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## **INTERNATIONAL ARMED CONFLICTS: MAIN FEATURES, REASONS, AND TYPES**

## **МІЖНАРОДНІ ЗБРОЙНІ КОНФЛІКТИ: ОСНОВНІ РИСИ, ПРИЧИНИ ТА ВИДИ**

*Armed conflicts that concern humanity are crimes against humanity. Armed conflicts are one of the most urgent problems of political science. Even though international law has adopted conventions on this crime and imposed sanctions, the world's powerful countries use violent means to pursue their national interests more quickly and effectively, and those countries do not even hesitate to shed the blood of innocent people. War has always been one of the urgent problems of humanity since the emergence of social class to our time. In this regard, the main goal of our research is to examine international armed conflicts, which are among the most important problems of conflictology, with a complex approach. In the article, the nature of political conflicts, more precisely, international armed conflicts, which are a type of foreign political conflict, the reasons for their occurrence, and the main characteristics have been studied. Armed conflicts were reviewed from a political and legal point of view, and the definition of international armed conflicts was given according to the UN charter and international humanitarian law conventions (Geneva and Hague). Thus, since 1949, Article 2, specific to the four Geneva Conventions, defines an international armed conflict that triggers the application of humanitarian law. According to International humanitarian law, an international armed conflict is considered to be an armed conflict between two or more states that are parties to the Geneva Conventions, as well as cases of occupation of all or part of the territory of a participating state, wars of national liberation.*

*In a broad sense, International armed conflicts include military-political conflicts and war. In the article, the main features and types of military-political conflicts and their differences from other armed conflicts, especially war, are analyzed and investigated. Types of military-political conflict such as military annexation, military incident, military provocation, invasion, and aggression were considered, and the essence of war was explained.*

**Key words:** international conflicts, armed conflicts, military conflicts, military incident, military annexation, military provocation, war, occupation, aggression.

*Збройні конфлікти, що стосуються людства, є злочинами проти людства. Збройні конфлікти є однією з найактуальніших проблем політичної науки. Незважаючи на те, що міжнародне право прийняло конвенції щодо цього злочину та ввело санкції, могутні країни світу використовують насильницькі засоби, щоб швидше та ефективніше переслідувати свої національні інтереси, і ці країни навіть не вагаються проливати кров невинних людей. Війна завжди була однією з актуальних проблем людства з моменту появи соціального класу і до нашого часу. У зв'язку з цим основною метою нашого дослідження є комплексний розгляд міжнародних збройних конфліктів, які є однією з найважливіших проблем конфліктології. У статті досліджено природу політичних конфліктів, а точніше міжнародних збройних конфліктів, які є різновидом зовнішньополітичного конфлікту, причини їх виникнення та основні характеристики. Розглянуто збройні конфлікти з політико-правової точки зору, надано визначення міжнародних збройних конфліктів відповідно до статуту ООН та міжнародних гуманітарних конвенцій (Женевської та Гаазької). Таким чином, починаючи з 1949 року, стаття 2, специфічна для чотирьох Женевських конвенцій, визначає міжнародний збройний конфлікт, який викликає застосування гуманітарного права. Згідно з міжнародним гуманітарним правом, міжнародним збройним конфліктом вважається збройний конфлікт між двома або більше державами, які є учасниками Женевських конвенцій, а також випадки окупації всієї або частини території держави-учасниці, війни між національне визволення.*

*У широкому розумінні міжнародні збройні конфлікти включають військово-політичні конфлікти і війни. У статті проаналізовано та досліджено основні ознаки та види військово-політичних конфліктів та їх відмінності від інших збройних конфліктів, особливо війни. Розглянуто такі види військово-політичного конфлікту, як військова анексія, військовий інцидент, військова провокація, вторгнення, агресія, роз'яснено сутність війни.*

**Ключові слова:** міжнародні конфлікти, збройні конфлікти, військові конфлікти, військовий інцидент, військова анексія, військова провокація, війна, окупація, агресія.

