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Contemporary Armed Conflicts in Ukraine as a Challenge for IHL: Cases, Prospects and Paradigms

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Abstract

The topic relevance is due to the need to consider the possibility of applying the international humanitarian law norms during military operations in Ukraine, given that the modern realities of the war in Ukraine are accompanied by obvious violations of the norms of IHL in relation to the civilian population and the military. The aim of the work was to determine features of the IHL application in the context of military actions in Ukraine. A randomized systematic review was conducted, based on the search for publications for the period 2018–2024 in the scientometric databases. The research identified the main aspects and challenges of applying the IHL norms within the realities of the armed conflicts of today. Data on compliance and application of IHL in the context of modern challenges are presented and analyzed. It is shown that the IHL application in zones of armed conflicts is a complex process that requires constant international

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efforts. To illustrate the challenges arising within the implementation of IHL, the article examines the conflicts in Syria and Israel. Despite different geopolitical contexts, these conflicts have common features – massive IHL violations and humanitarian crises, war crimes. The features of violations of IHL norms during the current military aggression in Ukraine were identified. The paper not only conducted a comparative analysis of IHL norms implementation in conflict zones, but also put forward recommendations/proposals to promote their compliance. The paper identifies factors that are important in the IHL implementation in Ukraine during wartime. The need for control and development of effective methods for compliance with IHL during wartime is considered.

Keywords: domestic law; international humanitarian law; implementation; war crimes; criminal liability; crime.

Introduction

Today, armed conflicts and wars continue to destroy cities and countries, destabilize situations and cause enormous suffering to both civilians and those who are subject to military service. In these situations, IHL serves as the main framework that can mitigate the effects of military conflicts and protect the population's rights. However, despite the humanitarian principles offered by IHL, their implementation in countries at war is fraught with difficulties (Borrell, 2024). The application of IHL is not just a major task in the context of military conflicts – it is an urgent and pressing issue that threatens the lives of a large number of people. Military conflicts occurred in many countries: Syria, Yemen, the occupied territories of Israel and Palestine, the war in Iraq, and in recent years, military operations have been taking place in Ukraine and other countries, so the application and ratification of, and compliance with, the basic principles of IHL is an urgent and obvious need.

The scientific literature in recent years, as well as press releases of international humanitarian associations, clearly emphasize that the main point for mitigating armed conflicts is to comply with all the principles of IHL and implement them in places where military conflicts are ongoing (ICRC, 2021). The main components of IHL are humane principles, distinction and military proportionality, which determine the strategic behaviour of the conflict parties and minimize the harm that may be caused to the civilian population during a military conflict. Humanity necessitates respect for each person's worth and dignity, even when differentiation forces parties to distinguish between military members and civilians in order to stop attacks on civilians. Military necessity permits the use of force only to the amount required to accomplish justifiable military objectives, considering minimizing harm to civilians within proportionality to the military advantage obtained (Kaja, 2019).

Basic IHL principles are clear and clearly stated, but their implementation faces sound challenges, especially in the context of hostilities, military conflicts accompanied by brutal violence, instability in political and economic domains, and human rights violations (Gunawan, *et al.* 2023; Le Moli, 2021). The link between IHL and state sovereignty complicates matters further, since governments frequently prioritize their sovereignty over international legal responsibilities, resulting in an imbalance between IHL compliance and state sovereignty respect. IHL ratification is made more difficult by the spread of new technologies in military conflicts because relevant actors may not be constrained by the primary legal framework and may take calculated actions that go against accepted behavioural norms (ICRC, 2022, 2023). Despite some research on determining the specifics of the implementation of IHL in the context of military operations in Ukraine, this issue has not been sufficiently covered and there is a need for further study and analysis, and for determining effective mechanisms for its application.

Therefore, the current issue is to determine the specifics of the IHL application within the landscape of military actions in Ukraine.

