



Pocket card on the protection of the separated, missing and dead



ICRC

Disclaimer

This pocket card has been designed for non-state parties to non-international armed conflicts and sets out only a selection of the rules of international humanitarian law.

A complete list of the rules on protecting the separated, missing and dead in non-international armed conflicts, along with examples of how they can be implemented in practice, can be found in: International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Non-State Armed Groups and the Separated, Missing and Dead: Obligations Under International Humanitarian Law and Examples of How to Implement Them*, ICRC, Geneva, 2025.

All parties to armed conflict must respect international humanitarian law and spare civilians from harm.



1. If possible, warn civilians of fighting and allow families to flee together.



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2. Allow people under your control to search for and contact family members.



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3. Provide families who ask about their missing loved ones with any information you have.



4. Record who is involved in the fighting, including details such as their name and height, plus any scars or tattoos. If possible, give each fighter at least one identification item, such as an ID disc (or “dog tag”), an ID card, or their name and/or number on their uniform. After each operation, record who was killed or captured or went missing.



5. Make a list of all detainees with their full name and date of birth, plus rank and service number for soldiers, as well as when and where they were captured and who is responsible for their detention. Inform the ICRC about any detainees you hold.



6. Allow detainees to contact their families and help them do so.



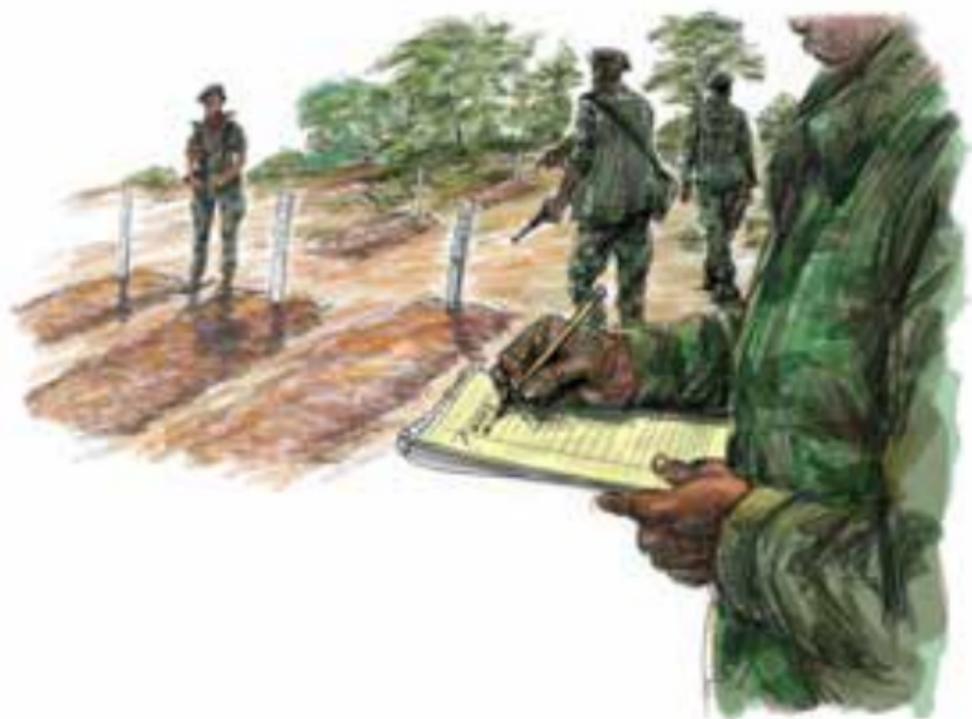
7. After each operation, and whenever possible, search for, collect and evacuate all the dead, no matter who they are (friend or enemy).



8. Protect the dead from being mutilated.
Do not remove or steal their personal belongings.



9. Return the dead and their belongings to their families, for instance with the help of the ICRC or by allowing authorities to recover remains in territory under your control.



- 10.** If you cannot evacuate the dead, bury them respectfully, with one body per grave or with bodies separated in common graves. Record all available identification information prior to burial and mark the location of the grave. Keep records of all burial sites.



11. Search for missing persons and share any information you have about missing enemy soldiers or civilians with the enemy and with the ICRC.

Since 1863, the ICRC works to relieve suffering and preserve human dignity during war and armed violence. We deliver vital aid without discrimination and reconnect families alongside our Red Cross and Red Crescent partners. Engaging with all sides and armed forces, often confidentially, we advocate for detainees' humane treatment and urge compliance with international humanitarian law to protect civilians on the ground and online.



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