The mortal remains \(^1\) of persons killed in action or who have died of wounds or disease contracted during hostilities must be respected, as must the mortal remains \(^1\) of persons who have died in captivity, internment \(^2\) or detention \(^3\) as a result of occupation \(^4\) of a territory. International law prescribes rules for the respect and marking of graves \(^5\) and the steps to be taken for such purposes at the end of hostilities.

See Missing persons \(^6\);

### OUTLINE

Chapter 7, Provisions on the Dead and the Missing \(^7\)

### LEGAL SOURCE

**examination confirming death**

- GCI, 17/1 \(^8\) (see ICRC updated Commentary \(^9\))
- GCII, 20 \(^10\) (see ICRC updated Commentary \(^11\))
- GCIII, 120/3 \(^12\)
obligation to search and identify dead bodies and notify of deaths

HR, 14, 19

GCI, 15 (see ICRC updated Commentary), 16 (see ICRC updated Commentary), 17 (see ICRC updated Commentary)

GCII, 18/1 (see ICRC updated Commentary), 19 (see ICRC updated Commentary)

GCIII, 120/3

GCIV, 16/2, 129/2

PI, 33

PII, 8

CIHL, 112, 116

last wills, documents, personal effects and valuables

HR, 19

GCI, 16/3 (see ICRC updated Commentary)
GCII, 19/3 [29] (see ICRC updated Commentary [23])

GCIII, 120/1 [12], 122/9 [30]

GCIV, 113 [31], 129/1 [13], 139 [32]

PI, 34/2(c) [33]

CIHL, 114 [34]

respect for mortal remains

GCI, 15/1 [35] (see ICRC updated Commentary [17])

GCII, 18/1 [36] (see ICRC updated Commentary [21])

GCIV, 16/2 [24]

PI, 34/1 [33]

PII, 8 [26]

CIHL, 113 [37]

decent burial

GCI, 17 [38] (see ICRC updated Commentary [9])
agreements on the return of remains

PI, 34/2 and 4 [33]

CIHL, 114 [34]

**DOCUMENTS**

German Invasion of Crete [40]

ICRC, Request to Visit Gravesites in the Falklands/Malvinas [41]

United States of America, The Death of Osama bin Laden [42]

**CASES**

Israel, Evacuation of bodies in Jenin [43]

ICRC/Lebanon, Sabra and Chatila [44]

Israel, The Rafah Case [45]

Malaysia/Philippines, Conflict over the Sultanate of Sulu [46]
Treatment of the Dead in Afghanistan

Sweden/Syria, Can Armed Groups Issue Judgments?

Colombia Peace Agreement

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

Cameroon, Dead and Missing Persons

Source URL: https://casebook.icrc.org/glossary/dead-persons

Links
[1] https://casebook.icrc.org/glossary/remains
[14]
[37] https://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule113
[39] https://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule115
[40] https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/german-invasion-crete
[41] https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/icrc-request-visit-gravesites-falklandsmalvinas