

Human Rights Protection In The Distribution Of Humanitarian Aid To War Refugees

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Article Info

Received: 2025-02-20

Revised: 2025-03-13

Accepted: 2025-05-20

Keywords:

Humanitarian Aid; Aid Distribution; Human Rights; Syrian Refugees.

Abstract

The war in Syria has caused a major humanitarian crisis, causing millions of civilians to flee to various countries, especially in the Middle East. This condition demands a fast, equitable, and effective distribution of humanitarian aid. In the distribution process, the protection of human rights (HAM) is crucial so that all refugees gain access to aid fairly and without discrimination. This study aims to analyze the implementation of human rights protection in the distribution of humanitarian aid for Syrian refugees and identify the challenges faced. The method used is a normative and empirical legal approach with a case study in Jordan, a country with many Syrian refugees, and a strategic point for the distribution of international aid. Data were obtained from an analysis of global and national refugee law and the results of interviews and observations in the field. The findings show that although there are international legal instruments such as the 1949 Geneva Convention, Additional Protocols, and the UN Charter, their implementation in the field is still weak. Discrimination in access to aid, lack of transparency, and exploitation of vulnerable groups such as women and children were found. In addition, dependence on international organizations and weak coordination between humanitarian actors hamper distribution effectiveness. Strengthening monitoring mechanisms, increased coordination, and human rights-based policies are needed to make aid distribution more inclusive and equitable.

I. Introduction

According to the UN Charter, the primary purpose of the UN is to maintain international peace and security, build friendly relations among nations, and encourage global cooperation in overcoming problems such as poverty, human rights violations, and humanitarian disasters (Pietropaolo, 2016). In addition, the UN also functions as a center for coordinating the actions of nations in achieving these common goals. However, various challenges often arise in its implementation (*das Sein*) (Karl & Scholz Karl, 2022). One example is the minimal fundamental role of the UN in handling the refugee crisis. Based on the results of a field survey conducted by researchers, it was found that the UN did not function optimally in responding to the conditions of the Syrian community after the war, where this institution only recorded without providing concrete assistance (Amelia, 2020).

Although the UN and humanitarian agencies assisted, the amount was minimal and not comparable to the number of refugees recorded. The main obstacles include limited access to conflict areas, politicization of assistance, and the low capacity of humanitarian agencies, especially in Indonesia, which do not understand the bureaucratic flow and international legality (Khalil, 2011). Much aid is distributed through unofficial channels without a survey of real refugee needs, so aid distribution is often uneven and not on target. Some agencies even distribute aid without coordinating with official authorities such as the Ministry of Endowments or the Syrian Ministry of Humanity (Moore & Pubantz, 2017). As a result, most refugees returning to Syria from asylum countries such as Jordan and Lebanon chose to return to their homeland due to the government's lack of preparedness in post-war recovery. (Pietropaolo, 2016).

On the other hand, their lives in Syria are also not decent due to limited access to jobs and basic needs. In addition, issues of discrimination in distribution have also emerged, especially related to the diversity of recipient groups and logistical and political constraints in areas controlled by armed groups. Therefore, protecting human rights in the distribution of humanitarian aid requires in-depth study to disseminate current implementation and formulate more effective and fair policies (Deplano, 2015).

Challenges in the Distribution of Humanitarian Aid In the context of the distribution of humanitarian aid, several significant challenges are often faced by countries receiving refugees. These challenges include logistical obstacles, budget constraints, and the politicization of aid distribution (Alkhalil et al., 2022). Logistical obstacles are a significant problem in conflict areas that are often difficult to access due to unstable security conditions. For example, areas controlled by armed groups are often "no-go zones" for international humanitarian organizations. This condition is exacerbated by limited transportation infrastructure, which delays aid reaching recipients. Budget constraints are a crucial challenge in distributing humanitarian aid (Deplano, 2015). After the COVID-19 pandemic, many donor countries have reduced their contributions, forcing agencies such as UNHCR to prioritize and reduce aid for refugees. In addition, the politicization of aid has further exacerbated the situation, where distribution is often used as a tool for political negotiation by parties to the conflict. As a result, aid is only distributed to certain areas. In contrast, others are neglected, which is detrimental to refugees and violates the neutrality and independence of humanitarian agencies (Al Qaralleh, 2022).