The work attempts to determine the features of the IHL application in the context of military actions in Ukraine. Conducting a comprehensive analysis of the challenges in accordance with scientific research, critical remarks and recommendations on the IHL application in regions of military conflicts. Having analysed the basic principles of IHL, various examples of military conflicts, studying criticism and providing recommendations for improvement, the study will help formulate a number of important provisions on the difficulties of applying IHL in Ukraine.

Work tasks: (1) to investigate the current state of the problem according to scientometric sources and determine the main aspects of the formation of norms of IHL; (2) to study the peculiarities of the norms of IHL and highlight issues related to war crimes and criminal liability in crisis conditions of war; (3) to conduct an analysis of international experience in the humanitarian law application during military operations; (4) to identify proposals for the effective implementation of IHL in the context of the war in Ukraine.

Literature review

Of course, the issue of protecting human rights is particularly acute in countries where war is raging, because it is during military conflicts that a large number of human rights violations occur (Taran & Hryha, 2024; Meltzer, 2020). This area falls under the IHL is a set of international legal norms aimed at human rights protection during war and establishing prohibitions or restrictions on methods and means of warfare, as well as responsibility for violations of relevant principles

and norms (Zamryga, 2022; Mangora *et al.*, 2024; Mangora & Mangora, 2023; Tertyshnyka *et al.*, 2023). The three main tasks of IHL are to protect, limit, prevent. IHL is reflected in relevant international treaties and conventions and applies to all parties-participants in the conflict and is based on a variety of sources, such as treaties, customary law, and basic legal concepts. Fundamentally, IHL, often referred to as the law of war or the law of armed conflict, is a body of legislation intended to lessen the armed conflict effects on both military troops and civilians. It is important to adhere to the basic and fundamental principles of IHL such as humanity, proportionality, and distinction (Usmanov & Vergeles, 2022; Dzehtsiarou & Tzevelekos, 2022; Archibong, 2023). It can be said that humanity is the fundamental principle that determines the formulation of other IHL principles. Humanity in armed conflict refers to respecting the dignity of people, namely taking all measures for their protection. This implies prohibition of violence, ill-treatment, and ensuring the safety and security of medical personnel and medical facilities. Mass attacks must not target civilians or civilian-related property (Le Moli, 2021).

An important feature of IHL is the universal application of its principles and laws, which applies to all types of armed conflicts, such as international/non-international. This means that states are obliged to comply with the principles of IHL even if they are involved in conflicts against non-international actors or unrecognized groups. In this regard, IHL may be viewed as reinforcing state sovereignty by acknowledging states' key responsibility in guaranteeing international law conformity (Zyberi, 2018). In general, actually, the link between IHL and state sovereignty is tight and balanced. IHL recognizes the need of state responsibility and enforcement in ensuring that its principles are followed, even as it attempts to limit state sovereignty during armed conflict (Dzehtsiarou & Tzevelekos, 2022).

All of the above requires the development of strategies and approaches to implementing the norms of IHL that take into account the needs of Ukraine in the context of military actions.

Methodology

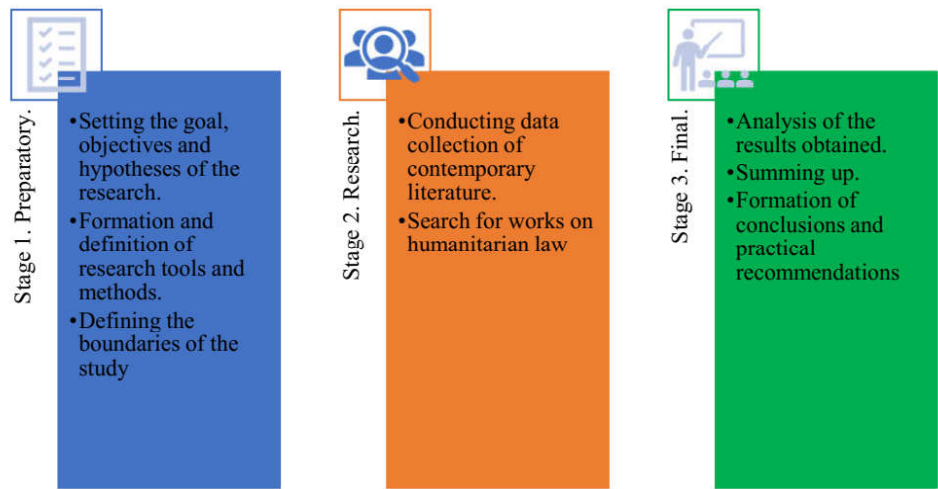
The study was conducted through an analysis of scientific literature. To analyze the literature on the current state of the problem, databases (Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed and Google Scholar) were used for searching the publications of the period 2018–2024. The search was carried out using the keywords “domestic law”, “international humanitarian law”, “implementation”, “war crimes”, “criminal responsibility”, “crime”. The analysis included scientific articles from recent years, 38 of which were included in the study.

