

Ukraine Crises and Humanitarian Action

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Introduction

Humanitarian actors are responding to another crisis as we are currently experiencing one of the worst humanitarian crises in European countries. The *TRC Journal of Humanitarian Action* invited eminent academics and skilled humanitarians to discuss the various aspects of humanitarian action in Ukraine.

The discussion reviewed the key elements of the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and its similarities and differences to prior forced displacements. It elaborated on the coordination and effectiveness of humanitarian action and European nations' responses to the humanitarian crisis. It also explored the localization aspect of humanitarian action in Ukraine along with the resilience of individuals and communities.

Selman Salim Kesgin

What are the main differences and similarities between the current crisis in Ukraine and other humanitarian crises?

Mukesh Kapila

Looking back in time, conflicts have become nastier and more vicious. The means for making war have become technologically more refined. Thus, the physical damage they do has become more extreme. Populations have become more urbanized, so conflicts like the one in Ukraine are very much urbanized wars. That is where the infrastructure is. No one wants to control a mountainside or some uninhabited spaces. Cities are at the

center of conflicts perhaps much more than in the past when the demography was different. This is the first difference. The second is that conflicts are much more multidimensional. Today, land, air, water, and cyberspace forces are deployed all together. That is certainly a change from past decades. Third, what this means is that while there was a time when conflicts distinguished between fighters and civilians, now everyone has become part of the war. This is a consequence of the way war is fought, the location of the war, and the focus of the war. For example, if you are a cyber warrior, then you are as much a civilian. You are as much part of the war as if you were a tank commander, in a way. That then begs questions about the protections of humanitarian law or just the law of decency and war that the world got used to. All those factors demonstrate that each war has progressively built on the previous war and made it more complex, more focused, and nastier.

Technology is preserving soldiers better than it used to, which makes war a safer place for them. Now, you can make war sitting in a bunker or from far away, and in fact, the safest place to be in a war-torn country is on the battlefield as a soldier because you are the least likely to actually be in the direct line of fire. You probably have the most infrastructure to support you if you get sick, injured, or wounded. Most soldiers do not die in conflicts anymore, and if they are rescued, it is very rare for wounded soldiers to die because infrastructure for medical care is so good nowadays. This, however, is not true for civilians.

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Kristin Bergtora Sandvik

I disagree with Mukesh. On the day of this roundtable discussion, the Norwegian newspapers published pieces on the attempts of Russian men to cross the border from the north as they are afraid of being drafted into the military as soldiers. When one looks at the Russian casualty numbers for the war in Ukraine and the way Russian soldiers are essentially being sent off unprepared and with few weapons, it does not look like a war where it is safe to be a soldier.

Perspective must be discussed. This war comes with a European perspective. It comes with a quite clear narrative of good versus evil, which the rest of the world has problems accepting. However, it can be stated that this idea of speed, proximity, and fear of the past is a very valid observation. The Baltic states and Poland all have previous experience with the USSR, which shapes their intervention. Even Norway, for example, does as well. Looking up facts for this roundtable, it was found that the coverage from 1944 is about the Red Army's liberating Norway from the Germans. When the Germans burned half the country, it had an arctic border. There is this idea of navigating a humanitarian response, of coexistence, of trying to deal with the past the whole time. This is what explains the very forceful European response, but also that a lot of countries struggle with this and deal with this and are rightly criticized for a partly racist sort of approach to the refugee flow. However, it is quite complicated, and it feels very much located in the distant past and in experiences with the Russian empire and the USSR.

Alexandra Boivin

As a reaction to the point about soldiers somehow being safer than civilians, there have been large numbers of fallen and detained servicemen, and the impact this has had on the conflict and the fighters themselves cannot be denied. In partial agreement with the point made by Mukesh Kapila that civilians are worse off than servicemen during conflicts in terms of access to services.

This is a trend that has been seen over the years. However, it can be said that the particular situation of casualties in the Ukraine conflict actually brings to the fore the vulnerability of those in uniform and brings back quite saliently the relevance of the Geneva Conventions in their original incarnation. In terms of the specificities of the conflict, it is an international armed conflict with the full-fledged application of the Geneva Conventions. Both parties recognize the applicability of international humanitarian law, which means that there is a shared understanding that there are some actions that are off-limits and that there are certain people and objects that are protected. Now, of course, this shared recognition of the relevance of the law remains very challenging to translate into military operations, especially given the tendency of the parties to invoke the lack of reciprocity and what has already been alluded to, which is the very sharply polarized geopolitical and information environment, which basically provides little incentive for restraint in the conduct of hostilities.

Linked to this point is the prevalence of misinformation and disinformation, which is a feature of most conflicts today, but it is again particularly salient in the Ukraine context. It adds a whole new layer of insecurity for civilians who rely on information to make decisions about whether to stay, whether to go, where to find assistance, whom to trust. Thus, the digital sphere is not only being used to manufacture erroneous and misleading information but in some instances also being weaponized. Mukesh alluded to this. I'm referring to the cybersecurity operations against civilian infrastructure and also the broader impact of digitalization on the ways in which wars are fought. Particularly worrying is the trend that we see of targeting housing and essential infrastructure such as health, water, gas, and electricity facilities which impact large parts of the population and the use of explosives in densely populated areas. Referring also to the point Mukesh made about urban centers and fighting around dams and nuclear installations, the recent escalation in the rhetoric surrounding the potential use of nuclear weapons is almost a normalization of a reference to nuclear weapons and is extremely concerning. While it could be said that a lot of the trends in warfare that we see here are seen in other places, this particular reality speaks to the volatility, the unpredictability, and the global significance of the crisis.

Finally, in terms of patterns of suffering, sadly, there is too much one could say, and again, there are probably a lot of similarities with other conflicts. However, there were two realities that ought to be highlighted here. One is the reality and the vulnerability of the elderly. Another is the reality of people with disabilities. Somewhere around 22% of the population of Ukraine is over 65 years old, and many of these elderly people have caretakers who are often women. Their ability or their willingness to leave is quite limited, and their access to medicine, of course, is limited as well. And when

it comes to people with disabilities, the number we have is around 2.7 million people with disabilities, with many of these disabilities associated with lack of access to medical treatment or untreated chronic disease like diabetes. We are dealing with a population that may be less visible but is particularly vulnerable in this context, where the humanitarian response needs to be particularly attentive.

