The principle of humane treatment requires that the wounded and sick, prisoners of war, civilians and other persons protected by IHL are treated humanely at all times.

The principle of humane treatment in IHL requires that those who fall into the hands of the enemy be treated with respect for their dignity as human beings. The principle seeks to ensure that the physical integrity of captured/detained persons is not violated, that they are not subjected to any form of torture or ill treatment. In IACs, the principle gives rise to a number of explicit rules, such as those prohibiting torture, rape and sexual violence and exposure of prisoners of war to public curiosity. In NIACs, the requirement of humane treatment for civilians and persons hors de combat is set out in common Article 3, which prohibits violence to life and person (including cruel treatment and torture), the taking of hostages, humiliating and degrading treatment, and execution without regular trial. Civilians and detained combatants or fighters are entitled to respect for their physical and mental integrity, their honour, family rights, religious convictions and practices, and their manners and customs. The requirement to accord humane treatment is recognized as a fundamental guarantee by both Additional Protocols I and II.

See Treatment; Torture;
HR, 4/2 [9]

common 3/1 [10] (see ICRC updated Commentary [11])

GCI, 12 [12] (see ICRC updated Commentary [13])

GCII, 12 [14] (see ICRC updated Commentary [15])

GCIII, 13 [16]

GCIV, 5/3 [17], 27/1 [18], 127/1 [19]

PI, 10/2 [20], 75/1 [21]

PII, 4/1 [22], 5/3 [23], 7/2 [24]

CIHL, 87 [25]

CASES

Israel/Palestine, Operation Protective Edge (Gaza, 13 June - 26 August 2014) [28]

Libya, Report of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (2014/15) [27]

Sweden/Syria, Can Armed Groups Issue Judgments? [28]

United States, Jurisprudence Related to the Bombing of the U.S.S Cole [29]
USA, Al-Shimari v. CACI Premier Technology, Inc. [30]

USA, Jawad v. Gates [31]


Iraq: Situation of Internally Displaced Persons [33]

Syria, Report by UN Commission of Inquiry (March 2017) [34]

Syria, the Battle for Aleppo [35]

Israel/Palestine, Accountability for the Use of Lethal Force [36]

UN/Colombia, Human Rights Committee Clarifications and Concluding Observations (2016) [37]

International Criminal Court, Trial Judgment in the Case of the Prosecutor V. Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo [38]


South Sudan, AU Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan [40]

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Links