Research design and approach

This study was conducted sequentially in several stages, according to the design presented in Figure 1. The methodology used in this study is a case-based approach, which includes bibliometric and documentary analysis. This allows for a thorough and in-depth analysis of the issues of armed conflicts, human rights violations and the challenges of implementing IHL.

Initially, an analysis of modern scientific literature by domestic Ukrainian and foreign authors was conducted, the goal and objectives of the study were set, the sample was formed, and the tools, methods, and boundaries of the study were determined. During the second stage, data collection was conducted.

The data were collected from scientific articles, reports, monographic books, and online resources. Documents and reports from international organizations such as ICRC were used. Sources such as scientific articles and books were used to analyse and contextualize the problem, and also served to create a theoretical basis for the study. The final stage of the work involved analysing the research data, drawing conclusions, and formulating practical recommendations. The collected data was processed based on a qualitative approach application. This involved examining related themes and trends in the data as well as evaluating the data in light of the goals and problem of the study. The analysis of the research results also included comparing the data with the current literature on the research question and identifying the absence of certain data in the literature.



Source : created by authors

Figure 1. Stages of conducting the study

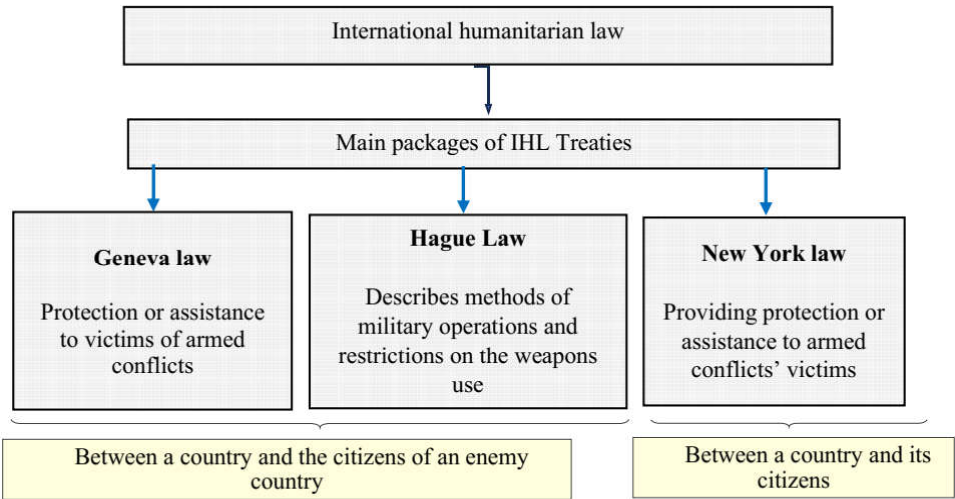
Study limitations

It should be noted the study is based on secondary data sources, which may not offer a comprehensive picture of the reality on the ground, and that the study is constrained by the number of research questions and objectives, which may not address all topics.

Results

In the course of our research, an analysis of literary data was conducted to highlight the issue of defining and assessing the challenges associated with the IHL application in countries during military operations.

Implementing IHL in conflict areas around the globe is a never-ending task that is fraught with challenges. To overcome humanitarian crises that occur during armed conflicts, it is essential to comprehend how IHL is used in practical situations, from its basic principles to its critiques and difficulties. According to experts, the application of international law principles must be consistent with one another (Arai, 2023) (Figure 2).



