

A large, atmospheric photograph showing silhouettes of soldiers against a bright, cloudy sky. In the foreground, a soldier stands prominently, holding a rifle vertically. Behind him, other soldiers are visible, some walking and one sitting near a fire. The scene is set against a backdrop of dark, rugged terrain and a bright horizon.

*The study is beyond doubt impressive and the first,  
most wide-ranging word on this particular topic...*

**Leiden Journal of International Law**

*What makes this study unique is the seriousness  
and breadth of the method used to identify practice...*

**American Journal of International Law**

# CUSTOMARY INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW DATABASE

**NEW FROM  
THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE  
OF THE RED CROSS**

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**ICRC**

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In 1996, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in consultation with experts from around the world, embarked on a major study to identify rules of customary international humanitarian law (IHL). The resulting publication, which appeared in 2005, has been hailed as a landmark document seeking to identify the common core of IHL binding on all parties to all types of armed conflict.

The study makes it easier to identify and apply customary IHL and therefore to enhance the legal protection of victims of armed conflict, thereby reducing the human cost of conflict. Customary IHL fills in certain gaps in the protection provided by treaty law – gaps which arise, for example, when treaties are not ratified by certain States or do not cover certain issues. Since its publication the customary law study has been recognized as an important legal reference with regard to international and non-international armed conflicts including by courts, international organizations and non-governmental organizations.

**The ICRC has launched a FREE online version of the study with 50% more content than the original printed version.** It is divided into two parts. Part One offers a comprehensive analysis of the customary rules of IHL deemed applicable in international and non-international armed conflict. Part Two contains a summary of State practice relating to most aspects of IHL, as expressed in national legislation, military manuals, official statements, and case law, and the practice of other entities such as international organizations and international courts and tribunals.

With the new database these materials will be available for the first time in a single online source accessible worldwide. The database is easy to navigate and Part Two will be updated regularly by the ICRC in cooperation with the British Red Cross. It will be an essential resource for anyone interested in the application and interpretation of IHL and for any further review of State practice carried out to assess customary IHL.

For more information, please go to [www.icrc.org/customary-ihl](http://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl)

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Winner of the Ciardi Prize for an original study on the law of war.