

SECOND WORLD RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT  
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Measures against particularly inhuman warfare

Prepared by the Swedish Red Cross

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## MEASURES AGAINST PARTICULARLY INHUMAN WARFARE

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Report by the National Red Cross of Sweden

One of the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law is to ensure protection of the civilian population in times of armed conflicts. It has always been the duty of the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement to react against violations of this principle, exposing cases of indiscriminate warfare which victimizes the civilian population. The movement has fulfilled this duty, e.g. by pointing out the indiscriminate character of nuclear warfare.

Already in 1948, at the International Conference in Stockholm, a clear position was taken by the Red Cross and Red Crescent against nuclear weapons. This position has been confirmed at different occasions up to present time and made it clear that the movement is opposing not only the use of nuclear weapons but also the development and storing of them. As has been repeatedly stated, such weapons imply indiscriminate destruction and a suffering which is excessively beyond any conceivable military necessity. In addition, as stated already in 1948, these weapons threaten our civilisation.

The threat against the civilian population is increasing by the development which is taking place in all three major weapon areas. Conventional weapons with indiscriminate effects are produced, and new weapons are developed which are particularly inhuman by inflicting a suffering which goes far beyond any military purpose. There are indications that chemical weapons have been used, causing a widespread and often lifelong suffering. Preparations are being made for chemical and biological warfare. The deployment of nuclear weapons is increasing, and such weapons are being developed by means of underground tests.

In this area the capacity of indiscriminate killing and devastation surpasses everything which has been prohibited concerning conventional or chemical and biological weapons. Today, when the findings on a "nuclear winter" have been made, we agree that these weapons threaten the existence of mankind. While strictly observing neutrality in relation to powers in conflict, the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement is not neutral in relation to these weapons.

In this situation the Conference will call the attention of all National Societies to

- the 1925 Geneva protocol for the prohibition of the use of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases and/or of bacteriological methods of warfare;
- the 1977 additional protocol to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and relating to the protection of victims of international armed conflicts (protocol I);
- the 1981 United Nations Convention on certain inhuman weapons formally called Convention on the prohibition of the use of certain conventional weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects, and;
- the repeated Red Cross and Red Crescent statements against nuclear weapons as presented in the League memo of January 1984: test of the main resolutions on peace adopted by the international Red Cross meetings since 1919.

The conference expects each society to urge its Government considers the following proposals:

1. The Convention on weapons and the protocols of 1977 should be ratified if that has not been done.
2. An investigation should be carried out, revealing possible violations of the 1925 protocol, the 1977 protocol and the 1981 Convention.
3. Steps should be taken ending possible violations and preventing violations in the future.
4. Ways should be considered whereby other Governments could be urged effectively to ratify the 1977 protocols and the 1981 Convention.
5. The Government should seriously consider the Red Cross and Red Crescent's statements on nuclear weapons and, preferably together with other Governments, take steps according to them.