

# International Humanitarian Law. Seven Decades in the Service of Humanity\*

Elena Roxana Vișan

*PhD candidate National University of Political Sciences and Public Administration, Bucharest, Romania,  
Member of the European Law Institute - ELI, roxanne\_lex@yahoo.com*

**ABSTRACT:** In an era marked by globalization, increasingly bloody and permanent armed conflicts, war threats, it is imperative to respect the foundation of humanity, the Geneva Conventions by adopting actions in the spirit of human rights education and a culture of peace. From the desire to protect the human being and to promote among the youth the humanitarian treasure of humanity, specialists in the field of International Humanitarian Law, non-governmental organizations celebrate the Day of the International Humanitarian Law annually, by a collective commitment in assimilating and promoting the human aspiration, being, peace and the common good.

**KEYWORDS:** International Humanitarian Law, peace, humanitarian conventions, solidarity rights

## Introduction

For the field of International Humanitarian Law, the year 2019 represented the celebration of the seven decades since the adoption of the Geneva Conventions (1949-2019), demonstrating its role and importance in building the humanitarian treasure of humanity. Being aware of the efforts made at international level regarding the law of war and of the need to promote among the young generation humanitarian principles in the event of armed conflict, the Romanian nation has responded positively in this regard.

On May 14, 1956, Romania becomes a part to the Geneva Conventions, when the importance of respecting International Humanitarian Law is recognized. Thus, by Law no. 177/2013 is declared May 14, the Day of International Humanitarian Law, a symbol of guaranteeing the fundamental rights and freedoms, granted to the persons involved in the armed conflicts. National humanitarian law commissions are set up which, through the cooperation with governmental and non-governmental entities, carry out specific actions for International Humanitarian Law.

Among the outstanding national actions in this regard, we mention the 6th edition dedicated to the Day of International Humanitarian Law, organized by the Romanian Association of Humanitarian Law, the Prahova branch, in Ploiesti, a scientific, educational and cultural initiative. The action itself has built an interinstitutional relationship, between the academic, pre-university, through a public-private partnership between local, national and international institutional entities, such as: Police Academy "A.I. Cuza" Bucharest, Romania, Ploiesti County Council, Inspectorate Prahova County School, National College of Education "Regina Maria" Ploiești, County Library "Nicolae Iorga," General Directorate of Education Culture Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, Pedagogical College "Alexei Mateevici" Chisinau etc.

The approach manifested by the organizers highlighted the common, innovative and even universal character, I could say, transmitting the unity between the political and social decision makers. The initiative initiated by the Ploieștean county community aimed at addressing human rights issues, the Trans dimension and disciplinary ploys, based on humanitarian principles and

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values, valuable knowledge on humanitarian education, means of interstate co-operation, in order to build a culture for peace and peace.

The theme of the year 2019 marked the 70 years since the adoption of the Geneva Conventions, international legal instruments, which proliferate norms of protection of human rights, of the natural environment, in situations of armed conflict and in time of peace, of the people in suffering: children, women, refugees, migrants, of the cultural heritage of the community. The event proved to be a complex one, structured in three defining stages: holding a national conference, launching a scientific publication dedicated to international humanitarian law, an artistic-plastic catalog made up of vase works by young people, future consecrated artists and of course the awards, the winners of the competition "International humanitarian law in the vision of young people"

### **A happy experience**

The scientific approach dedicated to the Day of International Humanitarian Law has materialized through the work "International Humanitarian Law. Seven decades in the service of humanity," part of the ARDU Collection - Romanian Association of Humanitarian Law, Prahova branch. One of the many reference papers published in the field, the paper was coordinated by Mrs. Irina Moroianu Zlătescu and Mrs Elena Roxana Vișan. The publication contributes significantly to the promotion of International Humanitarian Law, occupying a well-deserved place in the training of any specialist in the field. For the legal literature, the publication responds promptly to the scientific conditions, specialized in International Humanitarian Law, offering views of some military and civilian experts, a moment of reflection on humanitarian issues. Through the deep involvement and dedication of the co-authors, the work is structured in three chapters: *The Geneva Conventions - the humanitarian treasurer of mankind, the transposition into practice of the provisions of the Geneva Conventions: theory vs. practice, the children - the present and future standard of humanity in ensuring peace.*

With a scientific space of about 400 pages, the content of the publication offers a broad, relevant presentation of the provisions of the Geneva Conventions, the indissoluble legal instruments of the humanitarian law system, as well as the perspectives and scope of International Humanitarian Law.