**Introduction to the problem.** Political stability is an important factor in international relations. Deliberate or accidental violation of this stability can lead to conflict. Therefore, international relations make stability, cooperation, and development on the one side, and conflict and hostility on the other. Therefore, international military conflicts are considered one of the most important and serious problems in the theory of international relations and conflictology.

The analysis of political conflicts that took place at different times in history, especially in recent times, gives us the impression that the subjects of political conflicts prefer armed struggle methods in most cases for their aims and interests. Indeed, no matter how undesirable it is for the socio-political experience, the increase in cases of armed violence is constantly being observed. It should be noted that the methods of armed violence are applied not only at the political level of society but also in all major types of social conflicts. Researchers and political observers try to justify this with many factors. For example, it is suggested that during a conflict, it takes a long time to achieve a goal through peaceful means. In some cases, after a long period of time, the object of the conflict may lose its importance for the subjects. Armed means of struggle allow the subjects of the conflict to get "desirable" outcomes in a short period of time.

**The degree of problem development.** International conflicts or international armed conflicts have been widely studied by Western conflict scientists and political scientists, and the essence and classification of armed conflicts are reflected in international humanitarian law – the Geneva and Hague Conventions. In the study of international armed conflicts, mainly Western scholars include Jean Pictet [15], William Boothby [5], Kenneth Waltz [6], Michael Howard [9], Mary Footer [13], Julia Schmidt [13], Daniela Nascimento [10], Paul Kelly [12], Laurie Blank [2], Gregory Noone [2], Joseph Nye [16], David Welch [16], Turkish and local scientists Elif Uzun [14], Sezai Ozelik [8], Elshad Mirbashioglu [3], Latif Huseynov [1] and others researched on the topic.

**The purpose and tasks of the research.** The purpose of the research task is to study the essence and main characteristics of international conflicts, international armed conflicts in a broad sense, which are an important problem of political science, and to examine the distinguishing aspects of military-political conflicts from other conflicts as a type of international conflicts.

To give the essence and definition of armed conflicts from a political and legal point of view, to briefly explain the main characteristics and

types; contradictions that lead to international military conflicts; Explain the types and main characteristics of international armed conflicts, studying the international armed conflict at the level of international law are among the tasks of the research work.

**Methods.** The main methods of political science, such as comparative and systematic analysis, were used in the article.

**Main part.**

**The essence of armed conflict.** In scientific literature related to conflictology, armed conflict is described as the elimination of contradictions between states, classes, groups, and social movements in the most acute form by the use of armed violence.

In addition to what we mentioned above, the concept of armed conflict is considered in broad and narrow terms in the military-political literature. In a broad sense, armed conflict refers to any political process in which weapons are used. In a narrow sense, armed conflict is explained as a type of armed conflict. This is a type of armed conflict in which a limited level of armed violence is applied in a short period of time [1, p. 189].

For a more detailed analysis of armed political conflicts, it would be appropriate to distinguish "military conflict" from "armed conflict". In addition, in most cases, war is analyzed as a separate conflict situation. Even though these concepts are quite close to each other within the framework of the problem we are considering, it is necessary to pay attention to the "subtle" points that give reason to distinguish them. A military conflict usually means an interstate conflict. Thus, states legally use their military forces during conflict. Therefore, only a conflict involving the legal military forces of two or more states can be considered an international military conflict [2, p. 19].

During an international military conflict, states with conflicting interests use military means with certain restrictions. Accordingly, in other sources, military conflict is understood as the form of elimination of conflicts between the subjects of military-strategic relations with the use of military force on a limited scale.

