



# ICRC

**152<sup>nd</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly**

**General Debate: Nurturing Hope: Securing Peace and Ensuring Justice for  
Future Generations**

**18 April 2026**

Madam President, Honourable Members of Parliament,

This Assembly meets at a moment defined by a single urgent question: how to nurture hope and secure peace and justice for the generations who will inherit today's decisions.

Armed conflicts are intensifying, displacement is rising, and climate impacts are deepening vulnerabilities.

War must be prevented. But when it breaks out, the legal line against barbarism is international humanitarian law. IHL protects people in armed conflict, limits the means and methods of warfare, and preserves a space for humanity even in the darkest moments. When this line is crossed, the consequences are devastating.

Every day, the International Committee of the Red Cross witnesses the human cost of armed conflict: hospitals damaged, water systems disrupted, humanitarian access delayed or denied, families separated, and detainees held in conditions that violate their dignity.

These realities are now intersecting with rapid advances in military technology. Artificial intelligence is increasingly integrated into military decision-making and weapon systems, raising serious risks for civilians. Our experience tells us not to focus on promises tied to new technologies getting better, but on their real-world effects.

In conflicts where military use of AI is expanding, we are not seeing better protection for civilians. Instead, these systems can accelerate harm, underscoring the urgent need to ensure military uses of AI remain within IHL limits.

Honourable Members,

Efforts to reinforce respect for IHL are gaining new political traction. The Global IHL Initiative – launched by the ICRC and six founding States to elevate IHL as a political priority – has now been joined by 106 States and offers a practical pathway to strengthen respect for IHL, culminating in a High-Level Conference on Humanity in War in Jordan later in 2026.

The 2025 Speakers' Declaration reaffirm obligations essential to global stability: protecting civilians, ensuring humanitarian access, upholding the rule of law, and preventing impunity.

Parliaments are indispensable to strengthening respect for IHL. Through legislation, oversight and budgetary authority, you shape the national systems that give these rules meaning. The Geneva Declaration, adopted at the last Assembly, serves as a solid foundation for this critical work.

Allow me to conclude with two recommendations.

First, help build momentum for the Global IHL Initiative by using your parliamentary tools – for example, by asking a parliamentary question on your government's engagement, requesting a briefing, or encouraging committee discussions ahead of the High-Level Conference.

Second, ensure military uses of AI comply with IHL, including by maintaining human control, conducting rigorous legal reviews, and encouraging your governments to adopt a new legally binding instrument with clear prohibitions and restrictions on autonomous weapons systems.

Honourable Members,

If we are serious about securing hope, peace, and justice for future generations, we must ensure the legal protections that safeguard humanity in war are upheld. Your leadership is essential – and needed now.

Thank you.