

Applying Just War Theory



Read the case studies below. For each one, decide if you think it could be justified as a just war. Explain your answer.

Case Study	Can this count as a just war?	Explanation
A cruel dictator is abusing the rights of his civilians. The UN is deciding whether to intervene and overthrow him. They know they have a good chance of winning as the dictator's army is badly trained and poorly equipped. However, they cannot guarantee that civilians will not be harmed if the attack.		
A country has been invaded by a neighbouring country. They have tried to negotiate with the aggressors but this has not achieved anything. The government has decided to fight back with all available force, even if there is little chance of success.		
Pirates are operating off the coast of a small country. They are terrorising local fishing communities and disrupting international shipping. A coalition of countries has decided to hunt them down and arrest them at sea. Where necessary, they will use lethal force. The pirates will pose no real challenge to the professional soldiers of these countries.		

Applying Just War Theory **Answers**

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A cruel dictator is abusing the rights of his civilians. The UN is deciding whether to intervene and overthrow him. They know they have a good chance of winning as the dictator's army is badly trained and poorly equipped. However, they cannot guarantee that civilians will not be harmed if the attack.	No	Though this qualifies on most of the criteria, the threat to civilians mean this is unlikely to be justifiable.
A country has been invaded by a neighbouring country. They have tried to negotiate with the aggressors but this has not achieved anything. The government has decided to fight back with all available force, even if there is little chance of success.	No	There is little chance of success so the war will cause pointless suffering.
Pirates are operating off the coast of a small country. They are terrorising local fishing communities and disrupting international shipping. A coalition of countries has decided to hunt them down and arrest them at sea. Where necessary, they will use lethal force. The pirates will pose no real challenge to the professional soldiers of these countries.	Yes	It appears to pass all the criteria mentioned in the case study. It is for a good reason (protecting people); it has been agreed to by several legitimate authorities; it should succeed; it appears to pose no threat to civilians.