

A note from the Editor

Twenty years ago, on 8 June 1977, two Protocols additional to the 1949 Geneva Conventions were adopted by a Diplomatic Conference especially convened for the purpose of reaffirming and developing international humanitarian law applicable in armed conflict. The two new treaties adapted the universally accepted 1907 law of The Hague and the 1949 Geneva Conventions for the protection of war victims — themselves a response to lessons learned during the Second World War — to the challenges of warfare in the fourth quarter of the twentieth century. The main goal of the treaty-making process was to remedy the main lacuna left in 1949, that is, to strengthen the international rules protecting the civilian population from the effects of military operations and other acts of hostility.

Although States' acceptance of the 1977 Protocols through ratification or accession and, in parallel, the incorporation of their provisions into an international consensus on what is acceptable or otherwise in the conduct of military operations are success stories in themselves, this is no time for self-congratulation. There have been too many serious violations of international humanitarian law in recent or ongoing conflicts. They remind us all too often that the capacity of the law to influence human conduct is limited. Instead the *Review* proposes to mark this anniversary by publishing a number of articles that throw light on various aspects of the new law. In particular, at the invitation of the *Review*, several scholars and government lawyers who were involved in the codification process in the 1970s share some thoughts on the new treaties, 20 years later. Last but not least, the President of the ICRC appeals to governments not only to accept the Protocols formally but also to comply with their provisions.

The *Review* is also publishing two articles that will respond to our readers' interest in the history and philosophy of international humanitarian law. Sergio Moratitel Villa examines the contribution of the Spanish school of internationalists to the evolution of international humanitarian law, and Robert Kolb traces the history of the terms *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*.

On 18 September 1997, a Diplomatic Conference convened by the government of Norway adopted a new treaty prohibiting the use of anti-personnel landmines, weapons whose destructive impact on civilians has come to be regarded as totally unacceptable. Readers of the *Review* will find the text of the Convention in this issue.

The Review
