The principle of proportionality prohibits attacks against military objectives which are “expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians [1], damage to civilian objects [2], or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage [3] anticipated”.

In other words, the principle of proportionality seeks to limit damage caused by military operations by requiring that the effects of the means [4] and methods of warfare [5] used must not be disproportionate to the military advantage [3] sought.

**OUTLINE**

Chapter 4. III. 2. c) proportionality [6]

Chapter 9, II. 6. c) dd) principle of proportionality [7]

**LEGAL SOURCE**

PI, 51/5b [8]

CIHL, 14 [9]
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ICJ, Nuclear Weapons Advisory Opinion (Para. 43)

Israel/Gaza, Operation Cast Lead (Part I, Paras. 120-126, 230-232)

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ICRC, Statement - War in Cities ; What is at Stake? [50]

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**suggested readings:**


**Further readings:**


KNOOPS Geert-Jan Alexander, “The Duality of the Proportionality Principle


“Symposium: The International Legal Fallout from Kosovo” (articles of GAZZINI Tarcisio, HILPOLD Peter, CERONE John, FENRICK William J., BENVENUTI
Source URL: https://casebook.icrc.org/glossary/proportionality

Links
[1] https://casebook.icrc.org/glossary/civilians
[6] https://casebook.icrc.org/law/fundamentals-ihl#d_iii_2_c
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[27] https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/echr-isayeva-v-russia