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Research Guide Series

The Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC)

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International Law of Armed Conflict

The **International Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC)** is also known by the terms **Law of war** and **International Humanitarian Law (IHL)**. It is based on two types of law: treaty (to which only states party to the treaty are bound), and customary law. This area of international law is diverse but may be roughly broken down into two main parts: the laws concerning the resort to force (*jus ad bellum*), and those concerning the conduct of hostilities (*jus in bello*). It governs international and non-international armed conflict, and provides guidelines on the right of states to individual and collective self-defence. In addition to providing humanitarian personnel in armed conflicts, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) promotes IHL, monitors changes in the nature of armed conflict and prepares possible developments to the law. The United Nations is also involved in encouraging the development and codification of international law, and performs a judicial role through the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice. Commanding Officers are responsible for ensuring that the actions of their troops are legal, so knowledge of this area of law is vital.

This bibliography has been designed to provide a guide as to where to find information on the Law of Armed Conflict. Please note that the list of references below is a selection of the more relevant titles and information on the subject. The list is not intended to be exhaustive or definitive but is an introductory guide to some of the resources available.

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