

Criminal Protection of Civilians and Civilian Objects during Armed Conflicts under International Humanitarian Law and Its Implications for Modern Wars- An Analytical Study –

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to shed light on the international protection afforded to civilians and civilian objects, as established under the framework of international humanitarian law. Given the proliferation of armed conflicts across the globe, as well as the increasing sophistication and quantity of weapons used, the international community strives to regulate the methods and means of warfare in order to safeguard human beings and their property, which is the fundamental objective of international humanitarian law.

Keywords: Civilians, Civilian Objects, Armed Conflicts, Protection.

1. Introduction

Recently, the scale and intensity of wars have escalated dramatically, with armed conflicts almost everywhere around the world. Despite the immense human losses caused by conflicts throughout history, particularly the devastation of the two World Wars, international attention to humanitarian law remains crucial, especially considering the political, economic, and social changes brought about by these wars. In the last two centuries, casualties have risen sharply, and the destruction has intensified. The ongoing devastation in conflict zones, especially in the Middle East, highlights the widespread destruction in regions like Palestine, Ukraine, Sudan, Yemen, Syria, and Mali, with significant human and material losses. These areas are facing not only destruction but also the potential threat of a global war.

It is evident that there exists a body of law designed to establish a set of rules that must be respected by all parties involved, aimed at protecting both human beings and their property during times when they are most vulnerable. This role is entrusted to what is known as international humanitarian law.

International humanitarian law is a branch of public international law that encompasses a series of customary and treaty-based legal rules intended to protect the victims of armed conflicts. It establishes the international rules for the conduct of warfare, and due to the catastrophic impact that wars have on individuals and their property worldwide, it has become crucial to safeguard both the individuals themselves and the places, objects, and infrastructures they inhabit or use.

The focus of protection is the individual. Crimes committed against civilians during armed conflicts are crimes against humanity, targeting the victim while also fueling the violence. Hence, it is essential to establish regulations that mitigate such offenses. In addition to human casualties, the effects of war often extend to personal and public property. The scope of protection also extends to civilian objects—structures that are not military targets and do not contribute directly to military operations, either by nature or purpose.

1.1. The significance of this study

It lies in the sensitive and crucial topic it addresses, which falls under the criminal protection of civilians and civilian objects during armed conflicts. These conflicts have predominantly been concentrated in the last two decades in the Middle East and Africa. While Europe had been relatively free from war for some time, the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict has reshaped the global situation, creating instability not only in Europe but worldwide. The ongoing

Israeli-Palestinian conflict has also expanded the scope of the war, drawing in countries like Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq, and Syria, contributing to regional instability. This has led to turbulence in the Red Sea area, with claims of threats to international trade. These developments make the subject of this study particularly relevant.

1.2. This study aims

highlight the international protection granted to civilians and civilian objects under international humanitarian law. Given the rise in armed conflicts across the world and the increasing quantity and sophistication of weapons used, the international community seeks to regulate the methods and means of warfare to protect human beings and their property, which is the ultimate goal of international humanitarian law.

1.3. The research problem

revolves around the effectiveness of the rules established under international humanitarian law in protecting civilians and civilian objects during international and non-international armed conflicts, and the implications this has for contemporary wars worldwide.

The study will employ an analytical approach, presenting and analyzing the relevant legal texts from international law and international humanitarian law, as well as reviewing scholarly opinions in this field.

The study will be organized into two main sections:

- **Section One:** Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflicts under International Humanitarian Law
- **Section Two:** Protection of Civilian Objects in Armed Conflicts under International Humanitarian Law

Section One: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflicts under International Humanitarian Law

This section will first define "civilians" and then explore the meaning of "armed conflicts," with a focus on applying these concepts to the ongoing wars today.

Section 1: The Concept of Civilians under International Humanitarian Law

Since international humanitarian law (IHL) is a branch of public international law, as previously mentioned, it is essential to define the principle that distinguishes between combatants and non-combatants (civilians) in international legal doctrine. This section will then define the "civilian" targeted for legal protection under IHL.

1.4. The Principle of Distinction between Combatants and Civilians in International Law

From the early emergence of traditional international law in the seventeenth century, there were few restrictions on the methods of warfare between warring states, except for those self-imposed by the combatants themselves. Among these self-imposed restrictions were prohibitions on looting cities and a form of protection for women and children. Over time, specific rules developed to provide assistance to the wounded and sick, as well as the duty not to target non-combatants (civilians). Therefore, we can say that there have been ongoing efforts in international legal doctrine, from the seventeenth century to the present, to establish principles that differentiate between combatants and non-combatants.

