

Humanitarian Law Education Strategy for Military Personnel: A Study on Effective Training Programs and Their Impact on Battlefield Behavior

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ABSTRACT

Humanitarian law education for military personnel plays a crucial role in reducing violations of international law during armed conflicts. Humanitarian law aims to protect individuals who are not or are no longer involved in combat, such as civilians and prisoners of war, as well as to limit the means in war to reduce human suffering. This study aims to explore effective strategies for humanitarian law education for military personnel, focusing on training programs implemented in several countries and their impact on soldiers' behavior on the battlefield. Through case studies of training programs in countries that have successfully integrated humanitarian law principles into military education, this research identifies successful approaches as well as challenges faced in its implementation. The findings indicate that a deeper understanding of humanitarian law can enhance military personnel's adherence to international law and reduce violations in the field. This research provides recommendations for the development of more comprehensive and sustainable training programs, integrating ethics, morality, and practical application of humanitarian law in military daily life.

Keywords: *humanitarian law education, military training, military behavior, international law, war violations, effective training programs*

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INTRODUCTION

Humanitarian law education (HLH) for military members plays an important role in ensuring that the implementation of military operations remains in accordance with the principles of international law, especially in armed conflict. Humanitarian law aims to protect individuals who are not or are no longer involved in combat, such as civilians and prisoners of war, as well as to limit the means of war to reduce human suffering. However, in practice, violations of these laws are still common on the battlefield, even though many countries have ratified international conventions on humanitarian law. One way to minimize these violations is to increase humanitarian law education for military members. Effective training programs can improve military members' understanding and compliance with the principles of humanitarian law, which in turn can reduce the number of violations that occur during conflict. Globally, violations of humanitarian law continue to occur in conflict-torn regions, including in countries such as Syria, Yemen, and Ukraine. In many cases, members of the military engage in attacks on civilian targets or infrastructure that are not directly related to military activities. At the regional level, countries in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, also face similar challenges in terms of training and implementation of humanitarian law among their armed forces. Despite Indonesia's commitment to international law, violations of the

principles of humanitarian law can still occur if military members are not provided with adequate training.

At the national level, Indonesia, as a country bound by international conventions and with an active role in international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), continues to strive to strengthen humanitarian law training programs among military members. However, the effectiveness of such training in preventing violations during war still requires more in-depth evaluation.

Previous research on humanitarian law education among military members has shown that this education can reduce war crimes if accompanied by a deep understanding and ongoing training. For example, a study by Gill (2021) shows that training that focuses on the application of the principles of proportionality and differentiation can minimize potential violations of international law. Research by Aksar (2022) also highlights the importance of integrating humanitarian law into military doctrine as an effort to ensure that military members are not only aware of legal theory but also able to apply it in real-life war situations.

Although much research has addressed the importance of humanitarian law education, there is a research gap in terms of understanding the direct impact of such training programs on the behavior of military members on the battlefield. Previous research has tended to be limited to legal theory or normative studies of the application of humanitarian law, without considering how such training can be adapted to the realities in the field. In addition, few studies explore the differences in the success of humanitarian law training programs between countries with different social and political contexts. This research fills the gap by exploring more deeply how effective humanitarian law training programs can influence military behavior in war situations. This research will also examine the various educational approaches that have been implemented in countries that have successfully applied the principles of humanitarian law in their military education, as well as their impact on the reduction of war crimes. Using case studies, this study will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and successes of humanitarian law training programs that can serve as a model for other countries, including Indonesia, in improving the effectiveness of humanitarian law training among their armed forces.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with case study methods to analyze the effectiveness of humanitarian law training programs for military members and their impact on their behavior on the battlefield. This approach was chosen because it can explore a deep understanding of the application of humanitarian law education, the challenges faced in its implementation, and its influence on the actions of military members in armed conflict (Creswell, 2014). Data will be collected through several techniques, including in-depth interviews with training instructors, military members who have attended the training, as well as officials involved in education policy.

