

SOCHUM

ENSURING THE PROTECTION
OF CIVILIANS AND HUMAN
RIGHTS IN OCCUPIED AND
WAR-TORN TERRITORIES



BESTAMUN 25'



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Letter from Under Secretary-General

Dear Delegates,

Right off the bat hello everybody, I'm Rojin Yılmaz, many of you know my face, even if you don't know it, you've heard my name. I am 19 years old and a 1th grade student at Atılım University & Department of Translation and Interpreting. I don't remember what conference this was my time, but I love MUN conferences. It is an honour to participate in the United Nations conference of Beştepe College, and it is a laurel to be the Under Secretary-General of SOCHUM as a Committee, and I would like to thank Ali Solmaz for his hard-working. Thank you for being my partner in this matter. It is a really great feeling to partner and do business with Ali.

I also love playing the piano and singing, but usually no one knows my voice intimately. The topic of our committee, where I am an Under Secretary-General, is Ensuring the Protection of Civilians and Human Rights in Occupied and War-Torn Territories. Our delegates will discuss this issue of SOCHUM for four days. This agenda item is a universal issue and it is important for our future. I am very confident that our delegates will bring together different ideas with an internal perspective, a future-oriented question solver. I would like to thank Ayaulym Assyrlhan, the Deputy Secretary General of the conference, for her support and efforts. I am grateful to you and your teams for this incredible conference. No matter what I write here, nothing can describe the success of my career, the greatness of this conference, my friends, my team, my partner.

Once and for all, I am grateful to the entire BESTMUN'25 academy and organizing team for their efforts during this conference and for the efforts they will give afterwards.

If you have any questions or have anything you want to ask, you can contact me without hesitation. Among other things, you can contact me on instagram: @rojinyilmaazz also my mail rojinyilmz3307@gmail.com

Kindest Regards,

Rojin,

Under Secretary-General of the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee.

Letter from Academic Assistant

Dear Delegates,

I am Ali Solmaz, Academic Assistant to the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM) for BESTMUN'25. As an 18 year old first year student at Gazi University's Faculty of Medicine, I bring a fresh, evidence based perspective to the critical issues we face.

The topic of our committee, Ensuring the Protection of Civilians and Human Rights in Occupied and War-Torn Territories, is a moral imperative that touches on every aspect of human suffering from attacks on civil facilities to the crisis of displacement. Over the four days of the conference we will explore the complexities of International Law's Accountability Gaps, the critical role of the International Committee of the Red Cross and Local Humanitarian Networks and the urgent need to address Exploitation and Violence Against Women. I am confident that your diverse backgrounds and intellectual rigour will guide us towards meaningful and executable resolutions.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the Secretariat, the organising team and the entire BESTMUN'25 academy for their tireless efforts in making this conference a reality. Their commitment ensures that we have the ideal platform for robust debate and diplomatic success.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding the committee's background guide, rules of procedure or if you require clarification on international law. I look forward to working alongside each of you.

Kindest Regards,

Ali Solmaz

Academic Assistant of the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee

1.Committee Overview

1.1. Introduction to Social, Cultural and Humanitarian Committee (SOCHUM)

SOCHUM (The Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee) is the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. It focuses on protecting human rights, promoting social justice, and upholding human dignity. SOCHUM deals with issues such as refugees, women's and children's rights, racial discrimination, human trafficking, the right to education, and the preservation of cultural diversity. It also works closely with organizations like UNICEF, UNHCR, and UNESCO. In Model United Nations (MUN) conferences, SOCHUM is one of the most active and engaging committees, as it discusses human-centered global issues.

The Third Committee meets every year in early October and wants to finish its work by the end of November. All 193 countries that are members of the UN can come. Like in past sessions, a big part of the committee's work will be looking into human rights issues, such as reports from the Human Rights Council's special procedures, which were set up in 2006.

1.2. The role of SOCHUM in Global Humanitarian Policy

SOCHUM plays a crucial role in shaping global humanitarian policy by addressing issues that affect human welfare and dignity. It focuses on promoting international cooperation to protect human rights, assist vulnerable groups, and respond to social and cultural challenges. The committee develops and recommends policies that aim to reduce inequality, prevent discrimination, and support people affected by conflict, poverty, or displacement. Through resolutions and collaboration with organizations such as UNHCR, UNICEF, and UNESCO, SOCHUM helps guide member states in creating fair and effective humanitarian responses worldwide.

1.3. Mandate and Working Methods

SOCHUM's job is to deal with social, humanitarian, and cultural problems around the world that have an impact on human rights and development. It works to protect the rights of vulnerable groups, promote equality, and make sure that basic freedoms are respected. The committee talks about items on the agenda that the UN General Assembly has sent to it and writes resolutions that show what all the member states agree on. SOCHUM works by having open debates, negotiations, and building consensus among delegations. It works closely with UN organizations like UNHCR, UNICEF, and UNESCO to put its suggestions into action. SOCHUM makes sure that humanitarian policies are inclusive, effective, and coordinated around the world by using these methods.

1.4. Cooperation with other UN Bodies (UNHRC, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP)

SOCHUM works closely with different UN bodies to make the world a better place for people and promote human rights. It works with the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to

make sure that basic freedoms are protected and that human rights standards are followed. SOCHUM works with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to deal with issues related to refugees, such as their safety, displacement, and asylum. It works with UNICEF to protect children's rights and well-being, such as making sure they can go to school and are safe from being taken advantage of. SOCHUM also works with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to help people feel included, reduce poverty, and promote long-term human development. SOCHUM makes sure that its resolutions are coordinated, useful, and in line with the UN system's bigger goals by working with these groups.

2. Understanding the Agenda

2.1. Introduction to the Agenda Item: Ensuring the Protection of Civilians and Human Rights in Occupied and War-Torn Territories

In recent decades, armed conflict has blighted the lives of millions of civilians. Serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law are common in many armed conflicts. In certain circumstances, some of these violations may even constitute genocide, war crimes or crimes against humanity. In today's armed conflict civilians are often the most affected category of persons. They not only face the risk of death and injuries but also that of displacement. All too frequently, civilians are targeted, used as shields or their means of survival – water, food and shelter – destroyed. Women, children and persons displaced by the conflict may be particularly affected by violence and its consequences.

2.2. Definition of 'Occupied' and 'War-Torn' Territories

In international law, a territory is considered "occupied" when it is actually placed under the authority of the hostile army. The definition of occupation and the obligations of the occupying power were initially codified at the end of the nineteenth century.

Occupied territories are areas under the control of a foreign military, without the agreement of the country that has sovereignty over them. This situation often arises during or right after armed conflict. International humanitarian law, particularly the 1907 Hague Regulations and the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention, governs occupation, outlining the rights and responsibilities of the occupying power. Occupation doesn't transfer sovereignty. Instead, it's a temporary situation where the occupying power must maintain public order and safety, while also following the existing laws of the area, unless it's impossible to do so.

War-torn areas are those places that have suffered significant destruction, disruption, and instability due to armed conflict. Unlike occupied territories, the main feature here isn't foreign control, but the extent of damage to social, economic, and political systems. These areas often show signs of infrastructure collapse, population displacement, weakened government, and restricted access to essential services. This term is used descriptively, not legally, and is common in humanitarian, development, and policy work. It's used to assess needs, allocate resources, and design programs for recovery.

2.3. Importance of Civilian Protection in Armed Conflicts

In today's armed conflict civilians are often the most affected category of persons. They not only face the risk of death and injuries but also that of displacement. All too frequently, civilians are targeted, used as shields or their means of survival – water, food and shelter – destroyed. Women, children and persons displaced by the conflict may be particularly affected by violence and its consequences.

Conflict and protection analysis, as well as protection monitoring, must inform our engagement in situations of armed conflict. Understanding and analysing the ways in which conflict affects the persons we serve in different ways, including depending on their sex, gender, age and other factors, are key to conduct a comprehensive protection risk analysis and deliver tailored responses.

2.4. Human Rights under International Humanitarian Law

International humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law are complementary. They both seek to protect human dignity, though they do so in different circumstances and in different ways. Human rights law applies at all times and in all circumstances, and it concerns all persons subject to the jurisdiction of a State. Its purpose is to protect individuals from arbitrary behavior by the State. Human rights law, therefore, continues to apply in times of armed conflict. However, human rights treaties, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Convention and the American Convention on Human Rights authorize derogations under stringent conditions from some rights in time of "public emergency which threatens the life of the nation," of which armed conflict is certainly an example. As it applies only in exceptional circumstances, no derogations are allowed. Many provisions are made for international armed conflicts, but far fewer apply to non-international armed conflicts. The principal purpose of IHL is to protect the life, health and human dignity of civilians and combatants no longer involved in hostilities (captured, wounded or sick combatants), and to limit the rights of parties in conflict to use methods of warfare of their choice. The aim is to limit the suffering and damage caused by armed conflict. In doing so, IHL may be said to protect the "core" of human rights in times of armed conflict. These core protections include the prohibition of slavery, the prohibition of torture and inhumane treatment and the prohibition of any retroactive application of the law. Unlike other rights (such as freedom of speech, of movement and of association) that may be abrogated in times of national emergencies, the core protections afforded by IHL can never be suspended. If all these core protections are brought together, it can be seen that both IHL and human rights law set forth essential basic rights.

