

CONFLICT CLASSIFICATION: WHY DO WE CARE? – LAUNCH OF THE WAR WATCH PORTAL

ROOM A2, GENEVA GRADUATE INSTITUTE | MONDAY 27 APRIL 2026, 12:30 TO 14:00



GENEVA ACADEMY a joint centre of
of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights

GENEVA GRADUATE INSTITUTE

UNIVERSITÉ DE GENÈVE

WAR WATCH

WORLD ASSESSMENT AND
TRACKING OF CIVILIAN HARM



At the heart of every armed conflict lies a fundamental question: How do we define what is happening, and why does that definition shape the world's response? Classification is far more than a technical exercise—it determines whether international law applies, who is protected, and what accountability looks like. It influences humanitarian aid, legal recourse, and the very narrative of war itself. Yet, in a landscape of evolving conflicts and competing interests, clarity is often the first casualty. Understanding why and how we classify conflicts is not just an academic pursuit—it is a cornerstone of justice, transparency, and the protection of human dignity in the most challenging circumstances.

The Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights is delighted to announce the formal launch event of War WATCH, our new portal that tracks armed conflicts worldwide and analyzes compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL). War WATCH brings together two of the Geneva Academy's major research initiatives: the RULAC database (which has classified armed conflicts since 2007) and the IHL in Focus project (which analyzes compliance with IHL in selected conflicts). Therefore, one can find both conflict classification and compliance analysis in one place.

The presentation will include remarks by some of those who have worked to make this important initiative a reality. Then, using the situations of armed conflict in Haiti and Iran, they will explain the work of the classification and its international importance. Join us for the launch of War WATCH and be part of the conversation that defines how we understand—and respond to—the conflicts shaping our world.

AGENDA

12:30 – Welcome and opening remarks

Professor Cecile Aptel, Executive Director of the Geneva Academy

12:35 – The birth of RULAC and the rationale for conflict classification

Professor Andrew Clapham, Geneva Graduate Institute

12:45 – The importance of RULAC and War WATCH

H. E. Amb. Sandra Lendenmann, Deputy Director, Directorate of International Law, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (online)

12:55 – The importance of upholding IHL

H. E. Amb. Deike Potzel, European Union Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva

13:05 – The classification of the conflict in Haiti

Juliette Graf, War WATCH Project Manager

13:15 – The classification of the conflicts involving Iran

Stuart Casey-Maslen, Head, IHL in Focus Project

13:30 – Q&A moderated by Professor Aptel

REGISTRATION

Register here: <https://bit.ly/4sbfCRx>

