

ciples of the Geneva Protocol of 1925²¹ and the Geneva Conventions of 1949;²²

3. *Considers* that the principles of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and the Geneva Conventions of 1949 should be strictly observed by all States and that States violating these international instruments should be condemned and held responsible to the world community;

4. *Affirms* that the participants in resistance movements and the freedom fighters in southern Africa and territories under colonial and alien domination and foreign occupation, struggling for their liberation and self-determination, should be treated, in case of their arrest, as prisoners of war in accordance with the principles of the Hague Convention of 1907²³ and the Geneva Conventions of 1949;

5. *Considers* that air bombardments of civilian populations and the use of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases and of all analogous liquids, materials and devices, as well as bacteriological (biological) weapons, constitute a flagrant violation of the Hague Convention of 1907, the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and the Geneva Conventions of 1949;

6. *Recognizes* the necessity of developing additional international instruments providing for the protection of civilian populations and freedom fighters against colonial and foreign domination as well as against racist régimes.

1922nd plenary meeting,
9 December 1970.

2675 (XXV). Basic principles for the protection of civilian populations in armed conflicts

The General Assembly,

Noting that in the present century the international community has accepted an increased role and new responsibilities for the alleviation of human suffering in any form and in particular during armed conflicts,

Recalling that to this end a series of international instruments has been adopted, including the four Geneva Conventions of 1949,²⁴

Recalling further its resolution 2444 (XXIII) of 19 December 1968 on respect for human rights in armed conflicts,

Bearing in mind the need for measures to ensure the better protection of human rights in armed conflicts of all types,

Noting with appreciation the work that is being undertaken in this respect by the International Committee of the Red Cross,

Noting with appreciation the reports of the Secretary-General on respect for human rights in armed conflicts,²⁵

Convinced that civilian populations are in special need of increased protection in time of armed conflicts,

Recognizing the importance of the strict application of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection

²¹ League of Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. XCIV (1929), No. 2138.

²² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75 (1950), Nos. 970-973.

²³ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1915).

²⁴ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75 (1950), Nos. 970-973.

²⁵ A/7720 and A/8052.

of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,²⁶

Affirms the following basic principles for the protection of civilian populations in armed conflicts, without prejudice to their future elaboration within the framework of progressive development of the international law of armed conflict:

1. Fundamental human rights, as accepted in international law and laid down in international instruments, continue to apply fully in situations of armed conflict.

2. In the conduct of military operations during armed conflicts, a distinction must be made at all times between persons actively taking part in the hostilities and civilian populations.

3. In the conduct of military operations, every effort should be made to spare civilian populations from the ravages of war, and all necessary precautions should be taken to avoid injury, loss or damage to civilian populations.

4. Civilian populations as such should not be the object of military operations.

5. Dwellings and other installations that are used only by civilian populations should not be the object of military operations.

6. Places or areas designated for the sole protection of civilians, such as hospital zones or similar refuges, should not be the object of military operations.

7. Civilian populations, or individual members thereof, should not be the object of reprisals, forcible transfers or other assaults on their integrity.

8. The provision of international relief to civilian populations is in conformity with the humanitarian principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international instruments in the field of human rights. The Declaration of Principles for International Humanitarian Relief to the Civilian Population in Disaster Situations, as laid down in resolution XXVI adopted by the twenty-first International Conference of the Red Cross,²⁷ shall apply in situations of armed conflict, and all parties to a conflict should make every effort to facilitate this application.

1922nd plenary meeting,
9 December 1970.

2676 (XXV). Respect for human rights in armed conflicts

The General Assembly,

Recalling that the Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations affirms faith in the dignity and worth of the human person,

Recalling that the United Nations has as one of its purposes the achievement of international co-operation in solving international problems of a humanitarian character and the promotion of respect for human rights,

Reiterating the obligation of Member States for the urgent termination of all armed aggression, as envisaged in Articles 1 and 2 of the Charter and in other relevant documents of the United Nations,

²⁶ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75 (1950), No. 973.

²⁷ *International Review of the Red Cross*, No. 104 (November 1969), p. 632.

