

ISTRTEMUN'25

follow the virtue, not the masses

general assembly

SOCHUM

**Humanitarian Assistance:
Humanitarian Missions during Times
of Crisis**

**Under Secretary General: Hafizh Rabbani
Academic Assistant Ahmet Tarık Yıldırım
President Chair: Mohamed Alaini
Vice Chair: Efe Tekdoğan**

Letter From Secretary General

Dear friends,

Welcome to ISTRTEMUN'25.

I won't fill this letter with big, formal words—because at the end of the day, what matters to me is that you feel supported, seen, and heard throughout this conference.

As your Secretary-General, I'm not just someone who opens and closes sessions. I'm someone you can come to when things get confusing, stressful, or even just a little too much. I'll be around—not just with my title, but with my heart and my time.

I truly hope this conference gives you something special. A moment of growth, a new friend, a good debate—whatever it is, may it stay with you after all of this is over.

I'll be just around the corner. You don't have to ask twice.

With all sincerity,
Hacı Ömer Gündoğdu
Secretary-General of ISTRTEMUN'25

Letter from Head of Academy

Dear Esteemed Delegates,

It is my utmost pleasure to welcome you to **ISTRTEMUN'25**. As the Head of Academy, I am thrilled to see a new generation of global thinkers, diplomats, and changemakers join us for this unforgettable journey of negotiation, collaboration, and critical thought.

Model United Nations is more than just a simulation—it is a unique platform where diverse perspectives converge to address the most pressing global challenges. This year, we have curated a set of thought-provoking and timely **agenda items**, carefully designed to reflect the complexity of the international landscape. From labor rights in the post-conflict world to economic resilience and futuristic global governance, each topic has been chosen to challenge and inspire you.

This academic preparation would not have been possible without the relentless dedication of our **Under Secretaries-General** and **Academic Assistants**, who worked tirelessly to develop insightful study guides. Their passion and commitment have laid the foundation for an exceptional conference experience, and I extend my sincere gratitude to each of them.

On behalf of the entire academic team, I welcome you once again to ISTRTEMUN'25. We look forward to seeing your ideas come to life in committee.

Warmest regards,
İbrahim Gülşeni Katman
Head of Academy
ISTRTEMUN'25

Introduction the Committee

The Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee(SOCHUM) is the third committee of the United Nations General Assembly. This committee is responsible for issues that arise in humanitarian, social development, equality and human rights.SOCHUM's main purpose is to solve the previously stated problems and preach respect towards basic human rights.SOCHUM serves as the voice of conscience and a platform committed to upholding human dignity. Therefore,delegates who participate in this committee are expected to demonstrate strong empathy, a sense of justice and focus on solving the problems.SOCHUM founded in 1945 to uphold the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, is the third General Assembly(GA) committee.Delegates are expected to seek solutions to both ongoing and emerging human rights concerns through diplomatic negotiation and global cooperation, aiming to craft long-lasting, effective policies.

Legal and Ethical Frameworks

In the midst of crises such as wars, natural disasters, epidemics and massive migrations, humanitarian aid plays a major role. This humanitarian aid must not only be done with good intentions, but also within defined legal regulations and ethical principles.Without this foundation, humanitarian aids can become vulnerable to abuse, and the main goal that protection of human life can be damaged.

a. Legal framework

International law provides several key instruments governing humanitarian aid. One of the most important of these is the Geneva Conventions. The Conventions contain explicit provisions on the protection of civilian life, particularly during armed conflict.

Also United Nations charter, the Universal Declaration of human rights, and International Humanitarian law(IHL), all of which affirm the legitimacy of humanitarian aid. These documents obviously say that aids must be delivered in a neutral, independent, and non-discriminatory. While in an aid action, state sovereignty and local laws must be taken into consideration; otherwise violations of International law may occur.

