

“Glen’s Parallax Perspectives” is a series of TV programs offering fresh ways for people to see issues such as foreign policy, social and economic justice, governmental functioning, the environment, and so forth. We provide voices and viewpoints that are rarely heard in mainstream media.

Mainstream media, politicians, and culture see the world in conventional ways. Therefore, in order to solve problems, we need to see things in fresh ways. Glen Anderson created this TV series to help people see things differently so we can solve problems at all levels from the local to the global.

This series title refers to “parallax” – the view you get by looking from a different perspective. For example, put one finger in front of your nose and another finger farther away. Close one eye. Then open that eye and close the other. Your fingers will seem to move. This is called a “parallax” view. This TV series invites you to look at issues from fresh perspectives.

Each program airs three times a week (currently every Monday at 1:30 pm, every Wednesday at 5:00 pm, and every Thursday at 9:00 pm) for the entire month on Thurston Community Television (TCTV), channel 22 for cable TV subscribers in Thurston County, Washington. TCTV is part of Thurston County Media. You can see their schedule at [www.tcmedia.org](http://www.tcmedia.org)

You can also watch the program described below through your computer at [www.parallaxperspectives.org](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org). All episodes of “Glen’s Parallax Perspectives” are posted on this blog’s “TV Programs” part and also in one or more of the categories listed in the right side of the computer screen. Also, see much information at the issue category headings at [www.parallaxperspectives.org](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org).

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# International Humanitarian Law

by Glen Anderson, the TV series’ producer and host  
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## Glen introduced the viewers to this interview topic:

He said this month’s interview on “Glen’s Parallax Perspectives” will help you understand a topic that very few Americans understand: **International Humanitarian Law**.

Overwhelmingly, the public wants peace and human rights. But very few people know even a little about International Humanitarian Law. Even people in the movements for peace and human rights know almost nothing about International Humanitarian Law. If the public knew more about it, we could make much more progress toward peace and human rights.

Our guest for this interview – Joanne Dufour – has a long, strong professional background including decades teaching Social Studies in schools. She has volunteered extensively for the Red Cross, where she has worked in their

disaster services and served as a trainer in International Humanitarian Law. Most of the images we’ll show during this interview came from trainings conducted by the American Red Cross.

Joanne has volunteered a large amount for the United Nations, beginning with her appointment as the first representative of her national Social Studies organization to a group of Non- Governmental organizations at the United Nations.

Joanne also has volunteered extensively with the peace movement, including working to abolish nuclear weapons.

During this interview Joanne includes information developed by the International Red Cross, and she adds her own knowledge to it.

## The origin of the International Red Cross:

Joanne said that the term “humanitarian” is not discussed enough. She said a starting point for understanding the term is when somebody is in need and someone else – who does not know that person – reaches out and helps them meet their need. She said it’s not relevant whether or not the relationship continues. What **IS** important is meeting that person’s need at the present moment. Glen said this point will recur several times during our interview.

We showed some visual images that illustrate the points Joanne made throughout our interview.

### HENRY DUNANT

Battle of  
Solferino 1859



In order to understand International Humanitarian Law, we need to understand the origins and the ongoing work of the International Red Cross. **This first visual image** shows Henry Dunant, the person who founded the International Red Cross. Joanne explained that he was a businessman from Geneva, Switzerland, who was conducting

business while a war was underway between France (Napoleon III) and the Austrians. Dunant was traveling in Italy to conduct his business and found himself in a war zone in Solferino, Italy. Joanne said that when Dunant arrived there the battle had ended and his carriage was plowing through the battlefield, which was filled with bodies and detached body parts (limbs, heads, etc.). Dunant could hear the groans and screams of soldiers who were suffering in agony.

He was so overwhelmed that he could not simply pass through the carnage and keep his business appointment. He stopped and went to a local church and asked for volunteers to help him bring the injured soldiers into the church and help him nurse them in order to save some of their lives. Some people did volunteer, they turned the church into a *de facto* hospital, and they worked around the clock to rescue some injured soldiers and save some of them from dying.

This experience changed his life. When he returned home to Geneva, he could not get this experience out of his mind, and he wrote a book titled *A Memory of Solferino*. Joanne held up a copy of the book so our TV camera could see it. The book became a best-seller. It was translated into many European languages and also translated into Japanese.

His book urged the creation of an organization that would do what he did with volunteers from Solferino’s church: Recruit and train volunteers to help people who were being hurt in wars. He found that people from twelve nations were interested enough to attend a meeting in 1863 to create the effort that became the International Red Cross.

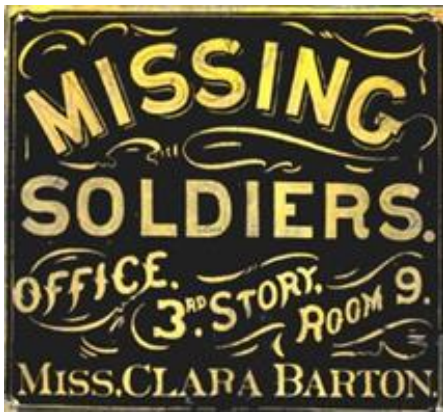
Joanne said that the International Red Cross’s first meeting occurred in Henry Dunant’s hometown, Geneva, Switzerland. At their first meeting the participants agreed that they wanted to write up what we came to call the First Geneva Convention (named after their meeting place). They agreed that they wanted to recruit and train volunteers to help injured soldiers.

They recognized that their new organization would need a flag to designate the areas where they would be working. They chose the Swiss flag’s image but with the red and white images reversed: a red cross on a white background. They named the international organization the Red Cross.

## American Red Cross and disaster relief:



Here in the U.S. – during our Civil War – Clara Barton did significant work in the field of nursing, but she also worked to find missing soldiers, and she did other humanitarian work. Joanne – whose professional career was teaching school – said Clara Barton taught K-12 in a small school in Massachusetts. Her students ended up in the Union Army and suffered badly while fighting the Civil War. In order to help them, she went to the war zones in the South and discovered that she was trying to do what Henry Dunant had done in Europe. She was in the battlefields, but almost no medical helpers were there to help. She recruited volunteers to find bandages to provide for the very few doctors on the battlefields. She herself physically assisted the doctors. At this time she did not think of creating an organization to do this work.



