to strengthen police training standards through a “quality over quantity” approach and to certify institutional evaluators. These activities involved **30 senior officers**.

Finally, on **7 August 2025**, a **public webinar was held to present the project’s activities, results, findings and conclusions** to a global audience, with **over 100 participants** from different regions worldwide.



## Security for all: strengthening the detection and response to gender violence through education

*Mexico, October - December 2025*

The project **“Security for all: Strengthening the detection and response to gender-based violence through education”** was implemented from **October to December 2025** in the **State of Tamaulipas, Mexico**, by the **Directorate of Special Projects and Training Activities for Latin America** of the **International Institute of Humanitarian Law** in Sanremo, Italy, with the collaboration of the **Mexican think tank Global Thought and El Colegio de Tamaulipas**, as well as with the financial support of the **Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation**.

Its overall objective was to **strengthen the skills of teaching staff and institutions** dedicated to addressing cases of gender-based violence in secondary schools, in order to detect and refer these cases in a timely manner, protect young women and girls from conflict-related violence, and prevent gender-based violence by reducing stereotypes and

contribute to the creation of peace in conflict settings.

The **in-person activity in Ciudad Victoria**, capital of the State of Tamaulipas, took place **between 18 and 27 November 2025**, gathering a total of **30 participants**: seven women and one man from the Women's Institute, while two men and six women attended from the Secondary and Higher Education Subsystems of the State of Tamaulipas, in particular from the Tamaulipas College of Bachelors; two men and six women attended from the Federalised High School; two women from the National College of Technical Professional Education; and four women from the Tamaulipas Institute for Employment Training.

The Department finally organized a **Closing Webinar of the Project on 18th December 2025**, to present the project's activities, results, findings and conclusions.

# Projects - European Union

## LICEAL - Linking Citizenship and Employability

2022-2025, 9 partners in 6 countries



The ultimate goal of the project is **to support adult learners**, particularly those who face difficulties in the labour market and social marginalization, to develop social, civic and relational skills which may contribute to their **social inclusion and active participation in democratic life as well as to their employability**. The relevance of transversal competences – such as cooperation, teamwork, negotiation, sense of initiative and creativity, self-regulation and respect of social norms – is the assumption that the project develops through its activities.

### Partnership

The project was approved within the framework of the **ERASMUS+** programme. The project is coordinated by Association EDIAS (France) in partnership with the International Institute of Humanitarian Law (IIHL) (Italy), the Fondation des Régions Européennes pour la Recherche, l'Education, et la Formation (FREREF) (France), Comitato Promotore S-NODI Gabriele Nigro (Italy), Democracy and Human Rights Education in Europe (Belgium), Learning Designers (Spain), Wiener Forum für Demokratie und Menschenrechte (Austria), BOGAZICI UNIVERSITESI (Turkey), Pôle emploi Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (France).

### LICEAL activities 2025

#### LICEAL - First Italian Policy Lab

Bologna, 16 January 2025

At the First Italian Policy Lab, different stakeholders discussed key challenges of adult and citizenship education. Participants highlighted the importance of strengthening adults' agency by supporting their ability to identify and address their own learning needs.

#### LICEAL Partner Meeting

Sanremo, 13 - 14 March 2025

LICEAL partners met to review project progress and coordinate the finalization of key outputs: discussions focused on developing practical guidelines for educators and completing an integrated toolkit to support the project's objectives.

#### LICEAL - Italian Policy Lab

Bologna, 23 May 2025

The second Italian Policy Lab continued stakeholder dialogue on adult and citizenship education, exploring systemic challenges and refining earlier proposals.

#### LICEAL Final Conference

Brussels, 3 July 2025

The final conference presented the Policy Framework, outcome of the project, which promotes integrated learning approaches combine vocational training with broader adult education, supporting personal and professional development beyond strictly workplace-oriented learning.

## GOTALK - Inclusive children's councils leading to democratic exchange

2023-2025, 5 partners in 2 countries



The GOTALK project addresses specific needs of children and educational professionals. Its final aim is **to improve the level of inclusiveness, sustainability and policy impact of children councils.**

GOTALK uses both existing and innovative mechanisms and strategies to establish children's and youth councils on a micro level in school and out-of-school context.

