IMUN 2025 Research Report

Human Rights Commission Issue #1: The question of providing humanitarian aid in war-torn areas through international cooperation.

The United Nations identifies the coordination of humanitarian relief efforts “beyond the relief capacity of national authorities” during disaster as one of its main mandates. To achieve this, it relies on the international co-operation of its member-states to provide funding and on-ground support to humanitarian operations ("Deliver Humanitarian"). This topic is particularly relevant due to the surge in the number of armed conflicts around the world. The deliberate obstruction of aid has become a form of warfare, and at the same time, there is a widening disparity between funding and need for humanitarian aid.

According to the International Relief Committee (IRC), humanitarian aid “is a form of assistance designed to save lives and alleviate suffering during and after crises, such as… conflicts” ("What is humanitarian"). Today, around 362 million people are in need of humanitarian aid worldwide, with conflict being the most significant contributing factor ("Record numbers"). Reports show that humanitarian aid is successful in saving lives, like in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where in 2 years mortality rates were lowered by 70% through a health program (Hofmann). But these programs are undermined by the constant underfunding of humanitarian organizations, and the dispersion of funding between said organizations. In Haiti, for example, one half of citizens do not have enough food, and yet, due to a lack of funding, the World Food Program is forced to reduce its assistance in the country ("Record numbers").

International cooperation is paramount to providing humanitarian aid in war torn areas, but that cooperation is undermined by various challenges, like the blockage of aid access by warring

parties. In 2022, the UN documented 3931 instances of denial humanitarian access worldwide, and stated that these blockages were mostly executed by government forces. According to the Fourth Geneva Convention, denying access to aid with arbitrary or unjustifiable reasons is a violation of international law. One example of blockage pointed out in a Security Council report was the situation in the Middle East, where the Israeli government has allegedly blocked access for aid into Palestine. Another example is the situation in Sudan, where armed forces have endangered humanitarian workers to an extent of them not being able to perform their duties. Other challenges to international cooperation in the issue of humanitarian aid is the lack of coordination and organization in delivery, and the use of humanitarian aid as diplomatic leverage ("'Shocking Increase'").

In this debate, delegates must focus on how the international community can ensure that humanitarian aid supports civilians in war-torn areas in a safe, timely, and impartial manner. They should discuss ways to enforce that access, like ceasefires and humanitarian corridors, while also holding those who obstruct that access accountable. Delegates should further come together to improve coordination and funding of humanitarian actions, in order to achieve humanitarian neutrality and prioritize human lives.

Works Cited

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