Joanne said that after the war ended, Clara Barton organized efforts to find soldiers who were missing (what we now call “Missing in Action” – MIA). She opened an office where she could carry on

that work. (See the ad above.) Joanne said that just recently people discovered the building where her office existed. Clara Barton went to prison camps to find out which soldiers had died there, and she notified those soldiers’ families. She performed this work for several years.

Then, while wondering what else she could do, a serious flood occurred, so she went to the flooded area and recruited volunteers to help. Once again she was using volunteers, but now she was using volunteers to help victims in a natural

disaster, where before she had helped soldiers who were victims of war.

Joanne said that these volunteers helping people they did not know fit the definition of “humanitarian” that she had offered at the beginning of our interview.

Clara Barton went to Europe and learned more about what Henry Dunant and the International Red Cross were doing, so she decided to start a similar organization in the U.S., but hers would deal with disasters in addition to dealing with war. It was very hard for her to start the American Red Cross because – although she was a strong, active woman – society did not respect strong active women. She had to push hard for twenty years – and vigorously lobby four U.S. presidents – in order to accomplish the creation of the American Red Cross.

Beginning with an attempt to help wounded soldiers, the American Red Cross adopted the mission “to continue and carry on a system of national and international relief in time of peace and to apply the same in mitigating the sufferings caused by pestilence, famine, fire, floods, and other great national calamities, and to devise and carry on measures for preventing the same.”

## International Red Cross and affiliated organizations:


Next we showed **this image** describing the International Federation of the Red Cross as “A league of Red Cross Societies that acts before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people.”

Joanne said that Clara Barton met with European Red Cross people several times and convinced them to do what **this image** says: to deal with natural disasters.

They had been focusing only on war until she convinced them to work on natural disasters during peacetime too.

### An American Proposal


Birth of the International Federation of the Red Cross



**HENRY DAVISON**

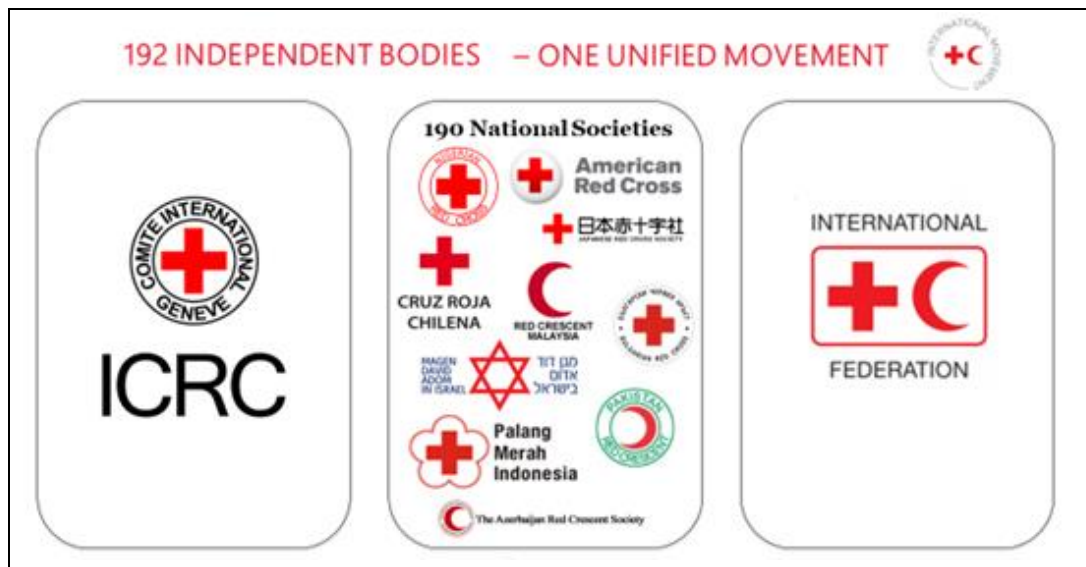
“A league of Red Cross Societies that acts before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people”

- 1919 League of Red Cross Societies
- 1983 Renamed the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
- 1991 Renamed the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



The governing board and directors of the League of Red Cross Societies (Geneva 1919)





Joanne said the images we are showing were devised by the American Red Cross, so they point out some of these advances in addition to the International Red Cross's work.

**This image** shows several independent bodies that are related in one unified movement. These include branches of the Red Cross, Red Crescent, and other organizations. We discussed these later in our

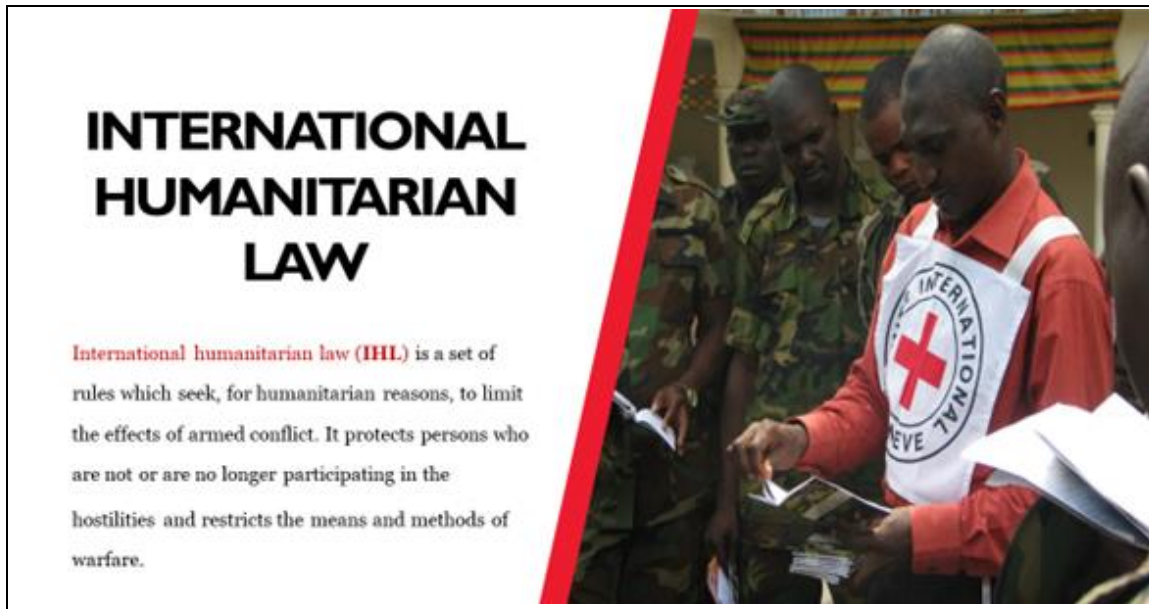
interview. Joanne said that twelve countries started this, and some nations felt that the “cross” looked too Christian for them, so Turkey (for example) wanted to use the symbol of a crescent, with the red and white reversed from their flag, just as the red cross is the reversed color pattern from Switzerland's flag. Joanne said the International Red Cross was open to that idea, but the IRC recognized that the 192 nations of the IRC could cause a proliferation of symbols that could spiral out of control, so later in this interview we'll discuss a Red Crystal as the third main symbol.