1. **Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols:** The 1949 Geneva Conventions and 1977 Additional Protocols specifically address the protection of civilians, health workers and human rights personnel during armed conflict. Denying access to relief supplies and health needs is a violation and unacceptable.
2. **International Humanitarian Law:** It is applied during armed conflict. It determines how countries and actors outside countries should act. It mandates the application of principles such as impartiality, non-discrimination and prioritizing civilians.
3. **Universal Declaration of Human Rights and UN conventions:** These conventions also protect human rights in peacetime. Everyone has the right to life, access to health care and dignity. These rights remain valid in the midst of crises.
4. **State sovereignty vs the Right to Intervene:** This is a legal dilemma and one of the most critical debates on humanitarian aid. As a general rule, in order to provide aid to a country, that country must first ask for it. However, in cases where a country does not want this aid, but the population is being harmed (Responsibility to Protect - R2P), intervention can be undertaken.
5. **Refugee Law (1951 Refugee Convention):** In times of crisis, when there are mass migrations, it regulates the rights of refugees and the responsibilities of receiving countries. This may require reaching across borders for aid operations.

b. Ethical framework

The ethical foundation of humanitarian aid, it's not only about offering aid, it's about how we can offer aid. Ethical framework, based on protection of human rights, justice, and individual dignity.

1. **Humanity:** The aim of aid is to solve the problems of everyone who has a problem. No political, ideological or economic interest must interfere with this goal. Everyone, no matter who they are, has the right to life and to live in dignity.

2. **Impartiality:** Aid should be needs-based. The religion, ethnicity, gender, political opinion or social status of the recipient must not affect the quality of aid. Otherwise, aid can become unfair and discriminatory.
3. **Independence:** Aid foundations should set their own standards, not be governed by governments or armed groups. In this way they can guarantee the credibility and long-term sustainability of aid.
4. **Accountability:** The impact of the aid provided, how it reaches the recipient and its results should be monitored and reported. Ethics should be reflected not only in belief but also in action.
5. **Dignity and Empowerment:** Aid should not undermine the dignity of the recipient; it should not make him/her dependent, on the contrary, it should help him/her to manage his/her own life.

These principles make aid more people-centered than just a process of material distribution.

Actors and Stakeholders

Aid activities in times of crisis have a multi-layered and multi-actor structure. For aid to be more effective, fair and sustainable, national and international stakeholders need to work in cooperation.

1. International organizations

The UN has established specialized agencies to address global crises. These organizations set standards and guidance according to the type of crisis.

a. United Nation agencies:

Operates under the authority of the UN Secretary General. Each agency has its own governance structure, budget, and operational capacity. Coordination among agencies is managed through the inter-Agency Standing Committee(IASC).

Cluster systems are applied, Leadership is assigned to specific agencies in fields like health, shelter, food, etc. Humanitarian funds such as CERF, Flash Appeals ensure rapid financial mobilization.

Challenges:

- Bureaucratic inertia.
- Programs sometimes fail to align with local realities.
- Pressure from donors can threaten neutrality.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR):

- Works to protect forcibly displaced persons and to find long-term solutions for them.
- Establishes refugee camps.
- Provides legal status and documentation.
- Manages processes for voluntary repatriation or local integration.

UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA):

- Responsible for coordinating international humanitarian operations during crises.
- Ensures that humanitarian organizations work in a coordinated and efficient manner.
- Mobilizes resources and organizes information sharing among actors.

UN Children's Fund (UNICEF):

- Works to protect children and youth affected by crises and to ensure their access to fundamental rights.
- Operates in fields such as education, health, psychosocial support, and child protection

World Food Programme (WFP):

- Organizes food aid operations to combat hunger in crises-affected areas.
- Conducts emergency food distributions.
- Develops long-term projects aimed at improving food security.

World Health Organization(WHO):

- Leads the control of epidemic diseases, emergency health services, and the reconstruction of health systems in post-crisis settings.
- Carries out vaccination campaigns.
- Supports the rebuilding of health infrastructure.

b. International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement:

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is the largest, oldest and most respected aid organization. It provides assistance to humanity in armed conflicts, natural disasters and other emergencies with impartiality and independence. This movement has adopted the principles of working independently of governments and has gained credibility all over the world.

