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III. PRINCIPLES AND LAW

Further Accessions to the Geneva Conventions

During 1974 the Sultanate of Oman (by accession on 31 January 1974) and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau (by accession on 21 February 1974) became parties to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949.

The official notifications were received by the Swiss Federal Council on the dates mentioned.

These two further accessions to the 1949 Geneva Conventions bring the number of Parties up to 138.

Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law

As in preceding years, the Legal Division concentrated in 1974 on work connected with the reaffirmation and development of international humanitarian law applicable in armed conflicts. The positive results of the preparatory work carried out by the ICRC since 1968 gave a decisive impulse to the undertaking as a whole and led the Swiss Government, as the government of the depositary State of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, to convene a Diplomatic Conference early in 1974.

Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts (first session)

The Conference was held in Geneva from 20 February to 29 March 1974. It was presided by Mr. Pierre Graber, Vice-President of the Swiss Federal Council and Head of the Federal Political Department.

The Conference was attended by 129 governmental delegations. Liberation movements recognized by the regional intergovernmental organizations concerned were invited to participate fully in the discussions of the Conference and of its main Committees, without the right to vote. The League of Red Cross Societies, the