The last point that can be made in this regard is about the mental health and psychosocial needs of the people. They are staggering, and of course extend into neighboring countries. There is a tendency today to look at the country geographically as separated with parts of it at war and others not. This needs to be challenged not only legally but also in terms of the people who are actually suffering and need attention—and will continue to need attention, unfortunately, for some time to come.

Viktoria Sereda

In addition to the points that were highlighted, we need to focus on what has been missed. First, it is important to remember the speed and numbers in which people were moving within the first 2 weeks of the conflict. One third of the country's population was on the move. We must talk about both internal displacement and people going across borders. These numbers were unprecedented. Since WWI, Europe has not had this many refugees coming in in such a short period of time. Another very important issue is that among those fleeing war are people who are double or triple displaced. After the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and beginning with the military conflict over the Donbas, the majority of displaced persons were settling near the front lines. These are exactly the zones which came under Russian attack very early in February. And again, approximately 50% of 1.8 million of these internally displaced persons from the previous conflict were settled exactly in these regions. Often, these were elderly people or people without resources who could not move further. Often, they could not afford to move further, or they had someone from the older generation on the other side of the front line and they needed to take care of them. Before COVID-19, this front line was one of the most porous. People crossed it en masse and commuted, often to visit their elderly. When the full-scale aggression erupted, many of the IDPs had very limited resources to move again, and now they are subject to double or triple displacement.

We observe patterns when people from cities that are under direct attack would move to the closer nearby neighborhoods, which are safe. Then, people from those “safer” places would flee to other more distant places. Therefore, almost the whole country was experiencing this triple or double resettlement in steps. Now, if you look at the sociodemographic characteristics of those fleeing, it becomes clear that current cross-border displacement of Ukrainians has a very distinctive character. In this case, if you compare it, for example, with Syrian refugee flows, the absolute majority of those fleeing are women with children and elderly persons. Such a situation creates absolutely different needs for them when they cross the border or arrive in the destination country both upon their arrival and in case this war continues, and they will have to stay within the receiving communities for a longer period. So far, there are no clear prospects for a peace treaty or ceasefire. This creates another spectrum of needs to be addressed.

A racialized discourse about Ukrainian refugees can be seen within the EU specifically, but we must remember that Ukraine is a home country to many different nationalities and also to indigenous Crimean Tatars or Turks, who are Muslims, and many other ethnic and religious groups who are also displaced. Therefore, it is not correct to describe those displaced from Ukraine as exclusively white Christians. There are many different ethnic and religious groups crossing the border and seeking refuge in different countries around Ukraine. Ukraine was also a host to labor and educational migrants. Ukraine was a refugee country for many dissidents from the post-Soviet space, some Afghan or Syrian refugees. All these groups need attention as their population was also affected and had to flee the country. Therefore, this should be presented as the displacement not only of Ukrainians but also of many other nationalities.

Selman Salim Kesgin

Moving on from this last point, how would you describe the responses of European countries to the Ukrainian displacement? There are some opinions which say, okay, they are our neighbors, and we are opening our doors, but at the same time, they are closing the doors on other refugees, in a sense illustrating that the Ukrainian crisis is another example of the hierarchy of refugees.

Mukesh Kapila

With personal experience and observations over time, my views on this have changed. First, I do not agree that the differential response is due to racism. However, it can be agreed that humanitarian responses are inequitable; in other words, humanity does not respond in a formulaic, equitable way to all crises in the world. However, this is not to say that there is an inherent poor racist impulse in the hearts and minds of policy makers and people when responding to this kind of crisis. On the contrary, this is huge generosity. Most of the donations to the great appeals for crisis aid around the world, regardless of the continent, come from the West.

And when I look at what is happening in Tigray or Sudan or elsewhere, all I can say is that if you classify that as racist, then I think there is a kind of subcategory of racism among black people. Thus, I do not agree with this formula. There is a characterization of racism. It is a human tendency to help people who are close by and near you. And if you were not to do that, then there is really no hope for the world. What we are seeing is a demonstration of the innate humanitarian instinct in people which seeks to rush out to help when they find someone in distress. And by the sheer nature of the practicalities of it, you rush out to help the people in your neighborhood first in your apartment block or in your village or whatever. And what's wrong with that?

It is tiring to hear people say that Ukraine is dominating all the news because everyone is rushing to help Ukrainians and that this means all poor and neglected people in other crises are suffering. This then inevitably leads to claiming the racism of donors. However, we can strongly rebut these ideas by asking "What are you doing now?" I have personally spent a lot of time in Pakistan, Iran, and other countries dealing with the Afghan crisis when I was working for the UK government and then later the UN. I was based in the UN mission in Kabul and later worked for the Red Cross. What I saw was the extraordinary generosity of the Pakistani people and the Iranian people to Afghan outflows, the same as European populations have done in relation to the Ukrainian outflows. Therefore, the dialog should be moving on to more constructive discussions on how to improve humanitarian solidarity around the world rather than this competition.

Kristin Bergtora Sandvik

I share some of the sentiments as I am a little discouraged by academic laziness. There are a couple of important things that we as researchers can tackle. The first is what can be learned. For example, the temporary protection directive seems to work. So let's do it again. Across Europe you find that Ukrainian refugees engage very eagerly using Google Translate, telling the government when they are unhappy. For example, in my home country, everything seems to work a lot more because you have refugees actively articulating what the rules are, what they think should be happening, and then essentially reforming the system from within. It can be suspected that this occurs with the middle-class refugee flow across Europe. However, there are issues that need to be addressed. For instance, the status of third-country nationals who are not related to Ukrainians in Europe has expired.

Another issue I want to discuss is the policy of humanitarian exceptionalism. Whenever I try to bring this up, humanitarians get very nervous, and academics get angry. Nobody wants to discuss the policy of pet exceptionalism, but across Europe, countries have bent backward to finance quarantine, suspend normal biosecurity regulations, and allow otherwise banned dog races. This policy of pet exceptionalism creates expectations, for example, for future refugees. And then only this morning, the head of the Norwegian Red Cross wrote an op-ed saying that when you have reception centers where a Syrian boy aged twelve has to use his bike in the Norwegian fall, it's raining, it's cold, but a twelve-year-old Ukrainian has a free bus ticket, that's a problem. It is a problem for these kids because they are both going to stay in Norway. However, they will do so with the understanding that they have different value. This is unglamorous; it's low key. However, I think it is also an academic obligation to try not to be lazy and to tackle the racist narrative, but also to see where things need to be critiqued.