Countries that have hosted asylum for Syrian refugees include Jordan, Lebanon,

Turkey, and several European countries such as Germany. According to UNHCR, Jordan is one of the countries with the most significant number of Syrian refugees, receiving more than one million since 2011 (Weinstein et al., 2007). Jordan's experience reflects the challenges and opportunities in distributing humanitarian aid, although efforts to address it are not without obstacles. The UNHCR report reveals that refugees in Jordan face difficulties in accessing basic needs such as food, clean water, and health services (Stavropoulou, 2018). Some live in camps such as Zaatari, while others live in local communities with limited access to aid. Economic pressures have complicated the Jordanian government's efforts to balance the needs of refugees and residents. This study focuses on the Syrian conflict to examine the application of human rights principles in aid distribution, as well as the role of NGOs in ensuring that aid complies with international human rights standards. El-Masri's (2022) research highlights gender-based discrimination, where women and children are often marginalized because aid does not take into account their specific needs, exacerbating existing inequalities.

To address disparities, humanitarian organizations have begun implementing inclusive approaches, such as gender training, sex-disaggregated data collection, and special services for women and children. Despite progress, equitable aid distribution remains challenging (Pincock et al., 2021). Human rights are the basis for aid distribution, as stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the Geneva Conventions, which emphasize non-discrimination, equal access, and respect for dignity. However, in some cases, donor pressure has forced humanitarian organizations to prioritize certain areas, even though other areas have more urgent needs (Karl & Scholz Karl, 2022).

Based on the challenges and issues discussed, several policy recommendations can be proposed to improve the distribution of humanitarian aid in conflict areas, including Improving International Coordination. Governments, international organizations, and NGOs must improve coordination to ensure equitable aid distribution (Azizi et al., 2021). The distribution of humanitarian aid can be improved by establishing a common platform for sharing data and resources and implementing a gender-based approach that considers the specific needs of women and children. Other recommendations include training field staff, empowering local governments and communities through training and technology transfer, and increasing transparency through audits and open reporting (Amelia, 2020). The principle of human rights, including in the perspective of Islamic law, must also be upheld so that aid can be distributed more fairly and effectively to refugees. In this study, the main problems to be studied are: How is the implementation of human rights protection in the distribution of humanitarian aid for Syrian refugees? What are the obstacles faced in distributing humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees? What policies can be implemented to increase the effectiveness of aid distribution by human rights principles?

2. Research Method

This study uses normative and empirical legal methods (Smajlovic & Murphy, 2020). The normative method analyzes international legal instruments related to human rights protection in distributing humanitarian aid, such as the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol. Meanwhile, the empirical approach is carried out through a case study in

Jordan, with data collection through interviews with NGOs and Syrian refugees and analysis of reports from UNHCR and ICRC. Data analysis includes a descriptive approach to describe field conditions, a qualitative to understand human rights violations, and a policy to evaluate the effectiveness of regulations and provide recommendations. This approach aims to produce more effective and human rights-oriented policies in distributing aid to refugees.