International Committee of Red Cross(ICRC):

- Founded in 1863 in Geneva, Switzerland.
- Operates in armed Conflicts and civil wars.
- Facilitates prisoner exchanges, protects the rights of war victims, and searches for missing persons.
- Serves as the guardian of the Geneva Conventions.
- Highly respected for its neutrality and credibility especially on the battlefield.

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies(IFRC):

- Responsible for coordinating international aid during natural disasters, epidemics, and other humanitarian crises.
- Founded in 1919 after World War 1.
- Promotes cooperation among over 190 national Red cross and Red Crescent societies worldwide.
- Conducts disaster preparedness, emergency response, and long-term rehabilitation projects.

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies:

- Each country has its own national society(e.g., Turkish Red Crescent in Türkiye).
- Provides domestic services such as healthcare, blood donations, and disaster aid.
- Participates in both national and international humanitarian operations.

Key Roles:

During armed conflicts:

- The ICRC visits prisoners of war and facilitates the establishment of humanitarian corridors.

During natural disasters:

- The IFRC leads rapid emergency response and recovery programs.

During civil crises:

- National societies provide direct support to migrants, refugees, and victims of epidemics.

Criticism and Challenges:

- Remaining neutral can be extremely difficult under political pressure.
- Access restrictions often arise in intense conflict zone
- There is a constant need for improvement in resource management and transparency.

Nevertheless, despite all challenges, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement considered the gold standard in humanitarian aid action.

2. State and Governments

a. Host Country Governments:

Governments of countries directly affected by a crisis serve as the primary coordinators and regulators of humanitarian activities within their territories. They have sovereign authority over the entry, operation, and exit of humanitarian actors and play a decisive role in setting the legal, security, and logistical frameworks for aid operations. Their engagement directly impacts the speed, scale, and effectiveness of humanitarian interventions.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Grant or restrict access to aid organizations.
- Regulate the distribution of aid supplies.
- Provide logistical support through infrastructure like airports, ports, roads.
- Ensure the security environment and protect humanitarian workers.

Challenges:

In some cases, aid may be manipulated or prevented from reaching certain groups for political reasons, which directly contradicts humanitarian principles.

b. Donor Countries:

Donor countries are states that contribute financial resources, technical expertise, and logistical capacities to enable and sustain crisis response for life not only for immediate emergency aid but also for longer-term recovery and development actions. Donor countries often influence strategic priorities and funding flows within the humanitarian sector.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Generate funds and support humanitarian organizations.
- Provide military or civilian logistical assets.
- Facilitate access to the crisis zone through diplomatic channels.

Challenges and Risks:

Some donor countries may seek to increase their political influence in exchange for their aid, risking the neutrality of humanitarian aid.

c. Military Units:

Military forces, whether national or multinational, provide critical support during major crises, such as transportation, logistics, security and mass evacuation. They provide support because of their disciplined nature and their capacity for rapid deployment, especially when civilian capacity is insufficient. But not to be confused with humanitarian aid. Must protect principles of independence and disarmament.

3. NGOs and Local actors

a. International NGOs:

International NGOs are organizations that work across borders and provide humanitarian and development support services. They often have operational networks, financial resources and extensive technical expertise. This enables them to respond effectively to complex emergencies around the world.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Provide health services, food distribution, psychological support, and shelter.
- conduct needs assessments to focus on the right target groups.
- Develop community-based programs to strengthen resilience.

Examples:

- **MSF(Medecins sans Frontieres):** Medical services in war and crisis zones.
- **IRC(International Rescue Committee):** Emergency aid and resettlement for refugees.
- **CARE:** Food security and women's empowerment programs.
- **Save the children:** Child protection and education services.

b. Local NGOs:

Local NGOs are organizations that operate in their home countries and adapt humanitarian aid to local cultural, social and linguistic contexts. Their deep knowledge of local needs and reality makes them a critical actor to ensure the relevance, acceptance and sustainability of assistance.

