Laudatio for Professor Maryam Idris Abdulkadir, Laureate of the 2026 Henry Dunant Field Prize

To the men, women and children that have lost their lives during this armed conflict (both uniformed and civilians) may your souls continue to rest in perfect peace. It may not seem like much, but research like this seeks to make a difference and make sure it does not happen again.

Maryam Idris Abdulkadir, May 2024

Excellencies, distinguished guests, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, dear laureates, dear Professor Abdulkadir, dearest Maryam,

It is with those words, enshrined in Professor Maryam Idris Abdulkadir's work, that I would like to start this laudatio.

We are gathered tonight around the figure of Henry Dunant at a time when his ideals to care for the most vulnerable ones are at high stakes. Our world is facing numerous challenges and it feels easy to give up and despair in front of those. Professor Maryam Idris Abdulkadir, from Baze University, Nigeria, to whom we are honored to award the 2026 Henry Dunant Field Prize tonight, is not one to give up in front of challenges. Quite the contrary.

Professor Maryam Idris Abdulkadir started her academic journey by earning her bachelor of law, barrister-at-law, and Master of Law at the Ahmadu Bello University, Kaduna State, Nigeria in 2017. From then on, after some years practicing as a legal professional, Maryam Abdulkadir joined academia again, this time as Law Clinic Supervisor and Secretary, Law Clinic Committee, Baze University, Abuja, Nigeria.

This is where Professor Abdulkadir started her extraordinary journey connecting legal education to humanitarian issues. Lecturing on International Human Rights, Humanitarian Law, and Public International Law to more than 800 students, Maryam Abdulkadir developed numerous training materials for law clinic students, enhancing practical understanding of complex legal issues. She also coached students for inter-university debates, including the 2022 United Nations World Day Against Human Trafficking.

This led Professor Abdulkadir to establish two specialized clinics, improving practical legal education and access to justice for marginalized groups: the Migration and Trafficked persons Law Clinic and the International Humanitarian Law Clinic of Baze University.

Through her Migration and Trafficked persons Law Clinic, Maryam Abdulkadir and her students have visited camps gathering people displaced by armed conflict and violence in Kuchigoro, Abuja. There, they have conducted interviews with displaced people to assess their situation and the potential issues faced in terms of their human rights. Based on those reports, law clinicians have handled client's case files and drafted partnership

proposals and agreements under Professor Abdulkadir's guidance. Under the "UNHCR I belong Campaign", her clinic has also collaborated with a UN subsidiary body to design a program, training, and capacity building for students and planned, implemented, and tracked the progress of the project's initiatives.

Through her International Humanitarian Law Clinic, Maryam Abdulkadir and her students have carried out the "Tutor with Love" project, which consisted of designing lesson plans and training students to teach children in the Kuchigoro camp primary school subjects, including international humanitarian law. They have also carried out humanitarian and human rights projects in the camp to ensure the protection of the civilian population. These projects include gathering data from the field to create an empowerment program for women, Human rights advocacy programs in the camp, and proposals for policy changes on registration of births and education in the camps to combat statelessness.

Beyond her law clinics initiatives, Maryam Idris Abdulkadir is also involved in two committees of the Association for Juridical Studies on Immigration (ASGI), the think tank committee on free movement and international agreement in the ECOWAS region and the Fact-finding group on Trafficking and Returns. As such, she conducts research on the trafficking of children to Libya, gathering data from NAPTIP and IOM.

Furthermore, Professor Abdulkadir has conducted comprehensive research work entitled "The role of international humanitarian law in protecting the natural environment in non-international armed conflict: a study of Borno state Nigeria". There, she argued about protection of the natural environment during war, presenting the existing framework on the protection of the natural environment in both International Armed Conflict (IAC) and Non-International Armed Conflict (NIAC). This desk research was complemented by field research to determine how the armed conflict in Borno State affected the natural environment, the knowledge of belligerents about IHL and its implementation, especially provisions of protecting the environment and the possible gaps on protection of the environment in armed conflict in domestic laws. The research concluded with concrete recommendations aimed at developing domestic law further on this matter, involving NGOs in Borno State, training non-State actors, disseminating IHL, and domesticating international environmental law obligations ratified by Nigeria.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

What is striking in all Maryam Idris Abdulkadir's endeavors is how, like Henry Dunant, they connect field problems with writings, aiming at transforming the world into a better place. Indeed, through her work and writings, Maryam Idris Abdulkadir has provided marginalized communities, including internally displaced persons (IDPs) and victims of human trafficking with access to justice and hope. She has done so by, at the same time, helping students develop practical skills to address such situations as future professionals. This is a truly remarkable way of combining individual aspirations and collective endeavours, humanitarian and educational perspectives, field and academic work. Through her academic journey, and as her very words bear witness, Professor Abdulkadir has thus demonstrated a profound sense of social responsibility, dedication to justice, advocacy, and education in Nigeria and beyond.

For these reasons, the Henry Dunant Prize Foundation, in partnership with the International Committee of the Red Cross, is honored to award its 2026 Henry Dunant

Field Prize to Professor Maryam Idris Abdulkadir. Her tireless dedication to the most vulnerable among us inspires us all to strive for a world where justice and humanity prevail.

Congratulations, Professor Abdulkadir, dear Maryam, on this well-deserved recognition. May your work continue to illuminate the path toward a more just and compassionate world. Thank you very much.