2.5. Global Relevance and Impact of the Issue

In 2022, nearly 94 percent of the victims of explosive weapons used in populated areas were civilians (in 17 conflict-affected countries and territories). Conflicts also cause the destruction of homes, schools, health-care facilities, water installations and other essential infrastructure. To minimize this destruction, taking actions is mandatory. Last year, conflict and insecurity were the most significant drivers of high levels of acute food insecurity for around 117 million people in 19 countries and territories. Crops were destroyed, livestock stolen, land spoiled, roads blocked and farmers driven from their fields. Livelihoods were lost as food prices increased sharply. With the increasing conflicts all around the globe related nations must be alarmed.

3. Historical Background

3.1. Evolution of International Humanitarian Law

How, and why, does international humanitarian law (IHL) develop? And why does it matter? These are not only matters for legal historians. Knowledge and understanding of the law require a good grasp of its historic development. Insight into how and why IHL develops can give valuable answers to contemporary problems, such as unclear interpretation of IHL provisions or ways to address pressing humanitarian concerns arising from the effects of armed conflict on civilians and other protected persons and objects. As part of the body of international law, IHL aims to protect persons who are not or no longer taking part in hostilities, the sick and wounded, prisoners and civilians, and to define the rights and obligations of the parties to a conflict in the conduct of hostilities. The object and purpose of IHL are to protect those affected by armed conflict, including by imposing limits on how belligerents use force. In order to achieve its object and purpose, IHL has to evolve in tandem with the reality of warfare, including the evolution of military technologies and tactics; changes in the environment, such as the world's ever-increasing urbanization; and developments in other bodies of law, for example, international human rights law. Developments in IHL are further triggered or influenced by an evolving understanding of cross-cutting principles and concepts, such as the importance and different facets of the notion of gender. Courts and tribunals, both international and domestic, have in turn shaped the interpretation and implementation of IHL, and have often played an important role in introducing or reflecting such external developments.

3.2. The Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols

The Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols are a body of public international law, also known as the Humanitarian Law of Armed Conflicts. They aim to establish minimum protections, standards of humane treatment, and fundamental guarantees of respect to individuals victimized by armed conflicts. The Geneva Conventions are a series of treaties on the treatment of civilians, prisoners of war (POWs), and soldiers who are otherwise rendered hors de combat (French, literally for "outside the fight") or incapable of fighting.

Convention I

This Convention protects wounded and sick soldiers and medical personnel who are not taking an active part in hostility against a party. It ensures humane treatment without discrimination founded on race, color, sex, religion or faith, birth or wealth, etc. To that end, the Convention prohibits torture, assaults upon personal dignity, and execution without judgment (Article 3). It also grants the right to proper medical treatment and care.

Convention II

This agreement extended the protections outlined in the first Convention to shipwrecked soldiers and other naval forces, including special protections afforded to hospital ships.

Convention III

One of the treaties created during the 1949 Convention defined "Prisoner of War" and accorded such prisoners proper and humane treatment as specified by the first Convention. Specifically, it required POWs to give only their names, ranks, and serial numbers to their captors. Nations party to the Convention may not use torture to extract information from POWs. Additionally, it established the POWs must be released and returned to their home countries without delay after active hostilities end.

Convention IV

Under this Convention, civilians are afforded the same protections from inhumane treatment and attack afforded to sick and wounded soldiers in the first Convention. Further, additional regulations regarding the treatment of civilians were introduced. Specifically, it prohibits attacks on civilian hospitals, medical transports, etc. It also specifies the rights of internees (POWs) and saboteurs. Finally, it discusses how occupiers are to treat an occupied populace.

Protocol I

The signing nations agreed to implement additional restrictions on the treatment of "protected persons" in accordance with the original conventions. They also provided further clarification on the terms used in the conventions. Additionally, new rules were introduced for the treatment of the deceased, protection of cultural artifacts, and addressing dangerous targets, such as dams and nuclear installations.

Protocol II

In this Protocol, the fundamentals of "humane treatment" were further clarified. Additionally, the rights of interned persons were specifically enumerated, providing protections for those charged with crimes during wartime. It also identified new protections and rights for civilian populations.

Protocol III

Protocol III was adopted in 2005 to add the "red crystal" emblem to the list of symbols used to identify neutral humanitarian aid workers.

3.3 The Development of Civilian Protection Norms

When we think about the historical origins of civilian protection, we tend to do so in a particular way. We associate the emergence of the norm with the development of the principles of discrimination and, to a lesser degree, proportionality in the Geneva Conventions. We then link the idea of protecting vulnerable individuals and groups in times of conflict to the elaboration of the international legal framework following the devastating events of the Second World War. In this account, what occurred before 1945 is of little consequence. In terms of broader normative advancements, in the following years the United Nations passed several resolutions dealing with crimes against humanity and genocide, but it was in 1948 that two main documents touching upon the rights and the protection of (though not exclusively) civilian populations were ratified: the Geneva Convention and the Declaration of Human Rights. Crucially, in 1949 the norm of civilian protection took full form, as it was codified in what came to be the Fourth Geneva Convention and in Common Article 3 to all the Conventions. The conventions put a constraint on state behaviour whilst generating a set of expectations to regulate how states should treat civilians. Civilian protection was further fostered in 1977, as two Protocols were added to the 1949 texts, dealing specifically with non-combatant populations in international, colonial and domestic armed conflicts.

3.4. Major Historical Conflicts (Palestine, Ukraine, Bosnia, Rwanda, Iraq.)

Israel and Hamas have begun to implement the first phase of U.S. President Donald Trump's twenty-point peace deal. Under the agreement's terms, Hamas has released all living hostages and promised to release the remains of others it holds, while Israel has freed about two thousand Palestinian prisoners held in Israel and withdrawn its forces to a predetermined line, leaving it in control of 53 percent of the Gaza Strip. The United Nations has also drastically scaled up aid to the territory. The status of other challenging issues, however, including the disarmament of Hamas and Gaza's future governance structure, remains unclear. Three years since Russia's February 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russia still occupies roughly 20 percent of the country after gaining over four thousand square kilometers of territory in 2024. Russia continues to bombard Ukrainian cities, while Ukraine maintains drone attacks on Russian ships and military vehicles. Since January 2022, Ukraine has received about \$407 billion in aid, including over \$118 billion from the United States. Fighting and air strikes have inflicted over 40,000 civilian casualties, while 3.7 million people are internally displaced, and 6.9 million have fled Ukraine. 12.7 million people need humanitarian assistance. As the United States works to negotiate an end to the war in Ukraine, the Trump administration's approach has escalated tensions between Kyiv and Washington and strained relations with NATO allies. The United States has pressured Ukraine to make concessions, including recognizing Crimea as Russian territory. President Trump met with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Anchorage, Alaska, on August 15, with the stated goal of achieving a ceasefire in the war in Ukraine. However, no concrete progress was announced, with Trump saying, "there's no deal until there's a deal." And there are numerous conflicts waiting to be solved all around the world.

3.5. Key UN milestones on Civilian Protection

Twenty-five years ago, the United Nations Security Council decided that the protection of civilians (POC) in armed conflict was an issue of international peace and security, and it tasked the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) with the first explicit mandate to protect civilians from threats of physical violence. Prior to this, peacekeeping missions helped protect populations through key activities like monitoring ceasefires, disarming combatants, and supporting peace negotiations, but were not authorized by the Security Council to intervene with force to protect populations. National state authorities are responsible for protecting the population in their territory, and peacekeepers support them to do so. However, in some peacekeeping contexts where host states are unwilling or unable to fully meet this responsibility, the Security Council empowers peacekeepers to step in. In these cases, peacekeeping missions are authorized to prevent and stop threats of physical violence against civilians, including through the use of force when needed.

In missions with a POC mandate, all peacekeepers - civilian, police and military – are responsible for protecting civilians. They coordinate with each other as well as with local authorities and UN staff outside the mission. And while peacekeepers are not resourced to protect all populations at all times, peacekeeping missions use all their available tools to prevent conflict before it starts and protect those most at risk from violence.

4. Current Situation and Global Context

4.1. Overview of Ongoing Conflicts

This is, in numbers, the most affected region: more than 45 armed conflicts are currently taking place throughout the Middle East and North Africa in the following territories: Cyprus, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Turkey, Yemen and Western Sahara.

The majority are non-international (NIACs), involving a multitude of armed non-state actors and foreign interventions by Western powers, Russia, and neighbouring countries – except for the NIACs taking place in Egypt and Turkey.

4.2. Case Study: Israel-Palestine Conflict

It is widely accepted that the most likely solution to the conflict is a "two-state solution": in other words, the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. (Egypt never claimed permanent sovereignty over Gaza, seeing its administration as temporary pending the creation of a Palestinian state, whilst Jordan renounced its claim to the West Bank in 1988.) Fatah, one of the two leading factions in Palestinian politics, supports this initiative. Hamas, its rival, takes a more radical line. Under the Hamas vision, the entire area presently covered by the State of Israel would – along with the OPTs – form part of a future Palestinian state. Hamas also has a long history of terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians. With a view to

achieving a two-state solution, there have in recent years been various sets of talks between the Israeli and Palestinian administrations.

