A “demilitarized zone” is an area, agreed upon between the parties to an armed conflict\(^1\), which cannot be occupied or used for military purposes by any party to the conflict. Demilitarized zones can be established by a verbal or written agreement in times of peace or during an armed conflict.

The subject of the agreement is normally an area which fulfills the following conditions:

- a. all combatants as well as mobile weapons and mobile military equipment have been evacuated;
- b. no hostile use is made of fixed military installations or establishments;
- c. no acts of hostility are committed by the authorities or by the population; and
- d. all activity linked to the military effort has ceased.

The agreement should define and describe, with precision, the limits of the demilitarized zone and, if appropriate, lay down the methods of supervision.

Police forces\(^2\) may be stationed in demilitarized zones to maintain order.

There are detailed rules for the creation and recognition of demilitarized zones, and for agreement upon the distinctive sign to be displayed there.

The concept of a demilitarized zone is not far removed from those of hospital zones and localities\(^3\), neutralized zones\(^4\), and hospital and safety zones and localities\(^5\).
See Neutralized zones [4]; Hospital and safety zones and localities [3];

**OUTLINE**

Chapter 9, 13. Zones created to protect war victims against the effects of hostilities [6]

**LEGAL SOURCE**

PI, 60 [7]

PI, 85/3(d) [8]

CIHL, 36 [9]

**CASES**

Sri Lanka, Jaffna Hospital Zone [10]

Sri Lanka, Conflict in the Vanni [Paras 12-16] [11]

Case Study, Armed Conflicts in the former Yugoslavia (para 14) [12]


Netherlands, Responsibility of International Organizations (paras 2.4 and 2.6) [14]

ECHR, Isayeva v. Russia (paras 16 and 186) [15]
Suggested readings:


Further readings:


“Zones sanitaires et zones de sécurité”, in IRRC, Nos 390 & 392, 1951, 80 pp.

Source URL: https://casebook.icrc.org/glossary/demilitarized-zones

Links
[8] https://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Article.xsp?action=openDocument&amp;documentId=73D05A98B6CEB566C12563CD0051E1A0