Alexandra Boivin

A lot has been said. And I am glad to hear Kristin reference the head of the Norwegian Red Cross. Indeed, National Societies — particularly those in Europe — have been really looking at how to support the Ukrainian response within the country. They need to petition for equality of treatment. I mean to the extent that equality of treatment is appropriate, but just to also highlight where some of the policies of their government at the national level are discriminatory. The rhetoric should not be that Ukrainian refugees should not be on the receiving end of these benefits and solidarity. This

would be counterproductive. However, what you are saying is, wow, what an opportunity! This moment of solidarity needs to be extended more broadly to others who ought to be receiving the same opportunities. I have not thought about it deeply beyond knowing that it is a concern for the Red Cross Red Crescent movement.

I would not challenge Mukesh in terms of pushing back on the racist formula as being the wrong formula. I would also agree that this is not the most productive use of the term *racism* in this context. Then again, not to discard the fact that there are no doubt instances of racism, but to use it as a blanket word to describe a phenomenon which is fundamentally a phenomenon of tremendous solidarity and generosity is not helping anyone.

Viktoria Sereda

It must be stressed that the provision of refugee protection is ideologically constructed on global public goods which states should collectively value and support. However, the reality is very different because some states have very little incentive to assume the role of provider because of the nonexecutable nature of humanitarian and security benefits from the protection. For example, in sociology, the term *logic of rescue* shows how current debate about the refugee crisis in various states and among non-state actors mobilizes very diverse and competing views on the “solvability” of different groups of irregular migrants. Such an approach is also often applied to refugees who come from different societies. Who is “worthy of being rescued” or “who should be prioritized”? Such debates become a part of the media and political discourse. The Ukraine case has two stories. The first occurred between 2014 and the full-scale Russian attack in February, when the great majority of those who were displaced stayed within the country. And if you look at the numbers of those who moved across the border and received asylum status outside of Ukraine, these were very small numbers. Of those who applied after the annexation of Crimea and during the hot stage of the conflict of the Donbas, there were around 20,000 people and only 2% to 4% depending on the country actually had received asylum status by 2016, but they were used in political discourses and debates within the EU refugee crisis. For example, Poland and Hungary were claiming that they saved millions of Ukrainian refugees between 2014 and 2016 because these countries did not want to host Syrian refugees. And, if you look at numbers, there were fewer than 50 people in each country from Ukraine who at that moment had received refugee status. What was really happening, since it was happening before the introduction of the visa-free regime between Ukraine and the EU in 2017, was that in the majority of cases, those escaping were pushed to become undocumented labor migrants. Those who were seeking refuge in neighboring countries were also exploited economically.

Another important part of the discussion should be how to build a new security order which would also address the growing number of internal and cross-border displacements and describe issues like weaponization of displacement, economic exploitation, or political rent seeking from displaced populations. For example, the temporary protection directive applied to the Ukrainian refugees or other new innovations in providing humanitarian aid to refugees fleeing from Ukraine to neighboring countries can be used to chart new provisions and policies. It is important to create new international legislation that would prevent future situations where refugees are exponentially weaponized. I want to raise yet another question. This new temporary protection status grants many more rights to Ukrainian refugees than previous laws. However, we have to remember that it is framed as temporary. This leaves a lot of room for interpretation, and its temporary character means that it can be withdrawn at any moment, and then large groups of the population will be left to the discretion of the receiving states. Imagine there was a ceasefire tomorrow and the EU decided to withdraw this temporary protection status from those 5 to 7 million Ukrainians staying outside Ukraine in the EU.

Selman Salim Kesgin

We will discuss the future of the crisis and what the future responses of actors will be during the crisis. However, before moving on to the next chapter, I would like to ask about the overall humanitarian action in the field. Regardless of effective coordination, how are humanitarian actors perceived in the field? Earlier in the conversation, Mukesh mentioned that one war is built on from a previous war. Could it be stated that this applies to humanitarian responses? For instance, that humanitarian operations are built from previous maintenance operations and the human community, having learned from previous failures, are doing good in the field or are repeating some pitfalls. What are your views on the coordination and effectiveness of humanitarian actors in the field?

Mukesh Kapila

Humanitarian actors are also learning and adapting. This can be seen, for example, in using innovations like cash for aid technologies, remote assistance, and many other techniques. Therefore, humanitarian action is undoubtedly evolving, learning from both successes and failures elsewhere in the past. That gives me the chance to simply share my perceptions, having visited the Ukraine region a few months ago and having seen the complaints against the Western humanitarian system. For example, in Romania, I was told by the head of the National Humanitarian Emergency Response Operations and other senior people that they were very upset with the whole UN system because the UN was behaving as if we were in the middle of Africa where there was no local capacity. They rolled into town with the same tools and instruments that they used elsewhere, set up the coordination structures that they were going to because the locals didn't have the capacity. Millions are coming out of Ukraine; therefore, the UN humanitarian organizations had to step in because that is what they normally do in many other places, whether or not it is massive and rapid displacement. Forget that we are sitting in the center of Europe. It is no longer Eastern Europe; we're sitting in the center of Europe now. Many of the countries are part of the European Union, and there are a whole lot of systems and structures, and then there are billions of euros waiting, and there are a social safety net and national policies already there to integrate these people into local mechanisms rather than establish special assistance for refugees. And all these are positive things if you like. However, many of the UN agencies, the likes of the UNHCR, the WFP, and others, were completely blind to them. It appeared to me, at least, that that's what these people were complaining about.

When I went further into the countryside, away from the capitals, other complaints started coming up. For instance, international humanitarian security systems are such that they speak a lot, they pontificate a great deal about solidarity and so on and so forth, but when it comes to actual practical assistance and taking the risks that go with delivery on the ground to rely on the local actors... So, I ended up standing on the border, either inside Ukraine or just outside. I can't say the location as I wasn't sure where I was. And you could tell that what was going on is that Western aid suppliers were coming in, dumping the aid there, and local organizations were then coming in and delivering the aid wherever they're going to deliver. Often it was the Ukrainian Red Cross coming to deliver to a common delivery point. I was told that the reason why was because insurance policies and various other security organizations didn't allow them to go. You remember my mentioning this to you and saying I wanted to go and see for myself whether even the International Red Cross wasn't doing more. Because to be honest, the International Red Cross is not necessarily much better than this when it comes to risk protection. What they were trying to do was transfer risk from international actors to local actors. Therefore, when we talk about solidarity, we shouldn't always equate it in terms of money. It is also a question of actually taking the risk that goes with local humanitarian action and the security protocols. But what I thought was that the protections that came to international actors were not transferred alongside the risks that the locals had to take to deliver the billions that had been pledged.