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Figure 2. IHL legislative base structure

IHL's cornerstone, humanity, demands all armed conflict' parties to be respected for their worth and dignity. It requires that medical personnel and healthcare (medical) facilities be safe and prohibits hostility, abuse, and maltreatment. To ensure that civilians and facilities are not intentionally targeted, the idea of

distinction demands parties to make a difference between fighters and civilians. The principles of IHL require that military actions be proportionate to the military advantage gained, while avoiding harm to the civilian population. In armed conflicts, it is permissible to use force to achieve military objectives within the limits of the law and to the extent necessary.

Although the IHL application is intended to be universal, its implementation in a broad range of conflict zones across the world is problematic. Let us look at the conflict in Syria as an example to understand patterns of IHL application in a specific practical case.

The military conflict in Syria has been ongoing since 2011 within the Arab Spring uprisings and has escalated into a horrific civil war (Nayef Alakash *et al.*, 2024). The war has involved multiple parties and countries, rebel groups, extremist organizations, and the international community. The situation in Syria is dire by the core principles of IHL, with over a million displaced persons, widespread destruction of infrastructure, and numerous violations of human rights and IHL (Chalisey, 2024).

The IHL implementation in Syria is seriously hampered by the unwillingness of all parties-participants in the military conflict to adhere to its core principles. The civilian population bears the brunt of the violence, crimes, attacks, mass killings, and the use of prohibited weapons. Both the Government and non-state armed groups are accused of committing serious violations of IHL, including attacks on civilian areas, cities, medical facilities, and educational institutions (Oweis, 2018).

The UN and other humanitarian bodies are aggressively pushing the adoption of IHL in Syria. The UN Security Council has passed resolutions condemning assaults on civilians and urging humanitarian access to conflict areas. However, these attempts have frequently been delayed by political disagreements and the refusal of the conflicting parties to comply with their international legal commitments.

The Syrian crisis has also highlighted the difficulties in holding people accountable for IHL violations. Despite considerable evidence of war crimes and crimes against civilians, accountability procedures remain restricted. Geopolitical reasons have hampered efforts to report Syria's situation to the International Criminal Court, while local accountability systems have been ineffectual (Barakat & Hatay, 2019).

The example of Syria highlights the critical need and importance of upholding IHL and implementing accountability in the field of hostilities. The situation in Syria serves as a stark reminder of the catastrophic consequences of failing to uphold IHL principles, underscoring the urgent need to uphold human rights and international law. All of the fundamental principles of IHL have been violated in the Syrian military conflict, with the civilian population suffering the most from the violence. Armed groups have been accused of committing serious violations, such as using prohibited weapons and attacking civilian areas without warning.

The humanitarian situation is severely hampered by the refusal of all sides to the armed conflict to respect the precepts of IHL.

The wars between Israel and Hamas and between Russia and Ukraine have left many internally displaced persons in their wake. The Hamas attack on southern Israel near the Gaza Strip on 7 October 2023 led to a swift Israeli response, forcing civilians in the Gaza Strip, Rafah and other Palestinian towns to flee their homes (Ogechukwu, 2025). A similar situation developed in Ukraine after the Russian invasion in 2022. IHL enables a legal framework for protecting IDPs and the regulation of military conflicts and actions of both international and non-international nature (Oleinik, 2024).

The leading institutional structure in achieving this goal of protecting IDPs is the United Nations (UN), established under the UN Charter. This article analyzes the effectiveness of available legal and institutional mechanisms for armed conflicts victims protection, particularly in the context of the conflicts between Hamas and Israel and between Russia and Ukraine (Bhattacharya, 2023).