3. Results and Discussion

Implementation of Human Rights Protection in the Distribution of Humanitarian Aid for Syrian Refugees

Implementing human rights protection in distributing humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees includes several important aspects. International Human Rights Law, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the 1951 Refugee Convention, provides a legal basis for the protection of refugees, including the right to seek asylum and protection from forced eviction (*non-refoulement*) (Smajlovic & Murphy, 2020). The prolonged conflict in Syria since 2011 has triggered a major humanitarian crisis, with millions of Syrians forced to flee to countries such as Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and European countries. This condition presents significant challenges in the distribution of humanitarian aid, which are related to logistics and the protection of human rights (Elshobake & Sakka, 2024). The fundamental rights of refugees, such as food, shelter, education, and health services, are often neglected in emergencies. Around 3.7 million Syrians have fled abroad, while those who remain in Syria face extreme poverty, hunger, and difficulty in accessing clean water (Wicaksono et al., 2016). In practice, temporary protection status, as implemented in Turkey, has played an important role in guaranteeing the fundamental rights of refugees to social and health services (Özcürümez, 2018).

The distribution of humanitarian aid cannot be separated from the social protection system of the recipient country. International organizations and local NGOs are vital in providing basic needs such as food, shelter, and psychosocial and educational support. In Jordan and Lebanon, the Resilience Agenda program attempts to integrate a long-term development approach that targets refugees and local communities (Yilmaz, 2019). However, these initiatives often face structural contradictions between protecting citizens and refugees—cooperation between UN agencies, NGOs, and local governments (Firoz, 2022). The assistance covers basic needs such as food, shelter, health services, and psychosocial support for refugees. Despite strong coordination efforts, implementing human rights protection in aid distribution still faces various challenges. Limited access for humanitarian organizations to some conflict areas often hinders aid distribution evenly (Ali & Kabau, 2014).

A rights-based approach to humanitarian aid places the fulfillment of human rights as a central principle, not just compassion or temporary assistance. Therefore, refugee rights are clearly defined and integrated between emergency assistance and long-term social protection (Barry & Jawad, 2019). Cooperation between

international institutions and local governments is crucial in building resilient and sustainable policies. The application of human rights in humanitarian aid faces several obstacles (Stevens, 2016). First, the securitization of aid can obscure the humanitarian function and lead to excessive surveillance, as seen in the management of Za'atari Camp in Jordan. Second, economic and social barriers in recipient countries such as Lebanon and Turkey make it difficult to implement comprehensive protection. Third, the mental health aspect of refugees is often overlooked, even though trauma from armed conflict requires systematic and evidence-based psychological rehabilitation (Pasha, 2021). In recipient countries, limited resources and political uncertainty hamper human rights protection in aid distribution. Countries like Lebanon and Turkey struggle to provide adequate support due to economic and social pressures. Reliance on limited international aid leads to uneven distribution, with vulnerable groups such as women and children being more marginalized (Elshobake & Sakka, 2024). Political and bureaucratic factors also limit the role of international institutions, so better coordination is needed between governments, international organizations, and civil society (Schauer & Schauer, 2010).

Human rights protection efforts in this context also require strong advocacy to raise awareness among local and international communities. Humanitarian assistance must be seen as a moral and international legal obligation, not merely charity or charity. Public education and information campaigns can help reduce the stigma against refugees and build solidarity across countries (Elshobake & Sakka, 2024). In addition, effective advocacy is also needed to encourage more inclusive and human rights-based policies, which do not only rely on temporary assistance but also create long-term solutions for refugees (Khalil, 2011). Through a rights-based approach, the international community can be assured that protecting refugees is not an option but an obligation that every country must fulfill by existing international law. Awareness campaigns involving the media, educational institutions, and civil society organizations can help change negative views of refugees and strengthen political support and resources to protect their rights while ensuring a more equitable and effective distribution of aid (Lambert, 2017).

To achieve more optimal human rights protection, there needs to be a broader awareness of the importance of a rights-based approach in aid distribution. Public education through information campaigns involving the media, educational institutions, and civil society organizations will play an important role in reducing the stigma against refugees and strengthening solidarity between countries (Azizi et al., 2021). This would also help change the often negative narrative surrounding refugees by focusing on their rights as individuals deserving protection rather than as aid recipients. Strong advocacy is needed to encourage host countries to move beyond temporary aid to provide long-term, sustainable solutions for refugees. More inclusive, human rights-based policies must be implemented to ensure that refugees are not treated as a burden but as a group deserving full support for recovery and integration into society. In this regard, support from the international

community is essential, with the principles of solidarity and social justice at the forefront (Deplano, 2015).