These efforts were reflected in the ideas of a number of legal scholars, such as **Hugo Grotius**, representative of the natural law school in international law, **Samuel von Pufendorf**, and representatives of the positivist school in international legal doctrine, such as Emerich de **Vattel**. These scholars advocated for the protection of those not engaged in fighting (i.e., civilians) based on principles of humanity. In the eighteenth century, the ideas of the social contract theorist, **Jean-Jacques Rousseau**, promoted a peaceful view that laid a legal and doctrinal foundation for distinguishing between combatants and civilians. Rousseau argued that war was not a conflict between individuals but between states. Furthermore, the nineteenth-century scholars, such as **Thérèse de Bortalis**, **Talleyrand**, and others, contributed to the

development and consolidation of the principle of distinction between combatants and non-combatants in customary international law, which found its application during the wars of the nineteenth century.

War, in the traditional international law view, could only be between states, and those designated as combatants had to be affiliated with and act under the authority of the state. This led to the understanding that the distinction between combatants and civilians, especially non-combatant civilians, was a significant victory for international law, as it became the foundation of the theory of war for humanitarian protection of peaceful civilians, shielding them from the horrors of war.

However, contemporary international reality reveals the limitations of the principle of distinction between combatants and civilians. This principle no longer aligns with current circumstances and only reflects the political and economic conditions of the era in which it emerged. This is due to the fact that, in modern conflicts, entire populations have become parties to wars, and a combination of factors—including the increasing number of combatants and non-combatants, the evolution of warfare techniques, and the use of economic warfare—has led to the collapse and ambiguity of the distinction between combatants and civilians, rendering it ineffective and impractical in the modern context (Al-Makhzoumi, 2008a).

This is evident in contemporary conflicts, such as the Russian-Ukrainian war, where civilians have become direct targets for invading forces, attacked with advanced weaponry. Similarly, in the asymmetrical conflict between Israeli occupation forces and Palestinian resistance movements, particularly the Islamic Jihad and Hamas, Israeli forces relentlessly target unarmed civilians without discrimination, unleashing their full wrath on them in frustration over their inability to achieve their declared goals. The use of excessive force against civilians in this case aims to pressure the resistance, compelling them to surrender or disarm.

1.5. The Definition of Civilians in International Humanitarian Law

In traditional international legal doctrine, the term "**civilians**" refers to non-combatants, i.e., peaceful civilians. Article 50(1)¹ of the 1977 Additional Protocol I defines civilians as persons who are not members of the armed forces, as outlined in Article 4(a) 1, 2, 3, 6 of the Third Geneva Convention and Article 43 of the First Protocol.

The Fourth Geneva Convention specifies that it protects individuals who find themselves, at any given time, under the authority of a party to the conflict or an occupying power, provided they are not nationals of the parties involved in the conflict or of the occupying state (Article 37). Therefore, nationality is the distinguishing criterion, but it is also possible for individuals to be stateless, "under the authority of a party to the conflict." Since they are not nationals of the warring parties, the Fourth Convention also applies to them, even though this is not explicitly stated.

The concept of "civilian population" encompasses all civilians, as clarified in Article 50 of the First Protocol. The presumption of civilian status applies in case of doubt. Civilians are not deprived of their status merely because some individuals among them do not meet the conditions defined in Article 50(3). According to Article 48 of the same Protocol, the parties to the conflict are obligated to respect the distinction between civilian populations and combatants, as well as between civilian objects and military objectives. Combatants must limit their operations to military objectives (The Four Geneva Conventions, 1949).

To protect civilians from the atrocities and violations of a war in which they have not participated, it was necessary to broaden the concept of "civilians" and provide a wide interpretation within its general framework. International humanitarian law has given special attention to certain vulnerable groups, such as women, children, refugees, stateless persons, and journalists, emphasizing the principle of respect for and protection of civilians (Sherif Attalam, 2001a).

The protection granted to civilian populations is embodied in Article 51 of the Additional Protocol I, specifically in paragraphs 1, 2, and 3, which state:

- 1.** Civilian populations and civilians shall enjoy general protection against the dangers arising from military operations, and a number of applicable rules must be observed to make this protection effective.

2. Civilians, as such, shall not be the object of attack, and acts of violence or threats aimed primarily at spreading fear among the civilian population are prohibited.
3. Civilians shall enjoy the protection provided by this section unless they directly participate in hostilities and for the duration of such participation (Sherif Attalam, 2001b).

