

To facilitate this complex task, the ICRC convened a First Conference of Government Experts on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts in Geneva in May, 1971. The Canadian delegation promoted vigorously the view that, building upon common Article 3 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, a basic minimum standard of humanitarian treatment should be applied in all armed conflict situations, whether these were characterized as "international" or "non-international". Canadian experts presented a draft protocol embodying this concept for which a number of other experts expressed support or interest.

The ICRC then formulated two draft protocols to the Geneva Conventions—one concerning international armed conflicts and the other, based on the draft proposed by Canada at the first conference, concerning armed conflicts of a non-international character. The ICRC convened a Second Conference of Government Experts in Geneva from May 3 to June 3, 1972, to consider the two draft protocols. At this second conference, Commission II (which, as at the first conference, was chaired by a Canadian expert) reviewed the second draft protocol dealing with non-international armed conflicts. The need to develop common Article 3 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions was largely accepted by the experts.

Basing itself on the work of the second conference and consideration of this subject in the Sixth (Legal) Committee at the 1972 session of the United Nations General Assembly, the ICRC intends to revise its two draft protocols by the end of the spring of 1973 and to distribute the revised protocols to states parties to the 1949 Geneva Conventions. The Swiss Government, in collaboration with the ICRC, intends to convene a diplomatic conference in Geneva in the spring of 1974, which, it is hoped, will adopt final versions of the two protocols.

International terrorism

The United Nations Secretary-General proposed the inscription of an item on measures to prevent terrorism on the agenda of the 1972 General Assembly. The

item provoked controversy owing to the tendency of many non-aligned countries to write off this initiative as an attempt to put the lid on national liberation movements. It was possible to inscribe the item only by specifying that it would cover acts of terrorism with a clear "international" element, and that the underlying causes of terrorism, as well as measures to prevent it, would be examined.

After consideration in the Sixth (Legal) Committee, the General Assembly adopted a resolution creating an Ad Hoc Committee on International Terrorism. Representatives from 35 states will consider the observations of states and submit a report with recommendations to the twenty-eighth General Assembly (1973). Canada voted against the resolution because it favoured the creation of a committee with a mandate to formulate specific measures to combat terrorism (such as a new international convention) rather than merely study the general problem and its causes. Notwithstanding its dissatisfaction with the mandate, Canada offered to serve on the committee which will meet in New York in July, 1973.

Settlement of claims

During 1972, the Bureau had considerable dealings both with Czechoslovakia and Cuba. The third round of negotiations with the Czechoslovakian authorities, which took place at Prague in May, eventually led to the settlement of outstanding claims against Czechoslovakia (through an agreement signed in April, 1973). A list of claims was presented to the Cuban authorities for study in May and was under review during the remainder of the year. In June, a proposal was made to the U.S.S.R. that discussions should in due course be initiated on the matter of claims against that country. Moreover, in September, Yugoslavia agreed in principle to look at outstanding claims, with the possibility of a first round of negotiations taking place late in 1973. Finally, various individual and corporate Canadian citizens were assisted in their pursuit of full and fair compensation for various claims against foreign governments.