An international armed conflict occurs when one or more States have recourse to armed force against another State, regardless of the reasons or the intensity of this confrontation. No formal declaration of war or recognition of the situation is required. The existence of an international armed conflict, and as a consequence, the possibility to apply International Humanitarian Law to this situation, depends on what actually happens on the ground. It is based on factual conditions. Apart from regular, inter-state armed conflicts, Additional Protocol I extends the definition of international armed conflicts to include armed conflicts in which peoples are fighting against colonial domination, alien occupation or racist regimes in the exercise of their right to self-determination (Wars of national liberation [1]).

See also Application [2]; Armed conflict [3]; Internationalised armed conflict [4]; Non-international armed conflict [5];
common 2[8] (see ICRC updated Commentary[9])

PI, 1/4[10]

CASES


Malaysia, Osman v. Prosecutor[12]

Israel, Applicability of the Fourth Convention to Occupied Territories[13]

South Africa, Sagarius and Others[14]


United States, United States v. Noriega (Part B. II. A.)[16]

Belgium, Belgian Soldiers in Somalia[17]

Case Study, Armed Conflicts in the former Yugoslavia (26)[18]

ICTY, The Prosecutor v. Tadic (Part C., Paras. 87-162)[19]

Case Study, Armed Conflicts in the Great Lakes Region (Part 3. A.)[20]

ICJ, Democratic Republic of the Congo/Uganda, Armed Activities on the Territory of the Congo
United States, Status and Treatment of Detainees Held in Guantanamo Naval Base (Parts I and II.)

US, US v. Marilyn Buck

Georgia/Russia, Human Rights Watch’s Report on the Conflict in South Ossetia

Georgia/Russia, Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in South Ossetia (Para. 9)

ECHR, Al-Jedda v. UK

ECHR, Hassan v. UK

ECHR, Al-Skeini et al. v. UK

ICRC, International Humanitarian Law and the challenges of contemporary armed conflicts in 2015

Italy, Use of force against ambulances in Iraq

Spain, Universal Jurisdiction over Grave Breaches of the Geneva Conventions

Germany, Aerial Drone Attack in Mir Ali/Pakistan
Syria, Syrian rebels treat captured Filipino soldiers as 'guests'

Central African Republic/Democratic Republic of Congo/Uganda, LRA attacks

Central African Republic, Coup d'Etat

ECCC, Detention Sites in Cambodia

BIBLIOGRAPHIC RESOURCES


SCHINDLER Dietrich, “The Different Types of Armed Conflicts According to the


**Source URL:** https://casebook.icrc.org/glossary/international-armed-conflict

**Links**

[6] https://casebook.icrc.org/law/fundamentals-ihl#b_iii_1_A
[16] https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/united-states-united-states-v-noriega#part_b_ii_a