Despite the expansion of the definition of "civilians" under international law to provide them with protection, civilians continue to face all types of targeting in modern wars, often in full view of the world. We witness daily acts of collective punishment and the killing of thousands of innocent civilians—most of them women and children—under the pretext of self-defense in the Israeli war against the Palestinians. This war, which began after the events of October 7, 2023, has witnessed all forms of crimes violating international law, from genocide to racial discrimination to forced displacement, among others. This represents the greatest undermining of the principles and norms of international humanitarian law in modern times.

1.6. The Concept of Armed Conflicts under International Humanitarian Law

International humanitarian law distinguishes between two types of armed conflict: international armed conflicts (IAC) and non-international armed conflicts (NIAC). This distinction is evident across various international conventions.

The Geneva Conventions of 1949 were the first to establish the differentiation between the law governing international armed conflicts and the law governing non-international armed conflicts. Later, the Rome Statute of 1998 further clarified this distinction by identifying serious violations of the laws and customs of war occurring during international armed conflicts and those occurring in non-international armed conflicts.²What is most relevant to this study is the impact of these conflicts on civilians in modern wars.

1.7. International Armed Conflicts and Their Impact on Civilians in Modern Wars

By examining the Common Article 2 of the four Geneva Conventions, we see that the term "international armed conflict" refers to any declared war or any armed confrontation between two or more of the High Contracting Parties, even if one of the parties does not recognize the state of war.

Paragraph 2 of the same article introduces a new rule that applies the provisions of the Geneva Conventions to any case of partial or complete occupation of the territory of a High Contracting Party, even if the occupation is not met with armed resistance. This paragraph specifically addresses the occupying power, ensuring the minimum protection of human rights during the occupation.³However, the recognition of the rights of those involved in struggles for national liberation did not come until 1977. This was addressed by Article 1(4) of the Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, which included within international armed conflicts "armed conflicts in which peoples fight against colonial domination, foreign occupation, or racist regimes, in exercising their right to self-determination."

1.8. Non-International Armed Conflicts and Their Impact on Civilians in Modern Wars

The Geneva Conventions introduced, for the first time, a legal framework for internal conflicts through the Common Article, which obligates the parties to the conflict to adhere to a minimum of humanitarian standards. This article explicitly stated that its provisions apply to "non-international armed conflicts..." Although most of the armed conflicts that erupted after World War II were internal conflicts, Common Article 3 is the only provision repeated in this regard. It is, therefore, inadequate when compared to the nearly 500 articles found in the four Geneva Conventions regarding international armed conflicts.

The application of Common Article 3 has led to many issues and disputes, revealing its inadequacy in addressing these situations and the urgent need for a more detailed legal framework.(Rouabhi, 2004).As a result, the Additional Protocol II of 1977 was introduced to complement Common Article 3. Paragraph 1 of this protocol defines non-international armed conflicts as "armed conflicts occurring within the territory of a State between the armed forces of the Government on one

side and armed groups of rebels on the other, provided that the latter fulfill three key criteria: the scope of the rebellion, organization, and territorial control."

The international protection established under the Additional Protocol II focuses on prohibiting military operations directed against civilian populations or acts of violence and threats intended to spread fear among civilians (Article 13). It also prohibits the use of starvation as a method of warfare (Article 14). The protocol further emphasizes the prohibition of attacks on personal dignity, degrading treatment, and cruel punishment, while providing special protection for children and ensuring the right to a fair trial for accused individuals, guaranteeing them all necessary international judicial safeguards (Al-Makhzoumi, 2008b).

2. Chapter Two: Protection of Civilian Objects during Armed Conflicts under International Humanitarian Law

International humanitarian law operates on a dual level. On the one hand, it provides special protection to civilians who do not participate in hostilities during armed conflicts, as well as to those who have ceased to fight, whether voluntarily or due to necessity, such as the wounded, the sick, and shipwrecked persons. This is referred to as the personal aspect of protection. On the other hand, it safeguards civilian properties and objects, representing the material aspect of protection under international humanitarian law.

In this chapter, we will first outline the conceptual framework of civilian objects protected during armed conflicts. Then, we will address the responsibilities arising from violations of these protections under international humanitarian law and their implications for modern warfare.

2.1. The Conceptual Framework of Civilian Objects Protected During Armed Conflicts

This section explores the definition of civilian objects and provides examples of those protected under international humanitarian law.