This interview technique is designed to provide direct insight into the experiences and perspectives of trainees, as well as the challenges they face in the application of humanitarian law in the field (Berg, 2009). In addition, a documentation study will be conducted by analyzing training modules, annual reports, and training evaluations to gain a more

comprehensive understanding of the structure and effectiveness of the training program (Yin, 2018).

Field observations will also be conducted to monitor the implementation of training in several military units, allowing researchers to observe the interaction between instructors and participants in a practical context (Spradley, 2016). The data collected will be analyzed using thematic analysis techniques to identify key themes related to the effectiveness of training, challenges in its implementation, and its impact on behavior on the battlefield (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Data triangulation will be used to ensure the validity of the research results by comparing interview data, documents, and field observation findings (Patton, 2015). This research is expected to provide a clearer picture of the extent to which humanitarian law training can influence military decision-making and the behavior of military members in armed conflict.

RESULTH AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the results of the research will be presented in depth regarding the effectiveness of humanitarian legal training programs for military members and their impact on their behavior on the battlefield. Based on data obtained from various sources, such as interviews with relevant stakeholders, observations on international organization reports, and analysis of official documents, three main issues that are the focus of this research will be discussed, namely: the quality and comprehensiveness of humanitarian law training materials provided to military members, the influence of training on decision-making and behavior of military members in the field, as well as the challenges faced in the implementation of humanitarian law training in various countries and military units. This study aims to delve deeper into whether existing humanitarian law training is effective in preventing violations of humanitarian law and how it contributes to changing military behavior in stressful war situations.

Based on research conducted through interviews with relevant stakeholders, observations of international organization reports, and analysis of official documents, the results of this study found three main issues that are the focus of the application of humanitarian law education for military members. The three aspects found are as follows:

Quality and Comprehensiveness of Humanitarian Law Training Materials.

The study found that the quality of humanitarian law training materials varied across countries and military units. In some countries that have more established humanitarian law training programs, the materials provided cover various basic principles of international law such as the principles of distinction, proportionality, and protection of vulnerable groups such as women and children. However, there are significant differences in the implementation of training in newer countries or with less developed military systems. In such countries, training materials are often limited to basic knowledge without emphasis on the application of humanitarian law principles in the context of more complex and situational wars. This has led to a lack of deep understanding from military members of the application of humanitarian law in stressful and dynamic situations on the battlefield.

In the context of humanitarian law education, the quality and comprehensiveness of training materials play an important role in ensuring that military members not only have basic knowledge, but also a deeper understanding of the application of the principles of international

law during armed conflict. The study found that in some countries with established training programs, the materials presented covered various basic principles of international humanitarian law, such as the principle of distinction, the principle of proportionality, and the protection of vulnerable groups, including women and children. This is in line with legal education theories that emphasize the importance of a comprehensive understanding that includes theory and practice in the real context of the battlefield.

According to Gill (2021), humanitarian law education should not only teach the basic principles of international law but also how those principles are applied in practical contexts on the battlefield. Gill emphasized that training that only covers theory with no emphasis on application in complex modern war situations, risks reducing the effectiveness of such training. Therefore, countries with more established training in humanitarian law have an advantage, as they can blend theory with practical scenarios that reflect more realistic conflict dynamics.

However, on the other hand, the study also found that countries with underdeveloped military systems often have training that is limited to only basic materials. In these countries, training materials tend to overlook the importance of applying the principles of humanitarian law in dynamic and stressful war situations. Aksar (2022) in his study identified that humanitarian law education that is less comprehensive often focuses on learning basic principles without providing practical context regarding the challenges faced by military members in the field. Aksar also highlighted that the lack of realistic battlefield simulations in training risks leading to the unpreparedness of military members in dealing with complex moral dilemmas on the battlefield.

In addition, this research also supports the view that the quality of training materials will be greatly influenced by the ability of countries to adapt training according to the needs and complexity of the conflicts they face. Countries with limited resources may have difficulty in putting together adequate training programs, which can affect the quality of understanding of humanitarian law received by military members. Therefore, there is a need for international efforts to provide technical assistance and resources to countries with underdeveloped military systems so that they can improve the quality of their humanitarian law training.