The most recent set of talks, mediated by US Secretary of State John Kerry, began in August 2013. But they collapsed in April 2014 following the decision by Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority and leader of Fatah, to sign a reconciliation agreement with Hamas. Israel was opposed to such an agreement and withdrew from the talks in protest. Following the collapse of the talks, the remainder of 2014 saw Israeli–Palestinian relations continue on a downward spiral. On 7 July, in response to rocket attacks by Hamas, Israel launched a full-blown military operation in Gaza. The hostilities ended on 26 August, when a ceasefire came into effect. During the conflict, 65 Israeli soldiers plus four Israeli civilians (and one foreign national in Israel) were killed. Casualties amongst Palestinians were far higher. According to UN figures, 2,104 Palestinians were killed, including 1,462 civilians. As part of the ceasefire agreement, Israel agreed to lift some of its restrictions on Gaza that had been imposed for security reasons in 2007, when Hamas seized Gaza by force. Hamas retained full control of the territory until the signing of its reconciliation agreement with Fatah. Whilst some restrictions have been lifted, many remain in place. For example, ordinary Gazans are not generally allowed to leave the territory. The ceasefire agreement also provided for indirect talks between Israel, Hamas and the PA, mediated by Egypt. Whilst they are far less ambitious in scope than the direct negotiations that collapsed in April 2014, at present they represent the only available opportunity to achieve meaningful progress.

4.3. Case Study: Russia-Ukraine War

Russia's invasion of Ukraine constitutes the biggest threat to peace and security in Europe since the end of the Cold War. On February 21, 2022, Russian president Vladimir Putin gave a bizarre and at times unhinged speech laying out a long list of grievances as justification for the “special military operation” announced the following day. While these grievances included the long-simmering dispute over the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the shape of the post–Cold War security architecture in Europe, the speech centered on a much more fundamental issue: the legitimacy of Ukrainian identity and statehood themselves. It reflected a worldview Putin had long expressed, emphasizing the deep-seated unity among the Eastern Slavs—Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians, who all trace their origins to the medieval Kyivan Rus commonwealth—and suggesting that the modern states of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus should share a political destiny both today and in the future. The corollary to that view is the claim that distinct Ukrainian and Belarusian identities are the product of foreign manipulation and that, today, the West is following in the footsteps of Russia's imperial rivals in using Ukraine (and Belarus) as part of an “anti-Russia project.” Throughout Putin's time in office, Moscow has pursued a policy toward Ukraine and Belarus predicated on the assumption that their respective national identities are artificial, and therefore fragile. Putin's arguments about foreign enemies promoting Ukrainian (and, in a more diffuse way, Belarusian) identity as part of a geopolitical struggle against Russia echo the way many of his predecessors refused to accept the agency of ordinary people seeking autonomy from tsarist or Soviet domination. The historically minded Putin often invokes the

ideas of thinkers emphasizing the organic unity of the Russian Empire and its people—especially its Slavic, Orthodox core—in a form of what the historian Timothy Snyder calls the “politics of eternity,” the belief in an unchanging historical essence. The salience that Putin and other Russian elites assign to the idea of Russian-Ukrainian-Belarusian unity helps explain the origins of the current conflict, notably why Moscow was willing to risk a large-scale war on its borders when neither Ukraine nor NATO posed any military threat. It also suggests that Moscow’s ambitions extend beyond preventing Ukrainian NATO membership and encompass a more thorough aspiration to dominate Ukraine politically, militarily, and economically.

4.4. Case Study: Syrian Civil War and Refugee Crisis

In March 2011 Syria’s government, led by Pres. Bashar al-Assad, faced an unprecedented challenge to its authority when pro-democracy protests erupted throughout the country. Protesters demanded an end to the authoritarian practices of the Assad regime, in place since Assad’s father, Hafez al-Assad, became president in 1971. The Syrian government used violence to suppress demonstrations, making extensive use of police, military, and paramilitary forces. Opposition militias began to form in 2011, and by 2012 the conflict had expanded into a full-fledged civil war. In late November 2024, as the government’s support from military allies collapsed, it was unable to stave off a rapid offensive by opposition forces and in early December Assad fled the country. The civil war continued after Assad’s fall as a new government took shape and worked to assert control over all of Syria. In January 2011, Syrian Pres. Bashar al-Assad was asked in an interview with *The Wall Street Journal* if he expected the wave of popular protest then sweeping through the Arab world—which had already unseated authoritarian rulers in Tunisia and Egypt—to reach Syria. Assad acknowledged that there had been economic hardships for many Syrians and that progress toward political reform had been slow and halting, but he was confident that Syria would be spared because his administration’s stance of resistance to the United States and Israel aligned with the beliefs of the Syrian people, whereas the leaders who had already fallen had carried out pro-Western foreign policy in defiance of their people’s feelings.

The onset of antiregime protests, coming just a few weeks after the interview, made it clear that Assad’s situation had been much more precarious than he was willing to admit. In reality, a variety of long-standing political and economic problems were pushing the country toward instability. When Assad succeeded his father in 2000, he came to the presidency with a reputation as a modernizer and a reformer. The hopes that were raised by Assad’s presidency went largely unfulfilled, though. In politics, a brief turn toward greater participation was quickly reversed, and Assad revived the authoritarian tactics of his late father’s administration, including pervasive censorship and surveillance and brutal violence against suspected opponents of the regime. Assad also oversaw significant liberalization of Syria’s state-dominated economy, but those changes mostly served to enrich a network of crony capitalists with ties to the regime. On the eve of the uprising, then, Syrian society remained highly repressive, with increasingly conspicuous inequalities in wealth and privilege. Although it is impossible to pinpoint when the uprising turned from a predominately peaceful

protest movement into a militarized rebellion, armed clashes became increasingly common, and by September 2011 organized rebel militias were regularly engaging in combat with government troops in cities around Syria. The Free Syrian Army, a rebel umbrella group formed by defectors from the Syrian army in July, claimed leadership over the armed opposition fighting in Syria, but its authority was largely unrecognized by the local militias.

4.5. Case Study: Sudan and Humanitarian Collapse

The power struggle between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) erupted into a large-scale conflict in April 2023 and has been driving humanitarian needs in the country ever since. Conservative estimates say the conflict has killed at least 15,500 people, while some estimates are as high as 150,000, and counting. Before the conflict, Sudan was already experiencing a severe humanitarian crisis. Long-term political instability and economic pressures meant that 15.8 million people were in need of humanitarian aid. The conflict has only exacerbated these conditions, leaving almost 25 million people—more than half of Sudan's population—in need. The brutal conflict since April 2023 has forced millions of people to flee their homes, pushing the number of displaced people to around 12 million by June 2024. The vast majority—over 10 million people—remain within Sudan, representing the largest displacement crisis in the world.

4.6. Emerging Threats in Modern Warfare (AI Weapons, Cyber Conflict)

Artificial intelligence has played a profound role in the military as well as the non-military domains of life. AI and robotics have revolutionised warfare tactics through the use of decoding machinery, nuclear missiles, spray fields, better healthcare, and precise communication that started from the Cold War and have been advancing ever since (Martin, 2021; Molder, 2010). As Russian President Vladimir Putin said, “Whichever country becomes the leader in Artificial Intelligence AI, would become the ruler of the world” (Casin, 2023). Recently, we see the pivotal role of AI and robotics in the Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Palestine war in the form of suicide drones, automated robot-snipers, nuclear force management, cyber defense etc. Due to the reduced risk of human casualties, cost of training, rations, supplies, and overall increased efficiency than the traditional method of war, many investments are continuously being made for development of AI and robotics. This, making it the future of warfare (Agarwala, 2023).

5. Key Players

5.1 The United Nations and its Organizations

The United Nations System Organizations cover a wide variety of organizational entities (centres, agencies, organizations, commissions, programmes, etc.) with different institutional and functional structures. The principal organs and subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Secretariat are included under the regular budget of the United Nations, as authorized by the General Assembly. Other agencies of the UN system, however, have their own regular budgets or are financed solely from voluntary contributions. These latter two categories, moreover, possess a certain degree of autonomy. The organizations within the United Nations system also vary considerably both in size and in activities. Most organizations were established when the United Nations itself came into being, others are considerably older. For example, the International Telecommunication Union, as a direct continuation of the International Telegraph Union, dates back to 1865 and the Universal Postal Union was first established in 1874.

UN - United Nations Secretariat
UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund
UNCTAD - United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP - United Nations Development Programme
UNEP - United Nations Environment Programme
UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund
UNRWA - United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine
UNU - United Nations University
WFP - World Food Programme
UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UN-Habitat - United Nations Human Settlements Programme
OCHA - Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ITC - International Trade Centre
UNOPS - United Nations Office for Project Services
UN Women

5.2. Regional Organizations (Arab League, ASEAN, African Union, and EU)

1. The European Union (EU)

The EU is unique as a political and economic union operating through a supranational system, giving its institutions more power than traditional intergovernmental bodies.