2.1.1. Definition of Civilian Objects

Under international agreements, "**civilian objects**" refer to "all property that does not constitute a military objective during armed conflicts." This definition is somewhat vague and does not clearly outline what constitutes an object or property deserving protection when military targets are attacked. Nevertheless, many legal writings rely on this definition (Waneqi, 2013a).

Civilian objects include food supplies, cultural and spiritual heritage of all peoples (such as historical monuments, works of art, and places of worship), irrigation projects, civilian infrastructure, cultural properties, and objects essential for the survival of civilian populations and the continuation of civilization.

Legitimate civilian objects also encompass enemy-owned properties, such as houses, places of worship, hospitals, schools, cultural landmarks, universities, medical units, and cultural assets. Additionally, they include natural resources such as water, the natural environment, engineering works, and sacred sites like monuments and places of worship—provided they are not used for military purposes (Saadallah, 2008a).

2.1.2. Civilian Objects Protected Under International Humanitarian Law

Civilian objects are protected from attack under the general provisions of international humanitarian law. Some objects also receive special protection because of their particular importance to safeguarding victims of armed conflict, civilian populations, or humanity at large, or because they are especially vulnerable to destruction and damage during armed conflict.

For instance, the special protection granted to medical units and transport under international humanitarian law is a subset of protections aimed at ensuring that the wounded and sick receive medical care. This protection is enshrined in the Geneva Conventions of 1864, 1899, and 1907, as well as in the First and Fourth Geneva Conventions, which address military medical units, transport vehicles, civilian hospitals, and certain medical transport systems. This protection has been extended to specifically include civilian medical units and transport in non-international armed conflicts. This obligation is implicit in Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, which mandates the collection and care of the wounded and sick.

Among civilian objects receiving special protection are cultural properties, the legal basis for which is found in the Hague Conventions of 1954 and 1970 on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, along with their protocols. These rules emphasize the protection of properties considered of great importance to the heritage of any people. This protection is also reflected in the 1977 Additional Protocols and customary law governing international and non-international armed conflicts.

2.2. Examples of Protection for Civilian Objects in International Humanitarian Law

One notable example is the protection afforded to the natural environment, which can suffer long-term harm due to armed conflict, especially from the use of specific weapons such as chemical or nuclear arms. International humanitarian law prohibits widespread, long-term, and severe damage to the natural environment. The 1976 Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques provides additional protection during armed conflict, banning deliberate environmental modification aimed at causing extensive, long-lasting, and significant harm.

Additionally, factories, dams, bridges, nuclear power plants, and facilities containing dangerous forces must not be targeted, even when they become military objectives. This is because such facilities can release dangerous forces that result in significant civilian casualties. Similarly, military targets near these facilities should not be attacked. These rules are established in the First Additional Protocol and in customary international law applicable to both international and non-international armed conflicts (Saadallah,2008b)

2.3. International Responsibility for Violating Civilian Objects

The contractual and customary provisions of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) prohibit all violations against protected property during both international and non-international armed conflicts, without exception. States are urged to intervene and punish violations of this law, meaning that responsibility is imposed for crimes committed against property, including civilian objects, artifacts, places of worship, artistic works, abuse of protective emblems, attacks, theft, and all forms of threats (Saadallah,2008c)

International legal scholars have divided opinions on the extent of international responsibility into three main perspectives: The first argues that the responsibility for international crimes lies solely with the state. The second advocates for dual responsibility, holding both the state and individuals accountable. The third opinion places criminal responsibility solely on individuals.

In reality, however, international criminal responsibility is shared by many parties. In addition to states and individuals, responsibility also falls on protecting powers, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), investigative bodies, and fact-finding missions. In this context, we will explore the responsibility of both individuals and states, before addressing the role of other entities.

2.4. Responsibility of Individuals and States for Violating Civilian Objects

Historically, states were considered the primary entity responsible for violations of international law, but over time, responsibility has shifted to include individuals.

2.4.1. Criminal Responsibility of Individuals

Criminal responsibility for individuals concerning acts that harm civilian property has been codified in several international documents. Among the key ones are:

- **UNESCO Declaration on the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage (2003)** Adopted during the 32nd session of the UNESCO General Conference in Paris in 2003, this declaration affirms the principle of individual criminal responsibility, as outlined in paragraph 7. It urges states to take appropriate measures in accordance with international law to assert jurisdiction and impose criminal penalties on individuals who commit or order the intentional destruction of cultural heritage deemed of significant value to humanity, regardless of whether the cultural property is listed by UNESCO or any other international organization.

