



HUMAN RIGHTS AND GLOBAL POLITICS: A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE ANALYSIS

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RESEARCH ARTICLE



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DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.70096/tssr.260402017>

Abstract

In the contemporary world order, human rights and global politics are inextricably linked, and this review aims to analyze their evolution and practical complexities within the framework of international relations. Although the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 established a new benchmark for global ethics, its implementation frequently encounters friction with national sovereignty and competing geopolitical interests. The study explores how the United Nations and international law provide an institutional framework for the protection of human rights, yet it notes that while these rights are theoretically universal, their practical application is often influenced by the political agendas of major powers. In particular, the concept of humanitarian intervention remains a focal point of debate in international politics, serving as a vital mechanism to protect vulnerable populations on one hand, while being criticized as a tool for interfering in the internal affairs of states on the other. In conclusion, this review shows that human rights are not just about laws or morals, but are also a key part of how power works in today's global politics, emphasizing that to solve the ongoing conflict between a country's authority and global humanitarian responsibilities, we need a fair and unbiased international system.

Keywords: *Human Rights, Global Politics, Sovereignty, Humanitarian Intervention, United Nations, International Law, Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

Introduction

Human rights are more than just essentials like food, clothing, shelter, healthcare, and education; they are also the cornerstone that gives human life purpose and dignity. It is a fundamental, unalienable, and untouchable human right. Human rights include freedom of expression, freedom of movement, life, peace, and protection from oppression and false accusations. Human rights are generally understood to be those inalienable, universal rights that are relevant to all people, regardless of their caste, race, or religion. But it's crucial to make sure that utilizing these rights does not compromise other people's freedom or tranquility.

Although the concept of human rights emerged with the development of modern science in the 18th century, it gained widespread global recognition in the mid-20th century. Currently, human rights are considered a recognized structural basis for obtaining any justice at the international level. In the current global context, when these rights are repeatedly violated due to war, conflict, and violence, their proper maintenance through local, national, and international laws has become even more urgent. Ultimately, human rights are not a controversial philosophy but rather a standard of civilized society that ensures the inherent dignity of humans and keeps the world habitable.

Definition of Human Rights

Human rights are a collection of codified laws or rules that pertain to the conduct and specific characteristics of the human race. These are protected by local and international legal frameworks and are considered an integral part of fundamental rights. A person is entitled to these rights simply by virtue of being born human. In other words, the rights recognized by a state's constitution for people to conduct their daily lives are called human rights.

Human rights are the essential opportunities and benefits required for the development of every individual's personality, which they acquire naturally by birth. These rights are universal in nature, far more comprehensive and extensive than limited or narrow state-granted rights, and are absolutely indispensable for living a healthy and normal life. Article 1 of the United Nations' "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" states, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." Human rights refer to those inherent rights of all people, regardless of race, gender, nationality, language, religion, or any other status.

According to the philosopher Bernard Bosanquet, "Rights are claims recognized by society and enforced by the state." Professor Robert Niven, in his Principles of Political Science, says, "The social existence of man is the source of rights." Professor Harold J. Laski, in his famous book A Grammar of Politics, says, "Rights are those conditions of social life without which no man can generally try to be his best." Professor Ernest Barker, in his Principles of Social and Political Theory, comments, "That is, rights are such necessary external conditions that lead to the highest development of personality. All these determined and protected conditions are considered as 'rights.'"

Origins and Evolution of Human Rights

Ancient Indian Ethical Scriptures: The development of human rights can be tracked back to the ancient Indian ethical texts. Justice, ethics, and human dharma (human duty/righteousness), which basically pointed to human rights, were the primary topics of discussion in the religious texts of ancient India. Guidance on moral growth and human obligations was given through these religious discussions. In ancient India, the pursuit of knowledge indirectly expanded human rights or moral values.

Cyrus Cylinder: The concept of human rights is quite ancient. It is said that in 539 BC, the Persian king Cyrus II (Cyrus the Great) invaded Babylon. After that, he freed the slave population oppressed by the Babylonians. Then, on the orders of Cyrus, a cylinder was made, which is called the 'Cyrus Cylinder.' It talks about religious freedom, tolerance, and the implementation of human rights throughout the empire. Experts claim that this is the world's first human rights charter.

Medina Charter: According to many researchers, the main foundation of human rights was laid by the proclamation of the Medina Charter by Hazrat Muhammad in 622 AD. The Medina Charter is called the world's first complete written constitution. According to the eminent historian William Montgomery Watt, this charter has a total of 47 articles in which human rights issues have been clearly stated for the first time. Notable articles: 1) All communities signing the charter will form a common nation, and all communities will enjoy equal civil rights. 2) All citizens will enjoy full religious freedom. No one will be able to interfere with anyone's religion. 3) The state will ensure the rights and security of citizens. 4) All kinds of bloodshed, murder, and rape are prohibited. 5) If a person commits a personal crime, it will be considered a personal crime. The community of the perpetrator cannot be held responsible for it. 6) The weak and helpless must be supported in every way.

