The tactics or strategy used in hostilities to defeat the enemy by using available information on him together with weapons, movement and surprise. International law has sanctioned the following principles regarding means and methods of warfare:

- a. the only legitimate object of war is to weaken the enemy’s military forces, for which purpose it is sufficient to disable the greatest possible number of enemy combatants;
- b. the right to choose methods and means of warfare is not unlimited;
- c. it is prohibited to employ methods (and means) of warfare of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering;
- d. in the study, development, acquisition or adoption of new means or methods of warfare it must be determined whether their employment is not prohibited in some or all circumstances.

Prohibited methods of warfare include perfidy, terror, starvation, reprisals against non-military objectives, and indiscriminate attacks, damage to the natural environment or to works and installations containing dangerous forces; ordering that there shall be no survivors; pillage; taking hostages; taking advantage of the presence of the civilian population or population movements to promote the conduct of hostilities; improper use of distinctive emblems and signs; and attacks on persons hors de combat or parachuting from an aircraft in distress.
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Chapter 9. III. 3. Prohibited methods of warfare

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Colombia, Constitutionality of IHL Implementing Legislation (Paras. 4, D.5.4.4, E.2 and Dissenting opinion)

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