# International Relations · GS - II

**Examine the humanitarian consequences of attacks on critical civilian infrastructure during armed conflicts. Discuss the role of international humanitarian law in protecting civilians.**

| EXAM YEAR | PAPER | SUBJECT |
|---|---|---|
| DAILY PRACTICE 04/11/2026 | GS - II | International Relations |

| MARKS | WORD LIMIT |
|---|---|
| 10 | ~150 words |

## Answer Hint

**Humanitarian impact of power outages, protection of essential services, principle of distinction, proportionality and precautions, civilian protection under the Geneva Conventions, accountability and humanitarian assistance.**

## Model Answer

### Introduction

Attacks on energy infrastructure during armed conflicts can cause widespread power outages, disrupt essential services and increase civilian suffering, particularly during extreme weather.

### Humanitarian Consequences

Electricity disruptions affect hospitals, water supply, sanitation, communication and heating. They can endanger vulnerable groups, delay emergency rescue operations and worsen displacement. Damage to infrastructure also imposes long-term economic and reconstruction costs.

### Role of International Humanitarian Law

International humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, seeks to limit suffering during armed conflict. The principle of **distinction** requires parties to distinguish civilians and civilian objects from combatants and military objectives. The principles of **proportionality** and **precautions** prohibit attacks expected to cause excessive civilian harm and require feasible steps to minimise it. Civilian infrastructure

is not automatically immune from attack in every circumstance, but it must be assessed under these legal rules.

**Way Forward**

Parties should protect essential services, facilitate humanitarian relief, investigate alleged violations and ensure accountability. International organisations can support emergency assistance and infrastructure recovery.

**Conclusion**

Respect for international humanitarian law is essential to reduce civilian suffering and preserve basic human dignity during armed conflicts.

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