But for now, Joanne explained that the International Committee of the Red Cross (the left-hand symbol in the image above) focuses strictly on the rules of war (which we discussed a few minutes later). The middle panel above shows some of the national branches of this international movement. The right-hand panel refers to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent entities that cooperate with each other whenever needed.



**The image at the bottom of this page** shows the basic principles that unite these entities: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality. The International Federation of the Red Cross is “A league of Red Cross Societies that acts before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people.”

## What is International Humanitarian Law? What are its main sources?



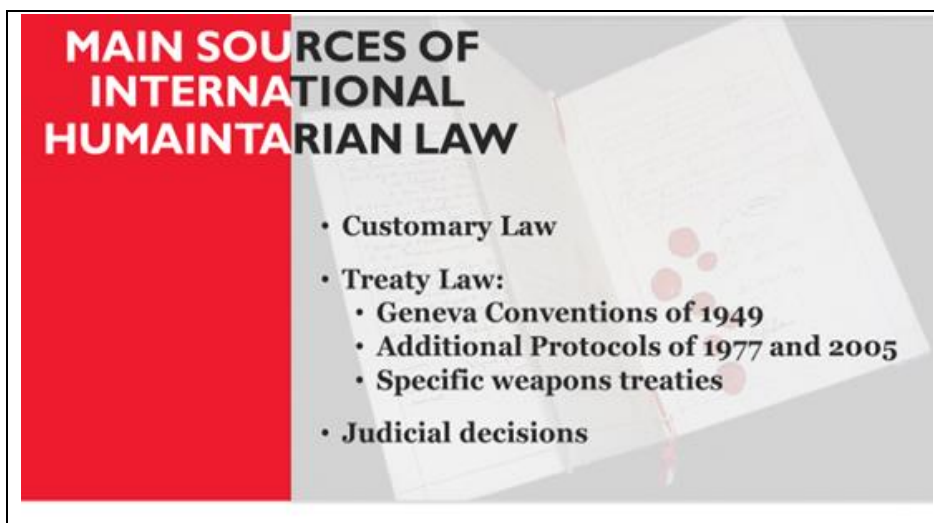
Now after this historical and organizational context, we discussed what International Humanitarian Law is and what it does.

Glen said that people watching our interview might know there is International **Human Rights** Law that pertains to living in **peacetime**, but most people do not know that **during wartime** International **Humanitarian** Law is relevant be-

cause it seeks to limit the effects of armed conflict. It protects civilians, and it protects wounded soldiers from further attack. It protects people from torture and some other kinds of abuses.

**The image above** says the Red Cross defines International Humanitarian Law (IHL) as “a set of rules which seek, for humanitarian reasons, to limit the effects of armed conflict. It protects persons who are not or are no longer participating in the hostilities and restricts the means and methods of warfare.” International Humanitarian Law seeks to limit the effects of armed conflict. It protects wounded soldiers from further attack. It protects them from torture and provides other protections.

So let’s distinguish between International **Humanitarian** Law, which pertains to **WAR**, and International **Human Rights** Law, which pertains to **PEACE**.



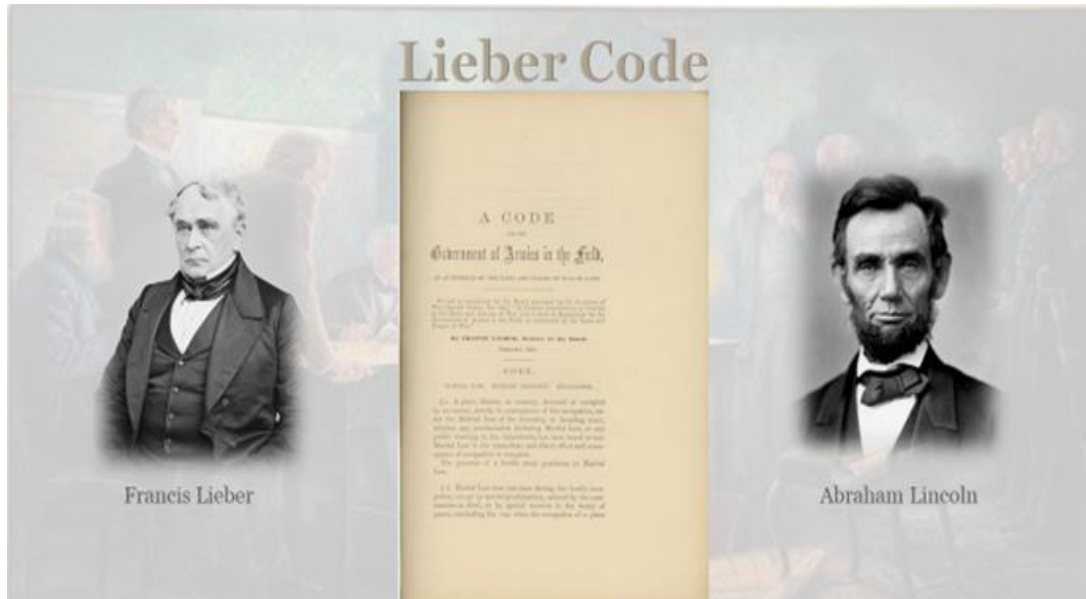
Joanne reinforced the principle that the concept of humanitarianism reaches out to wartime situations. Again, consistent with her concept of humanitarianism as helping people you don’t know, this aspect of law protects civilians and soldiers alike during wartime. International Humanitarian Law tries to humanize what is otherwise a horribly brutal situation.

She said that for many, many years, wars were fought between combatants who fought each other in specific spaces, but starting with World War I, new weapons allowed fighting to extend over wider geographical areas

and targeted civilian populations in addition to the enemy soldiers. Nowadays our government dismisses the innocent civilians who are injured or killed as merely “collateral damage.”

