

# UPHOLD THE NORMS THAT SAFEGUARD HUMANITY

## HIGH-LEVEL LEADERS' ROUNDTABLE

### Core Responsibility Two of the Agenda for Humanity

“Even wars have limits. Minimizing human suffering and protecting civilians requires strengthening compliance with international law.”

Report of the  
Secretary-General for  
the World Humanitarian  
Summit

### CORE COMMITMENTS

Serious violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of international human rights law continue to be committed on an alarming scale. They include attacks directed against civilians and the wounded and sick, indiscriminate attacks, starvation of civilians as a method of warfare, rape, torture, and unlawful or arbitrary detention. Direct attacks against and unlawful impediments affecting health care personnel, their means of transport and facilities, as well as humanitarian workers and objects used for humanitarian relief operations have severe and long-term humanitarian consequences.

No matter the circumstances, it remains essential to continue to work to ensure respect for norms that safeguard humanity. International humanitarian law, international human rights law, and refugee law, where applicable, remain as relevant as ever to provide protection to civilians, the humanitarian and medical missions, and persons hors de combat in armed conflict. It is critical for all parties to armed conflict to comply with international humanitarian law, including the rules of distinction, proportionality, and precautions, to spare protected persons and objects from the effects of military operations.

However, all have a responsibility to fulfil in improving the situation of civilians in armed conflict by ensuring and enhancing compliance with and accountability for violations of international humanitarian and applicable human rights law. We must seize the World Humanitarian Summit to take action to spare civilians from the effects of hostilities, enable humanitarian access, identify and speak out about violations and abuses, and give full effect to the norms that safeguard our humanity.

The five core commitments for this Roundtable, which are anchored in Core Responsibility Two of the Secretary-General's Agenda for Humanity, pay special attention to reducing the humanitarian impact of the conduct of hostilities and enabling humanitarian action and health care. The five core commitments aim to enhance the practical implementation of relevant obligations and strengthen the protection of civilians through concrete measures; they do not restate or modify existing obligations or create new ones.



**#1**  
PREVENT AND  
END CONFLICT



**#2**  
RESPECT RULES  
OF WAR



**#3**  
LEAVE NO ONE  
BEHIND



**#4**  
WORKING DIFFERENTLY  
TO END NEED



**#5**  
INVEST IN  
HUMANITY



- **Core commitment 1:** Commit to promote and enhance respect for international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and refugee law, where applicable.
- **Core commitment 2:** Commit to promote and enhance the protection of civilians and civilian objects, especially in the conduct of hostilities, for instance by working to prevent civilian harm resulting from the use of wide-area explosive weapons in populated areas, and by sparing civilian infrastructure from military use in the conduct of military operations.
- **Core Commitment 3:** Commit to ensure all populations in need receive rapid and unimpeded humanitarian assistance.
- **Core commitment 4:** Commit to promote and enhance efforts to respect and protect medical personnel, transports and facilities, as well as humanitarian relief personnel and assets against attacks, threats or other violent acts.
- **Core commitment 5:** Commit to speak out and systematically condemn serious violations of international humanitarian law and serious violations and abuses of international human rights law and to take concrete steps to ensure accountability of perpetrators when these acts amount to crimes under international law.



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## Uphold the Norms that Safeguard Humanity

### HIGH-LEVEL LEADERS' ROUNDTABLE

#### SAMPLE COMMITMENTS

**Core commitment 1: Commit to promote and enhance respect for international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and refugee law, where applicable.**

- [Name of Member State] commits to become a party to [xx treaty (e.g. the Arms Trade Treaty; the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions; the Convention on Cluster Munitions; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance)] and promote universal adherence to it.
- [Name of Member State] commits to enact and implement national legislation outlawing all forms of sexual and gender-based violence and ensuring the right of victims/survivors to an effective remedy.
- [Name of Member State] commits to establish a National Committee for the implementation of international humanitarian law in accordance with Resolution 1 of the 26<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in 1995.
- [Name of Member State] commits to enact and implement national legislation prohibiting members of their armed forces who have not attained the age of 18 years from taking a direct part in hostilities [and to become a party to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict].
- [Name of Member State / Organization] commits to host a meeting on [topic] with a view to improving dissemination and implementation of international humanitarian and human rights law in [20XX].
- [Name of Member State] commits to engage constructively in the intergovernmental process as set out in Resolution 2 of the 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in 2015, “to find agreement on features and functions of a potential forum of States and ways to enhance the implementation of IHL using the potential of the International Conference [of the Red Cross and Red Crescent] and IHL regional forums.”

- [Name of Organization] commits to offer international humanitarian and human rights law training/dissemination sessions for armed forces and/or non-state armed groups.
- [Name of Member State] commits to designate focal points in relevant government branches responsible for promoting respect for international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law through diplomatic, economic and military relations.
- [Name of Member State/ Organization] will join/help lead a coordinated global effort/campaign to mobilize States, civil society and global leaders to enhance respect for international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law.
- [Name of Member State] commits to recognize the competence of the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission in accordance with article 90 of Additional Protocol I to the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

**Core commitment 2: Commit to promote and enhance the protection of civilians and civilian objects, especially in the conduct of hostilities, for instance by working to prevent civilian harm resulting from the use of wide-area explosive weapons in populated areas, and by sparing civilian infrastructure from military use in the conduct of military operations.**

- [Name of Member State] commits to adopt and implement a government strategy and/or policy on the protection of civilians, and promote similar strategies and/or policies with other States.
- [Name of Member/ Organization] commits to collect data [and make it public] on the direct civilian harm and the reverberating effects on civilians resulting from the use of wide-area explosive weapons in populated areas, and to [share/ make public] by [20XX].
- [Name of Member State/ Organization] commits to collect and exchange good practices and lessons learned in minimizing impacts on civilians when using explosive weapons, and to [share/ make public] by [20XX].
- [Name of Member State/ Organization] commits to develop and promote practical proposals for protecting civilians exposed to attacks in populated areas (such as provision of plastic films for glass windows, safe exit routes, access points or routes for humanitarian assistance and rapid clearance of explosive ordnance) and to [share/ make public] by [20XX].
- [Name of Member State / Organization] commits to support humanitarian mine action programs aimed at clearing explosive remnants of war (ERW) through providing information and technical, financial and material assistance to locate, remove, destroy and otherwise render ineffective any type of explosive hazard.

