



College of Europe
Collège d'Europe



Natolin



ICRC

Addressing the Human Cost of War: Upholding IHL to Protect the Wounded, Sick and Dead

Provisional programme

26th Bruges Colloquium on IHL
Bruges, 19-20 November 2026

Overview of the (provisional) programme

All sessions will take place at the College of Europe (Dijver 11, 8000 Bruges), in-person and in English

Thursday 19 November 2026, 08:45 – 18:00 (CET)

Opening Statements

Introductory Conversation

From Solferino to Today's Battlefields: How Does IHL Protect the Wounded, Sick, and Dead?

Panel 1

Securing the Scene: Navigating IHL Requirements for the Search, Collection, Recovery, and Evacuation of the Wounded, Sick and Dead

Panel 2

Impartial Care for the Wounded and Sick: Addressing the Challenges of Armed Conflict

Panel 3

Dignity in Death: Protecting, Identifying, and Accounting for the Deceased



Friday 20 November 2026, 09:00 – 13:00 (CET)

Panel 4

The Lasting Human Cost of Weapons that Keep on Killing: Anti-Personnel Mines and Cluster Munitions

Panel 5

How IHL Shapes Hope: Returning the Wounded, Sick and Dead to their Loved Ones

Day 1 – Thursday, 19 November 2026

08:45 - 18:00 (CET)

08:45 - 09:15 **WELCOME AND REGISTRATION**

09:15 - 09:45 **OPENING STATEMENTS**

- **Eloi Fillion**, Head of Delegation, ICRC Delegation to the EU, NATO and the Kingdom of Belgium
- **Dr. João Gomes Cravinho**, Rector, College of Europe
- **Dr. Cordula Droege**, Director of International Law, Movement and Partnerships, ICRC

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09:45 - 10:45 **INTRODUCTORY CONVERSATION: FROM SOLFERINO TO TODAY'S BATTLEFIELDS:
HOW IHL PROTECTS THE WOUNDED, SICK, AND DEAD**

- **Dr. Cordula Droege**, Director of International Law, Movement and Partnerships, ICRC
- **Marco Sassòli**, Professor of International Law, University of Geneva
- **Amanda Wall**, Legal Adviser and Director of the Office of Legal Affairs, NATO HQ

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10:45 - 11:15 *Coffee break*

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11:15 - 12:45 **PANEL 1: SECURING THE SCENE: NAVIGATING IHL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
SEARCH, COLLECTION, RECOVERY, AND EVACUATION OF THE WOUNDED, SICK
AND DEAD**

- **IHL obligations to search, collect and evacuate the wounded, sick and dead**
– Ximena Londoño, Thematic Legal Advisor, ICRC
- **Operational and legal challenges of battlefield search and recovery operations**
– Rikke Rietveld, Project Director of Battlefield Forensics Programme, NATO
- **Search, collection and evacuation of the wounded and sick**
– *Tbc*

Chaired by Alexander Breitegger, Thematic Legal Advisor, ICRC

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12:45 - 14:15 *Lunch*

Day 1 – Thursday, 19 November 2026

08:45 - 18:00 (CET)

14:15 - 15:45 **PANEL 2: IMPARTIAL CARE FOR THE WOUNDED AND SICK: ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF ARMED CONFLICT**

- **The IHL obligation to provide care for wounded and sick persons without adverse distinction**
– Alexander Breitegger, Thematic Legal Advisor, ICRC
- **Treating friend and foe: operational challenges in armed conflict**
– *Tbc*
- **The auxiliary role in law and practice: medical care provided by National Societies**
– Dr. Katja Schöberl, Legal Advisor, German Red Cross

Chair *Tbc*

15:45 - 16:15 *Coffee break*

16:15 - 17:45 **PANEL 3: DIGNITY IN DEATH: PROTECTING, IDENTIFYING, AND ACCOUNTING FOR THE DECEASED**

- **Managing the deceased with dignity and respect: a humanitarian forensic perspective**
– Davette Nichole Gadison, Forensic Manager, ICRC
- **IHL and human rights obligations towards the deceased and their families**
– Prof. Melanie Klinkner, Professor of International Law, Bournemouth University
- **Military identification and mortuary affairs: an operational perspective**
– *Tbc*

Chaired by Ximena Londoño, Thematic Legal Advisor, ICRC

17:45 - 18:00 **CONCLUSION OF DAY 1**

- **Jürg Lauber**, Vice-President, ICRC (video address)

18:30 - 20:30 *Reception at the Bruges City Hall (Burg 12, 8000 Bruges)*

Day 2 – Friday, 20 November 2026

08:45 - 18:00 (CET)

09:00 - 09:15 WELCOME

09:15 - 10:45 **PANEL 4: THE LASTING HUMAN COST OF WEAPONS THAT KEEP ON KILLING: ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES AND CLUSTER MUNITIONS**

- **Beyond the blast: the individual and community impact of explosive weapons**
– Alma Taslidžan, Disarmament and Protection of Civilians Advocacy Manager, Handicap International Belgium
- **How disarmament treaties respond to the human cost of anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions**
– Juan Carlos Ruan, Director, Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit
- **The importance of continued adherence to disarmament treaties: a State perspective**
– Mark Roorda, Legal Counsel, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Chair *Tbc*

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10:45 - 11:15 *Coffee break*

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11:15 - 12:45 **PANEL 5: HOW IHL SHAPES HOPE: RETURNING THE WOUNDED, SICK AND DEAD TO THEIR LOVED ONES**

- **Repatriating the wounded and sick, returning the deceased: IHL obligations during and after conflict**
– Edward Madziwa, Programme Assistant, UNIDIR
- **Fostering hope: returning the dead in protracted conflicts**
– Magdalena Grono, EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus
- **From battlefield burial to identification and return of the deceased to their families**
– Geoffrey Cardozo, former Army Colonel, United Kingdom

Chair *Tbc*

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12:45 - 13:00 **CONCLUDING REMARKS**