



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
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**Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations Office
and to the other international organisations in Geneva**

242.512-0 – GEN 24/2014

Notification to governments of the States parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War

Statement of the depositary

The Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations Office and to the other international organisations in Geneva presents its compliments to the permanent missions to the United Nations Office in Geneva and has the honour of informing them of the following.

In a note verbale dated 22 July 2014, Switzerland, as depositary of the Geneva Conventions, notified the High Contracting Parties that consultations would resume concerning a possible conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, in accordance with the recommendation of United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/64/10 (paragraph 5 of the decision) and the various reports drafted by the depositary on the implementation of this recommendation.

Since then, the consultations held in Geneva have focused primarily on the advisability of such a conference as well as its potential objective, programme and procedure. Organised in several rounds based on a geographically representative sample of States parties, the consultations came to the conclusion on 9 December that a cross-regional critical mass of support for such a conference exists on the basis of the modalities (Appendix 1) and text of the Final Draft Declaration (Appendix 2). These two documents had been drafted and revised entirely on the basis of comments and contributions from High Contracting Parties and applicable international humanitarian law. A small number of States parties expressed their opposition to the principle of such a Conference. Consequently, the planned conference will be a "Conference of High Contracting Parties" like the 1999 and 2001 conferences (not a "Conference of *the* High Contracting Parties"), on the basis of Article 1 of the Convention.

The Swiss government therefore has the honour of informing the High Contracting Parties that a Conference of High Contracting Parties will take place, in accordance with the agreed modalities, on 17 December 2014 at 10:00 in the Salle Obasi of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), 7bis, avenue de la Paix, Geneva. The Conference will be followed by a lunch reception at 13:00.

The High Contracting Parties wishing to take part are kindly asked to register by 12:00 noon on 15 December 2014 via the online registration form at the following website address: www.eda.admin.ch/conferencefourthgenevaconvention (user: geneva, password: conventions). The High Contracting Parties which have already pre-registered using this form and have received a confirmation email from the Swiss Mission are not required to register. The website contains all reference documentation and contact email addresses for enquiries.

In accordance with the enclosed modalities, the programme of the Conference will be as follows:

1. Opening statement by the Chair of the Conference
2. Statements by the ICRC and UNRWA
3. Formal reading of the Declaration (as disseminated on 3 December 2014) by the Chair of the Conference and adoption by acclamation (without a vote)
4. Statements from groups
5. Conclusion by the Chair of the Conference

In accordance with the provisions of the enclosed modalities, the depositary will issue the badges permitting access to the conference room. These are reserved exclusively for High Contracting Parties and observers and are limited to two people per delegation. The Conference will be held at the level of permanent representatives of the permanent missions in Geneva.

High Contracting Parties wishing to speak at the Conference on behalf of an established group should notify the depositary by note verbale by 10:00 on Tuesday 16 December, as stated in the enclosed modalities. The depositary will draw up a list of the order of group statements.

High Contracting Parties wishing to submit a written declaration to the depositary for inclusion in the official documentation of the Conference should submit their declaration by note verbale by 10:00 on Tuesday 16 December, as stated in the enclosed modalities.

A copy of this note verbale is to be sent to the following organisations that will be able to participate as observers: ICRC, IFRC, UNRWA, OHCHR, European Union, Arab League, OIC, African Union.

This notification has been issued by the Swiss Federal Council in its capacity as depositary (www.dfae.admin.ch/depositaire) of the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols.

The Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations Office and to the other international organisations in Geneva takes this opportunity to convey to the diplomatic missions in Geneva renewed assurances of its highest consideration.

Enclosures mentioned

Bern, 10 December 2014

