The term refers to the means [1] and methods of warfare [2] employed by belligerents in armed conflicts. The IHL rules on conduct of hostilities aim to strike a balance between military necessity [3] and humanity [4], seeking mainly to protect civilians from attacks and effects of hostilities, but equally to limit the suffering of combatants. Key principles of IHL governing the conduct of hostilities include: distinction [5], proportionality [6], precautions [7] and prohibition of superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering [8].

See Distinction [5]; Proportionality [6]; Precautions in attack [7]; Means of warfare [1]; Methods of warfare [2]; Military objectives [9]; Civilian objects [10]; Fighters [11]; Direct participation in hostilities [12]; Naval warfare [13]; Law enforcement [14]; Superfluous injury [8];
Sixtieth Anniversary of the Geneva Conventions [18]

ICRC, New Weapons [19]

CASES

United States/United Kingdom, Report on the Conduct of the Persian Gulf War [20]

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, NATO Intervention [21]

Georgia/Russia, Human Rights Watch’s Report on the Conflict in South Ossetia [22]

Georgia/Russia, Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in South Ossetia [23]

Israel/Gaza, Operation Cast Lead [24]

ICRC, IHL and the Challenges of Contemporary Armed Conflicts [25]

Afghanistan, Code of Conduct for the Mujahideen [26]

Nigeria, Operational Code of Conduct [27]

The Environment and International Humanitarian Law [28]

Cambodia/Thailand, Border Conflict around the Temple of Preah Vihear [29]
Mali, Destruction of World Cultural Heritage [30]

Yemen, Obstructing Medical Care [31]

South Sudan: Medical Care Under Fire [32]

Syria, Code of Conduct of the Free Syrian Army [33]

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right of Everyone to the Enjoyment of the Highest Attainable Standard of Physical and Mental Health [34]


Autonomous Weapon Systems [36]

ECHR, Al-Skeini et al. v. UK [37]

General Assembly, The use of drones in counter-terrorism operations [38]

U.S., Lethal Operations against Al-Qa’ida Leaders [39]

Syria, Press conference with French President Francois Hollande and Russian President Vladimir Putin [40]

Libya, NATO Intervention 2011 [41]

ICRC, International Humanitarian Law and the challenges of contemporary armed conflicts in 2015
Yemen, Potential Existence and Effects of Naval Blockade

Sri Lanka, Naval War against Tamil Tigers

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

Afghanistan, Bombing of a Civilian Truck

Italy, Use of force against ambulances in Iraq

Syria, the Battle for Aleppo

Iraq/Syria/UK, Drone Operations against ISIS

ICRC, Statement - War in Cities ; What is at Stake?

Belgium, Prosecution of Terrorist Crimes in the context of Armed Conflict

Iraq, The Battle for Mosul

Germany, Aerial Drone Attack in Mir Ali/Pakistan

Eastern Ukraine, Attacks Against and Military Use of Schools

Eastern Ukraine, OHCHR Report on the Situation: November 2016 - February 2017
Syria, Syrian rebels treat captured Filipino soldiers as 'guests' [57]

Central African Republic/Democratic Republic of Congo/Uganda, LRA attacks [58]

Central African Republic, Coup d'Etat [59]

Central African Republic, No Class: When Armed Groups Use Schools [60]

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