- Official Source: European External Action Service (EEAS) and European Commission.
- Key Policy Areas: Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), Single Market, Eurozone, Justice and Home Affairs.
- Structure: Key institutions include the European Parliament, the European Council (Heads of State/Government), the Council of the European Union (Ministers), and the European Commission (Executive body).

- UN Status: Has an Enhanced Observer Status in the UN General Assembly, allowing it to speak, make proposals, and introduce amendments on behalf of its 27 member states.

2. The African Union (AU)

The AU is focused on accelerating the political and socio-economic integration of the continent and promoting democracy, good governance, and human rights.

- Official Source: African Union (AU) official website.
- Key Policy Areas: Agenda 2063 (long-term vision for Africa), Peace and Security Council (PSC), Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and post-conflict reconstruction.
- Structure: Key organs are the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the Executive Council (Foreign Ministers), and the Peace and Security Council (PSC). The AU Commission is the secretariat.
- UN Relationship: The AU-UN Strategic Partnership is extensive, particularly in peace-keeping operations (e.g., in Somalia, Sudan) where the AU often acts as the primary regional security mechanism.

3. The League of Arab States (LAS)

The LAS aims to strengthen relations, coordinate policies, and safeguard the independence and sovereignty of its members.

- Official Source: Official League of Arab States documents (e.g., the Pact of the League of Arab States).
- Key Policy Areas: Political cooperation, economic development, and cultural/social affairs. Arab Economic Unity is a longstanding goal.
- Structure: The primary body is the Council of the League (Council of Foreign Ministers). The General Secretariat is the administrative body.
- UN Relationship: Maintains a Permanent Observer Mission to the UN and frequently coordinates the positions of Arab states on issues concerning the Middle East and North Africa.

4. Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

ASEAN focuses on economic growth, social progress, cultural development, and regional peace and stability through non-interference and consensus (The "ASEAN Way").

- Official Source: ASEAN official website.
- Key Policy Areas: The ASEAN Community (comprising three pillars: Political-Security, Economic, and Socio-Cultural), regional trade agreements, and managing maritime security disputes.

- Structure: Key bodies include the ASEAN Summit (Heads of State/Government), the ASEAN Coordinating Council (Foreign Ministers), and the Committee of Permanent Representatives.
- UN Relationship: ASEAN is a key partner for the UN in maintaining regional peace and security in Southeast Asia, especially through dialogue and confidence-building measures.

5.3. Non-Governmental Organizations (HRW, Amnesty International, and ICRC)

1. Human Rights Watch (HRW)

HRW is a major international NGO dedicated to defending and protecting human rights globally, focusing on investigating and exposing abuses.

Category	Information
Mandate & Focus	To investigate and report on abuses of basic human rights as outlined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Its scope includes war crimes, social discrimination, political corruption, and freedom of expression.
Methods	Conducts fact-finding missions on the ground (in close to 100 countries), uses satellite imagery, and mines data to create an undeniable record. It then publicly pressures governments, armed groups, and businesses to change or enforce laws and policies.
Funding	Ensures independence by explicitly refusing government funding and relying on private individuals and foundations.
Relevance to MUN	HRW publishes an Annual World Report and thematic reports that are frequently cited by UN bodies and member states. Delegates can use their reports to support claims of human rights violations and advocate for specific sanctions or resolutions.

2. Amnesty International (AI)

AI is a global movement of millions of members and supporters focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of human rights.

Category	Information
Mandate & Focus	To campaign for the rights enshrined in the UDHR and other international human rights instruments. Historically focused on "prisoners of conscience" (those imprisoned for their beliefs), it now covers a vast range of issues including torture, the death penalty, refugees, and gender justice.
Methods	Combines rigorous research (country and regional experts) with mass public mobilization (Urgent Actions, campaigns). It targets national governments, inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), armed groups, and companies.
Funding	Maintains independence by being funded mainly by its membership and individual donations, and remaining independent of any political ideology, economic interest, or religion.
UN Status & Role	Holds special consultative status at the UN (since 1964) and has been instrumental in shaping key developments, including the adoption of core UN Conventions (like the Convention Against Torture) and the creation of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

3. International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

The ICRC is a unique, independent, and neutral humanitarian organization explicitly mandated by international law.

Category	Information
Mandate & Focus	Its mission, derived from the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols, is exclusively humanitarian: to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence, and to provide them with assistance. It is the guardian of International Humanitarian Law (IHL).
Core Principles	Guided by seven Fundamental Principles: Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity, and Universality. Neutrality is key to gaining access to all sides of a conflict.

Key Activities	Monitoring compliance with the Geneva Conventions, visiting detainees and prisoners of war, helping search for missing persons (Tracing Service), and providing medical care and essential aid in conflict zones.
Legal Status	A private Swiss association with a unique status equivalent to that of an international organization, and the only institution explicitly named in IHL to carry out these tasks.

5.4. Local Humanitarian and Civilian Networks

The protection of civilians and human rights in occupied and war-torn territories forms the core of international humanitarian and legal frameworks. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is uniquely positioned and legally mandated as the Guardian of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), with its mission deriving directly from the 1949 Geneva Conventions. The ICRC operates with neutrality to engage confidentially with conflict parties, reminding them of their IHL obligations, visiting detainees, and restoring family links. Crucially, international NGOs like Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International (AI) play an essential role by conducting rigorous fact-finding and documentation of violations, such as war crimes and the targeting of civilian infrastructure. Their widely publicized reports exert public pressure on perpetrators and provide vital evidence for accountability mechanisms like the International Criminal Court (ICC). Finally, Local Humanitarian and Civilian Networks are the immediate front-line actors, providing culturally appropriate aid and establishing local protection mechanisms for vulnerable populations, including women and children. The prominence of these local networks underscores the principle of Localization of Aid, emphasizing the need for the UN system to empower and directly fund actors who possess vital contextual knowledge and trust within the affected communities.

5.5. The Impact of the Private Sector and Media

The private sector and the media are increasingly consequential actors in the protection of civilians and human rights, particularly in conflict and occupied territories. The private sector, encompassing multinational corporations and extractive industries, has a dual responsibility under the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: to do no harm by ensuring their operations do not fuel conflict or exploit local populations, and to actively respect human rights throughout their supply chains and security arrangements. Delegates must address the power of companies to influence local governance and resource distribution. The media, including both traditional news outlets and digital platforms, plays a vital role in documentation and advocacy. By acting as a global witness, the media exposes atrocities, pressures governments and non-state actors for accountability, and shapes public

opinion, which is often crucial for generating international political will and funding for humanitarian interventions. However, the media's dual use can also spread disinformation or endanger local journalists and activists, making its ethical and secure operation a key policy focus.

6. Principal Difficulties and Problems

6.1. Inability to Get Humanitarian Aid

The inability to get humanitarian aid is a severe violation of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and a primary challenge to the protection of civilians in conflict and occupied territories. This denial of aid often stems from deliberate actions by State and non-State armed groups who use hunger and lack of medical care as weapons of war, block access through sieges or bureaucratic obstruction, or attack aid convoys and personnel. IHL obliges all parties to a conflict to allow and facilitate the rapid and unimpeded passage of impartial humanitarian relief for civilians in need, subject only to the right to control the relief's content to ensure it is not diverted for military purposes. When aid is denied, the resulting consequences include mass displacement, famine, disease outbreaks, and increased mortality rates. Addressing this requires robust UN Security Council action, targeted sanctions against obstructing parties, and sustained advocacy by NGOs like the ICRC and Amnesty International to shame those who violate these fundamental protection principles.

6.2. Attacks on Civilians and Civil Facilities

Attacks deliberately targeting civilians and civilian facilities, such as hospitals, schools, places of worship, and critical infrastructure, constitute grave violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and often qualify as war crimes or crimes against humanity. The fundamental principle of IHL is distinction, which mandates that parties to a conflict must at all times distinguish between combatants and civilians, and between military objectives and civilian objects. Directing attacks against civilians or objects indispensable to their survival is strictly prohibited. When such attacks occur, accountability is sought through meticulous documentation by NGOs like Human Rights Watch (HRW) and through investigations conducted by bodies like the International Criminal Court (ICC). Delegates must emphasize the need for states to comply with the IHL principles of proportionality (ensuring civilian harm is not excessive in relation to the anticipated military advantage) and precaution (taking all feasible measures to avoid or minimize civilian harm).

6.3. The Crisis of Refugees and Displacement

The Crisis of Refugees and Displacement is a direct consequence of the failure to protect civilians in conflict and occupied territories. This phenomenon is categorized into refugees

(individuals crossing an international border due to well-founded fear of persecution, governed by the 1951 Refugee Convention), and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)(those forced to flee their homes but remaining within their own country's borders, governed by the less-binding Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement). Both groups face severe protection risks, including exposure to trafficking, sexual violence, denial of humanitarian aid, and refoulement (the forcible return of refugees to a dangerous country). States bear the primary responsibility for the protection of IDPs, while the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) leads the international effort for refugees. Addressing this crisis requires not only sustained humanitarian funding but also comprehensive political solutions focused on ending the conflicts that fuel displacement and ensuring safe, voluntary, and dignified return to places of origin.

