



THE JOURNALIST SURVIVAL GUIDE

AN ANIMATED VIDEO GUIDE



Lesson 5

What are your international rights?

During armed conflicts, everyone, and whatever his occupation shall comply with these rules of international humanitarian law and put them into practice.

“The human dignity of all individuals must be respected at all times. Everything possible must be done, without any kind of discrimination, to reduce the suffering of those who take no direct part in the conflict or who have been put out of action by, for example, sickness, wounds or captivity.”

Persons no longer involved in fighting (“hors de combat” e.g. sick and wounded soldiers, detainees and prisoners of war) and those who do not take a direct part in hostilities (civilians) are entitled to respect for their lives and physical and moral integrity. They shall in all circumstances be protected and treated humanely without any adverse distinction.

It is forbidden to kill or injure an enemy who surrenders or who is “hors de combat”
The wounded and sick shall be collected and cared for. Protection extends to those persons and facilities involved in the care of the wounded and sick: medical personnel, hospitals and First Aid posts, transports and material. The emblem of the Red Cross, red crescent or red crystal is the sign of such protection and must be respected by all.

Captured combatants and civilians under the authority of an adverse party are entitled to respect for their lives, dignity, personal rights and convictions. They shall be protected against all acts of violence and reprisals. They shall have the right to correspond with their families and to receive relief and medical care.

Everyone shall be entitled to benefit from fundamental judicial guarantees. No one shall be held responsible for an act he has not committed. No one shall be subjected to physical or mental torture, corporal punishment or cruel and degrading treatment. Hostage taking is prohibited. The choice of method and means of warfare is not unlimited. It is prohibited to use weapons and methods of warfare that cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering.

Attacks shall distinguish between the civilian population and combatants and between civilian objects and military objectives. Accordingly, operations shall be directed only against military objectives. Indiscriminate attacks are prohibited.

Any contravention of these provisions is a breach of the law, which may make people liable to penal sanctions.

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