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 \[14\]
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