- [Name of Member State / Organization] commits to support public-information campaigns, education, training and liaison with communities aimed at sensitizing affected populations to the risks posed by landmines and explosive hazards, by providing [\$xx] to [name of country/ organization]/ or by providing training for [name of country/ organization].
- [Name of Member State] will adopt domestic legislation to prohibit/limit the use of schools and places of worship in support of the military effort.
- [Name of Member State] will incorporate the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict into military manuals, doctrine, rules of engagement, operational orders, and other means of dissemination by [20XX].
- [Name of Member State] commits to record, track and analyze civilian casualties in the conduct of their military operations and adapt their conduct accordingly in order to minimize civilian harm.
- [Name of Member State] will adhere to and promote the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians in the context of peacekeeping operations.

**Core Commitment 3: Commit to ensure all populations in need receive rapid and unimpeded humanitarian assistance.**

- [Name of Member State / Organization] commits to actively promote the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence in humanitarian action by [list action].
- [Name of Member State / Regional or sub-regional Organization] commits to integrating humanitarian principles in their humanitarian policy frameworks.
- [Name of Member State] commits to use leverage and influence [including through the Security Council] to prevent and end any arbitrary withholding of consent to impartial humanitarian relief.
- [Name of Member State] will adopt clear, simple and expedited procedures to allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief by [date].
- [Name of Member State] will review counter-terrorism and counter-violent extremism laws and responses that may impede humanitarian action by [20XX].
- [Name of Member State / Organization] will train armed forces to respect the obligation to allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief by [20XX].
- [Name of Member State] commits to take specific measures to bring to account actors who impede humanitarian access to civilians.

- [Name of Member State/ Organization] will support impartial humanitarian actors' efforts to engage in dialogue with, and operate in areas controlled by, non-state armed groups through [adopting legislation] [providing training] by [20XX].
- [Name of Member State / Organization] commits to operationalize, adhere to and respect the principles and concepts of the Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies (MCDA Guidelines) and endorse common humanitarian civil-military standards for coordinating foreign military assets in humanitarian assistance.
- [Name of Member State / Organization] commits to ensuring that all humanitarian response activities have the aim of making people safer, preserving their dignity and reducing vulnerabilities by [making humanitarian leadership accountable for pursuing protection outcomes] / [building the skills of staff according to their duties in areas such as protection, international humanitarian law and international human rights law, negotiations with parties, security and access, internal policies, conflict-sensitivity] / [improving the safety and security of relief personnel by building trust with armed groups and local actors, and adhering to humanitarian principles].

**Core commitment 4: Commit to promote and enhance efforts to respect and protect medical personnel, transports and facilities, as well as humanitarian relief personnel and assets against attacks, threats or other violent acts.**

- [Name of Member State] will [review/revise] [adopt] military rules of engagement and operational practice to include measures to protect the delivery of humanitarian assistance and health care.
- [Name of Member State] will [review/revise] [adopt] domestic legislation and its implementation to ensure that it is consistent with the obligation to respect and protect health care personnel, their means of transport and facilities, as well as humanitarian workers and objects used for humanitarian relief operations against attack by [20XX].
- [Name of Member State / Organization] will train the military on the applicable legal framework for the protection of health care as well as ethical duties of health care personnel by [20XX].
- [Name of Member State] will adopt and implement [additional] measures to guide the planning and conduct of an attack on a military objective in the vicinity of a health care facility by [20XX].
- [Name of Member State / Organization] will institutionalize dedicated platforms for information sharing and commits to humanitarian notification systems for de-confliction to safeguard civilians, humanitarian staff and assets in hostile environments.

**Core commitment 5: Commit to speak out and systematically condemn serious violations of international humanitarian law and serious violations and abuses of international human rights law and to take concrete steps to ensure accountability of perpetrators when these acts amount to crimes under international law.**

- [Name of Member State/ Organization] will [commence] [strengthen] [actively support] increased efforts to track, collect data, and report on trends of alleged violations of and gaps in compliance with international humanitarian law by [20XX].
- [Name of Member State] commits to [join] [promote implementation of] the Code of Conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes.
- [Member of UN Security Council] commits to refrain from exercising Security Council veto power where a mass atrocity has been ascertained.
- [Name of Member State] will adopt national legislation encompassing the full range of international crimes and expanding jurisdiction over them by [20XX].
- [Name of Member State / Organization] will offer legal assistance in drafting national legislation encompassing the full range of international crimes and expanding jurisdiction over them in [name of country].
- [Name of Member State] commits to become a party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and promote universal adherence to it.
- [Name of Member State/ Organization] will enhance cooperation with the International Criminal Court [and provide technical support and/or \$xx financial support for this purpose, e.g. through the Trust Fund for Victims] by [20XX].