International Relations · GS - II

Why is the protection of humanitarian and medical personnel essential during armed conflicts? Discuss the role of international humanitarian law in ensuring their safety.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 28/11/2026	GS - II	International Relations

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Medical neutrality, Geneva Conventions, civilian protection, humanitarian access, distinction, proportionality, accountability

Model Answer

The killing of two Doctors Without Borders (MSF) personnel in Gaza, as reported, highlights the dangers faced by humanitarian workers operating in conflict zones.

Their protection is essential for the following reasons:

1. **Humanitarian assistance:** Medical workers provide emergency treatment, surgical care and essential services to civilians and wounded combatants.
2. **Civilian protection:** Their work helps reduce civilian suffering and prevents further deterioration of healthcare systems.
3. **Humanitarian access:** Attacks on aid personnel discourage relief operations and restrict assistance to vulnerable populations.

International humanitarian law (IHL) provides important safeguards:

- The Geneva Conventions require respect and protection for wounded and sick persons, medical personnel and medical facilities.

- Parties to armed conflicts must distinguish between civilians and combatants.
- Attacks must comply with proportionality and precautionary obligations.
- Deliberate attacks against protected persons may constitute war crimes, depending on the circumstances and applicable law.

International organisations and humanitarian agencies also play an important role in documenting violations and facilitating relief operations.

Conclusion: Protecting medical personnel is both a legal obligation and a humanitarian necessity. Effective accountability and respect for international humanitarian law are indispensable for preserving human dignity during armed conflicts.