

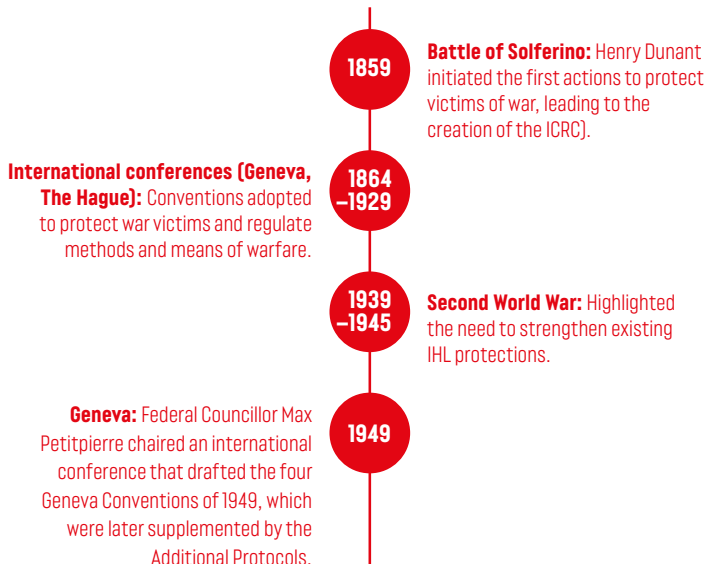


THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS IN FIVE POINTS

1. What are the Geneva Conventions?

The Geneva Conventions are international treaties which, together with their three Additional Protocols, constitute the pillars of international humanitarian law (IHL). Their aim is to mitigate the brutality of warfare by establishing minimum humanitarian standards that must be respected in all armed conflicts. The Geneva Conventions protect people who are not taking part in hostilities (civilians, medical personnel or members of humanitarian organisations) as well as those who are no longer taking part in the fighting (wounded, sick and shipwrecked persons, and prisoners of war). Switzerland is the depositary of the four Geneva Conventions, adopted in 1949, and their three Additional Protocols of 1977 and 2005.

2. Switzerland and the Geneva Conventions: a historical overview



3. What is the impact of the Geneva Conventions?

The Geneva Conventions continue to save millions of lives threatened by hundreds of conflicts worldwide, reunite countless separated family members and offer solace to thousands of prisoners of war. The Geneva Conventions aim to limit the effects of armed conflict and can thus facilitate a return to peace.

4. What about violations of IHL?

Violations of IHL have severe consequences for civilian populations. Under the conventions, states parties are obliged to respect their provisions and ensure compliance, thereby reinforcing both individual and collective responsibility. IHL requires states to take all necessary legislative and judicial measures to prosecute those who commit or order the commission of grave breaches.

Switzerland has made respecting, promoting and implementing IHL a constant priority of its foreign policy. Consequently, Switzerland has the tools and mechanisms needed not only to disseminate and provide training in IHL but also to prosecute war crimes at national level. At international level, it is also actively involved in the fight against impunity, particularly by supporting the International Criminal Court.

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states have ratified the Geneva Conventions, which are regarded as universally ratified.

5. 75 years later: let's renew our commitment!

At a time when the global situation is marked by conflicts causing immense suffering, elevating IHL to a political priority is imperative.

The 75th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions is an opportunity for all states to take concrete steps to renew their commitment in the name of a common humanity and to ensure respect for IHL. All states have an obligation to respect and ensure respect for the Geneva Conventions in all circumstances. In this regard, Switzerland calls on all states and other actors to use their influence to prevent and stop violations of IHL.

“The Geneva Conventions are the expression of a universal commitment in service of a common humanity. They constitute the cornerstone of international humanitarian law and have saved millions of lives in recent decades.”

Ignazio Cassis, Federal Councillor and head of the FDFA