

International Humanitarian Law

Guide Information

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Description: Designed to cover research on issues related to international humanitarian law, including law of war and law of armed conflict. Sections include locating international instruments, cases, national law, and more.

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Introduction

Introduction

International humanitarian law (IHL) deals with the rules that protect potential or actual victims of armed conflict, rules on the conduct of warfare, and the rules relating to the rights and duties of armed forces during a conflict. IHL includes "Geneva law" as well as "Hague law." IHL is often also referred to as "law of armed conflicts" and "law of war".

IHL also involves many other areas of law: [refugee law](#), [human rights](#), [migration](#), peaceful settlement of disputes, diplomatic relations, environmental law, and more.

For more introductory information, see [International Humanitarian Law: Answers to your Questions](#) by the ICRC.

Research Guides & Bibliographies

These resources are good starting points for most research projects. They will identify relevant books, articles, and websites.

ASIL Guide to Electronic Resources for International Law, [Humanitarian Law](#). An annotated guide focusing on many topics: humanitarian law, human rights, the United Nations, and more.

Harvard Law Library, [International Humanitarian Law](#) research Guide.

[Globlex](#), research guides on international, foreign and comparative law topics.

[International Criminal Courts for the Former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone: A Guide to Online and Print Resources](#).

Peace Palace Library, [Bibliography on International Humanitarian Law](#), includes citations to books and articles.

Research Guide: [International Humanitarian Law](#).

United Nations Documentation: [Research Guide](#).

Background Information

These are good sources for getting started on a research project. Some of these sources are available in print and electronically by subscription.

[Encyclopedia of Public International Law](#) (UCB only).

[Encyclopedia of Human Rights](#) (UCB only).

[Law of War Deskbook and Documentary Supplements](#).

[Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace](#) (UCB only).

[Parry and Grant Encyclopaedic Dictionary of International Law](#) (UCB only).

Laws, Treaties, UN Documents & Cases

International Treaties, Agreements & UN Documents

These resources provide the text of treaties and agreements as well as relevant UN documents.

ICRC, [Treaties & Documents](#), access to the Geneva conventions plus other treaties and documents, includes current status and ratification information. This database also includes Commentaries for the on the four Geneva Conventions and their two Additional Protocols of 1977. The Commentaries are also available in print (4 vols.) in the [Law Library](#) and in PDF at the Library of Congress [website](#).

[Switzerland](#) is the official depository for the Geneva Conventions (in French only).

[Electronic Information System for International Law](#) (EISIL), a good way to access primary sources as well as other research tools available on the internet.

[Flare Index to Treaties](#), a searchable database on over 2,000 multilateral treaties.

[Laws of War](#) (Avalon Project), provides access to a historical collection of instruments and documents.

Library of Congress, [Geneva Conventions Materials](#), a collection of ICRC and US Government materials related to the conventions.

[United Nations Documents](#), access to basic documents, like the UN Charter and resolutions.

[United Nations Official Documents Service](#) (ODS), Official United Nations documentation, beginning in 1993 and also provides access to the resolutions of the General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council and the Trusteeship Council from 1946 onwards.

[UNBISnet](#), the catalogue of United Nations(UN) documents and publications indexed by the UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library and the Library of the UN Office at Geneva. Also included are commercial publications and other non-UN sources held in the collection of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library. The coverage of UNBISnet is from 1979 onward.

[United Nations Treaty Collection](#), access to treaties and agreements published in the United Nations Treaty Series (U.N.T.S.). Also includes *Multilateral Treaties Deposited with the Secretary-General*, a good source for updated information on UN treaties. Note: this site is not easy to navigate and search.

[UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#), collection of human rights instruments, including humanitarian law.

[HeinOnline](#) (UCB only), this United Nations Law Collection covers U.N.T.S. and is much easier to search than the UN Treaty Collection noted above.

[Frequently Cited Treaties and Other International Agreements](#), a handy list of treaties with Bluebook citations and links to the text.

International Cases

There is no one database that provides access to all cases from international courts and tribunals. These are the primary databases.

[International Court of Justice](#)

[World Court Digest](#), a compendium of the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice.

[International Criminal Court for the Former Yugoslavia](#)

[Topical Digest of Case Law](#) (Human Rights Watch)

[ICTY Judgment Summaries](#)

[International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda](#)

[Digest of the Case Law](#) (Human Rights Watch)

[ICTR Judgment Summaries](#)

[International Criminal Court](#)

[Special Court for Sierra Leone](#)

[Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia](#) (select English)

[Basic Documents and Jurisprudence of International/ized Criminal Courts and Tribunals \(UCB only\)](#), a searchable database of jurisprudence and key documents relating to international/ized criminal courts and tribunals.

[Commonwealth and International Human Rights Case Law Databases](#), provides access to case law from international human rights bodies and Commonwealth country courts.

