## Common Article 3

[Article 3](), **common to the four Geneva Conventions**, marked a **breakthrough**[1], as it covered, for the first time, situations of non-international armed conflicts. These types of conflicts vary greatly. They include traditional civil wars, internal armed conflicts that spill over into other States or internal conflicts in which third States or a multinational force intervenes **alongside** [2]the government. Common Article 3 establishes fundamental rules from which no **derogation**[3] is permitted. It is like a mini-Convention within the Conventions as it contains the essential rules of the Geneva Conventions in a **condensed format** [4]and makes them applicable to conflicts not of an international character:

- It requires humane treatment for all persons in enemy hands, without any **adverse distinction**[5]. It specifically prohibits murder, **mutilation**[6], **torture**[7], **cruel**[8], **humiliating**[9] and **degrading treatment**[10], the taking of **hostages and unfair trial**[11].
- It requires that **the wounded**[12], sick and shipwrecked be collected and cared for.
- It grants the ICRC the right to offer its services to the parties to the conflict.
- It calls on the parties to the conflict to bring all or parts of the Geneva Conventions **into force** [13]through so-called special agreements.
- It recognizes that the application of these rules does not affect the legal status of the parties to the conflict.
- Given that most armed conflicts today are non-international, applying Common Article 3 is of the utmost importance. Its full
- respect is required.
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1 اختراق
2 with
3 لا انتقاص
4 تنسيق مكثف
5 التمييز المعاكس
6 تشويه
7 تعذيب
8 قاسية
9 مهين
10 المعاملة المهينة
11 الرهائن والمحاكمة الجائرة
12 الجريح
13 حيز التنفيذ.

**Where do the Geneva Conventions apply?**

- **States Party to the Geneva Conventions**

The Geneva Conventions entered into force on 21 October 1950. Ratification grew steadily through the decades: 74 States ratified the Conventions during the 1950s, 48 States did so during the 1960s, 20 States signed on during the 1970s, and another 20 States did so during the 1980s. Twenty-six countries ratified the Conventions in the early 1990s, largely in the aftermath of the break-up of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and the former Yugoslavia.

Seven new ratifications since 2000 have brought the total number of States Party to 194, making the Geneva Conventions universally applicable.

(a) "First Convention", "Second Convention", "Third Convention" and "Fourth Convention" mean, respectively, the Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field of 12 August 1949; the Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea of 12 August 1949; the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War of 12 August 1949; the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949; "the Conventions" means the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 for the protection of war victims;

(b) "rules of international law applicable in armed conflict" means the rules applicable in armed conflict set forth in international agreements to which the Parties to the conflict are Parties and the generally recognized principles and rules of international law which are applicable to armed conflict;

(c) "Protecting Power" means a neutral or other State not a Party to the conflict which has been designated by a Party to the conflict and accepted by the adverse Party and has agreed to carry out the functions

assigned to a Protecting Power under the Conventions and this Protocol;

(d) "substitute" means an organization acting in place of a Protecting Power in accordance with