A person who attempts to obtain or comments on or uses information for the press or for radio or television; any correspondent, reporter, photographer, or cameraman, or his/her film, radio or television technical assistant, habitually carrying out such activities as his/her main occupation.

“Journalists” are civilians and therefore enjoy the protection accorded to civilians unless and for such time as they take a direct part in hostilities.

The law of international armed conflict distinguishes two categories of journalists:

a. Accredited correspondents (war correspondents), who have a special authorization permitting them to accompany the armed forces.

Accredited correspondents are included among those who accompany the armed forces without being members thereof. Their status must be attested by an identity card. Captured accredited correspondents are prisoners of war.

b. Independent journalists engaged on dangerous missions in areas affected by hostilities.

Independent journalists operating in areas of armed conflict may obtain an identity card attesting their status as a journalist. Independent journalists who fall into the power of a Party to the conflict are civilians enjoying the ordinary protection granted to civilians by
the law of armed conflict.

Members of the armed forces [2] who have a function connected with information within the armed forces (press service, cinematographic service, etc.) are not journalists.

See also Media [3]

---

OUTLINE

Chapter 8, II. 2. d) Special protection of journalists [4]

---

LEGAL SOURCE

GCI, 13/4 [5] (see ICRC updated Commentary [6])

GCII, 13/4 [7] (see ICRC updated Commentary [8])

GCIII, 4A(4) [9]

PI, 79 [10]

CIHL, 34 [11]

---

CASES

Protection of Journalists [12]

UN, Secretary-General’s Reports on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (Part A.) [13]
BIBLIOGRAPHIC RESOURCES

Suggested readings:


MOORE Douglas W., “Twenty-First Century Embedded Journalist: Lawful

**Further readings:**


**Source URL:** https://casebook.icrc.org/glossary/journalists

**Links**

[1] https://casebook.icrc.org/glossary/war-correspondents