6.4. Exploitation and Violence Against Women

Exploitation and violence against women are pervasive features of conflict and displacement, often escalating into strategic tools of warfare and persecution. Forms of violence include Gender-Based Violence (GBV), such as sexual violence (rape and sexual slavery), trafficking, and forced marriage. In conflict settings, GBV is frequently used as a tactic of terror, control, and ethnic cleansing, constituting war crimes or crimes against humanity. Furthermore, the insecurity and breakdown of legal systems in occupied territories expose women to severe exploitation, particularly economic exploitation and forced labor. International frameworks, notably UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (Women, Peace and Security) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), obligate states to protect women and prosecute perpetrators. However, effective protection remains hampered by impunity, stigma, and the lack of access to specialized support services and justice mechanisms in high-risk zones.

6.5. Chemical and Biological Weapons Use

The use of Chemical and Biological Weapons (CBW) constitutes a clear war crime and is unequivocally prohibited by international law due to their indiscriminate nature and the catastrophic suffering they inflict upon civilians. Chemical weapons, banned by the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), employ toxic properties to cause death or harm. Biological weapons, banned by the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), use living organisms or toxins to cause disease. The deployment or proliferation of CBW in conflict or occupied territories is considered a severe breach of customary International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and a threat to international peace and security. UN bodies, particularly the Security Council, often refer to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for investigations and verification. The international community demands universal adherence to the CWC and BWC, emphasizing that any confirmed use warrants immediate and robust accountability, often involving referrals to the International Criminal Court (ICC) or specialized international tribunals.

6.6. International Law's Accountability Gaps

Despite the existence of robust frameworks like the Geneva Conventions and the Rome Statute, international law faces significant accountability gaps, particularly regarding the protection of civilians in conflict. These gaps arise primarily from the principle of State sovereignty, which often shields states from external intervention or prosecution, making it difficult to enforce international norms against powerful actors. The lack of a global enforcement mechanism means that compliance relies heavily on political will and the UN Security Council, where the use of the veto power frequently paralyzes action and blocks referrals to the International Criminal Court (ICC), leading to impunity for grave crimes. Furthermore, issues arise when dealing with non-State armed groups, as their accountability mechanisms are often undefined or non-existent in traditional international law. These gaps undermine the principle that no individual or state is above the law, eroding trust in the international justice system and contributing to the cycle of violence.

7. Institutional and Legal Structures

7.1. International humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions

A body of regulations known as international humanitarian law aims to lessen the negative impacts of armed conflict for humanitarian reasons. It limits the tools and tactics of war and safeguards those who are not or are no longer engaged in hostilities. The law of war or the law of armed conflict are other names for international humanitarian law.

The corpus of regulations controlling relations between states is known as international law, and it includes international humanitarian law. Treaties and conventions between states, customary rules which are composed of state practices deemed legally enforceable by those states, and general principles are all sources of international law.

International humanitarian law applies to military conflicts. It does not govern a State's actual use of force; that is the responsibility of a significant but separate area of international law outlined in the UN Charter.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) is the body of rules that governs the conduct of armed conflict and aims to protect civilians and other non-combatants in war-torn or occupied territories, limiting the methods and means of warfare. The Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols form the core of IHL and establish protections for wounded soldiers, prisoners of war, and especially civilians, who are safeguarded under the Fourth Geneva Convention. These treaties require all parties to distinguish between civilians and combatants, prohibit attacks on civilian infrastructure, ensure access to humanitarian aid, and forbid practices such as forced displacement, torture, and collective punishment. In the context of occupied territories, the Geneva Conventions place clear obligations on occupying powers to maintain public order, guarantee basic services, and respect human rights.

The Geneva Conventions comprise four international treaties enacted in 1949, along with their Additional Protocols, which constitute the cornerstone of International Humanitarian Law and delineate the regulations for safeguarding humans throughout armed combat. The

conventions address the safeguarding of injured and ill soldiers on land (Convention I), the protection of injured, ill, and shipwrecked military personnel at sea (Convention II), the humane treatment and rights of prisoners of war (Convention III), and the protection of civilians, particularly in occupied territories (Convention IV). The Conventions guarantee humane treatment for all individuals, ban torture, murder, and humiliating treatment, and compel conflicting parties to differentiate between civilians and combatants throughout all four treaties. They control the behavior of occupying powers, guarantee access to humanitarian assistance, and institute the principle of proportionality in assaults. The Additional Protocols enhance protections for victims of internal conflicts, impose restrictions on specific weapons, and strengthen the duty to protect medical personnel, humanitarian workers, and civilian infrastructure. The Geneva Conventions together establish a worldwide legal framework that constrains the savagery of war and protects essential human rights throughout armed conflict.

7.2. Mechanisms of Justice and the International Criminal Court (ICC)

The mechanisms of justice in armed conflict denote the systems and institutions that guarantee accountability for grave breaches of international law, including war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity, with the International Criminal Court (ICC) acting as the principal permanent global tribunal tasked with prosecuting individuals who perpetrate these offenses. The ICC, founded by the 1998 Rome Statute, functions autonomously from the United Nations and asserts jurisdiction solely when national tribunals are either incapable or disinclined to prosecute. It examines serious violations of the Geneva Conventions, intentional assaults on civilians, utilization of banned weaponry, torture, coerced displacement, and other significant transgressions. The ICC is supplemented by institutions like international tribunals, hybrid courts, fact-finding missions, and inquiries by the UN Human Rights Council, all aimed at documenting crimes, preserving evidence, and advancing justice for victims. Collectively, these measures seek to prevent future transgressions, enforce international humanitarian and human rights legislation, and strengthen the idea that no individual, including state leaders, is exempt from accountability.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is a permanent international tribunal intended to investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate individuals accused of the gravest crimes of global concern. Specifically, the offenses of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression.

7.3. Resolutions on Civilian Protection by the UN Security Council

24 MAY 2024
[S/RES/2730](#)

This was a resolution on the protection of humanitarian personnel and UN and associated personnel and their premises and assets.

27 APRIL 2021 S/RES/2573	<i>The Council unanimously condemned attacks on civilian infrastructure in conflict.</i>
20 JUNE 2019 S/RES/2475	<i>The Council unanimously adopted this resolution on protection of persons with disabilities in conflict.</i>
11 JUNE 2019 S/RES/2474	<i>This was a resolution on persons reported missing during armed conflict.</i>
24 MAY 2018 S/RES/2417	<i>This was a resolution on the link between armed conflict and food insecurity. It strongly condemned the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare, as well as the unlawful denial of humanitarian access.</i>
3 MAY 2016 S/RES/2286	<i>This condemned attacks on health care workers and facilities in armed conflict.</i>
27 MAY 2015 S/RES/2222	<i>This was a resolution on the protection of journalists that focused on the need to combat impunity for attacks against journalists, enhance reporting on violence against journalists and improve international coordination to strengthen the protection of journalists.</i>
29 AUGUST 2014 S/RES/2175	<i>This resolution condemned violence and intimidation against those involved in humanitarian operations.</i>
16 APRIL 2014 S/RES/2150	<i>This was a resolution calling on all states to prevent and fight against genocide, and other serious crimes under international law, reaffirming the principle of responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, and underscoring the importance of taking into account lessons learned from the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, during which Hutu and others who opposed the genocide were also killed.</i>
11 NOVEMBER 2009 S/RES/1894	<i>This resolution focused on compliance with international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law as well as relevant Council decisions, humanitarian access and UN peacekeeping.</i>
23 DECEMBER 2006 S/RES/1738	<i>This resolution condemned intentional attacks against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel, and requested that the Secretary-General include as a sub-item in his next reports on the protection of civilians in armed conflict the issue of the safety and security of journalists, media professionals and associated personnel.</i>

28 APRIL 2006
S/RES/1674

This resolution was on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, expressed grave concern at the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, and the use of such weapons on civilians affected by armed conflict. The Council emphasised the need to end impunity and drew attention to the range of justice mechanisms to be considered, including national, international and mixed criminal courts and tribunals.

26 AUGUST 2003
S/RES/1502

This resolution condemned all violence against humanitarian and UN and associated personnel, recalled obligations to protect such personnel under international humanitarian, refugee and human rights law, and called for unimpeded humanitarian access.

19 APRIL 2000
S/RES/1296

This was on "Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict and " the Council emphasised the importance of incorporating DDR in peace agreements.

17 SEPTEMBER 1999
S/RES/1265

This was the Council's first thematic resolution on protection of civilians in armed conflict, condemning targeting of civilians, calling for respect for international humanitarian, refugee and human rights law and expressing willingness to take measures to ensure compliance and to consider how peacekeeping mandates might better address the negative impact of conflict on civilians.

19 NOVEMBER 1998
S/RES/1208

The Council affirmed the primary responsibility of States hosting refugees to ensure the security and civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements in accordance with international refugee, human rights.

15 NOVEMBER 1996
S/RES/1080

The Council welcomed the offers made by member states concerning the establishment for humanitarian purposes of a temporary multinational force to facilitate the immediate return of humanitarian organizations and the effective delivery by civilian relief organizations of humanitarian aid to alleviate the immediate suffering of displaced persons, refugees and civilians at risk in eastern Zaire.