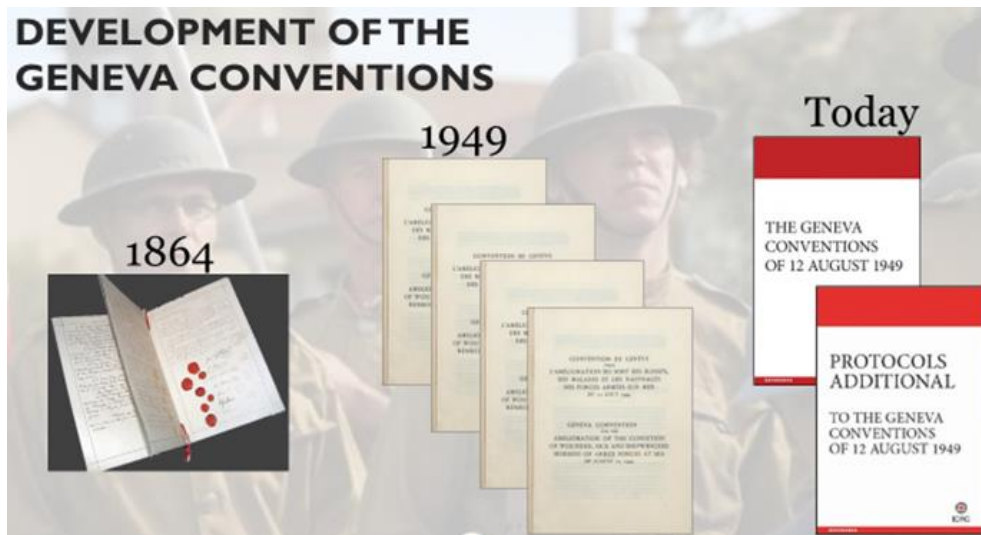
Joanne briefly mentioned the concepts in **the image above**. “Customary Law” pertains to some rather informal, generally agreed-upon rules for conducting warfare, even though no official body had formally adopted them. In 1949 nations agreed upon 600 explicitly published rules of war, the Geneva Conventions. More treaties (*e.g.*, the treaty outlawing land mines) came along too. Joanne showed copies of relevant books.

## Geneva Conventions: Basic information:



The general public has heard about the Geneva Conventions but probably does not know that these are NOT the usual kind of treaties. Governments do accept the Geneva Conventions, and it is the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) that has jurisdiction over them, so the relationship is government to ICRC instead of government-to-government.

Joanne explained the Lieber Code. She said that in 1862 when the international Red Cross was being organized, the American Civil War had just begun. President Lincoln was concerned that Americans were making war against other Americans. He wanted to set some limits on the mutual destruction, so he asked for help from Francis Lieber, a Prussian immigrant, who was a lawyer familiar with the laws of war. Lieber had two sons – one fighting for the Confederacy, and the other fighting for the Union. Lieber wrote what became the “Lieber Code” to set the kinds of limits that Lincoln wanted. Lieber attended the meeting in Geneva and contributed the Lieber Code to the Red Cross’s meeting, which adopted much of his wording for the First Geneva Convention.



Joanne said there are four Geneva Conventions. Each one was developed in response to a war.

She said the Second Geneva Convention was developed to deal with sailors in response to the Spanish-American War.

After World War I the Third Geneva Convention was developed in order to deal with the rights of prisoners.

After World War II the Fourth Geneva Convention was developed in response to the Holocaust and horrors in Asia.

Then in 1949 all four Geneva Conventions were combined into one set. The U.S. has signed and ratified all four of the Geneva Conventions of 1949:

- I. For the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field
- II. For the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea
- III. Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War
- IV. Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War



## War and Armed Conflict:

Throughout the world, various kinds of violence is occurring. Some of these are actual wars, and others are called “armed conflicts,” but are not labeled as actual “wars.”

Joanne explained the differences between a “war” and an “armed conflict.” **The image to the right** highlights the differences.

She said that traditionally a war was formally declared by one nation against another nation, and their military fighting came after that formal declaration.

But she said that – although the U.S. has been fighting “wars” almost continuously since the 1940s, the last war that the U.S. actually **DECLARED** was World War II. Likewise other nations and non-national groups have been fighting without formally declaring wars. She said the Geneva Conventions pertain to nations fighting nations and soldiers fighting soldiers. But increasingly innocent civilians are targeted or are killed as “collateral damage.” Deliberately attacking civilians started in World War I and escalated horribly in World War II. She said the rules needed to be changed to cope with these changed realities.

**The next image here** distinguishes between some types of “armed conflicts.” International Humanitarian Law is relevant in different ways.

While some combatants are armed forces controlled by governments, others are not under any government’s control, so those are called “Organized Armed Groups,” and some are not even very organized.

**The image to the right** points out that International Humanitarian does NOT apply to tensions or disturbances that are entirely within a nation. Domestic law is what would be relevant to an internal tension or disturbance.

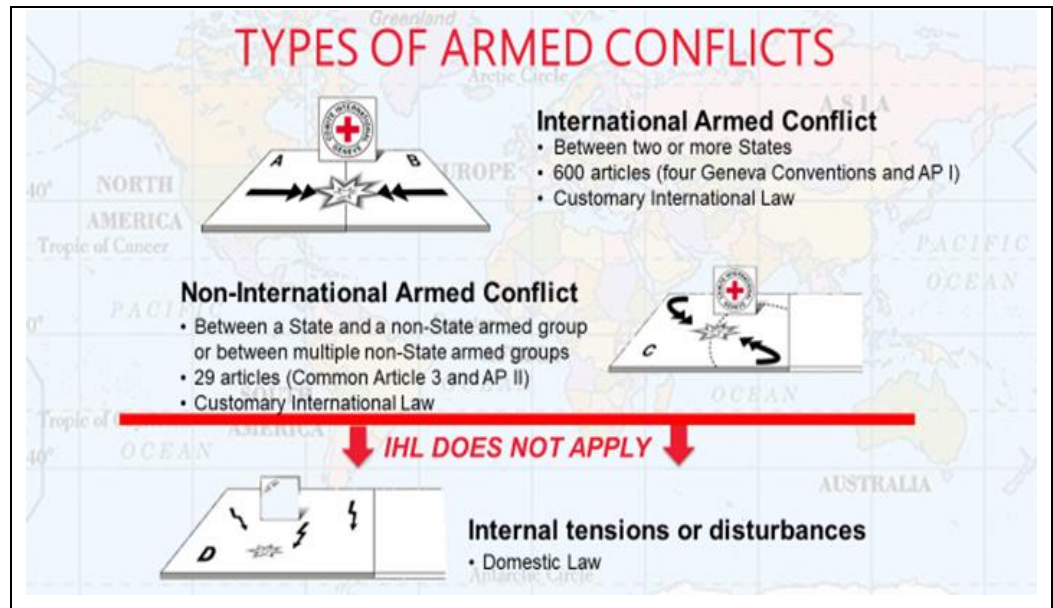
Also, Joanne said that when the U.S. captured, imprisoned and tortured people at Abu Ghraib, Iraq, those prisoners were not actual soldiers, so the Geneva Conventions – which apply to armed soldiers – did not seem to specifically apply to them. Glen said that in some part of the world some oppressors might be occupying some people’s local area and hurting the local people, so some neighbors join together to fight them violently in order to force them to go away. They’re not actual soldiers, so are they not protected by International Humanitarian Law? Not protected from being tortured? Joanne said they’d be called “unlawful enemy combatants,” and they are still protected by Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, which are more widely applicable beyond formally declared wars. Glen also mentioned the distinctions in **the image above**.