### Partnership

The project "Inclusive children's councils leading to democratic exchange" (GOTALK) is realized within the framework of the **CERV Programme**. The Project is coordinated by the Karel de Grote University of Applied Sciences and Arts (KdG) and the centre of expertise for Pedagogical Support in Day Care and School in partnership with the International Institute of Humanitarian Law (IIHL), UNIMORE (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia) represented by the Department of Education and Humanities, Fondazione E35, the AGBSO, Municipal Education of Antwerp.

### GOTALK activities 2024

#### GOTALK Meeting in Antwerp

*Antwerp, 2 - 3 April 2025*

2025 By implementing children councils within and outside of schools in Belgium and Italy, the GOTALK project aims to foster an inclusive, sustainable and impactful participation of children in decision-making. The partners of the project met in Antwerp on 2 and 3 April to present the latest insights from piloting and to discuss several aspects of the final phase of the project.

#### GOTALK Final Conference in Antwerp

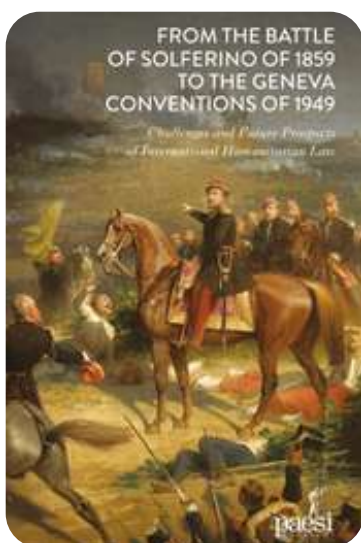
*Antwerp, 24 June 2025*

On 24th June, the final conference of the GOTALK project took place in Antwerp. After two years of piloting activities in Antwerp (Belgium) and Reggio Emilia (Italy) with children aged 6 to 18, the partners of the project met to present the latest insights and to discuss several aspects of the final phase of the project. The meeting was hosted by Karel de Grote Hogeschool and saw the participation of stakeholders from different countries to discuss strategies and practices to properly foster children participation.

# Publications

## The Proceedings of the 47<sup>th</sup> Sanremo Round Table

1 September 2025



In September 2025, the Institute published the *Proceedings of the 47<sup>th</sup> Sanremo Round Table on current issues of IHL on the topic “From the Battle of Solferino of 1859 to the Geneva Conventions of 1949: Challenges and Future Prospects of International Humanitarian Law”*.

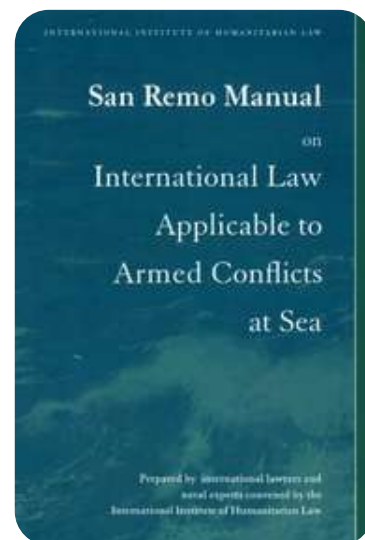
The Round Table delved into the **historical continuum**, **exploring the transformative journey of IHL** between these key occurrences, **fostering a deeper understanding of the development** of IHL over time, and **acknowledging the importance of humanitarian principles** to shape the landscape of modern conflict resolution and strengthen the protection of vulnerable populations.

## Update of the Sanremo Manual on International Law Applicable to Armed Conflict at Sea

1 - 5 September 2025

In September 2025, the Institute hosted the first expert meeting for the **update of the Sanremo Manual on International Law Applicable to Armed Conflict at Sea**. The meeting brought together **52 participants**, from around the world with different backgrounds, who contributed with their knowledge and experience.

The meeting was led by the Steering Committee, in collaboration with the Norwegian Red Cross and the ICRC. Its objectives were to reflect evolving naval operations, legal developments and emerging challenges. This important initiative reaffirms the central role of the Sanremo Institute in this landmark process.