Finally, by raising international awareness of refugee protection obligations, states can be assured of meeting their legal obligations set out in international conventions. This will improve direct protection for refugees and create a more effective and sustainable system for the distribution of humanitarian aid. The international community must continue to work together to ensure that human rights remain a top priority in all humanitarian relief efforts (Karl & Scholz Karl, 2022).

Human Rights Violations in the Process of Distribution of Humanitarian Aid for Syrian Refugees

Protecting fundamental human rights remains one of the international community's most pressing yet elusive goals. Despite being established to combat one of the most dangerous dangers threatening the foundations of the modern international order, the death toll associated with armed conflict and the collateral damage caused by international wars remains horrifying (Erameh, 2017). The ongoing conflict in Syria has left millions of people homeless, displaced to neighboring countries, and dependent on humanitarian aid for survival. The distribution of this aid is often marred by practices that violate the fundamental rights of refugees, such as discrimination, abuse of power, and unfairness in the allocation of aid (Lambert, 2017).

The Syrian conflict has caused many victims; almost 300,000 people have been killed, the majority of whom were civilians. In addition, almost 4,000,000 people have been displaced and are forced to live in refugee camps. The Syrian conflict began in 2011, starting with public demonstrations demanding a revolution, then escalating into an uprising and a very extreme internal violent conflict. Even the extreme conflict that has hit Syria is now described as greater than a revolution. Kenneth M Pollack, from the Saban Center for Middle East Policy, terms it an "Intercommunal Civil War" (Erameh, 2017).

In addition, the use of humanitarian aid as a political tool by parties to the conflict is also a serious human rights violation. The Syrian government and various armed groups often withhold or block aid that should be sent to specific areas to weaken their political opponents (Smajlovic & Murphy, 2020). This action causes civilians to become victims of a lack of food and health services and political pressure that makes it difficult for them to survive with dignity. The blocking of aid by parties to the conflict in Syria violates international humanitarian law and human rights principles because it causes the suffering of innocent civilians. Using aid as a political tool worsens the humanitarian situation and hinders peace efforts. Therefore, strict supervision and legal accountability are needed for parties that obstruct the fair and neutral distribution of aid (Elshobake & Sakka, 2024).

Another violation is the misuse of aid by armed groups who confiscate or organize aid distribution for their interests. In some cases, civilians are forced to provide

support or join certain groups as a condition for receiving aid. Such practices not only violate the right to fair and uncoerced assistance but also increase fear and insecurity among refugees (Pasha, 2021). Abuse of aid by armed groups also exacerbates civilians' dependence on the very people who are the source of their threat. When aid is controlled and manipulated for military or political interests, it removes the humanitarian essence of aid itself. Refugees who should be protected instead become propaganda tools or resources for armed groups, who exploit their vulnerability to strengthen their power. This situation not only creates violations of individual rights but also hinders the creation of a safe and dignified environment for refugees (Azizi et al., 2021).

The lack of protection for humanitarian workers and the lack of attention to vulnerable groups such as women and children exacerbates this condition. Many volunteers and humanitarian organizations have become victims of attacks or intimidation while carrying out their duties. Meanwhile, refugee women and children face the risk of sexual violence, exploitation, and loss of access to basic services that are appropriate to their specific needs (Potts, Fattal, et al., 2022). The unpreparedness of the distribution system in responding to these needs shows the weakness of human rights protection in the humanitarian context. As a result of this weak protection, many refugee women and children live in inadequate conditions without guarantees of physical or psychological security. Refugee camps that should be places of refuge are often locations for gender-based violence, human trafficking, and exploitation of child labor. The lack of access to reproductive health facilities, education, and psychosocial assistance further worsens their situation. This shows that the distribution of humanitarian aid has not fully implemented a human rights and gender justice-based approach, so systemic improvements are needed to ensure that the most vulnerable groups receive the protection and support they deserve (Potts, Kolli, et al., 2022).