2.4.2. Second Protocol to The Hague Convention (1954)

this protocol, adopted on March 26, 1996, also emphasizes individual criminal responsibility for acts of destruction during armed conflicts.

2.4.3. Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998)

The Rome Statute establishes individual criminal responsibility for war crimes against protected property, including:

- a. Intentionally attacking civilian property.
- b. Attacking humanitarian assistance facilities, peacekeeping operations, and civilian infrastructure.
- c. Targeting medical facilities or units.
- d. Attacking civilian objects when it causes excessive, widespread, and long-lasting environmental damage beyond military advantage, or targeting non-military structures such as cities, villages, and homes.
- e. Repeatedly attacking buildings for religious, educational, artistic, scientific, or charitable purposes, as well as hospitals, provided these are not used for military purposes.

In the ongoing war between the Israeli entity and Palestinians, media reports daily document the extensive damage inflicted by Israeli forces on civilian facilities, ranging from medical, cultural, and scientific institutions to basic infrastructure. These actions blatantly violate IHL, targeting everything crucial for survival, including cultural, scientific, and heritage sites, with hospitals suffering unprecedented levels of targeting, leading some to describe the war as a "war against hospitals."

2.5. Criminal Responsibility of States

The UNESCO Declaration on the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage (2003) also emphasizes the state's responsibility for damage to cultural property. It clearly states that any state that fails to adopt appropriate measures to prevent or punish the intentional destruction of cultural heritage, whether listed with UNESCO or not, is held accountable under international law.

The declaration mandates that states adopt legal, administrative, educational, and technical measures, in accordance with their available resources, to protect cultural heritage. It also encourages states to periodically review and update these measures to ensure alignment with both international and national standards for cultural property protection, and to use various means, particularly educational programs, to foster respect for cultural heritage within society.

The declaration highlights three key actions for states:

1. Becoming parties to conventions protecting cultural property, such as the 1954 Hague Convention and its protocols, as well as the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions.

2. Encouraging the creation and adoption of legal documents that offer higher levels of protection to cultural objects.
3. Promoting consistent implementation of existing and future documents regarding cultural property protection(Waneqi , 2013b).

International customary humanitarian law includes several rules protecting both persons and objects, focusing especially on medical and religious personnel, and their property. For example, Rule 25 emphasizes that medical personnel must be respected and protected at all times. Article 30 prohibits attacks on medical and religious personnel or objects if they display the distinctive emblems of the Geneva Conventions, and Article 32 requires respect and protection of objects used for humanitarian relief operations (Saadallah,2008d).

Modern wars, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, have systematically violated these legal provisions. The Israeli occupation forces commit numerous crimes against humanity and war crimes daily, including assassinations, killing civilians, demolishing homes, destroying civilian infrastructure, targeting hospitals, and using internationally banned weapons. These actions also include forced displacement, settlement expansion, land confiscation, arbitrary detention, torture, and desecration of sacred sites.

Israel has been following a policy of settlement expansion and human rights violations since 1967, drawing international condemnation (Henkerz, 2005). However, such violations continue to escalate due to the support Israel receives from the United States and certain Western countries, reflecting a clear double standard from these states, which claim to uphold human rights.

2.6. Responsibility of Other Parties for Violating Civilian Objects

The "other parties" refer to those entities authorized under international law to intervene in order to seek punishment for actions violating this law. In addition to the responsibility of individuals and states, as we have seen, contemporary International Humanitarian Law (IHL) allows other parties to play a role in ensuring the protection of civilian objects and property during armed conflicts. The most important of these parties include various individuals, committees, and international organizations, such as the United Nations, protecting powers, the International Red Cross, and fact-finding missions.

2.6.1. First: Responsibility of the United Nations and the Protecting Power

This section discusses the responsibilities of the United Nations and the protecting power.

a. Responsibility of the United Nations

The role of the United Nations, particularly when its peacekeeping forces are deployed on the territory of an agreement-making state, is to take all necessary actions to protect property in conflict areas. This is outlined in the Secretary-General's circular (Document 1999/SGB/ST, dated August 6, 1999), which specifies in Article 5 that the United Nations must clearly distinguish between civilians and combatants, as well as between civilian property and military objectives. It also prohibits any attacks on civilians or civilian property.