## Mujeres y Fuerza Pública: Promover la Sinergia

18 January 2025

This book is the final product of the project “**Women and Law Enforcement: Promoting Synergy**”; it gathers the **activities, conclusions and findings of the homonymous project** carried out with women and law enforcement officials in **Colombia and Ecuador** with the economic collaboration of the Direzione Generale per gli Affari Politici e Sicurezza of the Italian minister of Foreign Affairs and international Cooperation

## Seguridad y Vida Democrática en América Latina: Comunidad y policía trabajando en armonía

15 September 2025

This book is the final product of the project “**Security and democratic life in Latin America: community and police working in harmony**” and contains its activities, findings, results and recommendations. It also includes a “Summarized Handbook” detailing the certification of police institutions process in Latin America, with a focus on soft skills.



## The Sanremo Review

September 2024 - ongoing



In September, the Sanremo Institute’s Special Project Department launched the “Sanremo Review” to promote International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and Human Rights. It **invites experts, including military and civilian practitioners, academics, and humanitarian professionals, to contribute to discussions on pressing IHL issues**, such as its evolving landscape, core principles, **and the interplay with other legal frameworks**. The Review also addresses topics like humanitarian assistance and regional legal instruments, aiming to share real-world efforts and innovative approaches.

# Days of Culture for Human Rights

In cooperation with



## Second edition – Days of Culture for Human Rights

15 – 16 May 2025

The **second edition of the Days of Culture for Human Rights** was held at Villa Ormond on 15–16 May 2025. The event welcomed **over 200 middle and high school students from local schools**. Promoted by the Auxiliary Foundation of the International Institute of Humanitarian Law, the International Institute of Humanitarian Law and Fondazione Diritti Umani, this initiative aims to **promote awareness of human rights and today’s most pressing challenges, with a particular focus on youth engagement**. The two-day program included expert testimonies, **film screenings and cultural activities** designed to inspire reflection and dialogue. This year’s theme, **“The Condition of Women in Afghanistan: an unknown reality”** was explored during two morning sessions. Speakers included representatives from the organizing institutions as well as special guests: Afghan author Saliha Sultan, Dr. Flavia Mariani from

NOVE Caring Humans, Afghan athlete Mahdia Sharifi, and war correspondent Barbara Schiavulli. Opening remarks were delivered by the Mayor of Sanremo, Alessandro Mager, and Liguria’s Regional Councillor, Marco Scajola. Among the attendees was Lt. General (ret.) Giorgio Battisti, President of the IIHL.

A key highlight of the event was the screening of **“Radio Begum: The Voice of Resistance”**, a powerful documentary made available thanks to the support of arte.tv, the free European streaming platform. Following the screenings and talks, students engaged directly with the speakers in dynamic Q&A sessions that addressed critical issues such as **freedom of speech and press, rising fundamentalism, women’s rights and gender inequality, humanitarian crises, and the complex role of the international community in addressing these challenges**.

# Institutional Engagement



## UNESCO International Forum of the Civil-Military Alliance for the Protection of Cultural Property

*Paris, 16 May 2025*

The SPD, represented by its coordinator, was among the stakeholders taking part in the Forum to explore **good practices in civil-military cooperation** at the international and national levels, **share knowledge on advanced technologies**, and advocate for the **establishment of specialized military units for the protection of cultural property**.

## European Humanitarian Forum

*Brussels, 19 - 20 May 2025*

The Special Projects Department, represented by its Coordinator, took part in the fourth edition of the European Humanitarian Forum, contributing to the collective exchange on **coordinated response strategies and the future of humanitarian action**. The Forum's program featured high-level panels, interactive workshops, and Humanitarian Talks, offering a **dynamic platform to engage with both thematic and geographic priorities shaping today's humanitarian landscape**.



## OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation Dialogue

*Vienna, 12 November 2025*

The Department proudly contributed to the **OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation Dialogue on "IHL and Gender Equality"**, where the SPD Coordinator presented consolidated data from the last four editions of the Online Gender Course, demonstrating its strong and tangible impact on the daily work of a wide range of practitioners, while further recalling the legal responsibilities borne by states in the field of IHL dissemination and training.

# Main Partners & Network



Ministero degli Affari Esteri  
e della Cooperazione Internazionale



**+C IFRC**

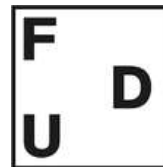
*Disaster Law*



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Special Projects Department      Sanremo - Italy

## 2025 Report of Activities Special Projects Department

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