



## **Iran: Conference on Islam and international humanitarian law highlights their similarities**

**Tehran** – The academic conference held in Qom on humanitarian principles common to Islam and international humanitarian law (IHL) drew to a close on 8 December.

Legal experts and religious scholars found many similarities between modern IHL and the legal and moral principles contained in jurisprudence based on the teachings of Islam and other world religions.

Ms Florence Gillette, head of mission for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Iran, stated: “Respect for the humanitarian principles enshrined in IHL can only be achieved by promoting a global humanitarian culture. Religious scholars can play an important role in ensuring that humanitarian values take root in peoples’ minds.”

During the two-day conference, experts from over 20 countries discussed legal provisions on the protected status of civilians, particularly displaced people and refugees, as well as of medical facilities, patients and the bodies of the dead. Islamic scholars and IHL experts also provided an overview of the rules of armed conflict relating to the protection of the environment and natural resources.

The conference was accompanied by an exhibition of books and posters featuring calligraphy on humanitarian topics, extracts from the Quran and the Hadith, customary IHL and publications in different languages on the subject of Islam and IHL.

The under secretary-general of the International Affairs and IHL Division of the IRCS, Mr. Mohammad Shahabeddin Mohammadi Araghi, referred to the humanitarian challenges in today’s world and said, “Religions can play a crucial role in strengthening respect for human dignity.” However, religions are sometimes misinterpreted. He added “Cooperation between the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, other humanitarian organizations and religious scholars can illustrate to the international community the rich humanitarian heritage of religions and humanitarian values in IHL.

The conference also provided an opportunity for representatives of other world religions to shed light on their religious humanitarian heritage. The event in Qom was the second international conference on Islam and IHL organized in Iran by the Centre for Comparative Studies on Islam and IHL, the Iranian Red Crescent and the ICRC.

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## Iran: Scholars and experts discuss humanitarian principles common to Islam and international humanitarian law

**TEHRAN** – On 7 and 8 December, the Centre for Comparative Studies on Islam and International Humanitarian Law, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran will host an academic conference in Qom to celebrate ten years of collaborative research on humanitarian principles in Islam and international humanitarian law (IHL) in Iran.

ICRC president Peter Maurer will attend the opening ceremony. As he explained: “A decade of collaboration between scholars of Islam and experts on IHL represents a milestone for the ICRC and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement as a whole. The dialogue between these experts and scholars aims to dispel misconceptions and identify shared values, particularly with regard to the protection of human dignity in situations of armed conflict. At a time when the devastating human cost of armed conflict is affecting millions of civilians, this collaboration is of paramount importance.”

The conference will bring together prominent IHL experts, scholars of Islam and religious leaders from more than 20 countries to shed light on Islamic humanitarian heritage and to identify humanitarian principles common to Islam and IHL.

The President of the Iranian Red Crescent Society, Dr Seyed Amir Mohsen Ziaee, referred to the escalation of armed conflicts in recent years, and said, “Common religious values and beliefs can help reducing the level of hostilities and bring us closer to peace. This conference is a step forward to discuss the importance of dialogue between religions and IHL in order strengthen respect for human dignity”.

Since 2006, the Iranian Red Crescent and the ICRC have jointly supported the academic work of the Centre for Comparative Studies on Islam and International Humanitarian Law. This work helps build bridges between Islam and IHL, as part of efforts to promote respect for human dignity and protect civilians and other non-combatants in conflicts throughout the world.

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