### Is it War or Armed Conflict

- War is a political declaration
- Armed Conflict is factual based
- The armed confrontation must reach minimum level of intensity
- The parties involved in the conflict must show a minimum of organization

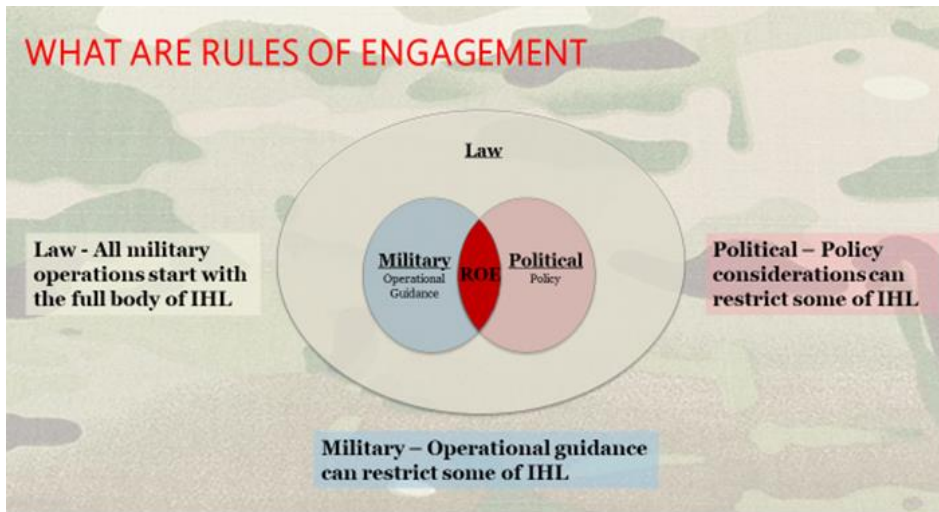
**“An armed conflict exists whenever there is a resort to armed force between States or protracted armed violence between governmental authorities and organized armed groups or between such groups within a State.”**

ICTY, The Prosecutor v. Dusko Tadic, IT-94-1AR72, Appeals Chamber, Decision, 2 October 1995.



Joanne said the International Red Cross distinguishes applicability in various cases. Glen said the International Red Cross is the recognized authority in some matters – with moral and legal clout under International Law– even though they are not a government. He thanked Joanne for participating in this interview to inform the public of these important matters.

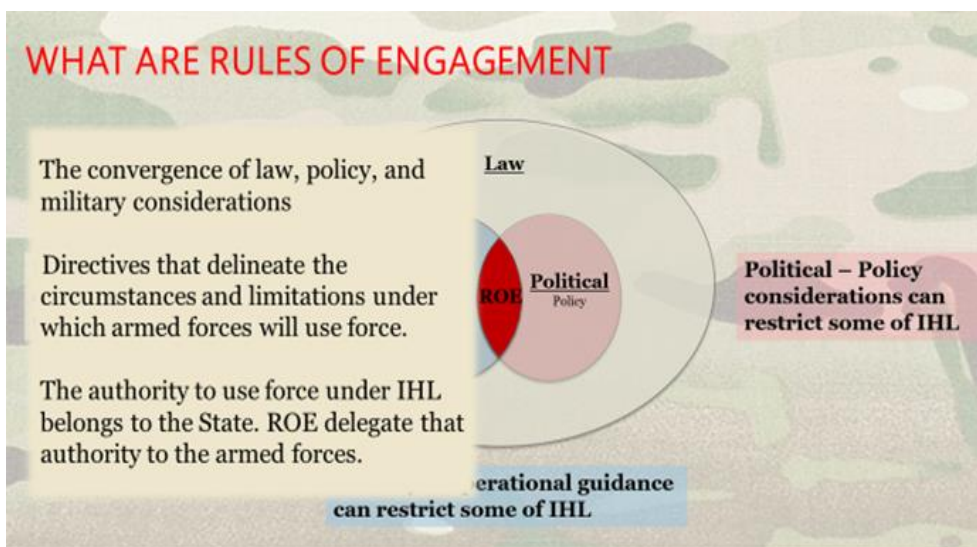
## Rules of Engagement:



Joanne began her explanation of **this image** by saying that basic principles affecting any war start with the Geneva Conventions. She said the U.S. calls it “the law of armed conflict,” and other nations call it different things.

Glen said the military troops are supposed to be trained to understand these aspects of international law. Joanne said some of the U.S.’s JAG officers have told her they don’t understand these things, even though they are the officers who are supposed to be training our military officers in what is legal and illegal.

Joanne said that even though the military is supposed to be trained in relevant international law, the wars are actually governed by the civilian governments (unless a military coup has overthrown a civilian government), so political considerations sometimes interfere with or restrict some aspects of compliance with International Humanitarian Law. She gave the example of a government that is secretly negotiating with a general on the enemy side, so that government would not want to militarily attack that general, even though IHL would allow it, because the government wants the general to survive as a negotiating partner. Glen said **the Venn diagram in the middle of this image** shows a red overlapping convergence between military and political interests.



