IHL prohibits the destruction of civilian objects and of property seized from the adversary in the absence of military necessity [1]. Wanton destruction of such property constitutes a war crime [2]. The ICTY [3], in the Trial Chamber judgment of Kordic and Cerkez [4], (February 26, 2001) held that “[T]he elements for the crime of wanton destruction not justified by military necessity charged under Article 3(b) of the Statute are satisfied where: (i) the destruction of property occurs on a large scale; (ii) the destruction is not justified by military necessity; and (iii) the perpetrator acted with the intent to destroy the property in question or in reckless disregard of the likelihood of its destruction.” paras 346-347

See also: Grave breaches [5]; Property [6]; Seizure [7]; Destruction [8]; War Crimes [9]

**LEGAL SOURCE**

**Grave breach**

GCI, 50 [10] (see ICRC updated Commentary [11])

GCII, 51 [12] (see ICRC updated Commentary [13])

GCIV, 147 [14]
Source URL: https://casebook.icrc.org/glossary/wanton-destruction

Links
[8] https://casebook.icrc.org/glossary/destruction