

# What are the basic rules of international humanitarian law?

CONDUCT OF HOSTILITIES	TREATMENT OF PERSONS	WEAPONS AND TACTICS	SPECIFIC PROTECTION
<p><b>Attacks must only be directed at military objectives, and are only permitted following a cumulative 3 step process of distinction, precautions and proportionality</b></p>	<p><b>Civilians and combatants who are hors de combat must be protected and treated humanely.</b></p>	<p><b>The only legitimate objective of war is to weaken the enemy's military forces.</b></p>	<p><b>Certain categories of people and objects must receive additional protection.</b></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attacking civilians or civilian objects (houses, vehicles, schools, business, etc) is prohibited.</li> <li>2. The expected number of deaths or injuries to civilians or damage to civilian objects must not be excessive compared to anticipated military advantage (principle of proportionality)</li> <li>3. Before an attack, every possible precaution must be taken to avoid or minimize the potential harm to civilians and civilian objects.</li> <li>4. Indiscriminate Attacks are prohibited.</li> <li>5. Acts or threats of violence with the primary purpose of spreading terror among the civilian population are prohibited</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Murder, torture, and cruel or degrading treatment or punishment are prohibited.</li> <li>2. Sexual violence is prohibited.</li> <li>3. Forced displacement of civilians is prohibited.</li> <li>4. Starving civilians is prohibited.</li> <li>5. Using human shields to protect military objectives is prohibited.</li> <li>6. Wounded, sick or shipwrecked enemy combatants must be searched for, collected and cared for. There should be no preferential treatment, except on medical grounds.</li> <li>7. Captured civilians and enemy combatants must be given adequate food, water, clothing, shelter and medical care and must be allowed to correspond with their families.</li> <li>8. Everyone must receive a fair trial.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The use of weapons that cause unnecessary suffering is prohibited.</li> <li>2. Taking hostages is prohibited.</li> <li>3. Killing or wounding a surrendered enemy is prohibited.</li> <li>4. Ordering or threatening that there shall be no survivors is prohibited.</li> <li>5. Destroying objects necessary for the survival of civilians (foodstuffs, farming areas, drinking water installations, etc.) is prohibited.</li> <li>6. Attacking medical and religious personnel and objects, whether or not lawfully using the red cross/red crescent/ rec crystal emblem, is prohibited.</li> <li>7. Perfidy, or abusing the protections of IHL in order to kill, injure or capture an adversary is prohibited, e.g., pretending to be a civilian or using an ambulance in launching an attack.</li> <li>8. Misusing the red cross/red crescent/red crystal emblem is prohibited.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Children are granted specific protection. Recruiting or using children under the age of 15 in armed conflict is prohibited. Human rights instruments raise the age of recruitment and use to 18 for many states and non-state parties to conflict.</li> <li>2. Medical personnel and facilities (hospitals, clinics, ambulances, etc.) as well as religious personnel must be respected and protected.</li> <li>3. Humanitarian relief personnel, supplies and operations must be respected and protected.</li> <li>4. Cultural property must be respected and protected.</li> <li>5. Women , displaced persons and disabled are granted specific protection.</li> <li>6. Installations containing dangerous forces, such as dams and nuclear power stations, are granted specific protection.</li> </ol>
<p><i>The table is a modified version of ICRC EHL Resource (modified by Danish Red Cross)</i></p>			