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In general international law, a sanction can be defined by an action carried out by one or more states toward another one to force the latter to comply with its legal obligations. In domestic law, a sanction relates to the penalty annexed to a violation ^[1] of a law as a mean of enforcing it.

In IHL more particularly, the term ‘sanctions’ may be applied:

- a. to the sanctions applicable to civilian internees ^[2] and prisoners of war ^[3] responsible for breaches ^[4] of the laws, regulations and general orders to which they are subject;
- b. to the sanctions applicable to persons who have committed war crimes ^[5] or other breaches of international humanitarian law; or
- c. to the sanctions applicable to commanders responsible ^[6] for failure to act.

See Disciplinary sanctions ^[7]; Violations ^[1]; Breaches ^[4]; State responsibility ^[8];
Individual criminal responsibility ^[9]

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