

# ***THE HARD WAR: Rules***

## **1. INTRODUCTION:**

*The Hard War* is a small two player card game, where the players each assume the role of a nationalist faction, fighting a bloody civil war for a small fictitious country. Players will wrestle for control over the nations' cities by playing cards representing military attacks. However, each attack causes civilian casualties and if media reports expose a high enough number of dead, a UN-led coalition will intervene and force an end to the war.

## **2. GOAL OF THE GAME:**

The goal of the game is to win the war, either by military force or by being found responsible for the *least* amount of civilian deaths in the war tribunals following a possible UN intervention.

### 3. GAME COMPONENTS:



#### 7 x CITY CARDS:

City cards have a number of flags showing who is closest to controlling this particular city. Each city is worth 1 or 2 victory points (VP). Each city, except Palpero, also has a City effect, which affects the player controlling the city, or that player's opponent, depending on the effect (see 6A for full city effect descriptions).



#### 60 x ATTACK CARDS:

Players will use these cards in their struggle for control of the cities. These cards are categorized into 2 groups:

**Artillery attack cards** and **Ground attack cards**, identified by their card backs (green or yellow).

Back

On their card faces, each Attack card has a number between 10.000 and 40.000, which is the **Civilian death toll**: The number of civilians that are killed as a direct result of this attack. Attack cards with a Civilian death toll of 40.000 are considered **Atrocities** and has a small skull at the top of the card.



Face

Ground attack cards also have an icon reminding players of the **Friendly fire rule** (5.2.3).



#### 1 x CIVILIAN DEATH TOLL TRACK:

The 3 parts of the **Civilian death toll track** are placed to form a continuous track from 0 to 200.000. A marker will be placed on the track to show the current Civilian death toll.



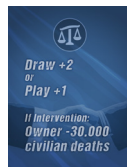
#### 20 x SPECIAL CARDS:

See 6B for full descriptions.



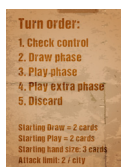
#### 9 x MARKERS:

For keeping track of stuff.



#### 1 x JUS AD BELLUM:

See 5.4 for rules description.



#### 2 x REFERENCE CARDS:

For easier access to rules.

## 4. GAME SETUP:

Before playing, you need to prepare the game by going through these steps:

1. Place the **City cards** in a line between the players, with the flags face up. Place a marker on each card, on the large number between the flags.
2. Shuffle all **Attack cards** and **Special cards** together in one deck and deal each player **3 cards** from the top of the deck. Then cut this deck into two smaller, roughly equal sized decks and place them face down next to each other next to the play area where both players can reach them. They are now the two **Draw decks**.
3. Place the 3 parts of the Civilian death toll track in order to create a continuous track from 0 to 200.000. Place a marker just outside the bottom edge.
4. Place the **Jus ad bellum** card to the side of the play area. It is controlled by neither player at the start of the game.
5. Give each player a **reference card** and choose a **Starting player**.

At the end of the setup, the play area should look something like this:



## 5. PLAYING THE GAME:

In *The Hard War*, players will take **turns**, with each turn being made up by 5 phases. Each player completes his or her turn before the other player starts, and so on.

A **turn** consists of the following **phases**:

1. Check control phase
  2. Draw phase
  3. Play phase
  4. Play extra phase
  5. Discard phase
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### 5.1. PHASE DESCRIPTION:



*Note: "You" below refers to the currently active player.*

#### 5.1.1. CHECK CONTROL PHASE:

If, during this phase, a city's marker is on the flag closest to you, you have taken control of that city. You must take the marker and place the city card in front of you, with the black and white side face up, or give it to your opponent if the card says "Opponent:". The markers represent each player's Victory points (VP), so if you took control of the capital city, also take the extra marker from the box, since this city is worth 2 VP.

+ Any effects on the **City card** take effect immediately or during the proper phase during your turn (i.e. Draw bonuses are applied during the draw phase etc.). See 6A for a complete description of the **City effects**.