Strengths:

- Cultural and linguistic adaptation.
- Possession of local trust.
- Faster crisis response capabilities.

Weaknesses:

Compared to international NGOs, they may face disadvantages in fundraising and capacity building.

c. Faith-Based Organizations:

Faith-based organizations are organizations that conduct humanitarian and development work based on faith-based values and principles.

Through spiritual, emotional and material support, they can build deep ties with the public and deliver aid to the most vulnerable groups that the outside world cannot reach.

Characteristics:

- Establish strong ties with the community.
- Operate on a volunteer basis.
- Often reach the most vulnerable and inaccessible populations.

4. Private Sector and Media

a. Private Companies:

Private companies, ranging from multinational firms to local businesses, play important roles in humanitarian response as logistics, financial services, technological and communication infrastructure. Due to their rapid mobility, innovation capabilities and operational capacities, they provide additional support to traditional humanitarian actors, especially in crisis situations.

Duties:

- Transportation of food and equipment
- Communication technologies
- Financial tools

Especially during Crises:

- Private sector aid can deliver aid more quickly and efficiently.
- Innovation and new technologies can be activated.

b. Media and Journalists:

Media organizations and journalists are a critical communication bridge to expose injustices and humanitarian crises and mobilize public support and political will. By reporting from crisis areas, they help to maintain transparency, hold actors accountable and ensure that the needs of affected populations are not ignored.

Duties:

- Launch donation campaigns.
- Ensure transparency in aid operations.
- Document human rights violations in crisis areas.

Risks:

Misinformation or dramatization of crises can negatively influence the direction of aid.

5. Beneficiaries and Community leaders**a. Crisis-Affected Communities:**

Crisis Affected communities include people affected by natural disasters, armed conflict or other emergencies. These communities are not only passive recipients of aid, but also people who can articulate their needs, prioritize aid and contribute to recovery processes.

Important Principles:

- Aid must be provided with dignity; recipients should be active participants, not passive beneficiaries.
- The cultural appropriateness of aid must be considered.

b. Community Leaders and Local Authorities:

Duties:

- Ensure fair distribution of aid.
- Support the accurate identification of local needs.
- Strengthen recovery and long-term resilience post-crisis.

Each of these actors plays an indispensable role in crisis response. However, the strongest outcomes are achieved through prioritizing collaboration, transparency, and local participation.

Challenges to humanitarian missions

1. Access Restrictions:

- **Conflict zones:** Warring parties often restrict access to vulnerable populations as a tactic of war.
- **Governmental barriers:** Governments may deny entry or impose bureaucratic hurdles, fearing foreign interference or loss of control.
- **Insecurity:** Areas controlled by non-state actors or criminal groups can be too dangerous for humanitarian workers to enter.

2. Security Risks:

- **Targeting of aid workers:** Humanitarian personnel are increasingly targeted through kidnapping, violence, or even killings.
- **Looting and attacks:** Convoys carrying food, medicine, and shelter materials are often looted, depriving civilians of aid.
- **Complex conflict environments:** Navigating multiple factions with unclear allegiances can expose workers to unpredictable threats.

3. Political Manipulation of Aid:

- **Weaponization of aid:** Aid can be deliberately diverted to certain groups to strengthen political or military positions.
- **Loss of neutrality:** Humanitarian organizations can be perceived as supporting one side, undermining trust and safety.
- **Conditional access:** Some governments or actors allow aid only if it benefits their agenda, compromising humanitarian principles.

4. Funding Constraints:

- **Short-term funding cycles:** Donor fatigue and shifting political priorities cause inconsistent and unpredictable funding.
- **Earmarked donations:** Funds often come with strict conditions, limiting flexibility to respond to emerging needs.
- **Competition for resources:** Organizations sometimes compete rather than collaborate, leading to inefficiencies.