[International Law Reports \(UCB only\)](#), reprints, in English, selected decisions from the highest national courts as well as international courts and tribunals. Also available in print.

[Oxford Reports on International Law \(UCB only\)](#), provides access to jurisprudence from the African Commission, the European Court of Human Rights, and several UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies.

WorldLII, [International Courts & Tribunals Project](#), access to cases from selected international courts and tribunals.

There are many print collections of cases from international courts and tribunals. Here are some of the most notable.

[Global War Crimes Tribunal Collection](#) (1997-).

[Annotated Leading Cases of International criminal Tribunals](#) (1999-, with coverage from 1993). Full text of the most important decisions, including concurring, separate and dissenting opinions. Distinguished experts in the field of international criminal law have commented the most important decisions of the ICTY, ICTR, The Special Court for Sierra Leone, The International Criminal Tribunal for Timor-Leste and the ICC. Also available [electronically](#).

[International Criminal Law Reports](#) (2000-).

National Law

ICRC, [National Implementation](#), the database includes the texts of legal measures adopted by States. Such measures may take a variety of forms, including constitutional provisions, specific laws (e.g. Geneva Conventions Acts), parts of more general laws (e.g. criminal codes), regulations and decrees. Relevant decisions of national courts are also included when available.

National Implementation of International Humanitarian Law, Biannual Update on National Legislation and Case Law, 90

INT'L. REV. RED CROSS 777 (2008).

OECD, BiosecurityCodes, [Legislation](#), a selection of sites that collect or provide access to national legislation relating to security, biosafety, bioterrorism, biological weapons, import / export of dual-use materials, and biodiversity.

Oxford Reports on International Law: [International Law in Domestic Courts](#) (UCB only), searchable database containing national case law that deals with international topics.

Research Websites

Selected Websites

This is a small sampling of the many valuable websites available for researching humanitarian law. To locate more resources, search [EISIL](#).

[ICRC Website](#), provides access to many resources including treaties, international documents, articles, reports and more.

[Customary International Humanitarian Law](#), the online updated coverage of the [Study on customary international humanitarian law](#), conducted by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and published by Cambridge University Press in 2005.

UN, [Humanitarian Affairs](#), this page outlines the UN's work in humanitarian affairs, including all of the bodies involved in this work. Also organizes information on thematic issues: climate change, global food security, protection of civilians in armed conflict, and more.

[UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#), provides links to news, reports and information on current areas in need. Includes the [Reference Guides on Humanitarian Normative Decisions](#) which includes a link to the Compilation of United Nations Resolutions on Humanitarian Assistance.

[International Humanitarian Law Research Initiative](#), a great source for identifying news, reports, documents, and publications related to IHL.

[Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research](#), the collection of publications includes an Occasional Paper Series, journal articles, book chapters, conference reports, policy briefs, and more. Many of these items are available in PDF.

[ReliefWeb](#), this is an incredible resource containing news, reports, documents, maps, and other information. The advanced search allows the research to search by keyword and limit to a specific type of document (news, agreement, analysis) or by emergency. This is a good way to locate documents from other organizations.

[IRIN](#): Humanitarian News and Analysis.

[REFWORLD](#) (UNHCR), this collection contains a large collect of reports relating to situations in countries of origin, policy documents and positions, and documents relating to international and national legal frameworks. The information has been compiled from UNHCR's field offices, Governments, international, regional and non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and judicial bodies.

[War Crimes Research Portal](#), this portal contains links to other valuable sites for research, searchable war crimes research memoranda, a [research guide on international humanitarian law](#), an "instant analysis" section containing articles, and a bibliography of books and law journals.

[FIRST 2.0](#), "Facts on International Relations and Security Trends."

[International Crisis Group](#), documents and information on conflict analysis around the world.

[Rule of Law in Armed Conflicts Project](#) (RULAC), access to law and information on countries and issues. Contains a Legal Developments Archive.

[ICC Legal Tools](#), you must accept the terms of use before you can access the tools available. Tools include basic documents, national law, international law, and some commentary. For "ICRC Customary International Humanitarian Law," see the "Publicists" section.

[Military Legal Resources](#) (Library of Congress), collection includes primary source materials and publications in the field of military law.

Journals, Books & Working Papers

Selected Publications

Peace Palace Library - A good way to keep up on new publications, including articles and books, is to use the [Peace Palace Library's Topics and Keywords](#) search. Simply select "international humanitarian law" and the database will run a search for all items in the Peace Palace catalog with this tag.

Journals

One of the best ways to locate articles is to use legal journal indexes. The best of the indexes include:

- [Index to Legal Periodicals & Books](#)
- [Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals](#)
- [Legal Resource Index](#) (also known as Legaltrac)
- [Legal Journals Index \(WL\)](#)

Legal Resource Index and Legal Journals Index are available on Westlaw.

