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RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN ARMED CONFLICTS

Note verbale dated 20 December 1977 from the Permanent Mission
of the United Republic of Cameroon to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretariat

The Permanent Mission of the United Republic of Cameroon to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the United Nations and has the honour to bring the following matter to its attention.

The first African Conference on Humanitarian Law, organized jointly by the Institute of International Relations of the Cameroon (IRIC) and the Henri Dunant Institute in Geneva, was held at Yaoundé from 28 November to 2 December 1977.

This Conference was attended by 40 delegates (law professors, diplomats, officers and doctors) from 23 African countries, and on 2 December 1977 it adopted a declaration entitled the "Yaoundé Declaration on Humanitarian Law", which reads as follows:

"The participants in the first African Seminar on International Humanitarian Law,

Concerned by the many violations on the African continent, and particularly in southern Africa, and in the Arab territories occupied by Israel, of the principles and rules of international humanitarian law, which have been made more serious by the practice of employing mercenaries,

Convinced that widespread dissemination and teaching of the principles of humanitarian international law would be an important contribution to the promotion of world peace,

Firmly believing that knowledge of international humanitarian law is essential to its application and effective observance by States and other entities concerned,

Noting that the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 ^{1/} for the protection of war victims require the contracting parties to disseminate the rules of international humanitarian law, as widely as possible, in time of peace as in time of war,

Taking account of the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, and especially resolutions 2852 (XXVI) of 20 December 1971, 3032 (XXVII) of 18 December 1972 and 3102 (XXVIII) of 12 December 1973, of resolution 15.5.12 of the eighteenth General Conference of UNESCO, held in 1974, and of the relevant resolutions of the international conferences of the Red Cross,

Aware of the universal nature of the humanitarian principles which, being the common heritage of mankind, coincide with both African culture and traditions,

Aware of the important role which the African States have played in the process of the reaffirmation and development of international humanitarian law,

Appreciating the particularly high level of the contribution made by each participant to the progressive development, dissemination and effectiveness of international humanitarian law,

Recommend that the Governments of the African States sign and ratify the two Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions, adopted on 10 June 1977, and thus play a leading role in the promotion of humanitarian international law, as adapted to suit the conditions currently prevailing in the international community;

Recommend that the Governments of the African States continue their efforts to disseminate the principles of international humanitarian law, particularly among the armed forces;

Suggest that university institutions, and particularly faculties of law, political, economic and social sciences, medicine and schools of administration, include in their curricula courses for the study of the principles of international humanitarian law, including instruments for the protection of human rights;

Recommend that the competent international and regional organizations encourage the establishment in Africa of regional training courses in international humanitarian law, including human rights and, if possible, assign the task of conducting such courses to the Institute of International Relations of the Cameroon, which is an international institute, in co-operation with the institutes of the Red Cross and, in particular, with the Henri Dunant Institute in Geneva;

^{1/} United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, Nos. 970 to 973.

Reaffirm their militant and active solidarity with all the victims of these unjust and inhuman violations."

The Permanent Mission would be grateful if the Secretariat could circulate this note as an official General Assembly document under agenda item 115.
