



ICRC



New Zealand International Humanitarian Law Moot Competition Rules 2026

Contents

Background.....	1
Section One: Participation	2
Section Two: Teams	2
Section Three: Assistance from coaches, faculty, staff, and advisors	3
Section Four: Competition structure	3
Section Five: Preparation and research	4
Section Six: Written submissions and synopses	4
Section Seven: Oral arguments	4
Section Eight: Judging.....	6
Section Nine: Best speaker.....	6
Section Ten: Regional Competition.....	6

Background

The New Zealand International Humanitarian Law Moot Court Competition 2026 (the Competition) is held each year in Te Whanganui-a-Tara | Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Competition is organised by:

- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and
- New Zealand Red Cross

The Competition's purposes:

- Enhancing students' knowledge and understanding of humanitarian law.
- Developing students' capacity to apply the law in a practical and relevant manner to real-life situations.

- Supporting humanitarian law education in New Zealand universities.
- Preparing students for humanitarian law-related professional endeavours.

The Organising Committee is responsible for organising and administering the Competition. The committee is composed of:

- members of ICRC, and
- New Zealand Red Cross employees.

Section One: Participation

To participate in the Competition, the event rules must be followed. The Organising Committee has the absolute discretion to:

- amend any rules, and
- resolve any questions concerning rules interpretation and application.

We gratefully receive support from legal professionals who act as judges for the Competition.

Section Two: Teams

The following rules apply so that teams are eligible to represent New Zealand in the Regional Competition in Hong Kong in March each year. See section eight for more information.

1. Each New Zealand law school may nominate a team of up to three students to compete in the competition.
2. Each team will be comprised of two student mooters with the third member to be a student researcher.
3. Each mooter and researcher must be:
 - a. enrolled at a participating law school in study below doctorate level at the time of competing, and
 - b. enrolled for law study in the following year – competitors for the Regional Competition must be enrolled for law study at their institution as at 1 January 2027.
4. Teams may have a coach as part of their team. Team coaches should be a:
 - a. student coach

- b. law teacher
 - c. legal practitioner, or
 - d. legal officer of a Red Cross or Red Crescent National Society.
- 5. Student mooters and student researchers receive funding from New Zealand Red Cross for their travel and accommodation costs.
- 6. Team coaches and advisors are responsible for covering their own travel and accommodation expenses, these costs aren't funded by New Zealand Red Cross.

Section Three: Assistance from coaches, faculty, staff, and advisors

- 7. Anyone acting as coaches, assistants, or advisors need to restrict their guidance to general advice on:
 - a. basic principles of humanitarian law
 - b. research and source methods
 - c. Memorial writing techniques
 - d. oral advocacy techniques
 - e. organising and structuring written and oral arguments
 - f. legal and factual argument quality
 - g. interpreting and enforcing Competition rules
 - h. pleading options and others strategic decisions.

Section Four: Competition structure

- 8. The competition is comprised of:
 - a. two preliminary rounds, and
 - b. one final round.
- 9. Each team will argue both sides of the problem — prosecution and defence — in the preliminary rounds.
- 10. Finalists are chosen by the decision of the judges based on the marks awarded. See Rule 37.
- 11. In the event of an uneven number of teams, a three-way moot will be held in the preliminary rounds only. There may be:
 - a. two prosecution teams and one defence, or
 - b. two defence teams and one prosecution.

12. If there are two teams representing the same side, neither team may give their oral presentation in front of the other team.
13. Teams will be given one set of written opposing submissions and only respond to the arguments of the opposing submissions they receive.
14. In a three-way moot, only one team can be declared the winner, and this will be seen as winning against both other teams.

Section Five: Preparation and research

15. Only team members can research and prepare for the Competition.
16. Lists of materials issued with the question are only a guide and competitors may use additional cases and materials at their discretion.

Section Six: Written submissions and synopses

17. Teams must submit a Synopsis of Argument separately for prosecution and defence one week before the Competition:
 - a. to ihl@redcross.org.nz
 - b. by 23:59 Friday 20 November 2026.
18. Each synopsis:
 - a. must not be longer than four pages
 - b. may have one additional page for a table of authorities, and
 - c. may have title page in addition the synopsis and table of authorities.
19. Each synopsis and list of authorities must:
 - a. be in Times New Roman font size 12
 - b. have 2.5cm margins, and
 - c. have 1.5 line spacing.

