Henry Dunant Memorial Moot Court Competition 2026
Organised by
The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

Henry Dunant Memorial Moot Court Competition: Rules and Guidelines

1. Introduction

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is a private, independent humanitarian organisation, based in Geneva, Switzerland. The ICRC has been conferred a mandate by the international community to protect and assist persons affected by armed conflict.[1] This mandate includes the promotion and development of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), including in times of peace. In the fulfilment of this responsibility, the ICRC is active in disseminating and promoting IHL in academic circles. This includes developing IHL curricula for universities, conducting university teacher training programmes in IHL and organising events such as the Henry Dunant Memorial Moot Court Competition.

1.1. The Moot Court

In 2001, ICRC Regional Delegation for South Asia initiated the Henry Dunant Memorial Moot Court Competition, with the aim of promoting better awareness of IHL among law students at universities throughout India. This competition is named in memory of Mr Henry Dunant, the co-founder of the ICRC and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in 1863.

The success of the competition prompted the ICRC, in collaboration with its partner organisation for this activity, the Indian Society of International Law, to expand the moot court beyond India in 2005. As a result, in 2005 the Henry Dunant Moot Court Competition was expanded in the region, drawing teams from countries across South Asia.

The Asia Pacific Moot Court Competition in Hong Kong will follow national competitions (as applicable) that will take place in each participating country. Winning team from each of the respective countries will participate in the Asia Pacific Moot Court Competition in Hong Kong, which will be held approximately in March 2027, three months after the completion of national level competitions.

1.2. Objectives

The principal objective of the Henry Dunant Memorial Moot Court Competition is to develop an increased awareness and interest in IHL in academic institutions throughout South Asia. A further objective is to use IHL to further academic excellence in the student community, and to develop their advocacy skills in an environment of friendly competition.

[1] The ICRC's initial mandate is derived from the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their 1977 Additional Protocols. The ICRC's mandate was expanded by the Statutes of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which were agreed upon by the States Parties to the Geneva Conventions.

2. Administration and General Rules

The official name of the competition is *The Henry Dunant Memorial Moot Court Competition* (the *"Moot Court"*). The ICRC and partner institutions, the Iranian National Committee on Humanitarian Law (INCHL), and Iranian Association for UN Studies (IAUNS), are the official organisers of the National Henry Dunant Memorial Moot Court Competition in Iran.

2.1. Eligibility

All Iranian universities, imparting legal education on a regular or part time basis in a program of study that leads to a bachelor's degree in law (LL.B) or Masters in law (LL.M) are only eligible to participate in the Moot Court Competition. All students enrolled on a full-time or part time basis in a program of study leading to a bachelor's degree in law (LL.B) or Masters in law (LL.M), are only eligible to participate. Students who have participated in this Moot Court Competition on a previous occasion are not eligible to participate again and any false declaration could lead to disqualification of the entire team concerned.

A person is ineligible to participate in the Competition if, he or she **holds or has held a full-time or part-time teaching post in law at any tertiary institution**, or **has been admitted or licensed to practise law in any jurisdiction.**

The organising committee shall have discretion to determine the eligibility of participating students in case of disputable circumstances.

2.2. Official Language

The official working language of the National Henry Dunant Memorial Moot Court Competition is **English** and the participating teams in the national competition must submit their written memorials in **English** only.

2.3. Team Composition

Each participating university **must** nominate team/s, consisting of **three** student members from the same college within the same university, **who will remain students until the end of the regional competitions in March 2027**. Multiple teams from each university are allowed to participate in the national competition. It is optional for the teams to be accompanied with a coach preferably from the faculty of the university that they represent. Each coach is not allowed to coach more than one team during the national competition. In the event that two or more coaches are supporting a team, the name of the primary coach **must** be entered on the registration form as the main coach. The **3-member composition is mandatory** for participating in the competition. Each team **must** introduce **one of its three members** as the contact/focal person. He/She will be the team representative and will receive all important information thought the process.

Teams are allowed to change their members **only** until the registration period ends. Any substitution of registered members of a team, after the registration period, is not permitted. Coaches may be substituted, withdrawn, or added to the team after the registration period.

2.4. Assistance to Teams

All research, writing and editing of written memorials for the Moot Court must be the exclusive product of the team members. Faculty members, coaches and team advisors of the participating team may only render external assistance to the team.

The use of Artificial Intelligence to generate, write, or substantially edit memorials is strictly prohibited. During oral presentations, consultation with coaches and AI tools shall be prohibited.

Failure to do so will result in disqualification from the competition.