The Gaza war has been one of the most violent events in the long-running Arab-Israeli conflict. Hamas and Islamic Jihad, Palestinian armed factions, have launched an estimated 5,000 rockets against Israeli border towns and Tel Aviv (Diderik, 2024). At the same time, approximately 1,000 Hamas terrorists stormed the border barrier between Israel and Gaza in multiple locations, attacking a number of Israeli communities, murdering over 1,000 people and capturing 247 Israelis, the majority of them were civilians. In the 75 years that Israel has been as a state, this was the worst loss of civilians lives. Operation Iron Swords, which featured heavy air and ground bombardments of northern Gaza and ultimately the whole Gaza Strip, was the Israel Defence Forces' (IDF) response. The beginning of Israel's military operations began with the neutralization of Hamas militants who carried out the attack and the destruction of most of Hamas' rocket launchers.

Media reports claim that the parties to this conflict have not always respected IHL, with dire consequences for the civilian population. Hamas has disregarded the law, for example by deliberately attacking and taking Israeli civilians hostage and using them as human shields. Among other things, Israel has failed to ensure that adequate humanitarian aid reaches Gaza, as it is obliged to do under the Geneva Conventions.

According to the literature, Israel, during its occupation of Gaza, is not adhering to the basic principles of IHL, according to which the occupation of a territory during a military conflict should be temporary. The occupying power should administer the territory, trying to preserve the pre-war situation on the ground in order to preserve the interests of the occupied population. It is Israel's denial of humanitarian aid and basic necessities to Gaza that violates the Rome Statute. They are deliberately starving civilians, depriving them of vital facilities and preventing the delivery of assistance in accordance with the Geneva Conventions. According to WHO, Israeli forces have killed an average of 100 Palestinian

children every day since the beginning of the conflict. The daily number of dead and injured journalists, medical personnel and fleeing civilians is increasing, and a large number of civilian objects are being destroyed, which clearly violates the cardinal principles of distinction and proportionality. A serious fact of violations is the use of prohibited weapons such as white phosphorus, cluster bombs, and repeated airstrikes, all of which confirm violations of IHL. A key tenet of IHL is proportionality, which serves as an excellent illustration of how to strike a balance between military and humanitarian concerns. This concept states that an attack on a lawful military target is forbidden if the anticipated “collateral” harm to civilians is disproportionate to the operation’s anticipated military benefit. The greater this advantage, the more “collateral harm” is permissible under IHL.

Both sides are committing serious violations of IHL, and the UN’s failure to address this issue is due to the political strategy of the governing bodies, particularly the UN Security Council. The veto power enjoyed by individual member states prevents meaningful action to end hostilities and accountability. Resolutions from the General Assembly often fail, hindering the application of IHL and shielding the parties from accountability, including by preventing cases from being referred to the International Criminal Court. IHL announces the authority through basic principles and laws to hold accountable those who committed war crimes, crimes of genocide and crimes against civilians, and crimes of aggression. The vulnerability of IDPs highlights the need to protect them from forced labour, sexual violence and exploitation, especially for women and girls among IDPs, highlighting the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas on the one hand and Russia-Ukraine on the other; which has resulted in millions of displaced persons as a result of military action.

Humanitarian law efforts to protect these displaced persons should be based on international, regional and national instruments; and relevant national governments are obliged to implement these instruments by establishing mechanisms for the protection and assistance of IDPs. IHL can also hold accountable those responsible for serious violations and abuses of the rights of IDPs through judicial protection. There is ongoing debate as to whether Hamas, as a non-state actor, can be held accountable under international human rights standards, but it is assumed that accountability is possible. In attacking Israeli civilians, Hamas has committed crimes against civilians and war crimes. According to Article 7 of the Rome Statute, a large-scale attack that involves the use of indiscriminate missiles, murder, torture, and sexual abuse is considered a crime against humanity (Kels, 2024; Gostin & Goodwin , 2024; Adler, 2024).

In Ukraine, during the current military aggression, frequent violations of IHL norms are recorded, such as the use of explosive devices in populated areas, significant civilian casualties, illegal detention, forced deportations and torture of civilians. The European Convention on Human Rights plays an important role in protecting the rights of civilians during war and armed conflict, ensuring rights such as the right to life, the prohibition of violence, and the right to a fair

trial. The effectiveness of international organizations is very low due to political obstacles that prevent the proper protection of civilian rights during war. It should be emphasized that children's rights are being violated in Ukraine during military operations. International conventions call for the application of IHL to protect children's rights and provide humanitarian assistance, but existing violations require amplifying, enhancing international control and mechanisms of monitoring.