Section Seven: Oral arguments

20. Each team has 35 minutes to present their case, excluding time taken to give appearances.
21. Researchers must not communicate with mooters during a round.

22. Each team can speak for no more than 35 minutes. The first mooter and the second mooter for each team can each speak individually for a minimum of 10 minutes.
23. Time allocation begins when each mooter starts speaking, this means that the timer will be stopped between speakers.
24. Each team may reserve up to 10 minutes for:
 - a. rebuttal for the Prosecution, or
 - b. surrebuttal for the Defence.
25. The scope of the Prosecutor's rebuttal is limited to responding to the Defence's oral hearings. The scope of the Defence's surrebuttal is limited to responding to the Prosecutor's rebuttal.
26. Each team must indicate:
 - a. the division of time when giving appearances
 - b. how long each mooter will speak, and
 - c. how much time they intend to reserve for rebuttal or surrebuttal.
27. Either the first mooter or the second mooter may address the court in rebuttal or surrebuttal. The time reserved for rebuttal or surrebuttal isn't included in the minimum time for each mooter to speak as specified in Rule 17.
28. The Court has discretion to extend the time for each mooter for good cause.
 - a. In the preliminary round, the maximum extended time granted to any mooter is three minutes.
 - b. In the final round, the maximum extension time granted to any mooter is at the discretion of the Court.
29. Time shall be kept by a court clerk, who will indicate to each mooter when they have:
 - a. five minutes left
 - b. one minute left, and
 - c. to conclude their address.
30. The order of the oral hearings shall be:
 - a. Prosecution's first mooter.
 - b. Prosecution's second mooter.
 - c. Defence's first mooter.
 - d. Defence's second mooter.
 - e. Rebuttal, if any – Prosecution's first or second mooter.
 - f. Surrebuttal, if any – Defence's first or second mooter.

31. No materials may be handed to the judges unless a judge specifically requests.
32. Team members must not disclose the name of their university until the results of the General Rounds are announced.
33. Team members or any person associated with a team must not disclose the identity of their university to any person acting as a judge — whether during or outside the hearings— until the final results are announced.
34. ‘Identity’ is defined as the name of their university, colours, logos, or defining characteristics such as buildings which could identify an institution
35. Disclosure may result in a deduction mark of five points which will affect the team’s overall score.

Section Eight: Judging

36. The preliminary rounds are heard by up to three judges and the final round by up to five judges.
37. Judges will award each mooter a mark out of 100, as follows:
 - Organisation of presentation: 10 marks
 - Development of argument: 25 marks
 - Questions from the bench: 30 marks
 - Manner and expression: 25 marks
 - Written submissions: 10 marks
 - **TOTAL 100 marks**
38. Score sheets won’t be released to competitors or participating universities.

Section Nine: Best speaker

39. The best speaker award is announced at the Competition’s closing event.
40. The award is decided by judges based on performance in the preliminary rounds and the final round if relevant.

Section Ten: Regional Competition

The format and location of the Regional Competition may change. Dates and other arrangements haven’t yet been confirmed.

41. The National Competition is used to select a team to compete at the Regional Competition – the Red Cross Asia Pacific Humanitarian Law Mooting Competition held annually in Hong Kong.
42. The winning team from the National Competition can represent New Zealand at the Regional Competition.
43. If the winning team is unable to attend the Regional Competition, the next highest placed team may represent New Zealand.
44. The team representing New Zealand at the Regional Competition receive funding from New Zealand Red Cross and ICRC for their travel and accommodation costs. This applies to:
 - a. two student mooters, and
 - b. up to one student researcher or one coach.
45. Participation from additional researchers, coaches, and advisors is determined by the Regional Competition rules.
46. Additional researchers, coaches, and advisors are responsible for covering their own travel and accommodation expenses, these costs aren't funded by ICRC or New Zealand Red Cross.

New Zealand Red Cross and ICRC have complete discretion to:

- make available and distribute funding for participation, and
- award prizes for the National and Regional Competitions.