Big organizations like the UN or other humanitarian organizations are just funders. They find intermediaries who then find other intermediaries who then find local actors. And that is the humanitarian food chain. This is an operation that is highly inefficient, usually inequitable, and very slow and unresponsive. And the pressure on Western agencies, UN agencies, the Red Cross system, is enormous because governments have shoveled millions at them. And there was huge pressure to spend, right? And the systems can't cope with that spending, not without seeking help. And the border is open, unlike in many other crisis regions where I worked. It is difficult to get into a country because the government won't let you in and you have to go underground to deliver aid. They are welcoming people to come and fight. They're also welcoming people to come and give aid. What is stopping people is the self-protection of the Western humanitarian system. I consider this to be immoral: as mentioned earlier, they were transferring risk to the local people. In this process, therefore, I believe this whole idea of localization is pure nonsense. All I saw in Ukraine was a step backward — and this is in the region where there are established capacities. I have nothing good to say about this issue. These observations are based on my comments, on direct observations. Clearly, I did not take away any good examples from my visit, yet I hope things have got better in the last few weeks.

Kristin Bergtora Sandvik

Just three small points. I think the problem of humanitarian indigestion that Mukesh is describing is a sort of tsunami in which the system is overwhelmed by cash donors wishing for something to happen quickly while other programs are underfunded. It is very stark in the current global climate of famine, for example. And I think this is something that we

as critics will have to keep struggling with. Financial accountability and trying to keep a clear overview of the operations are different than field workers and risk. And I think it is inevitable that the locals will have to deliver the aid. In terms of what Mukesh was describing, it does not seem conceivable that an international organization would be able to do it well, so this transfer of risk on every level is inevitable.

Viktoria Sereda

I think we must look back at 2014 and 2015 in Ukraine and learn from the role that civil society played then. Using this example, we can try to explain what is happening currently in society. What we saw is that there was a big upsurge of civil society, specifically, informal groups which were very efficient in targeting different and very pressing humanitarian issues of displaced Ukrainians. These self-aid groups were very quick and flexible in offering the necessary aid. It was only in the later stage that national and international NGOs were gradually assuming important roles. In some cases, their humanitarian aid was very delayed and did not take into account local needs. They were working according to pre-defined schemes (often developed for big refugee camps and not catered to a cross-country and almost “invisible” displaced population). All these institutions are often financed through grants and money of the very bureaucratized Western humanitarian aid organizations. It demonstrated that for fast and efficient aid delivery, this bureaucratic system is not helpful, even when displacement is happening within one country. At the same time, when we go one level up—when this displacement is cross-border and directed toward many neighboring countries—then there are even more challenges and issues for international organizations and for the monitoring of the situation. For example, in the majority of cases, if there is a need to gather some knowledge about what is happening at the local level, international scholars would be prohibited by their universities or institutions to go into the country because of the security risks. And again, we have only locals who are supposed to do all this work.

If you look at the situation with receiving and providing aid to Ukrainian refugees in Poland or other neighboring countries, one could observe patterns like those described above when, in the early stage of the displacement, ordinary citizens, voluntary organizations, and self-aid groups intensively stepped in. All those self-aid organizations, informal groups, and civil society organizations were taking care of displaced persons (a peak of 50-70,000 crossings per day), and then, gradually, state, and international organizations joined the process. You hear many voices complaining that international organizations turned into slow, overbureaucratized machines which quite often do not really understand what is needed. Some scholars voice the need to rethink the post-Fordist model of international aid. The current Ukraine case clearly demonstrated that this top-down approach is failing. Instead, unstructured civil society self-aid groups are much more efficient. One should also keep in mind that there is a big Ukrainian labor and, in general, big post-Soviet diaspora in both Poland and other EU countries, which also played an extremely important role in delivering aid and trying to help with the most pressing and most urgent needs of Ukrainian refugees in the early stages of the current crisis. At the same time, one should not expect civil society to completely replace state or international organizations. It cannot endlessly fulfill roles that have to be covered by state or international organizations because people cannot leave work or stay out in tents for months to offer the refugees help. They cannot leave their business or jobs for a long time because then the whole economy would collapse in the country.

Alexandra Boivin

I would like to walk you through how we devised our operation as one of these large humanitarian organizations that were referenced, that all have a specific mandate. And start by recalling ICRC presence in the country operationally since 2014, perhaps to counter the idea of newcomers.

With the events of 24 February, we had to regroup and take a hard look at what it was we were able to do. I think it took us about 6 weeks to get ICRC management back in Kiev, but that was a period initially — if I may say so— of some chaos. The question for us internally is always, could we have prepared better? Could it have taken less time? We spoke about displacement earlier on in this conversation, but, needless to say, a large majority of our staff has been displaced multiple times in this conflict.

Putting that aside, very early on, we made the decision that this response was going to be a Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement response with the Ukrainian Red Cross at the center. We have been working closely with this National Society for 8 years, so we were well positioned to leapfrog that relationship into a partnership on a new scale. It was clear

that we didn't have the capacity to reach people in need on such a large scale. The needs that were now emerging as a result of the intensification of the conflict and the environment had become much more complex than what we had known. And today, just to say, most of the assistance activities we carry out in Ukraine are done hand in hand with the Ukrainian Red Cross. So, yes, this is the local actor who does do the work, but I would say anything that's done near or beyond the front line is done with the ICRC, so this notion that the riskier work is outsourced doesn't resonate at all. We can come back to some of the examples of the work that's being done closer to the front lines in very difficult places. Indeed, to no one's surprise, going beyond certain areas is just not possible for the National Society, so that is where we work to our respective strengths. As I mentioned, the Red Cross Red Crescent response was very much part of the orientation. You would think it's like that in any situation of armed conflict, but I would say in this case it's different in the sense that it's even in the design of the response, the fact that we chose it specifically because of what has been mentioned here about the functioning of the government, and the fact that we find ourselves in the middle of Europe to focus our assistance work on supporting the authorities. We decided that to reach people at a scale, we should focus on essential services, specifically, working with water boards, for instance, and supporting them with water treatment chemicals, spare parts, and repairs. Another example is signing on with the Ministry of Social Policy to top up an existing cash distribution system. Mukesh already mentioned this. That the cash system is a feature of this conflict thankfully makes a lot of sense. But yes, seeing that as the obvious way to reach a number of people who were finding themselves in a place where the markets were continuing to function in spite of the conflict. Not only was the design of our operation hand in hand with the National Society, but also reflecting on scale is something that can and needs to be done with the local authorities.