2.5. Implementation and Interpretation of Rules

Regarding Moot Court practice and procedures, the final decision on the interpretation and implementation of rules lies with the organisers.

3. Rules for Oral Pleadings and Procedures

This year's national moot shall consist of one round of competition that only the winner team in the competition, will qualify for the Asia Pacific Moot Court Competition in Hong Kong.

3.1. Rules for the National Round

- All participating teams in the competition will be divided by the organisers into various groups to arrange the matches, depending upon the number of teams participating in the competition.

- Where necessary, more than one court room will be provided for all competitions, in order to facilitate the smooth functioning of the Moot Court Competition.

- Teams shall argue cases against each other; the matching of teams will be decided by a draw of lots prior to the commencement of the competition.

- During the preliminary national round, each team will have the opportunity to argue both sides; once as the prosecution and once as the defence.

- Time allotted for arguments will be 20+2 minutes for the prosecution and 20+2 minutes for the defence. The time will be paused when the judges pose a question to the speakers. The time taken to respond to the questions will be counted in the time allotted to the speakers.

- There will be time allotted for rebuttals. Each team will be allowed 3 minutes for rebuttals during the competition.

- Each team must consist of two mooters, regardless of the team pleads as Prosecutor or Defendant. Both mooters of each team must make considerable oral presentations during each round.

- Each team member shall refrain from disclosing his or her name to any person acting as a judge whether during or outside the hearings until the announcement of the final round results of the national competition. Team members or any person associated with a team shall also refrain from disclosing the name of his or her institution to any person acting as a judge whether during or outside the hearings until the announcement of the final round results of the national competition. Disclosure may subject to mark deduction from the team's score.

- The sides to be argued by the teams will be decided by a draw of lots, prior to the commencement of the semi-final rounds and final round of the competition.

4. Memorials

4.1. Submission of Memorials

Each participating team shall prepare both memorials and counter memorials, in **English**. All teams are to submit their copies to the organisers (hard and soft versions) before the deadline specified by the organising committee. The soft copies (pdf) should be emailed to **teh_event_services@icrc.org**. As a general rule, this will be prior to the oral round of the competition, which the exact deadline will be communicated to the teams at a later stage by the organising committee. **Failure to submit either of the two memorials before the deadline will result in disqualification from the competition. A memorial may not be revised for any purpose whatsoever once it has been submitted.**

Four (4) copies of each memorial and counter memorial in paper (hard copy) shall be submitted to the organising committee. **Submission of the hard copies of the memorials to the organising committee will not be considered as qualification for the oral round.** During oral presentations, the participating teams are responsible to have the copies of their memorials for their personal use. The copies submitted to the organising committee will not be returned to the participants under any circumstances. There will be exchange of memorials between the teams during the competition.

All memorials shall be prepared to the following specifications:

- Each memorial should have a cover sheet including the case title and indicating whether the memorial is for the Prosecutor or the Defendant.

- Memorial or counter memorial shall not be more than 25 typed pages.

- Memorials must be typed and submitted on standard A4 size paper.

- Font and size of the text of all parts of the memorial (excluding footnotes) must be the same and must be in either Times New Roman 12 or Arial 11 font size.

- The texts of all parts of each memorial must be double-spaced, with one inch margin on both sides.

- The text of footnotes and headings may be single-spaced. The font size of footnotes must be 2 points less than the text font.

- There must be double spacing between separate footnotes and between each heading and the body text of the memorial.

- Quotations of sources outside of the memorial of fifty words or more in any part of the memorial shall be block quoted and must be single-spaced.

- The Cover Sheet, Table of Contents, and Index of Authorities are not included in the 25 typed pages limit.

4.2. Description of Memorials

The Memorial shall consist of the following parts:

- Cover Sheet (including case title and indicating whether the memorial is for the Prosecutor or the Defendant)
- Table of Contents
- Index of Authorities (including corresponding page numbers)
- Statement of Jurisdiction
- Identification of Issues
- Statement of Facts
- Summary of Pleadings
- Pleadings including the Conclusion and/or Prayer for Relief.

5. Criteria for assessment

The assessment of the teams during the Moot Court Competition shall be out of a maximum of 100 marks, set out as follows:

Written Memorials	30 Marks
Appreciation of Fact and Law	15 Marks
Advocacy (Arguments, Framing of Issues, expression and articulation)	30 Marks
Use of Authorities and Citations	15 Marks
General Impression and Court Manner	10 Marks

- The written memorials submitted by participating teams shall be evaluated by one or more experts appointed by the organising committee and marks will be awarded for them.

- The disclosure of the team's institutional affiliation or the names of team members on the memorial will result in **disqualification** from the competition.