Noting the obligation of Member States under the Charter to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights,

Recalling its resolutions 2444 (XXIII) of 19 December 1968 and 2597 (XXIV) of 16 December 1969, in which it invited the Secretary-General, in consultation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, to study, *inter alia*:

(a) Steps which could be taken to secure the better application of existing humanitarian international conventions and rules in all armed conflicts,

(b) The need for additional humanitarian international conventions or for other appropriate legal instruments to ensure the better protection of civilians, prisoners and combatants in all armed conflicts,

Believing, therefore, that the treatment accorded to victims of war and armed aggression is a concern of the United Nations,

Noting resolution XI, adopted by the twenty-first International Conference of the Red Cross held at Istanbul in 1969,²⁸ calling upon all parties to the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, of 12 August 1949,²⁹ to ensure that all persons entitled to prisoner-of-war status are treated humanely and given the fullest measure of protection prescribed by the Convention, and that all parties involved in an armed conflict, no matter how it is characterized, provide free access to prisoners of war and to all places of their detention by a protecting Power or by the International Committee of the Red Cross,

Considering that the direct repatriation of seriously wounded and seriously sick prisoners of war and the repatriation or internment in a neutral country of prisoners of war who have undergone a long period of captivity constitute important aspects of human rights as advanced and preserved under the Geneva Convention of 1949 and the Charter of the United Nations,

1. Calls upon all parties to any armed conflict to comply with the terms and provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, of 12 August 1949, so as to ensure the humane treatment of all persons entitled to the protection of the Convention and, *inter alia*, to permit regular inspection, in accordance with the Convention, of all places of detention of prisoners of war by a protecting Power or humanitarian organization such as the International Committee of the Red Cross;

2. Endorses the continuing efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross to secure the effective application of the Geneva Convention of 1949;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to exert all efforts to obtain humane treatment for prisoners of war, especially for the victims of armed aggression and colonial suppression;

4. Urges compliance with article 109 of the Geneva Convention of 1949, which requires the repatriation of seriously wounded and seriously sick prisoners of war and which provides for agreements with a view to the direct repatriation or internment in a neutral country of able-bodied prisoners of war who have undergone a long period of captivity;

5. Urges that combatants in all armed conflicts not covered by article 4 of the Geneva Convention of

1949 be accorded the same humane treatment defined by the principles of international law applied to prisoners of war;

6. Urges strict compliance with the provisions of the existing international instruments concerning human rights in armed conflicts, and urges those States which have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the relevant instruments in order to facilitate in all aspects the protection of the victims of armed conflicts.

1922nd plenary meeting,
9 December 1970.

2677 (XXV). Respect for human rights in armed conflicts

The General Assembly,

Determined to continue all efforts to eliminate the threat or use of force in international relations, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, and to bring about general and complete disarmament under effective international control,

Reaffirming its desire to secure the full observance of human rights applicable in all armed conflicts pending the earliest possible termination of such conflicts,

Convinced of the continuing value of existing humanitarian rules relating to armed conflicts, in particular the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907,³⁰ the Geneva Protocol of 1925³¹ and the Geneva Conventions of 1949,³²

Realizing, however, that because existing humanitarian rules do not adequately meet all contemporary situations of armed conflict it is necessary to develop the substance of these rules and procedures for their implementation,

Reaffirming the principles contained in resolution XXIII adopted by the International Conference on Human Rights held at Teheran in 1968,³³ and in General Assembly resolutions 2444 (XXIII) of 19 December 1968 and 2597 (XXIV) of 16 December 1969,

Aware of the importance and complexity of the tasks undertaken in pursuance of these resolutions, which require the continuing attention and concern of the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the international community as a whole,

Noting with appreciation the two reports of the Secretary-General on respect for human rights in armed conflicts,³⁴

Recalling resolution XIII adopted unanimously by the twenty-first International Conference of the Red Cross held at Istanbul in 1969,³⁵ concerning the reaffirmation and development of the laws and customs applicable in armed conflicts,

Welcoming the decision of the International Committee of the Red Cross to convene at Geneva, from 24 May to 12 June 1971, a conference on the reaffirmation and development of international humanitarian

³⁰ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1915).

³¹ League of Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. XCIV (1929), No. 2138.

³² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75 (1950), Nos. 970-973.

³³ *Final Act of the International Conference on Human Rights* (United Nations publication, Sales No.: E.68.XIV.2), p. 18.

³⁴ A/7720 and A/8052.

³⁵ See A/7720, annex I, section D.

²⁸ *International Review of the Red Cross*, No. 104 (November 1969), p. 614.

²⁹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75 (1950), No. 972.