Religion is one of the prohibited grounds of adverse distinction. Respect for religious convictions is one of the fundamental guarantees applicable to all persons in the power of a Party to the conflict.

Prisoners of war are entitled to exercise their religious duties, be visited by ministers of their religion, as well as to receive articles of religious character (GC III, Art. 34). The same applies to civilian internees (GC IV, Art. 93).

Protected civilians are also entitled to exercise their religious duties, and in case of an occupation, the Occupying power shall facilitate such exercise (GC IV, Art. 27).

The dead should be buried, as far as possible, in accordance with their religious beliefs. They can only be cremated if their religion mandates so (GC I, Art. 17; GC III, Art. 120; GC IV, Art. 130).

Chaplains and religious personnel are offered the same special protection as medical personnel (GC I, Art. 24; GC III, Art. 33; P I, Art. 15; P II, Art. 9).

Religious organizations are, under certain circumstances, equated to relief societies.

Religious buildings and places of worship may constitute cultural property or benefit from equivalent protection and thus should be specially protected against attacks, pillage,
theft, misappropriation and vandalism.

See Discrimination [21];

**CASES**

- Iraq, Crimes by Militia Groups [22]

**OUTLINE**

Chapter 1, III. International Humanitarian Law and Cultural Relativism [23]

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