

International Humanitarian Law in Civil Wars: A Case Study on Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The ideology of “war” is a realm that we experience since the very beginning of our civilization. It has developed for years by taking into account the needs, interests, developments and changing behaviours of people. However, the war is widely construed as intrinsically evil. And in contrast, war is an inevitable scenario of the international system. But with the changing interests of humans and states, the nature of wars differs from international armed conflicts to non-international armed conflicts. Therefore in order to regulate the occurrence and certain conducts during a war, the international community has established a system of legal regulations called international humanitarian law covering major areas of war from the beginning until the end. This study is based on how the international humanitarian law is applicable in the context of the civil war in Sri Lanka. This aims to give a descriptive and broad conception of international humanitarian law, its branches and its applicability in internal armed conflicts. Primarily in the context of civil wars. And also, this study discusses the major allegations of war crimes regarding the civil war in Sri Lanka and evaluates the applicability of the above humanitarian regulations giving special reference to conventions adopted by Sri Lanka. This qualitative study is primarily based on information collected from reports, journal articles, news items and other collections of surveys done by international organizations, non-governmental organizations and other State bodies. Thus, this study intends to bridge the gap between theoretical and practical aspects of international humanitarian law focusing on the civil war issues in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Humanitarian law, Sri Lanka, Civil war

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