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];
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