



Published on *How does law protect in war? - Online casebook* (<https://casebook.icrc.org>)  
Home > Wounded and sick

---

Persons, whether military or civilian, who because of trauma, disease or other physical or mental disorder or disability are in need of medical care and who refrain from any act of hostility.

For the purposes of protection, these terms also cover maternity cases, new-born babies and other persons who may be in need of immediate medical assistance or care, such as the infirm or expectant mothers, and who refrain from any act of hostility.

They must be respected and protected in accordance with international humanitarian law. The general principle governing treatment of the wounded and sick of any party to the conflict is that they must be treated humanely and given, to the fullest extent practicable and with the least possible delay, the medical care required by their condition.

There must be no distinction among them founded on any grounds other than medical ones.

See Shipwrecked <sup>[1]</sup>;

## OUTLINE

Chapter 7, II. Respect, protection and care for wounded, sick and shipwrecked <sup>[2]</sup>

## LEGAL SOURCE

GCI, 12 <sup>[3]</sup> (see ICRC updated Commentary <sup>[4]</sup>) 18 <sup>[5]</sup> (see ICRC updated Commentary <sup>[6]</sup>)

GCII, 12 <sup>[7]</sup> (see ICRC updated Commentary <sup>[8]</sup>) 21 <sup>[9]</sup> (see ICRC updated Commentary <sup>[10]</sup>)

PI, 8 <sup>[11]</sup>-11 <sup>[12]</sup>

PII, 7 <sup>[13]</sup>-8 <sup>[14]</sup>

CIHL, Rules 109 <sup>[15]</sup>-111 <sup>[16]</sup>

## CASES

Netherlands, *In re Pilz* <sup>[17]</sup>

Israel, The Rafah Case (Paras. 40-44.) <sup>[18]</sup>

ICRC/Lebanon, Sabra and Chatila <sup>[19]</sup>

ICRC Report on Yemen, 1967 <sup>[20]</sup>

ICRC, Iran/Iraq, Memoranda <sup>[21]</sup>

Iraq, Care for Wounded Enemies <sup>[22]</sup>

Armed Conflicts in the former Yugoslavia (Para. 3) <sup>[23]</sup>

Afghanistan, Separate Hospital Treatment for Men and Women <sup>[24]</sup>

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Constitution of Safe Areas in 1992-1993 <sup>[25]</sup>

Gaza: Health situation in the Gaza Strip <sup>[26]</sup>

Yemen, Obstructing Medical Care <sup>[27]</sup>

South Sudan: Medical Care Under Fire <sup>[28]</sup>

Health Care in Pakistan's Tribal Areas <sup>[29]</sup>

Democratic Republic of Congo, Fighting with the M 23 Group <sup>[30]</sup>

Syrian Statement at the UN on the Medical Treatment of Enemy Fighters <sup>[31]</sup>

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right of Everyone to the Enjoyment of the Highest Attainable Standard of Physical and Mental Health <sup>[32]</sup>

UN, Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit <sup>[33]</sup>

Afghanistan, Attack on Kunduz Trauma Centre <sup>[34]</sup>

Sri Lanka, Naval War against Tamil Tigers <sup>[35]</sup>

Syria, the Battle for Aleppo <sup>[36]</sup>

Israel/Palestine, Accountability for the Use of Lethal Force <sup>[37]</sup>

South Sudan, Attack in Malakal UN Protection Site <sup>[38]</sup>

Syria: Medical support for ISIS <sup>[39]</sup>

## BIBLIOGRAPHIC RESOURCES

### Suggested reading:

SOLF Waldemar A., “Development of the Protection of the Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked under the Protocols Additional to the 1949 Geneva Conventions”, in *Studies and Essays on International Humanitarian Law and Red Cross Principles in Honour of Jean Pictet*, Geneva/The Hague, ICRC/M. Nijhoff, 1984, pp. 237-248

---

**Source URL:** <https://casebook.icrc.org/glossary/wounded-and-sick>

### Links

[1] <https://casebook.icrc.org/glossary/shipwrecked>

[2] <https://casebook.icrc.org/law/wounded-sick-shipwrecked-dead-and-missing#chapter3>

[3]

<https://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Article.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=B97B83DC12AC4998C12563CD>

[4] [https://ihl-](https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Comment.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=CECD58D1E2A2AF30C1257F15)

[databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Comment.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=CECD58D1E2A2AF30C1257F15](https://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Comment.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=CECD58D1E2A2AF30C1257F15)

[5]

<https://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Article.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=481ABBA45EB29F84C12563CD>

[6] [https://ihl-](https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Comment.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=C31DEC980837B383C1257F150)

[databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Comment.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=C31DEC980837B383C1257F150](https://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Comment.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=C31DEC980837B383C1257F150)

[7]

<https://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Article.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=A30C39F7F85D71CDC12563CD>

- [8] <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Comment.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=8BE9FEA9E6F5A570C12581150>
- [9] <https://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Article.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=1D265F8D7771BCB2C12563CD0>
- [10] <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Comment.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=A3CF88F0F10C9ABEC12581150>
- [11] <https://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Article.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=F8579DB5D12F282FC12563CD0>
- [12] <https://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Article.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=28D300B20C31500CC12563CD0>
- [13] <https://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Article.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=19B84A81B450AA6EC12563CD0>
- [14] <https://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Article.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=BDE27D8B033BE79DC12563CD0>
- [15] [https://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1\\_rul\\_rule109](https://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule109)
- [16] [https://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1\\_rul\\_rule111](https://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule111)
- [17] <https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/netherlands-re-pilz>
- [18] <https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/israel-rafah-case>
- [19] <https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/icrclebanon-sabra-and-chatila>
- [20] <https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/icrc-report-yemen-1967>
- [21] <https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/icrc-iraniraq-memoranda>
- [22] <https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/iraq-care-wounded-enemies>
- [23] <https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/case-study-armed-conflicts-former-yugoslavia>
- [24] <https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/afghanistan-separate-hospital-treatment-men-and-women>
- [25] <https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/bosnia-and-herzegovina-constitution-safe-areas>
- [26] <https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/gaza-health-situation-gaza-strip>
- [27] <https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/yemen-obstructing-medical-care>
- [28] <https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/south-sudan-medical-care-under-fire>
- [29] <https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/health-care-pakistans-tribal-areas>
- [30] <https://casebook.icrc.org/node/20954>
- [31] <https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/syrian-statement-un-medical-treatment-enemy-fighters>
- [32] <https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/report-special-rapporteur-right-everyone-enjoyment-highest-attainable-standard-physical>
- [33] <https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/un-report-secretary-general-world-humanitarian-summit>
- [34] <https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/afghanistan-attack-kunduz-trauma-centre>
- [35] <https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/sri-lanka-naval-war-against-tamil-tigers>

[36] <https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/syria-battle-aleppo>

[37] <https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/israelpalestine-accountability-use-lethal-force>

[38] <https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/south-sudan-attack-malakal-un-protection-site>

[39] <https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/syria-medical-support-isis>