All military operations start with the full body of International Humanitarian Law. Formalized “Rules of Engagement” are guidelines for what opposing forces can do to each other during their conflict. The “Rules of Engagement” are a convergence of International Humanitarian Law and military policies and other policies. **The box within the left side of this image** illustrates how – in practice – some political policy considerations and some military operational guidance restrict some of International Humanitarian Law.

Glen said that this box’s second paragraph refers to “force,” but that is a euphemism instead of using the honest word “violence.” Joanne said this box’s third paragraph affirms that the State – the political entity – is responsible for deciding when to use that violence, and the “Rules of Engagement” authorize the State to “delegate that authority to the armed forces.” The political entity must remain sovereign over the military. Glen emphasized the importance of clearly distinguishing who is in charge.



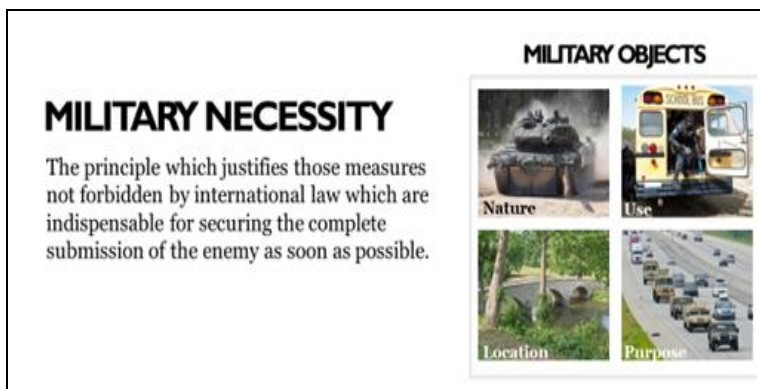
We did not have time during the interview for Joanne to say something she had told Glen before we started the interview. She said that nations that have agreed to adhere to International Humanitarian Law train their soldiers NOT to do certain things, but other entities that have not signed on (*e.g.*, al Qaeda, ISIS, and other entities) are not legally bound. However, the International Red Cross does reach out to them and does teach them that they will have more credibility if they refrain from doing horrible actions that are prohibited by International Humanitarian Law. It would be good if IHL could also extend to cover non-state entities.

## FOUR Fundamentals of International Humanitarian Law: Military Necessity, Distinction, Proportionality, Limiting Unnecessary Suffering:



We showed **this image**, which lists four fundamental principles of International Humanitarian Law. (We discussed each of these four with **four images below**.) Joanne said this is important and interesting because IHL seeks to humanize and reduce the bad effects of what happens in wars.

She said that the basic military goal is to do whatever it takes in order to win, with no holds barred. But she said the first item listed here – “Military Necessity” – clarifies what is shown in **the next image below**.



We did not have time to explore the details listed in **the second image on this page**, but this “Military Necessity” principle does seek to clarify what is OK to consider a military target or activity, and what is not OK.

Joanne said “Distinction” is the principle that requires soldiers to distinguish between civilians and combatants, and to protect civilians as much as possible. This “Distinction” principle also protects combatants who (because of injury, etc.) are no longer fighting. She said this principle goes back to Henry Dunant’s work.

Glen said **the small box in this image’s upper right corner** shows an Arabic language warning by the U.S. military telling civilians driving oil tankers in Iraq to get out of their trucks before the U.S. destroys those trucks. Civilian truck drivers were not legitimate military targets.



## PROPORTIONALITY

An attack should not be conducted if it is expected to

cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof,

which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated.



The next principle limits attacks to only what would be proportional to their legitimate purposes. The text in this box summarizes this.

Glen said “proportionality” is also one of the criteria in the “Just War” theory. Your actions cannot escalate beyond what is militarily necessary. He said recent news stories have said it would be wrong for Trump or someone

to take an action they were considering because that action would escalate beyond what is proportionate to the original provocative action.

## LIMITING UNNECESSARY SUFFERING

It is prohibited to employ weapons, projectiles and material and methods of warfare of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering.



The next principle – Limiting Unnecessary Suffering – seems entirely reasonable as a principle of International Humanitarian Law. Even if you are at war, you should not cause unnecessary suffering.

But Glen said the U.S. has used some weapons – during the Vietnam war and elsewhere – that were specifically designed and intended to cause unnecessary suffering.

Joanne said some weapons (chemical weapons, for example) have been outlawed by treaties or other international decisions, and 92% of the world’s chemical weapons have been gathered and destroyed. Therefore, chemical weapons

are almost never used, and on the rare occasions that we hear news about chemical weapons being used, it is the rarity that causes those occurrences to be reported as news. We both agreed that international efforts to make this kind of progress have indeed been working.

## Distinctive Emblems: Red Cross, Red Crescent, Red Crystal:



### DISTINCTIVE EMBLEMS

Protective use is using the emblem as a visible sign to claim the legal protection of IHL in times of armed conflict. It should be displayed on personnel, equipment or facilities entitled to the protected status

PROTECTIVE USE



Next we revisited the distinctive emblems that we discussed earlier in this interview. In addition to the Red Cross and the Red Crescent, a third emblem – the Red Crystal – was developed to summarize and symbolize anything beyond the first two, rather than bog down with dozens and dozens of symbolic emblems. Joanne said the Red Crystal is hardly ever used, but it is a practical solution.

Joanne said the first two emblems became quickly recognized by ordinary people around the world. She said if aid arrived people would re-

spect whoever was bringing the aid even if they did not know which country was providing it.

## Who is protected:

### WHO IS PROTECTED

- Civilians
- Wounded and sick combatants on land or at sea
- Prisoners of war or persons deprived of their freedom
- Persons who accompany the armed forces without actually being members, such as:
  - war correspondents
  - supply contractors and members of labor units
  - services responsible for the welfare of the armed forces
- Military medical and religious personnel
- Members of the merchant marine and civil aircraft
- Red Cross and other relief personnel



Next we showed and discussed **this image**, which lists the kinds of people who are protected under International Humanitarian Law.

In addition to civilians, wounded combatants, and prisoners of war, there is protection also for journalists, religious workers, and some other kinds of people who might be located in war zones.

Joanne said if you watch the M\*A\*S\*H program on TV, notice that the doctors keep emphasizing that they are doctors, not soldiers. The big Red Cross on their tents are intended to protect their field hospital.