To address these violations, it is necessary to strengthen international monitoring and accountability mechanisms and a clear political commitment from all parties to uphold humanitarian principles. The distribution of humanitarian aid must be carried out based on the principles of neutrality, fairness, and non-discrimination (Al Qaralleh, 2022). Donor countries, international organizations, and human rights institutions need to ensure that any aid provided not only reaches those in need but is channeled in a way that protects Syrian refugees' dignity and human rights (Hollis et al., 2018). In addition, it is important to involve local communities and refugees in the planning and distribution of aid to ensure that it truly corresponds to the real needs on the ground. Transparency in the distribution chain and monitoring by independent institutions must also be strengthened to prevent irresponsible parties' misuse or manipulation of aid. Cooperation between countries, regional organizations, and the UN is key to building a resilient and sustainable aid system while ensuring that human rights principles are the main foundation of Syria's humanitarian aid process (Lehmann & Masterson, 2020).

Policy to Increase the Effectiveness of Aid Distribution by Human Rights Principles

The process of distributing humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees has been marked by significant human rights violations, influenced by complex political, social, and logistical challenges. Syrian refugees often face discrimination based on religion, race, or country of origin, violating their right to seek asylum, as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Smajlovic & Murphy, 2020). In addition, refugees in Lebanon and Turkey often face forced repatriation, which is contrary to international commitments, such as the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, which require the protection of their rights. Securitization approaches, such as those seen in the Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan, often compromise humanitarian principles, with refugees treated as potential threats. The challenges of aid distribution are further complicated by the ongoing conflict, which targets civilians and essential services, making aid distribution inadequate (Elshobake & Sakka, 2024).

While highly humanitarian, host country policies also lack clear national strategies for long-term refugee management, making it challenging to protect refugee rights. In addition, refugees, especially children, are vulnerable to violence and exploitation, with protection measures often inadequate. Human rights protection in distributing humanitarian aid for Syrian refugees ("Interview with Peter Maurer," 2017). Strengthening the mechanism for monitoring aid distribution is a top priority to ensure that aid is distributed transparently and on target. Increasing transparency in aid delivery is also essential, including involving more independent monitors and increasing refugee participation in reporting and evaluation mechanisms. Closer cooperation between refugee-hosting countries and international humanitarian organizations must also be improved so that aid distribution can run more effectively and fairly. In addition, the implementation of policies that ensure that aid distribution is not based on political or ethnic discrimination must be a priority in global humanitarian policy in order to ensure that all refugees have equal rights and access to the humanitarian aid they need (Al Qaralleh, 2022).

The policy of establishing an independent monitoring institution involving national human rights institutions and civil society organizations. This institution monitors the distribution process, accommodates victims' complaints, and provides recommendations for improvement. Independent monitoring can strengthen the accountability of aid providers and increase public trust, especially among refugees who often feel mistreated in the distribution process. In addition, this independent monitoring institution can also function as a bridge between affected communities and the government or international aid institutions (Chapuis, 2014). By involving various parties with credibility and expertise in human rights, this institution can provide guidance and recommendations based on the principles of justice and equality. This institution can also introduce a safe reporting mechanism for victims who feel disadvantaged or have experienced rights violations in the distribution

process, thereby creating a sense of security and certainty. Through a transparent and open reporting system, this monitoring institution will help minimize the potential for abuse of power and ensure that the assistance provided reaches those entitled to receive it (Firoz, 2022).