The considered characteristics of armed conflicts in Western conflictology include both internal armed conflicts and external armed conflicts. In this sense, it would be more appropriate to classify armed conflicts in the most general way into internal armed conflicts and international military conflicts. Armed conflict is mainly an internal political issue, while military conflict and war are characteristic of the international political level. Our goal is

to investigate the essence of international armed conflicts as a type of armed conflict, the types, and reasons for their occurrence, as well as the ways to solve them following international law norms.

Thus, the term armed conflict generally refers to all conflicts accompanied by the use of weapons in any form by one or both parties to the conflict. International armed conflict refers to conflicts observed with the use of weapons by two or more states, regardless of their duration and intensity. In the Geneva Protocol adopted in 1977, wars for national freedom are also presented as international armed conflicts [1, p. 185].

**Contradictions that lead to international military conflicts.** While analyzing international military conflicts, it is important to identify the main contradictions underlying them. If we take into account that conflict is a constant guide of a person, then the contradictions based on it can be evaluated as a factor that determines the development process of humanity. The international socio-political, economic, and ecological analysis of the processes which are taking place in our modern times generally confirms that it is more appropriate to combine the contradictions that cause international conflicts into two large groups. Conventionally, we will denote those groups as "first" and "second" groups.

Contradictions included in the first group mainly occur in the following cases:

- as a result of human activity, the process of environmental degradation is accelerating. That is, the process of self-recovery of nature is no longer compatible with the speed of human activity. The initial contradiction, which we conventionally include in the first group, appears;
- the next contradiction, which we include in the first group, appears between the constantly growing human demands and the number of natural resources.

Therefore, the conflicts included in the first group cause the occurrence of "raw material" and "environmental" conflicts, respectively. Undoubtedly, such contradictions can become the basis for major military conflicts in our modern times. For example, the Iraq-Kuwait conflict can be cited as an example. This conflict quickly turned into a war because it affected the interests of all the states that benefited from Middle Eastern oil. Therefore, a "raw material conflict" has occurred.

The second group of contradictions that lead to the occurrence of military conflicts arises mainly from two reasons. The first reason can be the inequality of status among the elements of the modern system of international relations. The

second reason is related to the nature of interelement relations in the process of functioning of that system. As can be seen, the reasons for the contradictions that we include in the second group are essentially very similar. Contradictions in the system of interstate relations in most cases arise from the difference between the development levels of the states [3, p. 269].

The basis of the contradictions that arise depending on the nature of interstate relations is the competition for ideological, moral, religious, and cultural values belonging to different societies. The analysis of most of the military conflicts that have occurred and are threatening to occur shows that the contradictions we have considered above do not directly cause military conflicts to occur. Those contradictions are always related to material and economic conditions of social life. As a result of this relation that they are transformed first on the spiritual and then on the political level. Therefore, it can be surely said that military conflict arises from the government policy of states.

**Types of international armed conflicts.** International armed conflicts include military-political conflicts and war in a broad sense. First, it would be more appropriate to get acquainted with military-political conflicts and their distinguishing features.

According to the general conflict theory, any military conflict, whether interstate or intrastate, is considered a legitimate continuation of political conflict. From a legal point of view, a military conflict, regardless of the form of its manifestation, means a violation of certain norms (international or national), that is, a violation of the legal framework. Thus, a military conflict is a certain type of military operation that differs from one another in terms of scale, intensity, and the possibility of using one or another weapon and technique [4, p. 172].

There are two approaches to military-political conflicts: broad and narrow. In a broad sense, military conflict means any military conflict, including world wars. To be more precise, any armed conflict between two or more entities that have state status for the sake of legitimate state interests is characterized as a military conflict. The term military conflict, in a narrow sense, means concrete military collisions that have several characteristic features. This includes "military conflict", "war", "annexation", "military incident" and "military provocation" [5, p. 167].

