PRESENTATION

This volume gathers the texts of the presentations made during the first Introductory Course on International Humanitarian Law, which took place at the headquarters of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS) in Washington, D.C., on January 31, 2007. The course was organized within the framework of the Committee of Juridical and Political Affairs, in response to a mandate from the OAS General Assembly, contained in resolution AG/RES. 2226 (XXXVI-O/06), "Promotion and Respect of International Humanitarian Law." This resolution instructed the OAS Office of International Law, in coordination with the International Committee of the Red Cross, to organize a course on international humanitarian law for the staff of the Permanent Missions, the General Secretariat, and other students of the topic.[*]

Aside from the presentations, the book also includes the basic instruments of international humanitarian law, namely, the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the three Additional Protocols. The volume thus seeks to provide both the basic legal norms of international humanitarian law, as well as legal commentary (doctrine) on those norms, as a way of contributing to the dissemination of knowledge on this body of law among the staff of the Permanent Missions to the OAS, the General Secretariat of the OAS, and the public at large.

The book has been compiled and edited by the Office of International Law of the OAS Department of International Legal Affairs,[**] in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross. Its publication was financed by the International Committee of the Red Cross.[***]

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[*] For a detailed description of the course, see "Curriculum" in the "Annexes" section, p. 393.

[**] Current denomination: "Department of International Law of the Secretariat for Legal Affairs."

[***] The original publication of this book was made in Spanish. This translated version to the English language was made possible thanks to the International Committee of the Red Cross.