Wars of national liberation were formerly classed by international law as civil wars but are now regarded as international armed conflict and therefore regulated as such by international humanitarian law. They are armed conflicts \[1\] in which peoples are fighting against colonial domination and alien occupation and against racist regimes in the exercise of their right to self-determination \[2\].

See Non-international armed conflict \[3\]; International armed conflict \[4\];
United Kingdom and Australia, Applicability of Protocol I [8]

United States, President Rejects Protocol I [9]

South Africa, Sagarius and Others [10]


South Africa, AZAPO v. Republic of South Africa [12]

Case Study, Armed Conflicts in the former Yugoslavia (23 and 24) [13]

Germany, Government Reply on the Kurdistan Conflict [14]

Philippines, Application of IHL by the National Democratic Front of the Philippines [15]

The Netherlands, Public Prosecutor v. Folkerts [16]

The Conflict in Western Sahara [17]

United States, United States v. Marilyn Buck [18]

---

**BIBLIOGRAPHIC RESOURCES**


CASSESE Antonio, *Self-Determination of Peoples: a Legal Reappraisal*,


**Source URL:** https://casebook.icrc.org/glossary/national-liberation-wars

**Links**


https://casebook.icrc.org/glossary/non-international-armed-conflict
https://casebook.icrc.org/glossary/international-armed-conflict
https://casebook.icrc.org/law/fundamentals-ihl#2-3-b_bb
https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/france-accession-protocol-i#part_b_para_4
https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/united-states-president-rejects-protocol-i
https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/case-study-armed-conflicts-former-yugoslavia#para_23
https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/netherlands-public-prosecutor-v-folkerts
https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/united-states-united-states-v-marilyn-buck