17 MAY 1994
S/RES/918

This resolution imposed sanctions in connection with Rwanda and adjusted UNAMIR.

https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un_documents_type/security-council-resolutions/page/2?ctype=Protection+of+Civilians&cbtype=protection-of-civilians#038;cbtype=protection-of-civilians

7.4 Reports and Mandates of the Human Rights Council

The Reports and Mandates of the Human Rights Council (HRC) pertain to the monitoring, investigative, and advisory frameworks instituted by the Council to evaluate human rights situations and address transgressions globally, especially in conflict zones and occupied regions. The Human Rights Council (HRC) utilizes its Special Procedures, including Special Rapporteurs, Independent Experts, and Commissions of Inquiry, to gather evidence, document violations, and produce comprehensive findings on matters such as arbitrary detention, assaults on civilians, discrimination, and limitations on humanitarian assistance. These reports assist the international community in comprehending the magnitude and characteristics of violations, identifying culpable parties, and proposing measures for responsibility and protection. Mandates conferred by the HRC frequently authorize investigators to perform field trips, interact with victims, and collaborate with governments to enhance human rights standards. Collectively, these measures enhance transparency, facilitate early warning initiatives, and fortify international responses to human rights crises by ensuring that abuses are acknowledged, documented, and remedied.

7.5. Regional Courts for Human Rights (ACHPR, ECHR)

Regional Human Rights Courts, including the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), function as judicial entities that ensure legal accountability and safeguard fundamental rights within their regions, supplementing global frameworks such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the United Nations Human Rights Council. The ACHPR, functioning under the African Charter, adjudicates cases of violations including wrongful imprisonment, discrimination, and denial of fair trial rights, and renders binding decisions to member states to rectify abuses and enhance national human rights safeguards. The ECHR guarantees adherence to the European Convention on Human Rights by examining complaints from individuals, groups, or nations about matters such as freedom of expression, the right to life, the prohibition of torture, and the safeguarding of civilians in crisis situations. Both courts are essential in providing accessible justice, implementing regional human rights norms, and compelling governments to fulfill their legal duties, thus improving accountability and protecting human rights throughout Africa and Europe.

8. The Role of Women and Other Groups at Risk

8.1. UN Resolution 1325: Women, Peace, and Security

The Security Council adopted resolution S/RES/1325 concerning women, peace, and security on 31 October 2000. The resolution reaffirms the significant role of women in conflict prevention and resolution, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response, and post-conflict reconstruction, emphasizing the necessity of their equal participation and comprehensive involvement in all endeavors to maintain and promote peace and security. Resolution 1325 calls upon all stakeholders to enhance women's engagement and integrate gender views into all United Nations peace and security initiatives. It urges all conflicting parties to implement specific measures to safeguard women and girls against gender-based violence, especially rape and other kinds of sexual abuse, during armed conflict. The resolution delineates several significant operational mandates, affecting Member States and United Nations system institutions.

The resolution mandates the significant involvement of women at all tiers of decision-making regarding peace negotiations, peacekeeping operations, and post-conflict reconstruction. It also implores nations and international organizations to safeguard women and girls against gender-based violence—especially rape and sexual exploitation employed as instruments of war—and to guarantee their access to justice and humanitarian aid. The resolution underscores the necessity of including gender views in all peace and security initiatives, encompassing the training of peacekeepers, the formulation of refugee programs, and the reconstruction of institutions. Resolution 1325 promotes a worldwide framework that connects gender equality with sustainable peace and underscores the vital contributions of women in conflict prevention and rehabilitation.

8.2. UNICEF's Job is to Protect Children in War Zones

UNICEF is instrumental in defending children in crisis zones by delivering essential aid, upholding their rights, and promoting their safety during armed hostilities. Their responsibilities encompass the provision of emergency supplies, including food, potable water, and medical assistance; the creation of secure environments for children; the reunion of families separated by conflict; and the facilitation of psychosocial recovery for children impacted by violence and trauma. UNICEF endeavors to prevent the conscription of child soldiers, document severe violations—including homicide, mutilation, sexual violence, and assaults on educational institutions—and negotiate for humanitarian access to ensure aid reaches at-risk populations. UNICEF collaborates with governments, NGOs, and UN agencies to uphold international humanitarian and human rights law, guaranteeing that children in conflict zones have protection, education, and recovery possibilities despite prevailing threats.

8.3. The Effect of Humanitarian aid on Refugees and IDPs

This article examines the efficacy of foreign aid in addressing the underlying causes of migration and mitigating the influx of refugees. The authors: (a) examine the efficacy of foreign assistance inflows in diminishing the overall outflows of refugees from recipient nations (to any destination); and (b) assess the impact of aid on the influx of refugees into

donor countries. The authors utilize an instrumental variable methodology, leveraging the interplay between donor government/legislature fractionalization and the likelihood of obtaining aid from a certain donor as an instrument for bilateral aid. The analysis utilizes refugee data from 141 origin countries spanning 1976 to 2013, alongside bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) data.

Principal discoveries:

There is no indication that total assistance to countries of origin diminishes overall refugee outflows in the medium term. Only with prolonged delays of eleven years or more does assistance diminish refugee outflows, which seem to be influenced by delayed beneficial impacts of aid on economic growth.

Nonetheless, when the proportion of humanitarian assistance within total Official Development Assistance (ODA) is sufficiently elevated, such help diminishes the number of refugees departing their nation in the short term. Humanitarian help is more efficacious in mitigating refugee flows in the short term than general development aid—this aid diminishes refugee outflows provided that the proportion of humanitarian aid surpasses seven percent of overall Official Development Assistance (ODA) receipts two periods post-disbursement. Assistance is more efficacious in nations that are prominent sources of refugee exoduses, particularly those that are impoverished, authoritarian, or afflicted by intense conflict and calamity.

In the near term, donor nations encounter heightened refugee inflows, potentially influenced by an enhanced perception of these countries due to help, or by facilitating individuals' ability to finance their escape to another nation.

Assistance prompts recipient governments to facilitate the repatriation of their citizens in the short term.

Assistance elevates the count of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the near term, potentially by facilitating individuals' escape from immediate life-threatening dangers or by aiding the creation of IDP camps that permit citizens to find sanctuary within their own nation.

Assistance provided to neighboring countries of the origin nation diminishes the influx of refugees from the origin country to the global community, particularly to donor nations; hence, donors effectively utilize their help to compel bordering countries to impede refugee movements. Ultimately, assistance to adjacent countries amplifies refugee migration, potentially due to the relative ease and appeal of seeking asylum in a proximate nation.

8.4. Getting Help with Health, School, and Mental Health

Assistance with health, education, and mental health during conflict or crisis situations prioritizes the provision of essential services to civilians, particularly children and vulnerable populations, amidst prevailing instability. Healthcare access encompasses emergency medical treatment, vaccinations, maternal care, and support for war-related injuries or illnesses. Educational support entails the establishment of temporary learning environments, provision of educational materials, teacher training, and facilitation of children's reintegration into

secure and stable educational settings. Mental health services are equally vital, offering counseling, trauma-informed care, and psychosocial programs to aid individuals in managing stress, grief, and violence. Collectively, these services enable affected populations to sustain their well-being, regain a semblance of normalcy, and cultivate resilience in the face of conflict.

8.5. Helping Victims Get Better and Back into Society

Assisting victims in their recovery and reintegration into society necessitates the provision of extensive support to persons impacted by conflict, violence, or human rights abuses, enabling them to reconstruct their lives and engage fully in their communities. This encompasses medical treatment for physical injuries, psychological assistance for trauma, and social services to tackle displacement, loss of income, or family separation. Reintegration programs frequently provide education, vocational training, and career opportunities to economically and socially empower survivors. Legal assistance may be offered to aid victims in seeking justice, securing property, or obtaining compensation. This initiative seeks to integrate health, social, educational, and legal support to heal individuals, restore community cohesion, diminish susceptibility to future violence, and foster long-term stability and resilience in post-conflict cultures.

9. Response and Cooperation from Other Countries

9.1. Problems and Peacekeeping Operations

Responses and collaborations from other nations in conflict or crisis scenarios frequently entail peacekeeping operations, which are instituted to uphold stability, safeguard civilians, and facilitate the execution of peace accords. These operations, typically sanctioned by the United Nations, include obstacles including constrained resources, intricate political dynamics, insufficient cooperation from conflicting parties, and risks to the safety of the peacekeepers themselves. Peacekeeping missions may encompass monitoring ceasefires, separating combatants, delivering humanitarian aid, and facilitating the reconstruction of governance and infrastructure. Notwithstanding these hurdles, international collaboration via peacekeeping is crucial to avert the intensification of violence, safeguard civilians, uphold human rights, and provide conditions conducive to enduring peace.

