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**


**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 [14], 19 [15]

GCI, 15 [16] (see ICRC updated Commentary [17]), 16 [18] (see ICRC updated Commentary [19]), 17 [8] (see ICRC updated Commentary [9])

GCI, 18/1 [20] (see ICRC updated Commentary [21]), 19 [22] (see ICRC updated Commentary [23])

GCI, 120/3 [12]

GCIV, 16/2 [24], 129/2 [13]

PI, 33 [25]

PII, 8 [26]

CIHL, 112 [27], 116 [28]

last wills, documents, personal effects and valuables

HR, 19 [15]

GCI, 16/3 [18] (see ICRC updated Commentary [19])
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, 34/1 [33]
CIHL, 115 [39]

PI, 34/2 and 4 [33]
CIHL, 114 [34]

DOCUMENTS

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ICRC, Request to Visit Gravesites in the Falklands/Malvinas [41]
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Cameroon, Dead and Missing Persons

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

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[40] https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/german-invasion-crete
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