Thus, the quality and comprehensiveness of humanitarian law training materials are key factors in ensuring that military members have sufficient knowledge to carry out their legal obligations during conflict. It is important for countries to integrate the principles of humanitarian law into their training in a more applicable way, reflecting the real situation on the battlefield. This will ensure that members of the military not only understand the law, but are also prepared to deal with it in challenging situations.

The Effect of Training on Military Members' Decision Making and Behavior in the Field

The impact of humanitarian law training on military behavior in the field has proven positive, but not without challenges. Members of the military who have undergone humanitarian law training are more likely to consider the protection of civilians and to avoid attacks on non-military targets. However, in a stressful war situation, decisions made by military members are still influenced by other factors such as superiors' orders, limited information, and the need to achieve strategic objectives more quickly. On the ground, many members of the military admit that even though they are aware of the principles of humanitarian law, high tactical pressures often lead to violations or abandonment of those principles. Further

training on the application of humanitarian law in the context of asymmetric warfare and modern warfare is expected to improve their ability to deal with moral dilemmas on the ground.

Humanitarian law training for military members has a significant impact on their behavior in the field, although challenges in its implementation remain. The study shows that military members who have undergone humanitarian law training are more likely to consider the protection of civilians and avoid attacks on non-military targets, in accordance with basic principles of international law such as the principles of distinction and proportionality. This is in line with the theory of legal education which states that legal knowledge provided to individuals can influence their attitudes and behaviors in practical life, including in the context of war (Aksar, 2022).

However, although the training provides a better understanding of humanitarian law, challenges still arise on the battlefield. Gill's (2021) research shows that in stressful situations, military members often face a severe moral dilemma, where their decisions are more influenced by external factors such as superiors' orders, information limitations, and the urgency to achieve strategic goals in a short period of time. Gill stated that while legal knowledge can help military members to recognize possible violations, the tactical pressures and realities of the battlefield often lead to the abandonment of the principles of humanitarian law that have been taught in training. This creates a mismatch between the theories taught and the practices encountered in the field.

Furthermore, Aksar (2022) emphasizes the importance of more applicative continuing education, which not only includes a basic understanding of humanitarian law but also provides more concrete training on the application of humanitarian law in the context of asymmetric warfare and modern warfare. Aksar argues that in modern warfare, a major challenge arises when the military engages in operations that involve not only conventional forces, but also guerrilla warfare or attacks carried out by non-state groups. Under these conditions, the application of humanitarian law principles becomes more complex, and additional more contextual training is needed to prepare military members to face moral dilemmas that may arise.

The positive impact of humanitarian law training on military behavior in the field can also be seen from the efforts made by some countries to improve the quality of their training. Countries that have integrated humanitarian law training in their training programs tend to have militaries that are more aware of the importance of protecting civilians during conflict. However, in practice, the factors influencing decisions on the ground are often more dominated by tactical pressure and the need to achieve a quick military victory.

As a solution, this study emphasizes the need for a more in-depth and contextual approach to training. Training should include realistic battlefield simulations, which take into account the moral dilemmas and difficult decisions that must be made in stressful war situations. In addition, it is important to emphasize the development of military members' understanding of how they can overcome emerging moral dilemmas, as well as strengthen internal oversight mechanisms that can ensure that decisions taken remain in line with the principles of humanitarian law.

Thus, although humanitarian law training has a positive impact on the behavior of military members, the challenges in the application of such laws in the field still require more attention. Efforts to continuously improve training, with a focus on more realistic and contextual

implementation, are expected to reduce violations of humanitarian law and improve protection for civilians in armed conflict.

