



## ICRC | No agreement by States on mechanism to strengthen compliance with rules of war

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Geneva (ICRC) – After four years of extensive consultations, States have been unable to agree on a new mechanism proposed by the ICRC and the government of Switzerland to strengthen compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL). The decision was taken at the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, which draws to a close today in Geneva.

Instead, States agreed to launch an inter-governmental process to find ways to enhance the implementation of IHL. This process should culminate in four years, when the outcome will be presented at the next International Conference.

“It is disappointing that States could not agree on the original proposal, which addressed all the concerns raised during the consultation process,” said ICRC president Peter Maurer. “International humanitarian law is flouted almost every day, in every conflict around the world. By failing to support this initiative, States missed an opportunity to help to protect millions of people.”

The new mechanism would have involved setting up an annual meeting of states party to the Geneva Conventions, a non-politicized forum for them to share best practices and technical expertise.

At the conference, many States reaffirmed their commitment to respecting IHL, including through bilateral dialogue with the ICRC. Mr Maurer welcomed this, and said that the ICRC will pursue a strengthened dialogue with States on their IHL obligations.

“It is the responsibility of States to respect and ensure respect for the law of war. We therefore urge them to use the existing compliance mechanisms to their full potential,” added Mr Maurer.

In another development at the conference, a resolution was adopted which aims to find ways to improve the protection for those detained in non-international armed conflicts. This would ensure that all people detained in relation to conflicts have equal status, closing a legal loophole.