



Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the UN, Geneva

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PRESS RELEASE

Sri Lanka says “renewed political commitment to strengthen National IHL Compliance”

Addressing the plenary of the 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies today (9th) in Geneva, Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka in Geneva, has said “there is renewed political commitment and will in my country, to strengthen the national IHL compliance mechanism as well as on advancing measures to prevent and respond to all forms of violence including Sexual and Gender Based Violence (GBV), in a holistic manner”. He further noted that “this is reflective in the clear policy of the current administration to engage positively with the international community, including international organizations”.

Ambassador Aryasinha recalling that this year marks the 50th Anniversary of the proclamation of the fundamental principles of the ICRC, which has enabled the movement to carve out a clear identity and a distinctive role for itself, said “the guiding principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntariness, unity and universality has enabled the ICRC to be an acceptable party to intervene in situations of complex emergencies, and to win the confidence of the global community”, including during the difficult times of the internal armed conflict in Sri Lanka.

The ongoing Conference which is held under the overarching theme ‘Power of Humanity; the Fundamental Principles in Action’, aims at agreeing on several key resolutions covering issues related to strengthening IHL compliance, setting up guidelines for protection of detainees in particular in non-international armed conflict (NAICs) and legal frameworks for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sexual and Gender Based Violence etc. In this context, Ambassador Aryasinha said, the possibility of nuclear accidents and the resulting catastrophic humanitarian consequences, called for accelerating efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminating all nuclear weapons. (Full Statement is attached)

At a parallel event on ‘Contemporary Challenges for International Humanitarian Law’, Dr. Rohan Perera, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka in New York intervening during the panel discussion shared Sri Lanka’s national experience with regard to some of the pressing challenges faced by Sri Lanka during its long drawn out NIAC.

He highlighted the challenges posed to legitimate governments when there is open rejection of IHL, in particular by non-state armed groups. He underlined the importance of generating greater awareness of IHL obligations not only among non-state armed groups but also within a wider audience including the Diaspora, Civil Society and religious leaders who could exert influence on such groups.

The International Conference of ICRC is a quadrennial meeting of all the State Parties to the 1949 Geneva Convention on Laws of armed conflicts and also for the national Red Cross & Red Crescent World around. Currently there are over 196 States Parties to the 1949 Geneva Convention on Laws of armed conflicts. Deputy Permanent Representative Mrs. Samantha Jayasuriya and First Secretary Mr. Chatura Perera of the Sri Lanka Mission in Geneva were also part of Sri Lanka's delegation to the Conference.

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9th December 2015.