The responsibility of the United Nations in peacekeeping operations is based on Article 89 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, which obligates the High Contracting Parties to act collectively or individually, in cases of grave violations of the conventions, in cooperation with the United Nations and in accordance with the UN Charter.

b. Responsibility of the Protecting Power

The protecting power's role is to ensure the protection of civilian property during armed conflict. This responsibility includes assisting in the establishment of hospitals and safe areas, monitoring the distribution of medical supplies and food to beneficiaries, and safeguarding cultural property that has been placed under special protection at the request of a

concerned state party. Additionally, the protecting power is responsible for protecting diplomatic missions, consulates, documents, and archives belonging to a party to the conflict within the territory of the enemy state (Al-Makhzoumi, 2008c)

2.6.2. Second: Responsibility of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Fact-Finding Commission

This section covers the responsibilities of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Fact-Finding Commission.

a. Responsibility of the International Committee of the Red Cross

The ICRC holds significant humanitarian authority, including the responsibility for remedial tasks during attacks on civilian property. Its activities include rehabilitating and repairing water supply facilities, providing essential water when these facilities are targeted, and distributing plastic sheets, bags, or tankers to mitigate the devastating effects on local populations (Saadallah, 2008e).

The ICRC's mandate and scope of work are international, which enables its effective intervention in protecting civilian property. Consequently, it is also empowered to receive complaints about violations of international humanitarian law.

b. Responsibility of the International Fact-Finding Commission

The International Fact-Finding Commission is activated in cases of violations against protected property (Amer, 1995). It conducts investigations to establish the responsibility of the aggressor party for damaging protected property. Such an investigation is initiated when one party to the conflict requests it, and with the consent of the opposing party. The Commission operates through a panel of seven members and is authorized to independently seek evidence, as well as to invite the parties involved to assist in the investigation and provide any available evidence.⁴

Conclusion:

From the foregoing, it can be concluded that international lawmakers in the modern era have sought to achieve legal protection in general, and criminal protection in particular, for civilians and civilian objects during both international and non-international armed conflicts. This was done through the adoption of a series of international treaties, primarily the Geneva Conventions and their Protocols, as well as the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the United Nations Charter, along with human rights treaties and other agreements.

These treaties contain provisions that are binding on the state parties as they are signatories, and even on non-parties, as they include customary international law rules, and customary law is a source of international law and international humanitarian law. The latter aims to protect individuals, their dignity, and their property during armed conflicts, whether international or non-international. This study has highlighted this issue by addressing the protection of civilians and civilian objects during armed conflicts, and how this protection impacts the victims of modern wars in the world today. However, it can be observed that armed conflicts have greatly increased in modern times, with a sharp rise in the number of victims and the geographical spread of such conflicts. What was once largely confined to Africa and the Middle East has now spread to Europe and Asia. This highlights the failure of international institutions, especially the UN Security Council, to put an end to these wars, due to various complex reasons.

Therefore, based on this study, we propose the following suggestions to mitigate armed conflicts worldwide and contribute to the protection of their victims and property:

- **Amending the treaties establishing international institutions** responsible for maintaining global peace and security, particularly the United Nations, the Security Council, and the International Court of Justice.

- **Abolishing the veto power** and replacing it with other mechanisms that ensure equality among all UN member states, guaranteeing protection for victims of war and armed conflicts without discrimination between individuals under international law.
- **Activating the General Assembly of the states party to the Geneva Conventions** in cases of violations of international humanitarian law, to ensure accountability and enforcement of the conventions.
- **Pursuing accountability for the Israeli regime** in relation to the crimes of genocide and war crimes committed, and continuing to be committed, against the Palestinian people, ensuring that these crimes do not go unpunished.

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Footnotes List:

¹Refer to Articles 50 and 49 of the First Additional Protocol, both the first and second additional protocols, adopted and presented for signature, ratification, and accession by the diplomatic conference to reaffirm and develop international humanitarian law applicable to armed conflicts, dated June 8, 1977, and entered into force on December 7, 1978. The four Geneva Conventions of 1949, dated August 12, 1949, were adopted and presented for signature and accession by the diplomatic conference on international treaties for the protection of war victims, held in Geneva from April 21 to August 12, 1949, and entered into force on October 21, 1950.

²Refer to Article 8/2(a) 2/(c), (e), (f) of the Rome Statute of 1998 concerning the establishment of the International Criminal Court. Cited in: Omar Rouabhi, *Expounding the Meanings of International Humanitarian Law*, Dar Al-Khaldounia, Al-Qubba Al-Qadima, Algeria, January 2021, pp. 94, 96.

³Refer to Article 2 of the Common Articles of the Four Geneva Conventions.