- Failure to achieve the minimum score in memorials will result in **disqualification** from the competition.

6. Trophy and Certificates

Trophy and certificates will be awarded for the National Moot Court Competition, as follows:

- The Henry Dunant Memorial Moot Court Competition winners will be awarded a “Running Trophy”, and certificates.

- There will be a Best Mooter (advocate) certificate. This certificate will be awarded to the participant who have performed best during her/his oral presentations.

- There will be a Best Researcher certificate. This certificate will be awarded to the participant (researcher) who have gained the highest mark based on memorial evaluation and his/her contribution to the quality of team’s IHL knowledge during oral presentations.

- There will be a Best Memorial certificate. All the memorials, which are submitted to the organising committee of the competition, will be evaluated and the best memorial (based on the scores of both memorials) will be chosen to award this certificate.

- Each participant in the Henry Dunant Memorial Moot Court Competition will be given a general certificate of participation.

- The coaches and advisers of the participating teams **will not be entitled** to receive any kind of certificate or award.

- Since the trophy of Henry Dunant Memorial Moot Court Competition is a "Running Trophy", it is the responsibility of the faculty of the winning team to ensure that the trophy is returned to the organising committee, in Tehran, on the date specified by the organising committee.

7. Miscellaneous Rules of the Competition

- Upon completion of the competition, the organising committee reserves the exclusive right to use the memorials submitted to them, as they deem appropriate.

- Participating teams should carry with them required study or reference materials for their own use during the oral rounds of competition. Electronic equipment such as laptops, iPad, tablets, smart phones, smart watches, etc., should not be used during oral rounds. Any team found violating this rule would be **disqualified** from the competition.

- Scouting is permitted in the competition.

- Participating teams shall be expected to maintain the proper decorum of the courtroom during the proceedings and shall conduct themselves in a manner befitting the legal profession.

- The organising committee reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to take appropriate action for any unethical, unprofessional and wrongful conduct during the entire period of the Moot Court Competition.

- The organising committee's decision as regards the interpretation of these rules, or any other matters related to the Moot Court Competition shall be final and binding. **If there is any situation, which is not covered by these rules, the decision of the organising committee shall be final.**

- **The scores of the oral rounds and memorials will not be published by the organising committee.**

- The organising committee reserves the right to amend, modify or repeal any of the rules if so required and as they deem appropriate. Participating teams shall receive adequate notice of any/all such amendments or modifications to the rules.

- The organising committee shall not be held responsible for any loss or non-delivery of the Memorials.

- Each team, by participating in the Henry Dunant Memorial Moot Court Competition, confirms that it will not challenge the decision of the organising committee.

8. Rules Regarding the Judges

8. 1. Judges

- A person appointed as a moot court judge should be well versed in the subject of International Law, in general, and International Humanitarian Law, in particular. Judges are expected to be aware of the procedure involved in mooting and the rules.

- Judges may be selected from the following categories:

    - Academicians,
    - Legal advisers to the Government/armed forces/diplomats,
    - Serving or retired judges of the Supreme Court or the High Court, or
    - Senior advocates of the Supreme Court or the High Court.

- A full bench of three judges for every session of the competition is preferred.

- No faculty advisers, team coaches or other persons directly affiliated with a team shall act as judges at any level of the competition.

- The Bench Memorandum shall be distributed to the Judges for the purposes of briefing them on the legal issues addressed in the Moot Court Competition. The content of the Bench Memorandum is strictly confidential.

8. 2. Rules for the Judges

- All written memorials and oral presentations should have a minimum score.

- Judges are instructed to follow the time limit as closely as possible. Interventions from the judges are permitted at any stage of the presentations; however, these interventions must

be relevant to the issues and be kept to a minimum, so as not to disrupt the presentations of the participants.

8. 3. Commentary by Judges

Judges in the competition are encouraged to provide direct feedback to teams regarding the team's performance, at the completion of the round. In providing such feedback, Judges are cautioned to give due regard to the time limitations and the schedule of the competition as a whole.

9. Anonymity

To ensure the smooth functioning of the Moot Court and avoid any perception of bias during the competition, the organising committee maintains anonymity of the university names throughout the competition. To ensure this the organising committee will allocate a code number to each participating team in the competition. This code is to be applied by the organising committee to the participating teams during the competition, including on their written memorials.

10. Questions, Complaints and Suggestions

Any feedback concerning the organisation or conduct of the Moot Court should be directed directly to the organisers. Formal complaints or suggestions for improvement of the competition should be addressed formally, in writing, to the ICRC IHL Department in Iran (teh_event_services@icrc.org).