**Annexation** is one of the military collisions that the term military conflict means in a narrow sense. Annexation comes from the Latin word "annexio". Its meaning is understood as combining and capturing. Thus, annexation

refers to the occupation of the territory of one state in whole or in part by another state by violent means. In international law, annexation is defined as the most severe form of aggression, and international legal responsibility is assumed for this act. Annexation is considered a gross violation of international law norms. The UN Charter prohibits any threat and use of force against the territorial integrity and political sovereignty of any state [6, p. 118]. For example, we can show the occupation of Crimea by Russia. So, exactly on February 20, 2014, armed soldiers without name badges and trucks without number plates called "green men" entered the peninsula. According to the results of the "referendum" held on the territory of Crimea and Sevastopol on March 14, 2014, Crimea became part of Russia. Neither Ukraine nor Western countries recognized the results of the election. Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the "unification" of Crimea with Russia on March 18. After the occupation of Crimea, diplomats, politicians and representatives of "Crimea's self-defense" were awarded the medal "For the return of Crimea" and the operation took place from February 20 to March 18.

Russia initially refused to accept the fact of military aggression. Only on April 17, 2014, Russian President Vladimir Putin admitted for the first time that the Russian military was involved in the events in Crimea. International organizations called the annexation of Crimea illegal and condemned Russia's actions. Despite the implementation of economic sanctions against Russia by Western countries, the Kremlin denies the annexation of the peninsula and calls it "the restoration of historical justice". The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted February 20 as the official date of the beginning of Russia's temporary annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and Sevastopol [8, p. 145].

**Occupation** is one of the types of military conflict, which comes from the Latin word "occupatio". It means not to capture, to occupy. Occupation is the occupation of territories belonging to another state by the armed forces of one state. The legal affiliation of the territories captured during the occupation does not change and it is temporary in nature. Occupation can happen both when the parties are at war and after the war [7, p. 60].

**A military incident** is also an event from the category of military conflicts. A military incident is understood as an armed conflict that happened accidentally, depending on the circumstances, and not as a result of the deliberate actions of political forces. During a military incident, no significant changes occur within the country. Occurrence of

incidents is usually related to subjective activities of military structures belonging to different states. Such cases occur mostly in the border regions when the borders of the neighboring state are violated accidentally or deliberately. Sometimes, a military incident occurs due to reasons beyond human control [10, p. 43].

**Military provocation** is an aggressive military action by one state against another state by applying military forces. In this case, the goal is to achieve a similar response from the other party. Military provocation can be committed for different purposes.

Thus, we analyzed different types of military conflicts. It turned out that each type of conflict, being a unique social event in itself, has its characteristics and reasons for its occurrence. But it is possible to identify one universal sign for all military conflicts. Thus, force and violence factor exists in all armed conflicts. The concept of **aggression** is the most successful expression of these characteristics, which are universal for all types of military conflict.

The essence of the concept of **aggression** (lat. Aggressio - attack) is also explained in the UN charter. Thus, according to the charter, the illegal use of force by a state against the territorial integrity and political sovereignty of another state is aggression. The most dangerous form of aggression is the use of armed force. Aggression is also a sign of initiative. That is, it means the application of power by the first party [7, p. 63].

Military-political conflicts can be characterized as the initial stage of international conflict and the emergence of conflicts, and war as the period of conflict escalation.

**Thus, military-political conflicts have their characteristics**, which allow us to define this threat more precisely:

- military-political conflicts usually bring millions of victims and destroy the gene pool of nations;
- in the conditions of modern international relations, any military-political conflict can become a kind of "detonator" of a new world war;
- military conflicts increase environmental problems today;
- military-political conflicts have a negative impact on the moral and psychological atmosphere in regions, continents, and the whole world [5, p.322].

As it can be seen, the dangerous nature of military conflicts at the current stage requires their deeper study. In order to define the essence of military-political conflicts more clearly, first of all, it is necessary to define such signs of a military conflict that allow to distinguish it

from war, on the one hand, and from the other hand military operations and armed conflicts due to its nature. Thus, the military-political conflict can be considered as the most intense form of contradictions between states and their coalitions, which arose for various reasons. As a rule, the conflict activities of the conflicting parties are observed in a limited geographical area. These may be border areas, disputed, and inhabited by different ethnic groups. In rare cases, in the absence of a state of war, military conflict can cover large areas. Thus, it is incorrect to equate all military conflicts that have occurred with "war".