+ A controlled city can no longer have any **Attack cards** played on it. However, the Attack cards already played remain untouched and can still be targeted by **Media report cards**.

#### 5.1.2. DRAW PHASE:

During this phase, you **must** draw 2 cards (+ draw bonuses) from either **Draw deck** and place them in your hand. You may draw 1 card at a time and may choose what **Draw deck** to draw from before each card is drawn.



*Note: The **Starting player** only draws 1 card during the **first turn**.*

### 5.1.3. PLAY PHASE:

During this phase, you may play up to 2 cards (+ play bonuses) from your hand, either down on to the play area (if they are Attack cards) or according to the special card rules. You can target one or several cities in a turn.



*Note: The **Starting player** only plays 1 card during the **first turn**.*

For full details on how to play cards, see “5.2. How to play cards”.

### 5.1.4. PLAY EXTRA PHASE:

A special card may read “play extra”. This means that after you have completed the play phase, you may play any number of “play extra” cards for free, that is, outside of the “play 2” limit, although you must still abide by the limitations on the card.

### 5.1.5. DISCARD PHASE:

Here, if you have more cards in your hand than your current **Hand size** (starting hand size is 3), you have to select and discard cards from your hand until you match your hand size.

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## 5.2. HOW TO PLAY CARDS:

### 5.2.1. PLAYING ATTACK CARDS:

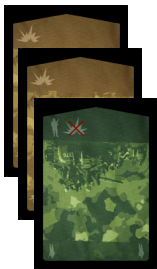
Your Attack cards are played **face down**, on your side of the city card you want to attack. (See image). Each following attack card is placed on top of the attack card previously played, offset slightly so that the **icons are still visible**. *After playing an attack card on a city, move the marker one flag closer to you.*



*Note: All attack cards are equally effective. For **each** card played, you move the marker **1** flag towards you.*



*Note: As you move the marker in either direction, you **only** count the **flags**. The number “space” is no longer used.*



### 5.2.2. ATTACK LIMIT:

A player may only play a maximum of 2 attack cards on each city in a single turn, unless playing a card that specifically “Ignores attack limit”.

### 5.2.3. FRIENDLY FIRE RULE:



*Note: Attack cards are categorized as Artillery attacks and Ground attacks. Once a player has played a Ground Attack card on a city, that player can no longer play Artillery attack cards on that city, for the rest of the game.*

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## 5.3. PLAYING MEDIA REPORT CARDS:

Target any face down **Attack card** in the play area, either on your or your opponent's side. The targeted attack card is flipped face up, **revealing** its **Civilian death toll**, but remains in place. **The used media report card is then discarded.**



*Note: As an attack card is **revealed** for any reason during the game (but not after a UN intervention), the Civilian death toll track must be updated. Add the revealed value to the current total and move the marker to the new total. This is true even if a player chose to play an Attack card face up (see 5.6.2 Securing a local victory).*



*fig: The Media report card is played on the middle Attack card. The Attack card is revealed but remains in place. The Civilian death toll track is updated 3 steps and the media report card is then discarded.*

## 5.4. JUS AD BELLUM:

The Jus ad bellum represents the owner being considered to be “Justified” in the conflict, at least in the eyes of the United Nations, and gives the player some extra room to maneuver. The player controlling Jus ad bellum may, during his or her turn, activate any 1(!) of the bonus effects on the card. Afterwards, the player must give the Jus ad bellum to his opponent, as he or she has used up the goodwill.

+ The Jus ad bellum’s bonus effects can not be used on the same turn it is received. Turn the card face down when you receive it and turn it face up at the start of your next turn to remember this.

+ If, for any reason, an **Atrocity** is revealed, the Jus ad bellum is given to the player who did not play the atrocity. If the receiving player was already the owner, this event is ignored.

+ The Jus ad bellum changing owner “event” is always completed before a game ends. For example, if the game ends because of an atrocity being revealed, causing an intervention, the Jus ad bellum changes owner before the game actually ends.

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## 5.5. GAME END AND WINNER:

There are 3 ways the game can end:

### 5.5.1. MILITARY VICTORY:

If either player **controls 4 victory points**, the game immediately ends and that player is proclaimed the winner.