Active participation from refugees or affected communities must also be a primary policy. Involving them in the planning, implementing, and evaluating aid will create a more inclusive and responsive distribution system. This approach not only strengthens the position of refugees as subjects, not objects of aid, but also increases the effectiveness of implementation because aid programs will align with local contexts and needs (Smajlovic & Murphy, 2020). In addition, the active participation of refugees can enrich the design of aid that is more contextual and relevant to their needs. Involving refugees in the planning process increases their sense of ownership of the aid they receive and allows them to express views and needs that outsiders may not identify (Lehmann & Masterson, 2020). This approach will create a sense of empowerment, where refugees feel valued as parties with the right to determine the necessary priorities and forms of aid. Furthermore, involving refugees in the evaluation will provide valuable feedback to improve the quality of aid distribution, ensuring that the program can adapt to the dynamics on the ground and truly meet urgent needs (Elshobake & Sakka, 2024).

In addition, it is important to establish a training policy for aid distribution officers from the government and humanitarian agencies on human rights principles and the humane treatment of refugees. Officers with a strong understanding of human rights will be more sensitive to potential discrimination or injustice during the distribution process (Lehmann, 2021). Training also helps to shape an empathetic and professional attitude in handling humanitarian crises. Training for aid distribution officers must go beyond human rights theory, focusing on awareness and power dynamics in the field (Duman & Çelik, 2019). Officers must be trained to recognize and avoid discrimination and abuse of power, especially in vulnerable groups. This training must be critical, identifying inequalities in access to aid and providing officers with skills to mitigate structural injustices in distribution. With this approach, officers follow procedures and play an active role in preventing injustice (Diab, 2024).

This policy must be implemented with a deep understanding that access to aid for vulnerable groups is not only about having special channels but also about overcoming structural barriers that are often invisible. In many cases, vulnerable groups face double discrimination, whether based on gender, age, disability, or other social status. Therefore, an intersectional approach must be translated into concrete actions, such as training distribution workers to recognize and address biases against this group (Promsopha & Tucci, 2024). Furthermore, while providing special channels and additional protections is important, it should not be a way to "isolate" vulnerable groups from general assistance or view them as separate objects. The assistance should be designed not to create social segregation but to build equitable integration, where everyone, regardless of their condition or background, is treated

with dignity and given equal rights (Karl & Scholz Karl, 2022).

In addition, the policy should involve active consultation with vulnerable groups to understand the specific challenges they face in accessing assistance. For example, for women and children, special attention should be paid to protection from sexual violence and exploitation, as well as the provision of gender-friendly facilities (Saade, 2020). For people with disabilities, physical and information accessibility should be guaranteed, for example, by providing easily accessible communication channels or appropriate means of transportation. By integrating the principle of inclusivity into the distribution system, the policy will create conditions that allow every individual, regardless of their identity or disability, to receive the assistance they need equally and without discrimination.

Finally, transparency in using aid funds and publishing periodic reports are important policies to guarantee the public's right to information. Transparency creates space for public control and encourages efficiency and integrity at every stage of aid distribution. With these policies, aid distribution becomes not just a logistical activity but also a tangible form of respect and protection of human dignity in emergencies (Hassouneh & Pascucci, 2022). Transparency in using aid funds and publishing periodic reports are important to ensure the public's right to information. This creates public control, encourages efficiency, and maintains integrity in aid distribution. With this policy, aid distribution becomes not only a logistical activity but also respects human dignity, builds trust, and reduces the potential for abuse, thus supporting a more just and dignified recovery of refugees.

4. Conclusion

The distribution of humanitarian aid for Syrian refugees faces various challenges, including access barriers, politicization of aid, and human rights violations. Although international law has regulated refugee protection, implementation in the field still faces serious obstacles. Therefore, there needs to be a more assertive policy to ensure that humanitarian aid is distributed fairly and by human rights principles. In addition, supervision of aid distribution needs to be improved to prevent exploitation and discrimination against refugees. Governments of host countries must be more active in overseeing aid distribution, while humanitarian organizations must improve transparency mechanisms in aid distribution. The international community needs to provide greater support for protecting the human rights of refugees. This journal can be an academic reference and contribute to strengthening human rights protection policies in distributing humanitarian aid for war refugees.

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