Any object which is not a military objective [1].

A civilian object must not be attacked unless it is used in a way that renders it a military objective [1]. It may not be the target of reprisals [2].

In case of doubt whether an object which is normally a civilian object (e.g., a place of worship, a house or other dwellings, a school) is a military objective [1], it must be considered as a civilian object.

See Property [3]; Cultural property [4]; Environment [5]; Water [6];
Protection: general (+ principle of distinction)

HR, 23(g) [10], 25 [11], 26 [12], 27 [13], 28 [14], 46 [15], 47 [16], 52 [17], 53 [18], 54 [19]

GCIV, 33 [20], 46 [21], 53 [22]

PI, 48 [23], 51 [24], 52 [25], 57 [25]

CIHL, 7 [26], 8 [27], 9 [28], 10 [28]

Protection: precautionary measures (See also Precautions against the effects of attacks [29]; Precautions in attack [30])

HR, 26 [12]:27 [13]

PI, 48 [31], 51 [24], 56-58 [32]

Protection: prohibition of confiscation

HR, 46/2 [15]

CIHL, 51(a) and (c) [33]

Protection: prohibition of destruction and seizure unless required by military necessity (See also Property [3]; Seizure [34])

HR, 23(g) [10]
Protection: against direct attack

HR, 25 [37], 27 [38]

PI, 52/1 [39], 56 [32], 59-60 [40]

CIHL, 7 [26] and 10 [28]

Protection: prohibition of indiscriminate attacks (See also Indiscriminate attacks [41])

PI, 52/4-5 [39]

Protection: prohibition of pillage (See also Pillage [42])

HR, 28 [43]

GCI, 15/1 [44] (see ICRC updated Commentary [45])

GCII, 18/1 [46] (see ICRC updated Commentary [47])
Protection: presumption of civilian character

PI, 52/3 [39]

Protection: prohibition of reprisals (See also Reprisals [2])

GCIV, 33 [20]

PI, 52/1 [8]

Grave breach (See also Grave breaches [51])

GCIV, 147 [52]

PI, 85 [53]

specially protected objects

cultural objects (See Cultural objects [4])

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works and installations containing dangerous forces (See Works and installations containing dangerous forces [55])

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Iran/Iraq, UN Security Council Assessing Violations of International Humanitarian Law [59]

ICTY, The Prosecutor v. Rajic [Part A., paras 39 and 42] [60]

ICTY, The Prosecutor v. Strugar [Part B., para. 282] [61]

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ICRC, Statement - War in Cities ; What is at Stake?

Iraq, The Battle for Mosul
Eastern Ukraine, Attacks Against and Military Use of Schools [85]

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BIBLIOGRAPHIC RESOURCES

Suggested readings:

GEHRING Robert W., “Protection of Civilian Infrastructures”, in Law and Contemporary Problems


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Links