[African Yearbook on International Humanitarian Law](#) (Juta, 2006-)

[International Review of the Red Cross](#) (ICRC, 1961-).

[Journal of Conflict & Security Law](#) (previous title, *Journal of Armed Conflict Law*) (Oxford University Press, 2000-).

[Journal of International Criminal Justice](#) (Oxford University Press, 2003-).

[Journal of International Humanitarian Legal Studies](#) (Martinus Nijhoff, 2010-).

[Journal of International Peacekeeping](#) (Martinus Nijhoff, 2009-).

[Revue Humanitaire](#) (Médecins du Monde, 2000-).

[Yearbook of International Humanitarian Law](#) (Cambridge University Press, 1998-).

Collections of Working Papers

The Armed Groups Project, [Working Papers](#).

[HPCR Research and Working Papers](#).

IHL Research Initiative, [Publications](#).

International Center for Transitional Justice, [Publications](#).

[Social Science Research Network](#) (SSRN).

Journal Articles from Other Disciplines

The main library offers many databases for locating journal literature from other disciplines, like international relations, peace and conflict studies, political science, public policy, and many more. To locate relevant databases, select the subject from the [A-Z list](#). Databases noted as "Recommended" are good places to start.

Books

To identify books in our collection, search [LawCat](#) using keywords.

YUTAKA ARAI-TAKAHASHI, [THE LAW OF OCCUPATION: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW, AND ITS INTERACTION WITH INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW](#) (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2009).

ANDREA BIANCHI, [INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW AND TERRORISM](#) (Hart, 2011).

ANTHONY CULLEN, [THE CONCEPT OF NON-INTERNATIONAL ARMED CONFLICT IN INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW](#) (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[CUSTOMARY INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW](#) (JEAN-MARIE HENCKAERTS AND LOUISE DOSWALK-BECK eds., Cambridge,; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005). See also the [ICRC database](#).

RICHARD GOLDSTEIN & ADAM SMITH, [INTERNATIONAL JUDICIAL INSTITUTIONS: THE ARCHITECTURE OF INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE AT HOME AND ABROAD](#) (Routledge, 2009).

RYAN GOODMAN & MINDY JANE ROSEMAN, [INTERROGATIONS, FORCED FEEDINGS, AND THE ROLE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS: NEW PERSPECTIVES ON INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS, HUMANITARIAN LAW, AND ETHICS](#) (Cambridge, MA: Human Rights Program, Harvard Law School, 2009).

ERIC A. HEINZE, [WAGING HUMANITARIAN WAR: THE ETHICS, LAW, AND POLITICS OF HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION](#) (SUNY Press, c2009).

NOELLE HIGGINS, [REGULATING THE USE OF FORCE IN WARS OF NATIONAL LIBERATION: THE NEED FOR A NEW REGIME: A STUDY OF THE SOUTH MOLUCCAS AND ACEH](#) (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2010).

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW SERIES (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers). This series of monographs and edited volumes aims to promote scholarly analysis and discussion of both the theory and practice of the international legal regulation of armed conflict.

[LAW OF WAR DESKBOOK & DOCUMENTARY SUPPLEMENT](#).

MICHAEL LEWIS, ERIC JENSEN, GEOFFREY CORN, VICTOR HANSEN, RICHARD JACKSON AND JAMES SCHOETTLER , [THE WAR ON TERROR AND THE LAWS OF WAR: A MILITARY PERSPECTIVE](#) (Oxford University Press, 2009).

MARCO SASSÒLI, ANTOINE BOUVIER, [HOW DOES LAW PROTECT IN WAR? CASES, DOCUMENTS AND TEACHING MATERIALS ON CONTEMPORARY PRACTICE IN INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW](#) (2nd ed. 2006).

GARY SOLIS, [THE LAW OF ARMED CONFLICT: INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW IN WAR](#) (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Blogs, Podcasts & More

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Center for Human Rights & Humanitarian Law, [Podcasts and Webcasts](#).

[Forced Migration Current Awareness Blog](#).

[Robert Chesney's National Security Law Listserv](#).

[International Justice Tribune](#).

[IntLawGrrls](#) [Blog].

[Lawfare Blog](#).

[Kenneth Anderson's Law of War and Just War Theory Blog](#).

[The Morning Brief](#), news round-up about security, law and policy (Fordham Law School, Center on National Security).

[Opinio Juris](#) [Blog].

Oxford Institute for Ethics, [Law and Armed Conflict, Podcasts](#).

[UN Pulse](#) [Blog], a blog alerting you to just-released UN online information, major reports, publications and documents.

[War Crimes Prosecution Watch](#) [Biweekly Newsletter].

[War in Context](#) [Blog].

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