## If captured:

This image is about people who have been captured:

### IF CAPTURED

- Civilians – Only held for reasons of security (GC IV)
- Members of the Armed Forces – POW
- Persons who accompany the armed forces without actually being members: - POW
  - civilian members of military aircraft crews
  - war correspondents
  - supply contractors and members of labor units
  - services responsible for the welfare of the armed forces
- Members of crews of the merchant marine and civil aircraft – POW
- Civilian *levee en masse* – POW
- Military medical and religious personnel – retained personnel





## What is protected:



We have been talking about how International Humanitarian Law protects **people**. Besides protecting people, International Humanitarian Law also protects **some kinds of places and things**.

Glen said this principle was in the news just recently. We taped this program on February 13, 2020, soon after Trump had said he wanted to bomb 52 of Iran’s cultural sites, but the Pentagon strongly told Trump that he could NOT bomb them because they were protected by international law, so bombing

them would be a war crime. This principle is what caused the Pentagon to rebuff Trump.

See the third item listed in **this image**: “cultural and historical sites.” Glen said **this image** – this principle of International Humanitarian Law – was hot news in February 2020. Joanne added that Trump likewise would violate international law if he were to torture people, which he said he wants to do. Although we did not add this explicitly during our interview, it is important for ordinary people to understand that International Humanitarian Law protects the world from the abuses of Trump and people with his contempt for decency.

## Dr. Albert Schweitzer affirmed the International Red Cross’s work:

Next we showed **Dr. Albert Schweitzer’s image** and his quotation that the Red Cross is “a light in the darkness.” He said, “It is the duty of all of us to see that it does not go out.” Joanne said that in the image we saw, the letter U is missing because the message is directed to **YOU**.

This was our last visual image in our series. Then we proceeded to discuss some other relevant matters.

## International Criminal Court:

We have not yet discussed either of two important international courts. First Joanne explained that the **International Court of Justice** (ICJ) began in about 1900 at The Hague, in The Netherlands, because that nation’s Queen Juliana wanted to create way for nations to deal with disputes instead of going to war. International jurists could decide those disputes and provide peaceful settlements. Glen said that at that time – decades before the League of Nations and half a century before the United Nations – nothing of that sort had existed, so the ICJ was truly ground-breaking. Joanne said this was a bold effort, and it has succeeded in helping a number of nations (including the U.S.) resolve disputes without going to war. Despite its great success, most people do not even know that the ICJ exists.

Joanne expressed enthusiasm also for the **International Criminal Court** (ICC), which was created to deal with very serious misbehavior by individuals. The ICC evolved from Yugoslavia and Rwanda to be an institution that can deal

with individuals from many nations. Now the ICC has 122 nations, but **the U.S. NEVER RATIFIED it**.

Joanne explained why the ICC is so important. The U.S. government overthrew Iraq’s government because it said Saddam Hussein was so terrible. If the U.S. had supported the ICC our government could have asked the ICC to deal with Saddam Hussein. Joanne said he had done some very bad things, and he had committed some war crimes, but the entire nation had not committed those war crimes – Saddam Hussein himself did – so it was wrong to make war against the entire nation of Iraq and kill many innocent civilians instead of holding Saddam Hussein personally responsible for what he had done.

She read a document specifying that the ICC has jurisdiction over individuals who “personally had committed genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, or crimes of aggression as an individual.”

While we were preparing for our interview, Joanne said the U.S. could have used the ICC instead of military violence to respond to Osama bin Laden or Qasem Soleimani.

She said negotiations to create the ICC were occurring in 1998, and it came into existence when the first 60 nations had ratified it. This is a recent solution to a long-standing problem, but the U.S. has failed to join or support it.

She was employed by the United Nations in the early 2000s and her boss asked her to work on genocide and efforts to protect the people of Darfur from Sudan's brutal leader Omar al-Bashir. She was living in Seattle she strongly helped develop curriculum and advocacy efforts.

She said the ICC was operating in time for al-Bashir to be brought to the ICC to be held accountable for the war crimes he had committed against Darfur. She said the ICC does not have a police force or any way to compel someone to be brought to the ICC to stand trial. She said that on February 12, 2020 (just two days before our February 13 taping date) she heard the news that Sudan's new government will indeed bring former president al-Bashir to the ICC.

Joanne and Glen briefly mentioned that judges around the world have "Universal Jurisdiction" to deal with war

crimes and bring offenders to the ICC. We said that George W. Bush avoided traveling to Canada because a judge in British Columbia wanted to arrest him for his war crimes. Joanne said that George W. Bush should have been held accountable for the war crime he committed at Abu Ghraib, Iraq. Also, a judge in Spain wanted to arrest General Pinochet, the dictator that the U.S. and Chile's military installed in Chile.

Glen said he would like to have judges in many nations say this about Kissinger, Obama, Trump, and many other war criminals who should be brought to justice at the International Criminal Court. He said, "This is bi-partisan with a long history," so if we had more judges exercising their "Universal Jurisdiction," we could significantly constrain these abuses of human rights and international law.

Joanne said that – just like people do not know what International Humanitarian Law is – people do not know about "Universal Jurisdiction," so we need to educate the public and urge them to stand up for IHL, the Geneva Conventions, and other protections of human rights. Joanne said we need to educate young people about these matters so we can turn things around.

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## Child soldiers:

Glen said that sometimes we hear news about cases where children become soldiers – and sometimes they are kidnapped and forced to become soldiers.

Joanne said the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) has done excellent work on this problem, including significant accomplishments many years ago. Sometimes after a war has ended the ICRC goes into war zones and helps the children who had been forced to become child soldiers and knew nothing else. The ICRC helps them recover and learn how to become kids – and become students – for the first time.

Glen said since 1994-1995 an international treaty has been protecting children's rights. It is called the "United

Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child." During our interview we had time to mention only a few of the facts in the paragraph you're reading now. Only two nations – the U.S. and Sudan – have refused to ratify it. Both nations recruit children younger than 18 to sign up for their militaries. Also, in the U.S. some conservatives (political and religious) oppose the treaty. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convention\\_on\\_the\\_Rights\\_of\\_the\\_Child](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convention_on_the_Rights_of_the_Child) and UNICEF's information at [www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention](http://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention) and also this information from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: [www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx)

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## Humanitarian work regarding land mines, prosthetics, etc.:

Glen said that a number of non-profit organizations – and individuals – have been performing significant humanitarian work to locate and remove land mines, provide prosthetics for people who have lost limbs to land mines, and perform other compassionate and just activities.