Also, the psychological impact of military aggression on the civilian population is of great importance, which is one of the components of the problem of IHL. Fear for own safety, loss of loved ones, destruction of homes, fears for the future lead to the development of depression, anxiety, aggression, post-traumatic stress disorders, etc. Violation of norms and human rights affect the mental state of the population. Based on the above, international humanitarian organizations emphasize the importance of providing psychological assistance, but the large number of people who need it exceeds the capabilities of such assistance.

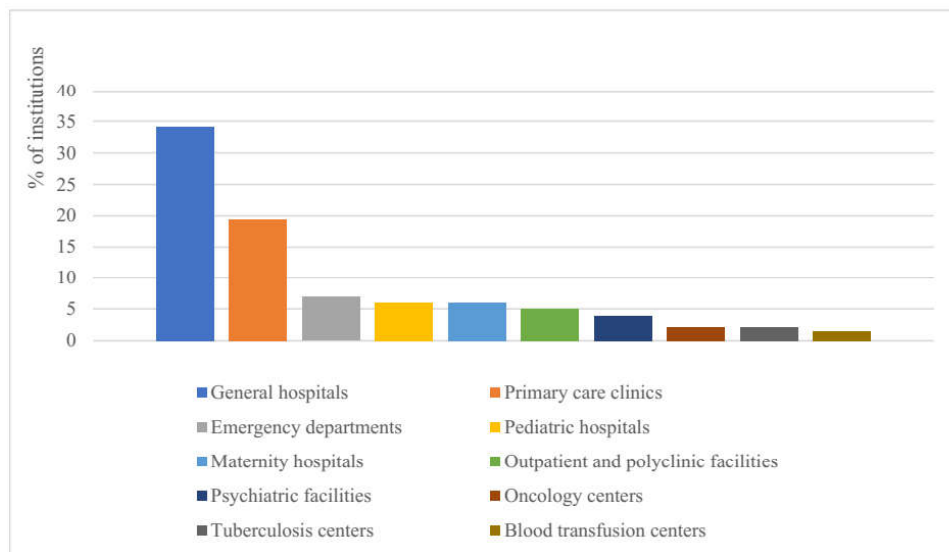
IHL aims to reduce civilian casualties by prohibiting attacks and protecting vital infrastructure. The military operations in Ukraine have demonstrated sound violations of these norms, as evidenced by the statistics on the number of civilian deaths and injuries. Artillery shelling has led to the majority of civilian casualties, as well as the use of prohibited weapons such as cluster munitions.

From the perspective of IHL principles, the presence of foreign fighters increases the risk of violations of IHL and human rights, as foreign groups may not be subject to the same legal framework as national actors. Lacking of clear legal provisions for foreign military personnel makes them vulnerable to ill-treatment and human rights violations, and creates a situation where it becomes difficult to hold them accountable for violations.

The destruction of vital infrastructure facilities such as water supply, electricity supply, and medical facilities has resulted in economic and physical losses, as well as significant humanitarian implications. The devastation of hospitals and schools had a direct impact on civilians' health and education, particularly among youngsters. It should be noted that the damage to the dam led to the leakage of water from the Kakhovka reservoir and the flooding of a large area, and the strikes on the Chernobyl nuclear power plant have put the population of not only Ukraine but also other countries at risk of radiation contamination.

In addition, the spread of infectious diseases during the hostilities in Ukraine arose due to the lack of access to medical care, creating additional risks to people's lives. Large-scale attacks on the energy sector have led to prolonged power outages, affecting approximately one million consumers and public health. In addition, the attacks have led to disruptions in the provision of water and heating, putting the civilian population, especially vulnerable people, at increased risk. Significant damage has also been recorded to cultural heritage sites, which is prohibited under IHL (their destruction and looting are prohibited during armed conflicts). Thus, according to statistical data Regarding attacks on Ukrainian healthcare facilities,

during the first year of war, there were 334 verified attacks on 267 Ukrainian healthcare facilities (Figure 3). The largest number of attacks occurred on general-profile hospitals (34.1% of attacks) and primary care clinics (19.5% of attacks).