Reaching the most vulnerable people in this conflict and scale is not necessarily the same thing. Therefore, it is also our responsibility to reach those that are beyond the reach of the authorities. And this also comes to the third orientation for us, as mentioned, which is our protection mandate. Unlike other relief factors, the expectation is that we work with the parties to the conflict to uphold their responsibilities. And what I'm referring to here is the dialog on the protection of civilian infrastructure, the use of weapons and their impact on civilians, visits to prisoners of war to check on conditions of detention and treatment, the obligation to notify detained and missing people, and also offering our services a neutral intermediary for the transfer of the wounded and dead, or for transferring letters from detainees to families to other authorities. These are highly sensitive operations that require a huge amount of time and effort. And to come back to the original question, the efficiency is quite difficult to measure ultimately because the results are going to look quite modest at times, and a lot of effort will have gone into it. However, there's no alternative for us. This will always be worth it, so maybe that was just to kind of paint the picture of how we see things.

I'm not exactly sure which areas Mukesh visited, but for example, one of the programs that we carry out with German Red Cross ambulance drivers involves evacuating very vulnerable groups from the front lines to Moldova. And this, again, is done with the local partner and designed together. We define ourselves as frontline workers. We do have to acknowledge that local responders in this conflict and probably others, but particularly visibly in this context, have been incredibly courageous and have delivered in a remarkable fashion. And I think that's not contested. It's not that this is not happening or this shouldn't happen. It is happening. And that's good because the needs are there. However, I think, relative to the very important point that Viktoria made about sustainability, there's only so much that can be done in this manner. And I do think that there is a space for all of us to play to our respective strengths. I suppose the challenge there is to make sure that we're not overstepping and that we do what we've been mandated to do. We are somehow not creating an environment that's not conducive to allowing other actors to do what they're able to do. And finally, let us not underestimate the role of the Ukrainian authorities in this conflict and their incredible resolve to keep us accountable, and just that this is not a sort of uprooted conversation from external people. This conversation is ongoing every day with representatives of the Ukrainian government, be it at the central, oblast or municipal level. There are many negotiations daily to ensure that what we're doing is indeed in line with what is needed and expected. And I think that's correct.

Mukesh Kapila

Just to make it clear, in my previous comments I was talking about physical risk. I'm not talking about financial risks or financial bureaucracy, though some very good points came out in the discussion on that. And there's a whole discussion on the efficiency of humanitarian operations. I was talking purely about physical risk. And all I can say is that I have seen how over the last 30 years organizations have become less and less courageous as the years have passed.

At the same time, the organizations have become more and more risk averse, making the risk calculations more and

more, looking at whatever calculations take place. And I can also say that over the last few years, there was a time when I would go around and just having the UN flag flying on my car or going to a place where there's a Red Cross flag flying on top of the tent, or something was enough. That was it. You could sleep very comfortably, and nothing was going to happen to you.

I also felt that my presence as an international offered protection to locals. However, I also felt the opposite sometimes when, not many times, the locals protected me as an international and I was being protected by the locals because they knew all the thugs and they had the relationships; they could keep them under control. I'm thinking of the Taliban and many other places I've been to. Thus, you understand that when we talk about solidarity, international solidarity, this was a solidarity of risk sharing and mutual risk protection, not one-sided risk transfers, which is what is happening. And what I fear is that while individuals are as courageous as ever because human nature has not changed, humanitarian organizations of the bigger sort have become much more cowardly. And we see this time and time again: they are very often the first to leave and the last to return. There were some exceptions, honorable exceptions, with the ICRC. The ICRC never left Kabul, as I remember very well from my decades dealing with that situation. This is what I'm here talking about.

Earlier on, I was saying that soldiers are covered nowadays because they hide in a bunker or behind a computer and they send drones, and they have artillery that can fire from 100 km away. My same complaint is against humanitarians. How do you expect to save lives on the ground unless you're willing to share the risks of the people on the ground? And I see the bureaucratic trend against that direction, and I see organizational policy creating more and more of that. At the same time, we want to help more people, and that can only mean physical risk transfer. I consider this a moral issue. It is not an issue of efficiency or whatever you like, technology or something. I just consider this a moral issue in terms of some of the practices we are indulging in and to do that are actually reducing self-protection. Now, if you have the most existentialist of dimensions of humanitarian action, it is a physical risk to the health provider and help recipient. Imagine how this corrupts the whole humanitarian ecosystem.

Selman Salim Kesgin

Thank you. There is no doubt that the civilian agency of individuals and resilience in daily life is quite important in that scope.

Alexandra Boivin

Just really very briefly, because a lot of what you were saying, Mukesh, resonated with me. And I think what I wanted to add was this notion of trust. How can you actually hope to save lives when you're not there? And I think for us it would be, how can you hope to be credible if you're not there? How can you hope to have the acceptance of the communities you want to serve?

It's a known factor that we've struggled in Ukraine with our reputation. And I think part of that has also been about how visible our action was and how close we were at certain moments and when we left certain places. What I'm trying to get at is I get your point about not making it all about efficiency, but ultimately the knock-on effects of not being there are tremendous. Therefore, if our business model, as it was, somehow builds in a remoteness, there are going to be all sorts of difficulties for us to be able to deliver. And there may be a moral question there, which is what you're raising very eloquently. And I would say, fundamentally, there's a delivery problem.

Kristin Bergtora Sandvik

Thank you. I'm going to just put on the law professor hat now and say labor law. I think there is also the issue that humanitarian work is work. I remember sitting through this court case that was filed against the Norwegian Refugee Council by a Canadian worker, and the Norwegian Refugee Council kept insisting that law didn't apply and the whole effort to help refugees would go under if humanitarian organizations were held accountable according to normal labor law standards, and the judge was not too interested. However, I think that it is work. Also, a lot of humanitarian workers experience danger from their own colleagues. I know very few women who've been in the field and have had very unpleasant experiences with colleagues which border on criminal acts and would be treated very differently in their

home jurisdictions. However, I also think there's something else and very interesting going on with risk transfer in this conflict, which has been previously pointed out repeatedly.

