

The Issue of Safeguarding of Civilians Human Rights in Areas of Conflict.

An area of conflict is an area of the world in which there is armed conflict, civil war or an occupation. According to the UN's Toolkit and Guidance for preventing and managing land and natural resources conflict, "Conflict arises when two or more groups believe their interests are incompatible."

In areas of conflict human rights are often violated due to governments and judiciary systems that are weakened or destroyed during conflict. Conflict also invariably leads to mass displacement which causes humans to be deprived of shelter, food, education, and healthcare, all of which are fundamental human rights.

In these areas of conflict there are often key violations of human rights including: Targeting of civilians, Displacement and Refugee crises as well as Restricted



humanitarian access, when aid workers cannot reach those people in need of food, water, or healthcare.

Targeting of civilians is a serious infringement of human rights as "human rights violations can be defined as violations of internationally recognised standards relating to human rights, whether or not these have yet been incorporated into national laws."

(<https://www.thecommonwealthlibrary.org/index.php/comsec/catalog/download/998/994/8427?inline=1#:~:text=Human%20rights%20violations%20can%20be,of%20Power%20proposes%20two%20definitions.> 24.06.25)

Displacement and Refugee Crises are seen as a violation of human rights because it can have profound consequences for the lives, health and wellbeing of both individuals and communities as a whole. Forced displacement is often unlawful and occurs when individuals and communities have been forced to leave or flee their homes in order to avoid the effects of events or situations such as armed conflict or human rights abuses.



(<https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/4794b2d52.pdf> 24.06.25)

Restricted Humanitarian Access is an infraction of human rights because humans have fundamental human rights which would be violated by restricted humanitarian access. For example, humans have the Right to Life, Right to Education and under Article 25 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights health is part of the right to an adequate standard of living. 'Health refers to a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being'. Physical health often referring to absence of injury or illness as well

as nutrition, dental health and sleep. Mental health refers to emotional and psychological well-being including dealing with stress. Social health can be considered an aspect of well-being that encompasses relationships and the ability to participate in society and community life.



(<https://www.wma.net/what-we-do/human-rights/right-to->

[health/#:~:text=The%201948%20Universal%20Declaration%20of,%201.24.06.25](https://www.wma.net/what-we-do/human-rights/right-to-health/#:~:text=The%201948%20Universal%20Declaration%20of,%201.24.06.25))

Some ideas for mechanisms you could put into place in your clauses:

- Encourage the use of satellite monitoring to both track civilian casualties and verify attacks.
- Create early warning systems for populations at risk eg. Populations in or around verified or potential conflict zones.
- Encourage harder sanctions on governments and nations that authorise attacks on civilians.
- Promote ceasefires in conflict zones and create safe zones.
- Suggest the creation of field hospitals and telemedicine/ tele-dentistry programmes in more remote and hostile areas to ensure essential healthcare access.
- Support vaccination programmes in conflict zones.

Helpful Links to further research:

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/protecting-human-rights-conflict-situations>

<https://www.un.org/en/our-work/protect-human-rights>

<https://emergency.unhcr.org/protection/protection-mechanisms/protection-armed-conflict>

<https://www.thecommonwealth-library.org/index.php/comsec/catalog/download/998/994/8427?inline=1#:~:text=Human%20rights%20violations%20can%20be,of%20Power%20proposes%20two%20definitions>

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