



THE INTERVENTION OF ANONYMOUS IN THE CONFLICT BETWEEN RUSSIA AND UKRAINE: SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE LEGAL STATUS OF HACKERS THROUGH THE LENS OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

The ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine - which began on 24 February 2022 - has confirmed the emergence of two phenomena: *i)* hostilities no longer take place exclusively on a physical battlefield, but also in the cyber realm; *ii)* non-state actors are increasingly taking part in such hostilities. An expression of both phenomena is the hacker group Anonymous, which declared cyber war on Russia. On this basis, the article analyses the legal status of Anonymous under International Humanitarian Law: after ruling out the qualification of the Group as “lawful combatants” under article 4 (A) of the Third Geneva Convention of 1949, it assesses whether the cyber-attacks committed by members of Anonymous amounted to direct “participation in hostilities”.