5. Coordination Problems:

- **Fragmentation:** Multiple NGOs, UN agencies, and governments may operate independently, leading to duplication or gaps.
- **Information sharing issues:** Lack of real-time data and mistrust between actors can hinder coordination.
- **Local marginalization:** International actors may sideline local organizations, missing vital local knowledge and capacities.

6. Operational and Logistical Challenges:

- **Infrastructure collapse:** Disasters often destroy roads, airports, and communication systems needed for aid delivery.
- **Remote or hostile environments:** Delivering aid to isolated, mountainous, or heavily contested areas is extremely difficult.
- **Supply chain disruptions:** Blockades, sanctions, or shortages can severely affect the timely delivery of essential goods.

7. Legal and Ethical Dilemmas:

- **Principle of neutrality vs. moral imperatives:** Choosing whether to engage with armed groups to access civilians poses ethical questions.
- **Data privacy concerns:** Collecting data on vulnerable populations must balance humanitarian needs with protecting personal privacy.
- **Accountability:** Ensuring aid effectiveness without causing harm (e.g., dependency, market disruption) remains a delicate balance.

8. Environmental and Health Risks:

- **Climate-related disasters:** Increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters complicate humanitarian responses.
- **Public health emergencies:** Epidemics (e.g., Ebola, COVID-19) can overwhelm humanitarian efforts and endanger staff and beneficiaries.
- **Resource scarcity:** Limited access to water, food, and clean energy intensifies competition and tensions among affected populations.

9. Cultural and Social Sensitivities:

- **Misunderstanding local contexts:** Poorly designed programs that ignore cultural norms can provoke resistance or fail entirely.
- **Gender-based challenges:** Women and marginalized groups may be underserved or excluded if humanitarian interventions are not sensitive to their specific needs.
- **Community mistrust:** Local communities might distrust foreign organizations, viewing them with suspicion or resentment.

10. Long-term Development vs. Emergency Relief:

- **Blurring lines:** In protracted crises, the distinction between immediate relief and long-term development becomes unclear.
- **Sustainability issues:** Short-term aid often does not address root causes, creating a cycle of dependency rather than resilience.
- **Exit strategies:** Lack of clear transition plans can leave communities vulnerable when humanitarian actors withdraw.

Role of SOCHUM in humanitarian missions

1. Promotion and Protection of Human Rights:

- **Mandate:** SOCHUM deals directly with the promotion of fundamental freedoms and human rights, which are often threatened in humanitarian crises.
- **Advocacy:** It highlights abuses during crises and works to ensure that human rights considerations remain central to humanitarian responses.
- **Resolutions:** SOCHUM drafts and adopts resolutions that condemn human rights violations and call for humanitarian action.

2. Addressing Refugee and Displacement Issues:

- **Collaboration with UNHCR:** SOCHUM works closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to address mass displacement, refugee protection, and asylum-seeker issues during humanitarian emergencies.
- **Policy Development:** It formulates guidelines and frameworks to ensure that displaced persons' rights are protected during humanitarian interventions.

3. Setting Normative Standards:

- **Humanitarian Law:** SOCHUM helps reinforce norms of international humanitarian law (IHL), particularly those concerning the protection of civilians in armed conflict.
- **Non-binding Declarations:** Though its resolutions are not legally binding, SOCHUM shapes the international normative framework that guides humanitarian operations.

4. Mobilizing International Attention and Action:

- **Thematic Debates:** SOCHUM provides a global forum for discussing humanitarian crises, ensuring that emerging issues (e.g., protection of internally displaced persons, rights of vulnerable minorities) receive international attention.
- **Political Pressure:** Through resolutions and public statements, SOCHUM puts diplomatic pressure on actors who obstruct humanitarian access or violate human rights during crises.

5. Strengthening Legal Protections:

- **Drafting Instruments:** SOCHUM has historically contributed to the development of key international human rights instruments that directly impact humanitarian missions, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and various human rights treaties.
- **Review Mechanisms:** It examines reports from bodies like the Human Rights Council, further monitoring the human rights dimensions of humanitarian efforts.