A military conflict usually means an interstate conflict. Thus, states legally use their military forces during conflict. Therefore, only a conflict involving the legal military forces of two or more states can be considered a military conflict. During a military conflict, states with conflicting interests use military means with certain limitations. Accordingly, in other sources, military conflict is understood as the form of elimination of conflicts between the subjects of military-strategic relations with the use of military force on a limited scale [3, p. 271].

During a military conflict, both sides act only in the interests of the state. During an armed conflict, while one of the parties protects the state interest, the other party fights for the interests of any group. Another aspect that distinguishes armed conflict from military conflict is that the former (armed conflict) is accompanied by the direct use of weapons. Most armed conflicts (insurgency, civil war, riot) can lead to war. For example, in the 1990s, in some of the republics that were part of Yugoslavia, the tendency of disobedience to the central government became much stronger, and when President Slobodan Milosevic imposed harsh repressive measures against the rebels, the civil war centers appeared in the country. Slovenia first broke away from Yugoslavia, and then Macedonia gained independence. The biggest armed conflict was between Serbia and Croatia and Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Croatia won the war with the central government and gained independence. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Serbian army massacred the civil people. With the diplomatic efforts of the United States, Bosnia-Herzegovina separated from Yugoslavia and became an independent state.

Yugoslavia collapsed and Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Slovenia, and Macedonia emerged on its ruins. In 1999, the Kosova Albanians, who started an armed struggle, created their independent state. Montenegro also separated from Serbia, and thus Serbia was completely deprived of access to the sea. In 1918,

the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes were established, and since 1929, this state was called the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. With the comprehensive help of the USA, Yugoslavia also experienced the bitter fate of the USSR, which happened a little earlier in 1991, and 7 independent states appeared on its former map. Except for Kosovo, those republics united and formed the state of Yugoslavia. 6 statues of women erected on Mount Avala near Belgrade represented these republics and were a symbol of their unity. In the heart of Europe, on the Balkan Peninsula, a free, democratic federal state, not one that enslaved and exploited some people, collapsed and broke into small pieces like a window glass that was hit by a stone.

Traces of the enmity that arose during the armed conflicts remain the same, and the effects of bitter memories continue to live on. In Kosovo, ethnic Serbs are treated harshly and their ordinary citizenship rights are violated. Tensions between Bosnia-Serb-Croat units in Bosnia-Herzegovina do not disappear. The cold relationship between Serbia and Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo does not disappear [8, p. 89].

During a military conflict, the parties of the conflict can use military force not directly, but also indirectly. In many cases, they achieve political goals by threatening the enemy by demonstrating military potential.

At the current stage of interaction between the states, the economy is the main area where the private and regional goals of the states are accumulated. According to F. Fukuyama, military conflicts are currently rising to a new economic level. It is important to note that when the parties of the conflict try to achieve their goals by force, the interaction of the parties, as a rule, does not go beyond the military conflict. In addition, the history of military-political conflicts proves that the personal goal of different states can become a global goal in the value system of any participant in the conflict. This means that a military conflict turns into a war. A military conflict involves the active movements of both parties to the dispute. If the force used by one of the participants in the conflict is not met with force resistance by the other participant, then there is no military conflict itself, but there is a one-sided military operation. In this sense, the generality of military conflict and war is revealed [11, p. 139].

War is the most acute and widespread form of international armed conflict. There is no coincidence that the history of mankind is often referred to as the "history of wars". According to K. Clausewitz, war is a political act in itself. War is not only a political act, but also a real means of politics, a continuation of political relations,

and its conduct by other means. Its uniqueness is only the uniqueness of means. A political goal is just a goal, and war is only a means, and the means can never be considered separately from the goal [12, p. 263].