Referring to the evolution of international relations, the need to respect the norms of strengthening security in the world by promoting the right to peace, it is highlighted the indispensable role of the Geneva Conventions, legal instruments, essential in acquiring, maintaining and strengthening the right to peace of each individual, resulting from here indirectly the normal development of nations and the achievement of the objectives of progress and civilization of the whole humanity" (Tudor, 2016, 13).

Chapter I deals with the Geneva Conventions from a theoretical perspective, legislative aspects regarding the protection of persons and goods during armed conflicts, highlighting the responsibility of each state through the governmental and non-governmental structures to harmonize national legislation in order to apply international standards in the humanitarian field. The news of the events highlights pertinent notations of some specialists in the field of international humanitarian law, referring to the necessity of the process "maturing the conscience of humanity," living proof of the defense of "tragic catastrophes caused by war" (Dragoman 2019, 38).

Also remarkable is the intervention of Mrs. prof. univ. dr. Irina Moroianu Zlătescu, who supported the idea that "conflictual relations between states have degenerated into military confrontations, in wars, and this has led to violations of human rights, demonstrating the vicious circle that humanity has not been able to remove."

The focus is also on the evolution of international humanitarian law by introducing in the international documents the disarmament process of some military groups that endanger the life, safety and human rights, but also the reactions of the states and international organizations that promptly and responsibly demand the punishment of crimes war. This kind of approach can do

nothing but determine the harmonious functioning of international society, supported by the reduction of armed conflicts at a global level through a policy of maintaining peace and exercising the right of peace, by all States Parties. The legal construction of peace requires the safeguarding of global and national security through the full reaffirmation of the spirit and creative force of all citizens, a sine qua non condition of a quality education in the spirit of peace and humanity (Vişan 2019a, 210).

Chapter II presents concrete aspects regarding the violation of the Geneva Conventions through a clear analysis, using the case study, but also by specifying the educational valences of International Humanitarian Law, suggesting the idea that Education for International Humanitarian Law (IHL) is carried out on two levels, at the same time, International Humanitarian Law in education and through education.

International Humanitarian Law through education favors the development of humanitarian education as a process of training and learning by using active and participatory techniques and methods in order to acquire its specific knowledge, while International Humanitarian Law in education means the need to respect human rights, to identify mitigation means” (Vişan2019a, 211), of “the effects of armed conflicts by protecting those who do not take part in conflicts or who no longer take part in them and by regulating the means and methods of fighting” (Official Journal of the European Union, 2009/C 303/06).

It is emphasized, the meaning of the world action of education: it is unfolding constantly, as a unitary commitment to the exercise of the right to education supported by a vision and a political will reflected in numerous international and regional human rights treaties, where this right and its interdependence are stipulated with the other human rights (Human Rights Education, 30).

An exceptional chapter is represented by Chapter III of the publication, which presents the county interdisciplinary project with international participation “Educational valences of the international humanitarian law in forming a culture of peace”, initiated as a line between the university and the pre-university environment, a continuity of activity curricular in the extracurricular sphere, which concerns the need to know humanitarian standards from the perspective of international humanitarian law. It sought to familiarize young people with the basic norms of international humanitarian law with humanitarian issues at international level, both at peace and at war time, but also at promoting solidarity rights, social and humanitarian aid services.

The theme proposed in 2019, on the occasion of the Day of International Humanitarian Law, was entitled “Children - the standard of present and future humanity in peace assurance.” Viewed as a theme of reflection on the tragic dimension of war, but also of promoting a culture of peace, this reinforces the decisive role played by education as a process of teaching and learning, in promoting a culture of peace, capable of building a knowledge space and understanding through cooperation and mutual respect.

The manifestation of peace in the international legal system, more specifically in international humanitarian law, is approached as a dynamic phenomenon supported by a culture in the spirit of humanitarianism and respect for human rights, the basis of economic development, the elimination of differences between states (Vişan 2019a, 210-214).

The prafume of the pacifist knowledge necessary in the formation of the humanitarian education, the best way to build and consolidate the global peace, the lining of an architecture between the present and the posterity civilizations is used. Born from the depths of the human being, from the desire to promote the common good and happiness, the culture of peace is the priceless, immaterial treasure that humanity must cherish and promote through a “pedagogy of reconciliation, under the sign of a new humanism” (Vişan 2019b, 286).

## Conclusions

Looking fiercely at the tumultuous past of mankind and confident about a pacifist future, this publication sends us to equally promote and value the culture of peace, the actions put in the service of humanity, which are invaluable to the role and importance of international humanitarian law. Guaranteeing solidarity between people, as “an expression of a conception of life in larger communities and which could only be achieved through joint efforts” (Diaconu, 2010, 170).

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