The Ukrainian government has changed and expanded digital platforms to allow its citizens to collect and distribute data. For example, observations that de facto push them, as you said, closer to not really being civilians anymore. You have kids flying commercially off-the-shelf drones to collect data. These are children. And in terms of how refugees are catered to, there are examples of Ukrainian refugees taking out high-interest loans to try to survive in Ukraine. I think there are very interesting things going on with remoteness and digital tools and risk transfer at the moment, but it's not the kind of traditional risk transfer we talk about. Nonetheless, generally, of course, I very much agree with your point about what has happened the last 20-30 years in terms of the desire of agencies to protect themselves.

Kerem Kınık

NGOs, our movement, even victims and the hostile parties adapt to crises, and it is a kind of normalization process in the mindset. It is natural and good for human beings to overcome this trauma. However, this is not the same for organizations or for our humanitarian ecosystem. This is because in long-standing and protracted crises, we are witnessing a kind of stability of unstabilization. It is not good because some parties, some companies, some NGOs, and some systems also benefit from this unstable crisis.

We have to keep this crisis on the global agenda. This will not be easy as global agendas are subjective to change. It is difficult to maintain one issue as a top agenda item. Nonetheless, we, as humanitarians, have to provide our testimonie, not only facts, statistics, and assessments, but we have to keep human dignity at the center. We must call continuously on governments, all parties, influencers to keep their eyes on the victims. This is an important part. Sharing risks, resources, burdens, and responsibilities, is not an easy task because our humanitarian ecosystem needs some reform, and we do not have one unique voice. We have the UN system, including the security systems, we have the Movement system, and we have the NGO system and the governmental systems, but it is difficult to collaborate as parties in this ecosystem. Sharing responsibilities and being truthful, acting effectively, calculating our outcomes, and measuring the social impact of our activities, being honest and transparent is crucial.

For the Ukrainian crisis, we could mobilize more resources. However, we have to ask ourselves, will we use these resources effectively in the future? And how about our anticipation of the crisis in terms of period, in terms of the number of people affected and victims, rebuilding the country, etc... so really a holistic approach is required.

As academics, we have to assess and put the realities on the table, and we have to speak out on behalf of the victims, the agencies, and the parties because being honest and being transparent and telling the truth is not always easy for agencies and organizations.

Nonetheless, as academics we must always tell the truth. We have to assess all humanitarian clusters, regardless of whether they come from the blue family, the red family or others. We must focus on the system and service delivery of humanitarian affairs. There were many lessons learned from Afghanistan, Syria, and from many other crises. Therefore, we need a global coalition of academics, and we need to handle this crisis holistically. It is not an easy kind of trade for this holistic approach. However, we need to handle the development projects from this site to this agile organization as a movement to adjust ourselves.

Viktoria Sereda

I think another issue which we must discuss here is whether the international community needs to step in, or if we need to assess the efficiency of applied humanitarian aid policy, research is needed. And of course, the big question is that, quite often, actors in both humanitarian aid and peacekeeping organizations and are not trained to identify and evaluate the quality of field work data behind the reports. But quite often this would be commissioned not to scholars but to local volunteers or non-governmental organizations which also are not trained for that data collection. This is one issue, in my opinion.

The other issue is how we approach the conflict, how we label certain things. One needs to address the question of decolonization of the Eurocentric approach to the labeling, and based on that, the matter of humanitarian aid provision. What is the nature of the conflict? How do we access its size and what needs to be done? An extremely important issue

is how we describe what is happening and what methodologies are applied. And here I want to bring as an example a scandal, which was recently discussed in Ukraine in a report by Amnesty International applied an inappropriate methodology. The report was based on interviews with civilians conducted in the filtration camps on Russian territory. And then based on that, they produced a report on human rights violations and needs. It provoked a lot of public discussions. However, who was punished: locals but nobody from the administration sitting in the headquarters of this organization. I believe that the academic community is not reacting effectively to similar cases. There must be a wider discussion on the labeling and the Eurocentric and methodological approaches to studying war-torn societies and displacement and sensitively and ethically acquiring necessary information.

Kristin Bergtora Sandvik

Just commenting on this, I think the Amnesty question is difficult. From my observations of the human rights community, opinions are a bit divided as to whether Amnesty was to blame as much as the blame they got. On the other hand, Amnesty is under so much pressure in many other places. Then, every sort of government could just come and say to them, you have done bad things. In terms of the methodology, particularly the very short time frame for responding, there are many interesting things that can come out of this. However, speaking of research, for instance, I was invited to a country neighboring Russia to do a little bit of work with exiles. Just having to check with my employers about the risk of being on the sanctions list, for example, whether I would have to clear every person I met in the room. Thus, one thing is getting into Ukraine, but another thing is trying to engage with good forces where you think you can find them. How, as an academic with no access to intelligence, I can navigate this landscape?

Alexandra Boivin

I'm just going to put in the discussion this notion that the ultimate local actors are those we serve, the affected population. So we do think about the entities and we think bureaucratically about organizations that operate as such and funding for those organizations. However, I think the extent to which we as humanitarians are actually also including communities in the design of our programming is a massive workstream. And it's a place where I think we all admit that we have a huge amount of work to do, especially when we try to respond on such a large scale and at such a high speed to a situation. How many times are we actually taking and ensuring that what we're delivering meets people's needs? And how much leeway do we ultimately have? The transaction costs of being more inclusive need to be factored in, and we have to be able to talk about that. Therefore, I think a local actor is also the extent to which we bring on board the communities in our programming. I mentioned the work with the water boards and the utility companies and the health authorities. I think that for me it is also part of the localization discussion. It's not for everyone to do everything the same, but I think to the extent that we are sustaining rather than substituting existing structures, we are taking a step in the right direction. That might not have always been our way of operating as humanitarians. I think we have to highlight those actions as not only correct in terms of what they will deliver for people and building on existing capacities, but also having the foresight to reflect on what the needs will be over time and how we connect our immediate response with the longer term and the recovery plans in a given conflict. Those would be my two invitations to think about local actors, too, not just civil society organizations, but also the communities we serve and the local authorities.