9.2. Diplomatic and Sanction Actions

Diplomatic and sanction measures are instruments employed by nations and international entities to address conflicts, human rights abuses, or threats to peace without utilizing armed force. Diplomatic actions encompass discussions, mediation, dialogue, and official declarations intended to resolve conflicts, promote cooperation, and ensure adherence to international law. Sanctions are measures, like trade restrictions, asset freezes, travel bans, or arms embargoes, placed on states, groups, or individuals to compel a change in detrimental behavior. These measures aim to dissuade aggressiveness, penalize infractions, and facilitate

peacebuilding while reducing civilian harm. When implemented successfully and in collaboration with international partners, diplomatic and punitive actions can foster accountability, safeguard human rights, and facilitate long-term conflict resolution.

9.3. The Role of the International Media and Campaigns to Raise Awareness

International media and awareness campaigns are essential in exposing human rights breaches, conflicts, and humanitarian crises, drawing worldwide attention to situations that may otherwise go unnoticed. Through the reporting of events, documentation of abuses, and dissemination of personal narratives from affected communities, media outlets educate governments, international organizations, and the public, thereby creating impetus for action and accountability. Awareness campaigns, typically conducted by NGOs, advocacy organizations, or UN agencies, enhance media initiatives by educating communities, organizing resources, and advocating for policy reform. Media coverage and campaigns collectively enhance the voices of victims, promote international collaboration, facilitate humanitarian responses, and cultivate worldwide solidarity in tackling human rights and protection issues.

9.4. Working Together Between States and NGOs

Cooperation between nations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is crucial for efficiently resolving wars, humanitarian emergencies, and human rights abuses. States furnish resources, political backing, and legal structures, but NGOs offer specialized knowledge, local engagement, and direct services including nutrition, medical assistance, education, and psychosocial support. Collaboration facilitates coordinated actions, prevents redundancy, and guarantees that assistance effectively reaches the most vulnerable groups. This collaboration enhances advocacy, oversight, and accountability frameworks, allowing both governments and NGOs to shape policy, safeguard civilians, and advance sustainable development and human rights. By amalgamating their strengths, states and NGOs can more effectively address crises and foster enduring resilience in impacted communities.

9.5. Problems with the Current System

The existing international framework for addressing conflicts, safeguarding civilians, and maintaining human rights has numerous substantial problems that hinder its efficacy. A significant issue is the absence of coordination and collaboration among states, international organizations, and NGOs, resulting in redundant efforts, deficiencies in aid distribution, and delayed responses to pressing emergencies. Political interests and power dynamics frequently affect decision-making within entities such as the United Nations Security Council, leading to delays, vetoes, or inconsistent implementation of decisions, even in instances of egregious human rights breaches. Funding remains a continual challenge; humanitarian and peacekeeping operations often encounter inadequate or erratic resources, undermining their capacity to deliver constant protection, medical assistance, education, or reconstruction services.

Moreover, peacekeeping operations frequently encounter safety and operational difficulties, such as assaults on staff, ambiguous mandates, and restricted ability to intervene, hindering their capacity to safeguard civilians effectively. Accountability procedures, including international courts and tribunals, can fail to prevent crimes due to protracted hearings, restricted jurisdiction, or challenges in apprehending culprits, particularly high-ranking officials. Vulnerable people, especially women and children, frequently remain unprotected despite frameworks such as UN Resolution 1325 or UNICEF initiatives, due to poor implementation at the local level.

Ultimately, information deficits and insufficient awareness within the international community might hinder or diminish responses; conflicts that garner less media coverage or advocacy may be overlooked, hence increasing the vulnerability of civilians. Cultural, logistical, and legal obstacles further hinder humanitarian efforts, particularly in areas experiencing active conflict, fragile governance, or limited access. In conclusion, although the international system has instituted mechanisms for protection and accountability, its efficacy is compromised by political, logistical, financial, and operational obstacles, underscoring the necessity for enhanced coordination, improved enforcement, and more proactive international involvement to safeguard the safety and rights of civilians in conflict zones.

10. Post-Conflict Recovery and Lasting Peace

10.1. Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR)

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) is a comprehensive post-conflict initiative aimed at stabilizing societies following armed wars by converting former fighters into constructive participants in civilian life, hence mitigating the likelihood of repeated violence. The initial phase, Disarmament, entails the collecting, registration, regulation, and secure disposal of weapons, ammunition, and military apparatus from former combatants and occasionally civilians engaged in the conflict. This stage is crucial to avert the proliferation of weaponry that may rekindle conflict or exacerbate criminal activity, necessitating secure collecting places, verification protocols, and occasionally incentives such as monetary assistance or food in exchange for weapons.

The second part, Demobilization, involves the official release of combatants from military factions or national armed forces. During demobilization, former combatants are frequently accommodated in camps or transitory facilities where they undergo medical assessments, receive psychological assistance, and are provided with essential requirements such as food, shelter, and clothing. This phase offers counseling and instruction regarding civilian life, assisting ex-combatants in their mental and social adjustment to a non-military setting. Demobilization diminishes the quantity of active combatants in society, hence directly decreasing the probability of recurrent conflict.

The third stage, Reintegration, is the most protracted and intricate step, emphasizing the social, economic, and political assimilation of former soldiers into communities.

Reintegration programs offer vocational training, education, microfinance, and employment possibilities to assist former combatants in sustaining themselves and their family.

Community-based activities, such as reconciliation programs, conflict resolution workshops, and psychosocial support, are vital for diminishing stigma and cultivating trust between former fighters and civilians. Reintegration also encompasses wider societal rehabilitation by fostering social cohesion, reinstating livelihoods, and enhancing local government frameworks.

Effective DDR programs are often orchestrated by national governments, with help from the United Nations, NGOs, and occasionally regional organizations, and are frequently associated with comprehensive peacebuilding, security sector reform, and development initiatives. Challenges in Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) encompass inadequate money, absence of political commitment, insecurity, restricted access to distant regions, and cultural or societal opposition from communities hesitant to embrace former soldiers. Nonetheless, DDR is broadly seen as fundamental to sustained peace, since it tackles both the urgent security threats from armed groups and the enduring socioeconomic requirements of post-conflict countries, thereby fostering stability, justice, and reconciliation.

10.2. Truth Commissions and Transitional Justice

Truth commissions and transitional justice are essential mechanisms for societies recovering from conflict, authoritarian governance, or extensive human rights violations, with the objective of confronting the legacy of abuses, enhancing accountability, and facilitating reconciliation. Truth commissions are provisional, autonomous entities created by governments or international organizations to examine and record widespread human rights abuses and crimes. They collect statements from victims and witnesses, analyze official records, and investigate the social and political circumstances that facilitated abuses. In contrast to courts, truth commissions generally lack prosecutorial authority; however, they generate detailed findings that acknowledge victims' suffering, demonstrate historical culpability, and offer suggestions for reparations, institutional reform, or policy modifications. Notable instances comprise South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which facilitated the nation's reckoning with the apartheid legacy, and the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which chronicled war crimes committed during the civil conflict.

Transitional justice is an overarching framework that includes truth commissions as well as judicial and non-judicial mechanisms aimed at remedying historical human rights violations and averting their recurrence. It encompasses criminal prosecutions for individuals guilty of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity; reparations initiatives for victims; institutional reforms including security sector reform and vetting of public officials; and strategies for memorialization and education to maintain historical memory. The objective is to harmonize accountability and reconciliation, enabling societies to progress while neither forgetting nor repeating historical horrors. Effective transitional justice serves individual and community needs by facilitating victim acknowledgment and closure, deterring future abuses, reinforcing the rule of law, and restoring trust between citizens and the state.

Nonetheless, the execution of these operations is frequently intricate. Truth commissions may encounter political pressure, constrained resources, or intimidation from culprits attempting to evade examination. Societies may grapple with the equilibrium between justice and forgiveness, particularly when prompt prosecutions are politically or logistically impractical. Notwithstanding these challenges, truth commissions and transitional justice mechanisms are broadly considered vital for sustainable peace, as they offer a systematic and transparent approach to addressing past violations, healing societal rifts, and establishing a basis for enduring human rights protection and democratic governance.

10.3. Rebuilding the economy and Keeping the Peace

Reconstructing the economy and sustaining peace are intricately linked challenges in post-conflict nations, since economic stability is crucial for enduring peace, while peace offers the security required for economic rejuvenation. Post-conflict, infrastructure including roads, educational institutions, healthcare facilities, and utilities is frequently devastated, markets disintegrate, and job prospects diminish, resulting in civilian impoverishment and increased susceptibility to recurring violence. Economic recovery initiatives seek to rejuvenate livelihoods, entice investment, reconstruct public services, and reintegrate displaced communities. Initiatives may encompass generating employment for former fighters and civilians, offering microloans and vocational training, revitalizing agriculture and industry, and instituting open governance and financial systems to mitigate corruption. Preserving tranquility throughout economic rehabilitation is equally essential. Post-conflict cultures encounter the peril of fresh violence stemming from disputes regarding resource distribution, persistent mistrust among communities, and the existence of armed factions. Peacekeeping operations, community policing, and disarmament initiatives, including DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration), collaborate with economic programs to enhance security stability. International organizations, NGOs, and adjacent states frequently offer financial support, technical proficiency, and oversight to guarantee that rehabilitation fosters durable peace instead of intensifying conflicts.