Joanne praised Canada as the nation that pushed hard for the treaty that banned land mines. Nations began signing it on December 3, 1997, and it went into effect on March 1, 1999. More than 80% of the world's nations (164 or more of them) have ratified it. Treaties such as the Ottawa Treaty

have contributed to the body of International Law that supports peace and humanitarianism.

Joanne said some nations, such as Cambodia and Laos, are saturated with land mines, so the International Committee of the Red Cross has created hospitals in some of those locations to help the victims – mostly children and farmers – whose limbs have been blown off by land mines. She said the biggest concentration of them is in the area between North Korea and South Korea.

We did not have time to mention that – despite the treaty – Trump wants to start using land mines again. See the in-

formation I posted recently to my blog: <http://parallaxperspectives.org/the-world-outlawed-land-mines-in-1997-but-trump-wants-to-start-using-them-again>

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## Political prisoners, including “disappeared” persons and those at Guantanamo:

Glen mentioned that a number of nonprofit organizations – including but not limited to Amnesty International – work hard to help political prisoners, including persons who have been “disappeared” (kidnapped and either held secretly in prison or even killed).

He said the U.S. has maintained a military prison at Guantanamo, Cuba, where our government imprisons people under terrible conditions without due process of law, and in many cases without even charging them with a crime or allowing any way for them to ever be released.

Joanne said one of the International Red Cross’s activities is to actually visit people who are in prison, and the ICRC has visited people imprisoned at Guantanamo. Obama did not keep his promise to close Guantanamo’s

prison, but the ICRC’s visits and reports have actually improved conditions for Guantanamo’s prisoners in several important ways. For example, they began access to phone conversations with family members every week, the facilities were cleaner, they got a library. Glen said the ICRC deserves credit for these improvements, because the U.S. government has been relentlessly cruel and unjust to the prisoners there.

She said that the ICRC does not use Americans to visit prisons in other countries because the U.S. government has biases and the ICRC does its work in strictly impartial ways. When they visit prisons they inventory who is there and whether the prisoner has been able to communicate with their family members.

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## Our final thoughts:

Glen said we have been talking about some big, serious, long-term problems – and we have also been affirming a variety of remedies through International Law and International Humanitarian Law. We could make even more progress if people would understand these more thoroughly and supportively.

Joanne encouraged more progress. She strongly supports the United Nations Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons and said the world has already banned chemical weapons and already banned land mines. It is entirely reasonable to push ahead vigorously and ban nuclear weapons too.

She said the head of the International Committee for the Red Cross supports this effort, and he was brought in to help promote the new treaty to ban nuclear weapons. He has publicly stated that although the ICRC helps in time of war, there is NO way to solve the horrible problems that a nuclear war would cause. The volunteers would be dead, and the hospitals would be incinerated. The ICRC as an organization has emphasized that the only remedy is to prevent nuclear war, and that means to prohibit nuclear weapons.

Glen added that – in a very similar way – organizations of medical doctors strongly oppose nuclear weapons. Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR, [www.psr.org](http://www.psr.org)) and International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW, [www.ippnw.org](http://www.ippnw.org)) very strongly want to abolish

nuclear weapons. IPPNW won the Nobel Peace Prize a few years ago.

He said that in July 2017 the United Nations General Assembly overwhelmingly passed the U.N. Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons with 122 votes. Now dozens of nations around the world are ratifying the treaty, which will go into effect when 50 nations have ratified it. Joanne said that 35 nations have ratified it already, and 12 more countries are in the process of scheduling their ratification votes, and 3 more countries are seriously moving forward but are not yet ready to schedule votes.

Both Joanne and Glen are active members of the Olympia Coalition to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, which has been reaching out to the public and to Congress to urge strong actions toward reducing the likelihood of nuclear war and to abolish those weapons altogether. Our local Olympia group is an active member of our statewide coalition, Washington Against Nuclear Weapons (WANW, [www.wanwcoalition.org](http://www.wanwcoalition.org)), which has 50 member organizations from throughout Washington State. Many national organizations are pushing hard also.

Glen affirmed that all of the issues we care about “rely on people-power,” so he urged more people to educate themselves and volunteer. Very, very few persons in the peace movement get paid. We’re almost entirely a volunteer “people-power” movement.



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## Sources of more information:

For every issue this TV series explores, we recommend sources of information. These are relevant to this month's program. You can see much information about International Humanitarian Law and related topics at the International Red Cross's website, [www.icrc.org](http://www.icrc.org)

- Also, see [www.redcross.org/humanityinwar.html](http://www.redcross.org/humanityinwar.html). This site also includes a video about "Rules of War in a Nutshell."
- For an overview of the Geneva Conventions, visit [www.icrc.org/en/document/geneva-conventions-1949-additional-protocols](http://www.icrc.org/en/document/geneva-conventions-1949-additional-protocols)
- You can visit [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and search for "International Humanitarian Law" to see informative videos.

- Search the internet for "truth and reconciliation commissions" and for "International Criminal Court"
- Please share this blog post with your friends so they can watch this interview VIDEO and/or read the THOROUGH SUMMARY document you're reading now, which summarizes what Joanne Dufour and I said during this interview. Invite your friends to visit my blog, [www.parallaxperspectives.org](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org) and see this TV program's links posted to my blog's "TV Programs" category and also to the blog's "Human Rights" and "Peace" categories, which include much more information about Peace and Human Rights.

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## Glen's closing encouragement:

Glen thanked Joanne Dufour for sharing her knowledge and her insights, and he thanked all of the people who have been watching our interview.

He said that big problems exist all around the world, and horrible violence and other injustices do occur.

But nearly all people really do value peace, fairness and human rights, so people can learn about International Humanitarian Law, and people can take smart actions for peace, fairness and human rights.

Many non-profit groups are doing excellent work, and they would be even more effective if more people volunteered their time and donated their financial support.

You can get information about a wide variety of issues related to peace, social justice and nonviolence through my blog, [www.parallaxperspectives.org](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org) or by phoning me at (360) 491-9093 or e-mailing me at [glenanderson@integra.net](mailto:glenanderson@integra.net)

I end each TV program with this encouragement:

**We're all one human family, and we all share one planet.  
We can create a better world, but we all have to work at it.  
The world needs whatever you can do to help!**