It refers to the legal position or condition of a person, property or place/territory under International Humanitarian Law.

Unlike human rights law, for example, under IHL the set of rules that applies to a particular situation is often dependent on the status of the persons or objects involved, and sometimes even the territory on which certain conduct is carried out.

IHL recognizes particular protections for the following categories of persons, places and objects:

a. Wounded, sick or shipwrecked persons;
b. Combatants;
c. Prisoners of war;
d. Medical aircraft;
e. Medical and religious personnel;
f. Civilian persons;
g. Cultural property;
h. Civil defence personnel;
i. Occupied territory;
j. non-defended localities and demilitarized zones;
k. hospital and safety zones.

IHL also uses the term when it clarifies that its application does not affect the legal status of
armed groups.

Furthermore, international humanitarian law deals with the status of public officials and judges of an occupied territory by providing that the Occupying Power may not alter their status.

See Classification of persons [17]; Protected persons [18]; Legal Status of the parties [19];

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of wounded and sick

See Wounded and sick [1]

GCI, 13 [25] (see ICRC updated Commentary [26]), 14 [27] (see ICRC updated Commentary [28])

of shipwrecked
See Shipwrecked [3]
GCI, 13 [25] (see ICRC updated Commentary [26])

of combatant
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HR, 1 [29]-3 [30]
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See Civilian objects [10]
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See Civil defence [11]

PI, 62 [41]–67 [42]

of parties to the conflict

See Legal status of the parties [19]

of non-defended localities

See Non-defended localities [13]

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