Instances:

Rwanda (1994–2000s): Subsequent to the genocide, Rwanda concentrated on revitalizing its economy via infrastructural initiatives, investment in education and healthcare, and the encouragement of entrepreneurship. Simultaneously, government and UN-supported organizations endeavored to uphold peace via reconciliation initiatives, community courts (Gacaca), and the rehabilitation of former combatants.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (1995 onward): Subsequent to the Dayton Peace Agreement, economic rehabilitation encompassed the revitalization of industries, the restoration of public services, and the establishment of employment initiatives. NATO and UN international oversight and peacekeeping efforts averted further violence and promoted political and economic stabilization.

Sierra Leone (2002 onward): Following the civil war, DDR programs facilitated the reintegration of former combatants, while economic initiatives concentrated on reconstructing educational institutions, infrastructure, and the mining industry. These initiatives, with peacekeeping personnel, mitigated the reemergence of conflict and fostered communal healing.

Reconstructing the economy and maintaining peace are interdependent processes: economic recovery alleviates poverty and social unrest, hence fostering political stability, while peace facilitates investment, trade, and social advancement. Effective post-conflict rebuilding necessitates synchronized initiatives across security, governance, and economic domains, engaging local people, governments, and international collaborators to establish resilient and self-sustaining civilizations.

10.4. Building Skills and Learning

Skill development and education are essential components of post-conflict rehabilitation and sustainable peacebuilding, since they empower individuals, mitigate vulnerability, and promote social and economic advancement. Conflict frequently undermines formal education systems, devastates schools, and displaces educators and students, resulting in generations deprived of educational opportunities. Reconstructing education entails rehabilitating schools, educating educators, supplying educational resources, and developing inclusive curriculum that encompass both academic proficiency and social unity. In addition to conventional education, skills-development initiatives—such as vocational training, apprenticeships, and technical courses—provide youngsters, former combatants, and vulnerable populations with the practical competencies required for employment, entrepreneurship, or community advancement. These initiatives not only furnish livelihoods but also facilitate the reintegration of persons into society, thereby diminishing the likelihood of recidivism into violence or criminal behavior.

Education and skill development are essential in facilitating psychological recovery. Learning environments provide children and adults with an organized setting to restore a feeling of normalcy, cultivate confidence, and reconstruct social networks broken by conflict. Furthermore, programs frequently incorporate peace education and human rights knowledge, imparting conflict resolution, tolerance, and civic responsibility, so enhancing community cohesion and fostering long-term stability.

Illustrations:

Afghanistan: After years of conflict, initiatives by UNICEF and NGOs have concentrated on reconstructing schools, training educators, and offering literacy and vocational programs, especially for girls and women, to guarantee access to education and economic prospects.

Sierra Leone: Following the civil war, vocational and skills programs for former child soldiers encompassed carpentry, agriculture, and tailoring, facilitating their ability to earn a livelihood and successfully reintegrate into their communities.

Rwanda: Post-genocide measures emphasized formal education and skills training, including technical institutes and community-based programs, which assisted youth and adults in reconstructing livelihoods while promoting reconciliation.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Initiatives encompassed vocational training for displaced teenagers and adults, alongside courses on civic involvement and intercultural awareness, aimed at enhancing social cohesion and economic stability.

10.5. The Importance of Cultural Reconciliation and Dialogue

Cultural reconciliation and discussion are essential elements of post-conflict peacebuilding, as hostilities can result in profound divisions among ethnic, religious, or political groups. In addition to facilitating physical reconstruction and economic recovery, enduring peace necessitates the restoration of trust, mutual understanding, and social cohesiveness among communities that have endured trauma, discrimination, or violence. Cultural reconciliation entails recognizing historical injustices, honoring multiple identities, safeguarding cultural legacy, and fostering inclusive environments for dialogue and communal coexistence. Dialogue projects enable communities to address concerns, exchange experiences, and cooperatively devise ways to avert future violence, thereby cultivating empathy and mutual respect.

These processes enhance social resilience by fostering involvement, collaboration, and collective narratives. Educational initiatives, public discussions, creative and cultural endeavors, and narrative practices can assist communities in processing collective pain, honoring diversity, and formulating a shared vision for the future. These initiatives disrupt cycles of animosity, contest stereotypes, and enable underprivileged populations, especially women, youth, and minority groups, to engage actively in peacebuilding efforts.

Illustrations:

Israel and Palestine: Grassroots programs, including bilingual schools, collaborative community projects, and discussion workshops for Israeli and Palestinian youth, seek to cultivate mutual understanding, diminish prejudice, and encourage tolerance amid persistent political strife. Initiatives such as “Seeds of Peace” unite youth from opposing factions to participate in discourse, leadership development, and conflict resolution.

Ukraine: In conflict-affected areas of Donbas, community conversation programs, psychosocial support initiatives, and educational projects seek to reconcile divisions among various linguistic and regional groupings. Civil society organizations conduct seminars and storytelling sessions to assist communities in processing trauma and fostering trust.

Russia: In the aftermath of conflicts in Chechnya and other areas, NGOs and cultural organizations have facilitated inter-ethnic dialogue, arts initiatives, and youth exchange programs to enhance understanding among ethnic groups and mitigate social tensions, confronting the legacy of violence and discrimination.

Sudan: In post-conflict regions of Darfur and South Sudan, local reconciliation committees, peace forums, and cultural projects have aimed to address tribal and ethnic conflicts, reintegrate displaced populations, and foster social cohesion. Narrative techniques, communal assemblies, and collaborative development initiatives have been employed to restore confidence among formerly conflicting factions.

12. Key Terms and Definitions

Civilian Protection — Ensuring the safety of non-combatants from injury, assault, and mistreatment during armed conflict.

Occupied Territory - Land subjected to foreign military authority without the approval of the rightful government.

War-Torn Territory / Conflict Zone — Regions profoundly impacted by warfare, characterized by devastated infrastructure and elevated civilian peril.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) — Legal regulations that restrict the consequences of armed conflict and safeguard civilians.

Geneva Conventions — Treaties establishing norms for the humane treatment of civilians, prisoners, and the injured during armed conflict.

Human Rights Law - Legislation safeguarding essential rights, such as the right to life, freedom from torture, and access to education, even in times of crisis.

Refugee - An individual compelled to escape their nation due to conflict, persecution, or violence.

Internally Displaced Person (IDP) — An individual who has been forced to leave their home due to conflict or tragedy but remains within their own country.

Transitional Justice - Mechanisms such as truth commissions, reparations, and tribunals to rectify historical human rights violations.

Peacekeeping - The deployment of international soldiers to safeguard civilians, oversee ceasefires, and pacify areas of conflict.

Peacebuilding entails sustained initiatives to restore government, infrastructure, and social cohesion following conflict.

Humanitarian Assistance - Delivery of sustenance, hydration, accommodation, and healthcare to civilians in emergencies.

Displacement / Forced Migration - Population movement induced by warfare, occupation, or persecution.

Accountability - Ensuring that individuals who commit human rights violations or war crimes are held responsible.

War Crimes — Grave breaches of international law, including the targeting of civilians or the perpetration of genocide.

International Criminal Court (ICC) — A tribunal that prosecutes persons for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

Cultural Reconciliation — Initiatives aimed at restoring trust and comprehension among polarized populations post-conflict.

Dialogue Initiatives — Programs that promote discussion, negotiation, and comprehension among opposing parties.

DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration) — A procedure aimed at disarming combatants, extricating them from armed factions, and reintegrating them into civilian life.

UNSCR 1325: Women, Peace, and Security — A United Nations resolution emphasizing the contributions of women in peacebuilding and safeguarding them against violence associated with war.

Ceasefire Agreement - A temporary or permanent cessation of hostilities between opposing parties.

13. Question to be Addressed

How can the international community ensure unimpeded humanitarian access to civilians living in occupied or war-torn territories?

What mechanisms can be strengthened to hold states and non-state armed groups accountable for violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL)?

How can the UN improve the protection of civilian infrastructure—such as hospitals, schools, and water systems—during armed conflict?

What effective strategies can be implemented to prevent displacement and improve conditions for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs)?

How can the international community address gender-based violence and exploitation of women in conflict zones, especially where legal systems have collapsed?

What steps should be taken to protect children in armed conflict, in line with UNICEF mandates and the principles of the Geneva Conventions?

How can the UN Security Council's resolutions on civilian protection be better enforced to prevent further atrocities?

What measures can reduce the growing humanitarian crisis caused by attacks on aid workers and blockades against relief efforts?

How should the UN and regional organizations respond to the use or threat of chemical and biological weapons in conflict areas?

What policies can be adopted to mitigate the impact of emerging warfare technologies, including AI-powered weapons and cyber operations, on civilian populations?

How can cooperation between states and NGOs be strengthened to ensure more effective and coordinated humanitarian responses?

What reforms are needed to close accountability gaps in international law that allow perpetrators of war crimes to avoid prosecution?

How can post-conflict recovery—such as DDR, transitional justice, and rebuilding essential services—be structured to protect human rights and ensure lasting peace?

What role should the media and global advocacy campaigns play in documenting violations and raising awareness without endangering civilians or journalists?

How can the rights and needs of vulnerable groups—women, children, people with disabilities, and minority communities—be protected more effectively in long-term conflict and occupation settings?

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