The term refers to means of warfare [1] generally employed in armed conflicts. The term distinguishes this class of weapons [2] from weapons of mass destruction (i.e., nuclear, chemical and biological/bacteriological weapons). International humanitarian law bans or restricts certain conventional weapons to protect civilians from their indiscriminate [3] effects and to spare combatants from suffering superfluous injuries [4] that serve no military purpose. As a consequence, specific weapons are forbidden in all circumstances because of their characteristics (e.g. laser weapons [5]), others are governed by restrictions in use (e.g. incendiary weapons [6]) and others can be both prohibited and restricted in use, according to their type and the treaty obligations applicable (e.g. mines [7]).

See Weapons [2]; Mines [7]; Incendiary weapons [6]; Laser weapons [5]; Remnants of war [8]; Cluster munitions [9]; Ammunition [10]; Dum-dum bullets [11]; Non-detectable fragments [12];
Mines

CIHL, 80

CIHL, 81

CIHL, 82

CIHL, 83

CCW Protocol II

CCW Protocol II (amended, 1996)

Ottawa Convention

Incendiary weapons

CIHL, 84

CCW Protocol III

Non-detectable fragments

CIHL, 79
CCW Protocol I [26]

Blinding weapons

CIHL, 86 [27]

CCW Protocol IV [28]

Explosive remnants

CCW Protocol V [29]

DOCUMENTS


Amendment to Article 1 of the 1980 Convention, in Order to Extend it to Non-International Armed Conflicts [31]


Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction [33]

Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Incendiary Weapons (Protocol III to the 1980 Convention)
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Suggested readings:


Further readings:


Source URL: https://casebook.icrc.org/glossary/conventional-weapons

Links
[37] https://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/INTRO/610
[38] https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/united-states-memorandum-law-use-lasers-anti-personnel-weapons