Mukesh Kapila

On the question of localization, I have no answer other than to say that the reality is that he or she who pays the piper really calls the tune. And when I look back on my donor career, which has been a large part of my humanitarian career, I have to say I've not been backward in using resource power to leverage policy preferences, if you like. And there's nothing that stimulates response in an organization of any sort. The bigger the organization, the greater the leverage you have. The bigger the donor you are in that organization, the greater the leverage you have. Nothing triggers them more than either the threat to withdraw funding from them, as is happening now with some UN scandals related to a particular agency, or the opposite, bribing them with more money to steer them in certain directions. There are diplomatic ways of doing this, and that is, of course, the business of international diplomacy in this field, but the reality is that. It's really not so surprising. As a donor, suddenly I didn't want to deal with 10,000 other organizations. I was quite happy to deal with a dozen and screw them as hard as possible to steer them in the direction that I thought I wanted to represent my particular government. Now, looking back on this, I can say, oh my God, I wish I hadn't. It was immoral, it was unethical, it was this, that, and the other thing. Unfortunately, that's the reality.

Something else that I observed is that as new capacities emerged in the developing world, meaning many NGOs that are actually domiciled in and have grown out of the developing world, as we call it, they quite honestly are no better off than the old Western-style organizations. You only have to go to some African organizations in Kenya or India or wherever and you realize that basically they've learned all the bad habits of the organizations that we love to criticize now, and they're behaving exactly in the same imperialist manner, except it's more domestic. And that doesn't make that any better. Just because you're an Indian organization, behaving in a monopolistic way in relation to smaller Indian organizations in the Indian space doesn't make it as if you had more license than say.

The real issue is about resource power and how, when the resources are skewed in the direction they are skewed, you are going to correct the imbalances of influence that come with it? Now, one answer to that is more multilateralist approaches, but in the end, the same donors are behind all these. It doesn't matter whether you just write a big check to the UNHCR or give money to the UNHCR and 10 refugee organizations if you like. It doesn't matter whether you give money to the Red Cross in Geneva or directly to a National Red Cross Society. You probably do both. You see, the agency of the national organizations is a problem there. I think the incentives are such that maintaining the status quo suits a lot of people, whether they are donor bureaucrats or bureaucrats of major intermediary organizations or medium-sized organizations. Thus, I think we're wasting our time on localization and trying to fiddle at the margins. If, for example, the amount of money going directly to local NGOs increases from 2% to 5% over the course of the next 5 years, well, great, but that's hardly going to bring about the great revolution that we are talking about. I don't know what the answer to that is other than to say that this is not something that can be settled by any compact like the so-called Grand Bargain. I was firmly opposed to the Grand Bargain from all the historical agency perspectives that are represented because it could be almost like a bunch of self-appointed people, which is basically a few donors, big donors and a few big organizations getting together, doing a deal, and then expecting the rest of the world to say, right, we made a Grand Bargain, and now you guys are going to join this. I never supported this. I spoke up against it and I'm sorry to say that as events have unfolded, it has made the world even more cynical than it was to start with. I think we need greater action from the ground up, greater resistance from the recipient organization, greater self-reliance, and greater questioning.

Please remember, and I speak from experience as a donor, I knew that at the end of the week if I hadn't spent a sum of 10 million, I wasn't doing my job. I used to count how much money I'd given away on Friday and if I hadn't met my weekly target for disbursement, then I had a problem the following week. Remember that donors need recipients. Otherwise, the system doesn't work. That is an important thing to remember when we talk about this political dynamic and the economic dynamic of resource flows and the way these things operate, and what we can do to disrupt that dynamic so that donors change the incentives on them is an important part of thinking ahead. No answers, but I hope the questions that need to be addressed are clear.

Selman Salim Kesgin

Dr Kınık, what is your take on the localization discussions in Türkiye? It is also another huge topic for humanitarian action in Türkiye. How do you see this situation in the Ukrainian crisis compared with the humanitarian response in Türkiye?

Kerem Kınık

Promises made at the World Humanitarian Summit regarding the Grand Bargain didn't work. The target was to reach at least a two-digit percentage, but we are still at less than 3%, which shows that it's not working. What is the root cause of this malfunctioning? Like Mukesh has already said, the root is our mindset. We now have newer and bigger crises, which are more complex and protracted, and we have to handle all those crises at a high level, being well skilled and having the capacity. Local actors have been aware of this kind of capacity in terms of planning and/or conducting their duties in the field and reporting many things.

We have the capacity as the humanitarian sector in terms of cash assistance, but we are still discussing the modalities of cash assistance, the sustainability of resources, and the complementarity of other humanitarian affairs to this cash assistance. Describing the goals of this kind of assistance is a very tough issue because you need ample resources for long-term planning. In the meantime, you have to build the local capacity and you have to hand over some duties and some resources to the local actors. However, the feature of the program is different because you need to be lobbying in Brussels or Geneva with intergovernmental organizations.

Organizations are claiming quick wins, perfect reports, perfect organizations, and perfect risk mapping. You need professional capacity for this. If you call some local actors to this kind of program as an implementing partner or a joint venture party, it is extremely difficult to convince intergroup and big organizations in utilizing their resources. We have to put local actors in the larger picture, we have to invest in their improvement, and we have to build their capacity. After the crisis, we will hand over all those programs engaged in at the local level to these local actors. Then, we will withdraw, and they will continue. Thus, we have to change the mindset, and it is not easy. In terms of local actors, we must have multilayer programming and planning. We have to call governments to implement these localization policies as a movement. The International Red Cross Red Crescent Conference is a suitable place for calling governments and getting resolutions, very solid resolutions in the red pillar in terms of localization. We can save National Societies by obtaining resolutions on certain allocation of resources, protection of National Societies by law and regulations, and changing the current working modalities of the IFRC with National Societies. These are very practical things that can be achieved, but we are very far away from our goals and discussions that were made in 2016 during the World Humanitarian Summit as the humanitarian sector.

Selman Salim Kesgin

Before we end this discussion, I would like all of the participants to briefly elaborate on two points that have been made — one on the relationships between the humanitarian sector and post-conflict projects, and the other on transitional justice. I believe this should be an underlined concept. What do you think about that? How can we combine projects within the context of the post-conflict area? Thank you, Kristin, for bringing up the topic about the extent to which organizations can or should share their data and how they can establish partnerships with research institutions. The price of data and neutrality in these discussions are very important.

Kristin Bergtora Sandvik

For me it was just a way of highlighting the dilemmas, right? For example, by sharing data, actors can be drawn into completely different processes. When we talk about liberation and solidarity, I grew up in the human rights movement. It's a different focus on social change. It's a different set of norms. It's a different modus operandi. There's ICRC humanitarianism and then there's multisectoral humanitarianism. However, this is shaping up to become an extremely difficult and contentious sort of post-conflict situation.