Source: created based on Barten et al. (2023)

Figure 3. Statistical data on the level of attacks on medical institutions in Ukraine from February 2022 to February 2023

International humanitarian law establishes neutrality and the provision of humanitarian assistance. A large amount of humanitarian assistance during the war in Ukraine was received from various international organizations. This assistance includes food, medicines, temporary housing, and supervision of the most vulnerable groups. Despite tremendous efforts, resources are still not enough to provide the population's basic requirements, particularly in occupied territory. One of the most difficult aspects of humanitarian assistance is coordination across many groups and governments. The UN cluster system creates the possibility of coordination of help in critical sectors like as food security, health care, civilian protection, and education. Field hospitals inside the health cluster have been constructed to provide emergency care to the injured and unwell. Logistical challenges and limited access to combat zones make it difficult to provide help, particularly in areas where hostilities are ongoing.

Funding for humanitarian aid is also a serious problem (Orzhynska et al., 2024).

The ICC, which has jurisdiction over crimes against humanity, genocide, and war crimes, has investigated crimes committed during the war in Ukraine and found that they included mass attacks on civilians, destruction of infrastructure, and violence against adults and children. The ICC emphasizes the importance of

international justice for accountability (Barten *et al.*, 2023; Orzhynska *et al.*, 2024; Khoirunnisa *et al.*, 2025).

Discussion

IHL has been identified as the basis for regulating armed conflicts and protecting civilians (Archibong, 2023). It also defines its objectives, namely the protection of victims of hostilities and the regulation of hostilities based on a balance between military necessity on the one side and humanity on the other. The conflict in Ukraine clearly showed difficulties in the setting of contemporary warfare and the significance of rigorous adherence to international legal principles. The Geneva Conventions and its Annexes, which define the basic principles of protection of persons not involved in hostilities, remain the main instruments for the protection of people in wartime. However, violations of these principles have become widespread, which necessitates a deeper analysis of their implementation, specifically on the example of hostilities in Ukraine (Orzhynska *et al.*, 2024).

In the domain of modern challenges of military aggression, the Geneva Conventions stipulate that all significant (“serious”) violations of IHL norms are defined as war crimes (Gostin & Goodwin, 2024; Adler, 2024). The following criteria are taken into account: whether they endanger protected categories of persons (civilian population, prisoners of war, wounded and sick) and objects protected by IHL (civilian objects or infrastructure), whether fundamental values are violated, or whether prohibited weapons are used (Nazarchuk, 2022). Our work has shown that in modern military conditions in Ukraine, IHL norms are significantly violated. This is manifested in such crimes as the intentional killing of civilians and military personnel, torture and inhuman treatment, intentional infliction of severe suffering, serious bodily harm, widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure and cases of marauderism, deportation and illegal imprisonment (Gunawan, 2023). In addition, IHL prohibits : striking at the civilian population, as well as strikes that may be expected to result in excessive casualties among the civilian population in comparison with the military successes achieved; strikes on civilian objects; strikes on critical infrastructure (thermal power plants, nuclear power plants) (Tertishnyka *et al.*, 2023). During the military operations in Ukraine, all these norms were violated, including large-scale attacks on civilian facilities (hospitals, schools, kindergartens, and just homes) and energy infrastructure facilities, damage to the dam, which led to the leakage of water from the Kakhovka reservoir and flooding of a large area, attacks on the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, and many other war crimes.

