The term refers not only to criminal punishment, but also to other types of sanctions, harassment or administrative action taken against a group in retaliation for an act committed by an individual/s who are considered to form part of the group. Such punishment therefore targets persons who bear no responsibility for having committed the conduct in question. Historically used as a deterrence tool by occupying powers to prevent attacks from resistance movements, collective punishments for acts committed by individuals during an armed conflict are prohibited by IHL against prisoners of war or other protected persons.

International humanitarian law prohibits collective punishment of prisoners of war or other protected persons for acts committed by individuals during an armed conflict.

The imposition of collective punishment is a war crime.

See War crimes, Sanctions; Individual criminal responsibility;
HR, 50 [9]

GCIII, 87/3 [10]

GCIV, 33 [11]

PI, 75/2(d) [12]

PI, 75/4(b) [12]

PII, 4/2(b) [13]

CIHL, 103 [14]

**DOCUMENT**

ICRC, Appeals on the Near East [15]

UN, Minimum Humanitarian Standards [16]

**CASES**

Sierra Leone, Special Court Ruling in the AFCR Case [17]

Switzerland, Qualification of the Conflict in El Salvador [18]


Israel/Gaza, Operation Cast Lead [22]

Israel/Lebanon/Hezbollah Conflict in 2006 [23]

Sierra Leone, Special Court Ruling on Immunity for Taylor [24]

India, Press Release, Violence in Kashmir [25]

ICRC, IHL and the Challenges of Contemporary Armed Conflicts [26]

Case Study, Armed Conflicts in the former Yugoslavia [27]

Democratic Republic of the Congo, Conflict in the Kivus [28]

Israel, House Demolitions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory [29]

Israel, Human Rights Committee’s Report on Beit Hanoun [30]

UN Security Council, Sanctions Imposed Upon Iraq [31]

UN, Guidelines for UN Forces [32]
ICTY, The Prosecutor v. Gali? [33]

Israel, Blockade of Gaza and the Flotilla Incident [34]

Iraq, Forced displacement and deliberate destruction [35]

Iraq: Situation of Internally Displaced Persons [36]

BIBLIOGRAPHIC RESOURCES

Suggested reading:


Further reading:


Source URL: https://casebook.icrc.org/glossary/collective-punishments

Links
[1] https://casebook.icrc.org/glossary/sanctions
[8] https://casebook.icrc.org/law/civilian-population#ii_3_b_ee
[14] https://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule103
[22] https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/israelgaza-operation-cast-lead
[27] https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/case-study-armed-conflicts-former-yugoslavia
[33] https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/icty-prosecutor-v-galic
[34] https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/israel-blockade-gaza-and-flotilla-incident-0