When I use the term “post-conflict,” it refers to some sort of ceasefire that seems to hold, a peace agreement, or if one side wins, essentially hostilities end and there might be a call to lift temporary protection. People are returning home. There's a general agreement that there will now be reconstruction because there is an idea that there will not be much more armed conflict. It's sort of a generic post-conflict situation. However, for the humanitarian sector, especially here, like in Colombia, you have transitional justice before the war has ended.

Mukesh Kapila

I have three words, one on each point. The first one is on data. It just reminded me of my time as a clinician. One of my patients, who was a rapist, came in. I was administering medical care to a rapist, and the dilemma was, I know very well, he's a rapist. I have him as a patient. Do I inform on him to the police when there are all the others and get distracted? The guidelines are quite clear on this one: where a crime has been committed against the law. Then, there's the duty of everyone engaged in society to do what is necessary to uphold the law, in the same way that humanitarian work is just humanitarian work, as I think Kristin was also saying. Therefore, it is subject to the protections of labor law, while others would argue it's a vocation and it should go beyond. Similarly, I think that when a crime has been committed in an area, then it's the duty of all humanitarians to ensure that if they ask for information that will allow the crime to be handled by law enforcement or confirmed by lawful authority, then it is a duty to comply— but that's my personal position. Does it distract and devalue and make humanitarian work more dangerous? It's a debatable argument. Undoubtedly it does, but it's one of the risks of working in conflict settings.

On the point of the post-conflict, I'm hard-pressed to think whether there is a single post-conflict situation in the world. I mean, maybe 50 years from now we'll say there's a post-conflict situation in Ukraine, but not before the next 50 years have gone by. I think because the nature of war has changed so much, wars continue forever, even when countries are recovering from war, as we know from a lot of psychological social experience. A nation that has tasted conflict is always

at risk of conflict for at least one or two generations —there’s a lot of research being done on that. It seems to me, then, that there is no such thing as a post-conflict situation and that it is the design of our aid programs. We need to get out of the paradigm of aid in conflict, aid before conflict, aid after conflict. We must design aid programs according to needs. And I think we’re going to have many more hybrid-type programs that are already happening.

On the final point on transitional justice, I was interested to see some things recently about a 94-year-old genocider of the Pol Pot regime. It is confirmed that his sentence has been handed down and that he’s been convicted of genocide and should serve the rest of his life in jail. Well, justice has been done, but he’s 94. Most of his colleagues, except for one, have already died, by the way, in the last few years waiting for justice to be carried out. And humanity dictates that we release this 94-year-old person to live out his life in some old people’s home regretting his past. Who cares whether he’s in jail for the rest of his life?

I’m all in favor of justice being as close to the ground as possible, as fast as possible, and in real time as much as possible without compromising the quality of the legal process or judicial independence or anything like that. If we do that a bit more purposefully, we might mitigate the climate of impunity which many perpetrators currently take advantage of. But if you conform to the leisurely pace of justice that we have now, then, quite frankly, it’s a joke.

Viktoria Sereda

I’m not a specialist on transitional justice, but I think that for Ukraine it would be specifically challenging because its society has a challenging task. Ukraine is right now at war and is going through the procedure of joining the European Union and must fulfill all the criteria included in this process. This transitional justice issue will pose new challenges, but also probably help in navigating this process. If one talks about the post-conflict situation, one should also remember that it is not enough to just accept programs of rebuilding the country and then terminate the temporary protection status, expecting that all Ukrainian refugees would return home. We see that what Russia is actively targeting right now is critical infrastructure, educational and medical institutions. If a peace treaty or a ceasefire is signed, people will not simply be able to return home. Those who escaped are women with children and elderly persons. Many people lost their houses, so they will have no place to go. Otherwise, there will be another wave of humanitarian crises within the country.

Alexandra Boivin

Just to emphasize what the priorities are now thinking ahead. Viktoria just spoke about the targeting of civilian infrastructure, education, hospitals, and so on. I want to emphasize the absolutely critical importance of remembering responsibilities under international humanitarian law and not forgetting that this framework is there and that we need to invoke it. It is also important for humanitarians to be able to do everything we cannot reach those who need us most. We don’t talk enough about those areas where there aren’t very many humanitarians present today. And I’m thinking about areas under the control of the Russian authorities. All affected individuals have to receive assistance and protection. And if we don’t, I mean, we are indeed creating an asymmetry here which is going to undermine our legitimacy over time, not to mention the very real needs of these populations. Therefore, these access challenges have to do with our standing vis-a-vis communities, but also vis-a-vis authorities, be they legitimate or not. It also requires us to advocate with third states. You mentioned before, Kristine, the sort of concern that academics may have around sanctions. I mean, these are concerns that we have as humanitarians, so it’s not just the parties that need to comply with the conventions. Third states must ensure that humanitarian exemptions are built into sanctions regimes and that there is consideration for all of the population which needs to access support.

There’s also the question of combining humanitarian assistance and military assistance. We’ve seen some lack of distinction there that does undermine us and what we stand for, so let us not forget that those are still very real challenges that we need to look at. And the second part was what you referenced, Mukesh, in terms of the need to invest and reflect on the large-scale systemic support and how we’re going to be able to sustain that and try to bring in that kind of help beyond the humanitarian effort. Once again, how do humanitarians act as bridges for other actors who may be better suited to bringing in that kind of help over time?

And finally, Viktoria mentioned the issue of returns. I just wanted to also mention that, especially as we go into winter now, and seeing what are going to be all the obstacles that mean people will not go back, we should be asking ourselves

what kind of investments are needed. I don't like that term. But I think we have to think about where we can actually make a difference so that we create conditions under which people can indeed realistically have the hope of returning even if the fighting hasn't fully ended. There are parts of the country where that's just not feasible, however.

Kerem Kınık

In addition to what colleagues have mentioned regarding data, we need data to achieve wisdom. However, it is difficult to access validated data and information in the context of this complex crisis. In the meantime, we must ask ourselves, what kind of data we would have if the government or institutions open their data center to us. Can we use this data as our foresight or our assessment? We need to find a common understanding and approach for datasets as humanitarians. All of us are trying to make needs assessments; we are trying to measure the social impact of our activities. If we are psychologists or psychiatrists, we need to conduct surveys or diagnose individual cases or society. However, do we have a common data set-validated service and index to use in this kind of ecosystem for humanitarian post-conflict planning to be part of peacebuilding and contribute to international politics and governmental systems, validated and well-structured data and information, and articles and research?

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