IHL is a reliable tool for combating such violations, in particular through the application of its laws together with the European Convention on Human Rights (Taran & Hryha, 2024; Dzehtsiarou & Tzevelekos, 2022; Ferraro, 2021). The war

in Ukraine has revealed the need to update legal norms and basic principles on hybrid conflicts, in particular on the use of prohibited weapons, such as drones and autonomous systems. Violations of international norms emphasize the need to strengthen mechanisms of accountability for their non-compliance. IHL obliges states to prevent and prosecute serious violations, but at the same time, the sources of IHL do not establish responsibility for them and do not describe them in sufficient detail for these provisions to have direct effect in the judicial process. This role belongs to criminal law: national and international (Orzhynska *et al.*, 2024; Pylypenko, 2021).

The State shall ensure that the national justice system is able to hold individuals who are accountable for IHL violations they committed (Biloskurska & Fedorchuk, 2022; Buromenskyi, 2023). Ukrainian human rights groups are actively working to collect data on war crimes and will appeal to the European Court.

Thus, by investigating the consequences of the armed conflict on the territory of Ukraine, the prosecution and law enforcement agencies implement this obligation, carry out an objective analysis of the events and ensure the implementation of the right to justice for those affected by the events. Assessing the implementation of IHL and international norms during the war in Ukraine is a sophisticated process requiring constant monitoring, improvement and implementation. Serious problems related to coordination, access to conflict zones and financing of humanitarian programs exist. IHL provides a legal basis for providing such assistance. However, the situation in Ukraine during hostilities requires more active intervention by international organizations to overcome these challenges. Thanks to the efforts of the international community, it is possible to solve the problems of IHL implementation in conflict zones. Therefore, it is possible to provide Recommendations for strengthening compliance with IHL and reducing armed conflicts' humanitarian consequences: (1) Increase the powers of the international criminal tribunal to prosecute war crimes; (2) Expand the powers of the UN and ICRC to effectively monitoring compliance with IHL and promptly reporting violations; (3) Conduct IHL awareness training programs for all parties involved in conflicts to increase awareness and respect for IHL; (4) Encourage governments to uphold their duties under IHL and settle disputes amicably by using diplomatic pressure and mediation; (5) To stop a conflict from getting worse, fund conflict prevention programs and deal with underlying problems; (6) Provide technical support and resources to help states and non-state entities comply with IHL; (7) Provide adequate humanitarian assistance and protection to the civilian population affected by conflicts; (8) Encourage global collaboration to mobilize resources for IHL implementation, exchange best practices, and coordinate reactions.

Conclusion

The work not only conducted a comparative analysis of the implementation of IHL in conflict zones, but also put forward recommendations/proposals for their compliance.

The international community has been concerned about the growing number of armed conflicts occurring worldwide since they have led to civilian fatalities and prompted people to leave their homes in search of safety. The crisis in Syria serves as a stark reminder of the catastrophic consequences of disregarding and failing to respect the principles of IHL, underscoring the need for respect for human rights and international law and accountability in conflict zones. In Syria, the rights of civilians were violated during the conflict. Another example of a gross violation of IHL is that of Israel and Hamas during the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: deliberate attacks on civilians, hostage-taking and indiscriminate rocket fire, potentially amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Structural weaknesses in the UN Security Council, including the veto power of some member states, hinder meaningful action and accountability in addressing violations of IHL during the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In Ukraine, during the current military aggression, a large number of IHL norms were violated. Among the most common were violations of the prohibition on targeting civilians or civilian objects; indiscriminate strikes (not directed at a specific military target or weapon), as well as strikes that are likely to result in excessive civilian casualties; strikes on objects that are essential for the survival of civilians; strikes on energy facilities, etc. All these violations indicate the need to monitor and develop effective methods for compliance with the norms of IHL during wartime, in order to bring to criminal responsibility the perpetrators of these war crimes.

Urgent reforms of the UN Security Council are needed, which will be essential to mitigate the influence of veto rights, strengthen the mechanisms for the application of IHL, and promote accountability through such means as recourse to the ICC, strengthening the principle of the responsibility to protect, and the pursuit of a just and lasting peace. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the war in Ukraine serve as sober reminders of the urgent need for international action to uphold the principles of IHL and protect civilians from the horrors of war. Only concerted efforts and substantial reforms of the UN Security Council can end the violence, suffering, and bring peace to the regions concerned.

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