### 5.5.2. U.N. INTERVENTION:

If the **Civilian death toll** reaches **200.000** dead, the game immediately ends. All played Attack cards are then revealed and each player sums up the civilian deaths on his or her side of the play area. The player with the *lowest* total wins the game. If there is a draw, no-one wins.



*Note: If either player controls the Jus ad bellum, 30.000 dead are subtracted from that player’s total, even if the Jus ad bellum is face down.*

### 5.5.3. BOTH DECKS RUN OUT OF CARDS:

See 5.5.2 above.

## 5.6. ADVANCED RULES:

These optional rules can be added for a more complex gaming experience.

### 5.6.1. ADDITIONAL MEDIA REPORT CARD RULE- UN OBSERVERS:

As an additional way to play Media report cards, during your play phase, you can attach a **Media report card** to a City by placing the media report card underneath the city card, partly visible.

From now on, all attack cards played on this city must be played **face up**, for as long as card is attached to the city. However, all previously played attack cards are unaffected.



*Note: If another city already had a media report card attached to it, discard that media report card as only one city can have an attached media report card at any given time.*



*Note: When a player takes control of a city in the Check control phase, if there is an attached card under it, this card is immediately discarded.*



### 5.6.2. SECURING A LOCAL VICTORY:

Normally, your opponent will always have an opportunity to counterattack once before you can gain control of a city. This means that it can be hard to actually take control of cities. The rule below rule can make it easier, but at a price:

If, during your play phase, the marker is on the flag closest to you, you can play a **face up(!) Atrocity card** (with a skull) and move the marker off your edge of the card. This **prevents your opponent from playing any attack cards on this city during his or her next turn**, effectively allowing you to **Secure the local victory**.



*Note: You must still respect the **attack limit**, **play limit** and **friendly fire rules**. That is, you must normally be allowed to play the card on this city.*

+ You don't take actual control of the city (or it's city effect) until your next Check control phase(5.1.1).



## 6. APPENDIX:

### 6A. CITY EFFECT DESCRIPTION:

#### **ADECH (Play +1):**

The controlling player may play an extra card during the Play phase, but must still respect Attack limit. This effect recurs each of his or her turns.

#### **DEDES (Civilian deaths +/- 30.000 once) :**

The controlling player may add or subtract 30.000 to the Civilian death toll track. This effect is instant and only occurs once.

#### **DUNSHE (Draw +1):**

The controlling player may draw an extra card during the Draw phase. This effect recurs each of his or her turns.

#### **INAE (Draw 3 cards once):**

The controlling player may draw up to 3 cards from the Draw decks. This effect is instant and occurs only once.

#### **KOROCAS (Opponent hand size -1):**

The controlling player's **opponent** now has a -1 hand size. This effect is instant and occurs only once. Should the opponent have too many cards on hand, he or she must immediately select and discard cards from his or her hand to match the new hand size. Give this card to your opponent as a reminder, but keep the marker as a victory point.

#### **NISHKA (Opponent discard hand once):**

The controlling player's **opponent** discards all cards in his or her hand. This effect is instant and occurs only once.

#### **PALPERO (Capital city (2 VP)):**

This city has no effect apart from being worth 2 victory points. As you take this city card, also take the spare marker from the box.

## 6B. SPECIAL CARDS DESCRIPTION:



### 6B.1. MEDIA REPORT CARD x 2:

This card works as a normal Media report card (see 5.3) except you may target 2 Attack cards instead of 1.



### 6B.2. US BOMBING:

This card can be played for free during your “play extra” phase (5.1.4). It ignores the Attack limit (5.2.2), which means it can be played as a third card on a city during a single turn. This card requires you to control the Jus ad bellum (5.4) to be played. You do not lose control of the Jus ad bellum by playing this card. *Move target city’s marker one step closer to your side.*



### 6B.3 LOCAL SUPPORT:

This card can be played for free during your “play extra” phase (5.1.4). It must be played on a city where neither player has played any previous attack cards. *Move target city’s marker one step closer to your side.*

## 6C. DESIGNER’S COMMENTS:

Thank you for playing my game! This game was designed as a project for a course in **Educational game design** that I took at Gothenburg University during fall 2015. The requirement was to design an educational game where the player could learn something and I chose to use so called “Procedural rhetoric” - making an argument through the rules of the game - to push a political argument about war, media and civilian casualties.

