

24th International Humanitarian and Security Conference

Save the date!

Webster University Geneva's 24th International Humanitarian & Security Conference (IHSC) will take place on March 7-8, 2019, at the International Conference Center Geneva on the theme "REBALANCING INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE 1949 GENEVA CONVENTIONS SEVENTY YEARS ON."

Seventy years after the adoption of the four Geneva Conventions on August 12, 1949, on the protection of war victims, the world is still witnessing major atrocities against civilians in conflict areas and the impunity of perpetrators. Schools, hospitals and religious sites are bombed as military targets, without distinction. Within such context, humanitarian workers, medical and religious personnel, as well as war correspondents, are increasingly in danger while trying to deliver relief to the victims and to inform the international community about the unfolding tragedies.

Although a broad consensus already exists on the significance of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), there is an urgent need for states to take joint steps towards a more effective enforcement of its provisions. In particular, states should ensure that children, among the most vulnerable groups, are protected and prevented from taking part in conflict.

Moreover, with the rise of non-state actors and technological innovations, war scenarios have become increasingly complex and loosely defined. This has raised new dilemmas regarding accountability and the scope of human agency in conflict zones, to which state-actors will have to respond and find adequate solutions.

In the context of today's fast-changing and conflict-driven world, it is more compelling than ever that existing IHL framework and commitments are strengthened to ensure the efficacy of future institutions and the effective implementation of IHL.

The main topics to be discussed during the six sessions of the Conference will include:

- 1) POWs, Internees, Captured Personnel and Detention Facilities;
- 2) The Protection of Civilians in Occupied Territories;
- 3) The Changing Character of Warfare;
- 4) The Protection of Medical and Religious Personnel, and War Correspondents;
- 5) Child Soldiers;
- 6) The Increased Relevance of Non-State Actors in Armed Conflicts.

The conference will be organized together with the Webster Humanitarian Association (WHA) and in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). As in previous years, it will be held under the High Patronage of the Government of the Republic and Canton of Geneva.

For more information, please contact Dr. Oreste Foppiani (foppiani@webster.ch), Head of the Department of International Relations and Chair of the Scientific Committee of the IHSC.