War is a military event capable of slowing down the development of civilization and destroying the material and moral values. The unanimous opinion on war is that war occurs for several reasons such as a socio-political, economic, ideological, national, religious, territorial, etc. among states, peoples, nations, classes, and social groups. War is a socio-political phenomenon that means the resolution of conflicts by the use of military force.

Generally, we can say that war is a phase of social conflict accompanied by mutual violence and destructive activities of two or more political entities (states) and their coalitions.

Unlike other types of armed conflicts, during the war, not only within the country's all government institution join the fight but within all state institutions. That is, in addition to using weapons against the enemy, they fight in other fields such as political, diplomatic, economic, and information.

Another important characteristic of war is its declaration following international law. This issue was established in the Hague Convention adopted in 1907. Starting a war without declaration is considered a violation of international law. In addition, from the moment the war begins, all treaties and agreements regulating peacetime relations lose their force. A state of emergency is applied in the territory of warring states [13, p. 239].

**International armed conflicts at the level of international law.** Armed conflicts are both a precedent and a legal issue. Since 1945, the UN Charter prohibits the use of force in relations between states, except in cases of self-defense during an attack. Article 2, inherent in the four Geneva Conventions since 1949, defines an international armed conflict that involves the application of humanitarian law. According to international humanitarian law, an international armed conflict is considered to be an armed conflict between two or more states that are parties to the Geneva Conventions, as well as cases of occupation of all or part of the territory of a participating state, wars of national liberation, as well as international armed conflicts [1, p. 188].

The definition given in Article 2, which is common to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, applies not only to the declaration of war but also to any armed conflict between two or more High Contracting Parties, even if the state of war is not recognized by one of them [14, p. 134].

Thus, the application of international humanitarian law is no longer dependent on the formalism of a war declaration, or the recognition of the state of belligerency by one of the concerned States. It relies on objective criteria to avoid political debates about the nature of the conflict.

The law of international armed conflict applies to all cases of occupation of all or part of the territory of a High Contracting Party, even if such occupation meets no armed resistance and therefore no armed clashes, or if those armed clashed are with non-state armed groups on the territory of the occupied State.

According to the 1977 first Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions, national liberation wars fought against colonial rule and foreign occupation and against racist regimes in the exercise of their right to self-determination are equated with international armed conflicts. Thus, the law of international armed conflict can therefore be applied to this type of conflict on the condition that authority representing the people involved in the conflict formally agrees to implement the Geneva Conventions and its first Additional Protocol [15, p. 5].

Direct military intervention by various states is not difficult to establish, but it is insufficient to reflect the full reality of modern armed conflicts, which do not conform to the formal legal criteria of states and territories reflected in term of agreement. Some armed conflicts can take place on the territory of several states without the direct involvement of national armies. Other armed conflicts occur within the territory of one state, but they involve non-state armed groups operating from the territory of a neighboring state, with or without the latter's support. Finally, some conflicts occur outside the national territory of one of the parties to the conflict [16, p. 59].

Finally, the presence of international military forces, whether operating under a UN mandate or not, can also change the nature of armed conflict if these forces are involved in direct combat and are not limited to self-defense.

In international jurisprudence, the criteria of "internationalization" of an armed conflict have been determined, when there is no conflict between two or more states and it cannot be called international in the strict sense of the term.

**The result.** Analyzing the nature and main characteristics of international armed conflicts, which are one of the world's global problems, we conclude that states use more violent means when fulfilling their interests and trying to achieve these interests in a short period of time. However, we are witnessing from history and

modern times how much armed conflicts and war in a wider sense have affected humanity both materially and morally, and psychologically. Although all armed conflicts are crimes against humanity and international law opposes them, it remains in the constant interest of superpower states as the most "optimal way" of reordering the world as a profitable field.

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