6. Supporting Accountability and Justice:

- **Investigations Support:** SOCHUM often calls for independent investigations into violations of humanitarian and human rights law.
- **Documentation and Reporting:** It supports efforts to document abuses during crises, which is vital for future accountability mechanisms such as international tribunals.

7. Promoting Protection of Vulnerable Groups:

- **Focus on Minorities:** SOCHUM consistently emphasizes the protection of minorities, indigenous peoples, women, children, and persons with disabilities during humanitarian crises.
- **Inclusive Response:** It encourages humanitarian missions to adopt inclusive approaches that do not leave behind marginalized groups.

8. Coordination with Other UN Bodies:

- **Inter-agency Collaboration:** While SOCHUM itself does not implement humanitarian aid directly, it complements the work of operational bodies like OCHA, UNHCR, UNICEF, and WFP by providing a policy and human rights framework.
- **Synergy with the Human Rights Council:** SOCHUM builds on the findings and recommendations of the Human Rights Council to inform its humanitarian resolutions.

9. Advancing the Responsibility to Protect (R2P):

- **Normative Support:** SOCHUM discussions often reinforce the international community's responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity principles that underpin humanitarian.

Current Crises

As of 2025, the major ongoing humanitarian crises around the world are detailed below:

1. Gaza: Famine and Humanitarian Catastrophe

On March 2, 2025, Israel halted humanitarian aid through the Kerem Abu Salem, Erez, and Zikim border crossings into the Gaza Strip.

Food prices have surged by up to 1,400%, and bakeries supported by the WFP have run out of flour and oil.

By the end of April, soup kitchens distributing hot meals also exhausted their supplies.

Half the population is surviving on only one-quarter of their daily food requirements.

The closure of the Rafah crossing has made it nearly impossible to deliver aid.

2. Sudan: Hunger, Ethnic Cleansing, and Global Neglect

The civil war that began in 2023 continues into 2025.

The WFP requires \$800 million to assist 7 million people from May to September 2025, but has secured only \$102 million.

This shortfall threatens food aid during both the rainy and hunger seasons.

3. Myanmar: Earthquake Disaster and Ongoing Military Violence

The 7.7 magnitude earthquake on March 28, 2025, killed over 5,400 people and injured more than 11,000.

The military continues airstrikes in quake-affected areas, seriously hampering recovery and aid delivery efforts.

4. Ukraine: Prolonged War and Devastation

Russia's invasion, which began in 2022, continues into 2025.

The conflict has destroyed infrastructure, displaced millions, and heightened humanitarian needs.

International support is waning, yet the intensity of clashes remains high.

5. Somalia: Drought, Security Crisis, and Government Fragility

Three years of drought and rising Al-Shabaab attacks have destabilized Somalia.

Al-Shabaab captured the town of Wargaadhi, just 50 km from the capital Mogadishu, raising serious concerns.

Government forces recaptured parts of the town via airstrikes, but militants continue to gain ground in rural areas.

6. Haiti: Gang Violence, Hunger, and State Collapse

The collapse of state authority has enabled gangs to seize control in Haiti.

Healthcare has collapsed, and access to basic needs is severely limited.

According to UN data, over 5,600 people were killed in gang violence in 2024 alone.

7. Afghanistan: Economic Collapse and Suppression of Women's Rights

Following the Taliban takeover, women's rights in Afghanistan have been severely restricted.

The economic crisis has worsened, and access to essential services has diminished.

Dwindling international aid has exacerbated the situation.

8. East Turkistan (Xinjiang): Systematic Oppression and Cultural Assimilation

As of 2025, China's suppression of Uyghur Turks in East Turkistan continues.

The Chinese government's stated 2025 goals include intensifying religious and cultural assimilation.

These policies are framed under the guise of "Building a Shared Chinese National Identity" and "counter-terrorism and stability."

Most of these crises are receiving inadequate support due to declining media attention and shifting priorities among donor countries.

The UN's OCHA requested \$47 billion in aid for 190 million people in 2025, yet only 5% of this target has been met.