Challenges in the Implementation of Humanitarian Law Training in Various Countries and Military Units

The biggest challenge found in the implementation of humanitarian law training is the lack of resources and political support, especially in countries with limited defense budgets. Some countries do not have the capacity to conduct comprehensive or well-organized training, while large countries often face challenges in integrating this training into their military doctrine as a whole. In addition, cultural and structural barriers also arise, such as the incompatibility between humanitarian law training and traditional military practices that place more emphasis on mission success and victory. To address these challenges, there is a need for reforms in military doctrine that integrate humanitarian law training in a more structured manner, as well as support from the international community in the form of resources and cross-border training.

The implementation of humanitarian law training in various countries faces a number of major challenges that affect the effectiveness and scope of such training programs. The study found that the biggest challenge in the implementation of humanitarian law training is limited resources and political support, especially in countries with limited defense budgets. This is in line with the findings of Gill (2021), who noted that countries with limited resources often have difficulty in providing comprehensive humanitarian law training, and often only suggest basic training without a deep understanding of the principles of international law. Aksar (2022) also highlights that in countries with limited military budgets, humanitarian law training is often overlooked, with more priority given to tactical and technical training that is more directly related to the success of military missions.

In this context, large countries with larger defense budgets, despite having more capacity to conduct training, often face challenges in integrating humanitarian law training into their military doctrine as a whole. This is due to internal conflicts between the principles of humanitarian law and practical goals that are often more focused on mission success and military victory. The theory of "militarism" put forward by Foucault (1977) explains that in many military organizations, there is a predominance of the logic of power and control that tends to prioritize quick results and efficiency over ethical and legal considerations. This leads to a discrepancy between existing military doctrine and the values embodied in international humanitarian law, which require the protection of civilians and vulnerable groups.

In addition to budgetary and doctrinal factors, cultural and structural barriers in training implementation also play an important role. In many countries, especially those with strong military traditions, there is a mismatch between humanitarian law training and traditional military practices that prioritize the success of military missions over the application of humanitarian principles. Aksar (2022) in his research emphasizes that in some military units, humanitarian law is considered an adjunct that is not always relevant to tactical needs in the field, leading to the neglect of such principles in situations of pressure. In addition, humanitarian law training is often limited to theory-based exercises, which do not include simulating real-life war situations, in which military members must face complex moral and ethical dilemmas.

To address these challenges, it is important to update military doctrine in order to integrate humanitarian law training more structurally and sustainably. Research by Gill (2021) and Aksar (2022) suggests that one important step is to design more applicative and situation-based training, where military members can learn to make balanced decisions between strategic objectives and protection of civilians. In addition, support from the international community is critical in providing cross-border resources and training to strengthen the capacity of humanitarian law training in countries with limited budgets. It has also led to the expansion of cross-border training programs that can integrate the experiences of more advanced countries with developing countries, so that there is a transfer of knowledge and technology in the teaching of humanitarian law. Thus, although the challenges in the implementation of humanitarian law training are enormous, there is an urgent need to update military doctrine and increase international support to ensure that this training is more effective and in accordance with practical needs on the ground. A more integrative, real-world situation-based training program and supported by adequate resources will help military members to better understand and apply the principles of humanitarian law on the battlefield.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that humanitarian law training for military members has a significant impact on reducing violations of the law in armed conflict, despite various challenges in its implementation. The quality and comprehensiveness of training materials vary between countries and military units, with more developed countries having more complete and structured training programs than countries with limited budgets. Although many military members have obtained humanitarian law training, its application in the field is often hampered by tactical pressures, information limitations, and cultural and structural factors in military organizations that prioritize mission success over humanitarian law considerations.

The implementation of humanitarian law training in countries with limited budgets also faces major obstacles, such as a lack of adequate resources and political support. In addition, the biggest challenge in humanitarian law training is the incompatibility between this training and military doctrine, which is often more focused on rapid strategic objectives than the application of humanitarian principles on the ground. Nevertheless, the positive impact of humanitarian law training, such as raising awareness of the protection of civilians and the avoidance of attacks on non-military targets, shows great potential in reducing violations of humanitarian law on the battlefield.

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