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**Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN
Geneva**

Statement

**Statement by Deputy Permanent Representative of Pakistan
Ambassador Zaman Mehdi**

34th International Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent

(30 October 2024)

**Honourable Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We commend the leadership and entire team of ICRC and IFRC for their tireless efforts in making this Conference a success.

This 34th International Conference holds special significance as 2024 marks 160 years of modern IHL treaty-making and is the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

As a signatory of Geneva Conventions, including its additional Protocol I and II, Pakistan has always been a faithful adherent to the Geneva Conventions and strongly advocated adherence to International Humanitarian law on all international fora.

The Geneva Conventions represent our collective resolve to manage the adverse effects of wars and minimize the suffering of civilians during armed conflicts. This is essential, important and urgent in contemporary settings. Our deliberations here and at the United Nations must be geared towards prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, also accompanied by promotion and protection of human rights and humanitarian principles in the entire cycles of an armed conflict.

Critically, we all must ensure jointly that adhering to IHL is a compulsion and not a choice. In this context Pakistan's national policy is guided by the following primary considerations:

First, full respect of international humanitarian law;

Second, upholding the rights of victims;

Third, respect for state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-intervention in internal affairs, and;

Fourth, rejection of the unilateral use of force.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is imperative to reflect on the challenges that IHL faces in today's world. Among these, two challenges stand out as the most pressing.

The first challenge is the ongoing and brazen violations of international humanitarian law by certain actors, coupled with the impunity with which these acts are carried out. These violations not only undermine the very essence of IHL but also erode the trust and faith of the international community in the effectiveness of these laws. Nowhere it is more evident than in the plight of the Palestinian people in Gaza and the genocide taking place there. This challenge can only be addressed by developing zero tolerance for violations of IHL in illegally occupied territories. It is in areas of illegal occupation that occupation forces feel least accountable.

The second significant challenge is ensuring that the principles and rules of IHL remain pertinent and fully applicable in the face of new and emerging technologies on the battlefield. Technological advancements in warfare, including autonomous weapons systems, artificial intelligence, and cyber warfare, are raising complex questions about the implementation of IHL. These technologies, while potentially transformative, must be scrutinized through the lens of humanitarian law to ensure that their use does not exacerbate human suffering or lower the threshold of conflict, making warfare a more regular occurrence.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

These Conventions were, and remain, a profound expression of our shared humanity—a collective commitment to ensuring that even in times of war, the principles of human dignity, compassion, and justice are upheld. We must not lose sight of humanity when navigating uncertainty.

I Thank You