Additionally, civilian casualties are usually completely ignored in war games, something which I feel is worth a discussion in itself.

### 6C.1. A WORD ABOUT THE TITLE OF THE GAME:

The term “Hard war” was coined by the union Major General William T. Sherman

during the American civil war and defines a war that is fought not only against a military enemy but against civilians as well. Sherman was both celebrated and criticized for his "March to the sea" in 1864, where he led 62.000 men to capture the city of Savannah, Georgia. During the march, Sherman employed the "scorched earth" tactic, with widespread destruction of civilian supplies and infrastructure. It was his conviction that this would break the backbone of the rebellion.

Sherman was also accused of allowing his troops to burn the city of Columbia in 1867.

"Hard war" is related to the term "Total war", war that uses tactics that causes significant civilian losses, on both sides, and disregards the laws of war.

### **6C.2. A WORD ABOUT JUS AD BELLUM:**

Jus ad bellum is a set of criteria for determining if a war can be considered "just". The term is translated as "right to war" and is an international agreement used to limit the justifiable reasons for a country to declare war on another country. The principles of Jus ad bellum includes:

That it must be waged by a legitimate authority, that it must aim for a just peace, that there must be a reasonable probability of victory, that the violence must be in proportion to the attack suffered and that the war must be a last resort, all other non-violent options having been exhausted.

Jus ad bellum can be considered to be included in the doctrine of "just war theory" (Jus Bellum iustum) together with "Jus in bello", that dictates how combatants are to act during the actual conflict.

### **6C.3. A WORD ABOUT THE US BOMBING CARD:**

How come the US bombing card does not have a Civilian death toll? It's not like the US is known for never killing civilians? I know, but the way I see it, the United nations are not interested in civilian casualties caused by a superpower. Neither will those casualties affect how soon they might intervene. Because of that, those casualties have no effect in this game. Perhaps that could be an idea for another game?

### **6C.4. ABOUT THE GAME:**

At first it can be difficult to see what strategy you should use, especially because of the multiple victory conditions. My advice is to play the game a couple of times first, after which I think the flow will become more obvious.

First time off, most players try the different cards out. They attack a little here and there and they both use media report cards. Before they know it the game has ended by intervention and one or the other wins, without really knowing how.

It is usually by the second play through that players realize that if you aim for a military victory, you should play as few media cards as possible, if any. Also, playing ground attack cards makes you less vulnerable to losing by intervention, but limits you in what cards you can use in the future.

Usually the game starts off, both trying for the military victory, because that's usually what you do in a war game. Then as one player either realizes that the other player has used a lot more artillery, or that he or she is losing the military battle, the strategy shifts. Now the game tends to become a race, where one player tries to finish by winning a military victory and the other tries to get an intervention by playing media cards. The problem for the military player is that he can not be picky about what cards he uses, which can make him even more motivated to avoid the intervention, and the media player must deal with the fact that he still needs to play attack cards to defend himself until he can make the intervention happen.

The game is designed to make it difficult to win a military victory, but if you feel that it is **too** hard to take 4 VP before the UN intervention comes barging in, try removing a few Media report cards from the deck before you start playing. This should even things out.

You can also try the advanced rule of Securing a local victory, since this also makes a military victory easier to accomplish.

## **6C.5. A BIG THANK YOU TO THE TESTERS:**

Seriously, thanks for all the game testing and valuable feedback!

Thank you:

Lina Liam Hansson  
Janusz Maxe  
John Wiberg  
Jonas Linderöth  
Björn Lindgren  
Jenny Lindgren

*/ Lars Nordbeck*

*If you wish to contact me, please check out the game's website.*