

I Am a **Woman** – What Are My Rights under International Humanitarian Law?

Q: As a woman, do I have the same rights as other civilians?

A: As a civilian, you share all the rights that civilians have.

Q: Does international humanitarian law give me special protection?

A: In addition to the rights given to you as a civilian, international humanitarian law recognises a number of measures, rights and advantages for women due to their particular needs. International humanitarian law ensures preferential treatment for expectant mothers and mothers having recently given birth regarding food, medical care and special health protection. Moreover, this law protects women from sexual violence.

Q: If I am an expectant mother or a mother of children less than seven years old, how shall I be treated?

A: You should receive special protection. The Occupying Power should endeavour to provide you with a secure place where you may be protected from the effects of war. It should also remove you and your children from areas under siege to safe places where food and care are available.

Q: May I be arrested?

A: You may be arrested in which case you have the same rights and guarantees as other protected persons, in addition to the special rights and advantages that international humanitarian law recognises for women under arrest.

Q: What special rights and advantages do I have if I am detained?

A: You have a right to be accommodated separately from men and have at your disposition special sanitary units that take into consideration your needs in relation to health and cleanliness. Expectant and breastfeeding mothers shall receive additional food according to their needs. A woman giving birth shall be admitted to an institution that provides treatment and appropriate care that is not inferior to that provided to others.

Q: Am I protected against rape and assault?

A: You are entitled to special protection against any attack on you honour, in particular rape, enforced prostitution or any form of indecent assault. Rape is a war crime.