International Relations · GS - II

Examine the challenges in protecting civilians during internal armed conflicts. Discuss the role of international humanitarian law in addressing these challenges.

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

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Civilian casualties, non-international armed conflict, distinction, proportionality, precautions, humanitarian access, accountability

Model Answer

Internal armed conflicts often involve government forces and organised non-State armed groups operating in populated areas. Civilians, including children and displaced persons, face severe risks from airstrikes, shelling and disruption of essential services.

Major challenges

1. **Urban and populated warfare:** Military operations in civilian settlements increase the risk of indiscriminate harm.
2. **Displacement:** Violence forces families to leave their homes, creating humanitarian and protection concerns.
3. **Humanitarian access:** Insecurity and restrictions can prevent medical assistance, food supplies and evacuation.

4. **Accountability deficits:** Weak institutions and limited independent monitoring may obstruct investigations into civilian casualties.

Role of international humanitarian law

Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions establishes minimum protections in non-international armed conflicts. Additional Protocol II provides further protections where its conditions of application are met.

The principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions regulate the conduct of hostilities. Civilians must not be deliberately targeted, and medical personnel and humanitarian relief operations receive specific protections.

Effective implementation requires independent investigations, humanitarian access, documentation of violations and accountability under applicable international and domestic law.

The reported airstrike on a wedding venue in Myanmar illustrates the grave civilian risks in conflict-affected areas. Protecting non-combatants must remain a central obligation of all parties to armed conflict.

BECOME IAS
AI POWERED UPSC PREP