



General Assembly
Human Rights Council
22nd session

Item 6 - Universal Periodic Review

Switzerland

Mr. President,

The PEC wishes to address the issue of the particular moral responsibility of Switzerland, as Depositary State of the Geneva Conventions, in ensuring respect for humanitarian law and in playing a proactive role in this regard. This responsibility goes beyond the obligation enshrined in Article I of the Conventions.

We are currently witnessing in Syria, but also in other contexts of violence, massive and almost daily violations of the Geneva Conventions.

The Press Emblem Campaign was created to strengthen the protection of journalists in conflict zones. In principle, journalists are protected by the Geneva Conventions as all other civilians and it is forbidden to attempt on their lives. But we note however that this obligation, which applies to all signatories of the Conventions, has repeatedly not been observed in recent years. Last year, a record number of 141 journalists have lost their lives in the exercise of their profession.

The PEC calls upon Switzerland, as Depositary State of the Geneva Conventions and Host Country of the Movement for the Red Cross and the Red Crescent, as well as of the Human Rights Council, to consult the High Contracting Parties before the submission of its next periodic report to the Council. The purpose of this consultation would be to identify means to strengthen the protection of journalists and media workers in conflict zones through concrete and effective mechanisms complementing the general provisions of the Geneva Conventions.

The presence on the field of independent witnesses is indispensable for documenting violations of humanitarian law, human rights as well as war crimes and crimes against humanity, so as to denounce and stop those heinous crimes.

I thank you for your attention.

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