The Magna Carta: The Magna Carta is considered a milestone in the development of the concept of human rights. It was an agreement concluded in 1215 between King John of England and the wealthy barons. It guaranteed that the people could not be arbitrarily taxed without the prior consent of the people's elected representatives. Royal officials could not arbitrarily acquire the people's land. No free person could be arrested, imprisoned, dispossessed, exiled, or harassed except in accordance with a judicial decision or law. In fact, the concept of the rule of law along with parliamentary democracy began with the Magna Carta. This charter was the first to declare that everyone in the country, including the king, was subject to the law of the land; that is, no one was above the law. This rational document of the rights of subjects and the reduction of the power of the king later served as an important guide for the empowerment of the people in the establishment of human rights in many countries, including the United States.

The Petition of Rights: The first significant document to emerge from the British people's movement in the 16th century is called the Petition of Rights. The Petition of Rights was passed into law by Parliament in 1628. This important document of human rights protected the people from taxation, imprisonment without the consent of Parliament, arbitrary intrusion into private homes, and the application of martial law.

The Bill of Rights: In 1689, the Bill of Rights was passed by the British Parliament and became a statutory law. It is a very important document in the realization of basic human rights. According to the famous French philosopher Voltaire, the Bill of Rights restored to every man those natural rights from which he had been deprived by various rulers for centuries. Such as complete freedom of life and property, the right to speak to the nation in writing, the freedom not to be tried on criminal charges by anyone except a jury of free men, and the freedom to peacefully practice any religion. Not only that, the Bill of Rights declared that if the king suspends or breaks any law without the prior consent of Parliament, or if the king imposes taxes at will for his expenses, or if he establishes royal commissions or royal courts, then these will be illegal and destructive.

After the socialist revolution in 1917, special importance was given to the economic and social rights of citizens. At the same time, the Mexican Constitution (The Mexican Constitution of the Republic, 1917), the German Constitution (The Constitution of Germany, 1919), and the Spanish Constitution (The Constitution of the Republic of Spain, 1931) gave importance to the civil rights of people and put them on paper. The first declaration of civil rights in the United States was the Virginia Declaration of Rights (The Virginian Declaration of Rights, 1776). The French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen of August 26, 1789, provided rights such as the right to liberty, the right to private property, the right to security, and the right to resist oppression.

If we discuss the theory of human rights, we will see that the first mention of natural rights is found in the writings of the Stoic philosophers of ancient Greece and Roman lawyers. The idea of rights is found in the writings of Greek philosophers Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle and legal experts Cicero and Seneca. Also, John Locke established the theory of 'natural rights' in his famous book called Two Treatises on Civil Government. Philosophers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Paine, Herbert Spencer, T. H. Greene, and others gave their views in favor of human rights.

Generations of Human Rights: To make the concept of human rights easier to understand, rights are divided into three categories. Each category is considered as one generation. These three generations of human rights are as follows:

- 1) First generation rights—(i) civil rights and (ii) political rights.
- 2) Second generation rights—Economic Rights, (ii) Social Rights, (iii) Cultural Rights.
- 3) Third generation rights—Group or Collective Rights.

It is to be noted that the rights of each generation are used here to refer to the contemporary situation. In this case, the rights of one generation do not disappear due to the next generation. The rights of each generation are enjoyed by people simultaneously.

Civil Rights: Right to life, right to liberty, right to security, right to communication, right to privacy, right to practice and propagate religion, etc.

Political Rights: Right to vote, right to be directly elected, right to assemble freely and peacefully and to form organizations, right to employment, right to freely express political opinions, right to a fair and impartial trial in court, etc.

Economic Rights: Right to work, right to freely choose one's workplace, right to equal and favorable wages for equal work, right to freely organize and participate in such organizations, right to an adequate standard of living, etc.

Social Rights: Right to education, right to good health, right to marry, right to found a family, etc.

Cultural Rights: The right to engage in the arts, the right to participate voluntarily in the cultural life of the community, the right to enjoy the advancement of science and its benefits, the right of minorities to preserve their cultural identity, etc.

Group or Collective Rights: The right to peace, the right to self-determination, the right to equal opportunities and participation in the sharing of natural resources, the right to sustainable development, etc.

By evaluating the rights of the above generations, it can be concluded that all human rights for overall development are applicable to the needs of human beings. In this case, the division of human rights into different generations, in fact, all rights, is essential for human self-realization. In this case, there should be no discrimination on the basis of state, religion, caste, ethnicity, gender, etc. It is the essential and inherent duty of every state to ensure that people can enjoy a normal life and all rights in a healthy and beautiful social environment.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR): The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a document that establishes the right to freedom of expression. It was drafted by the United Nations under the patronage of Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. It was adopted by the General Assembly at its first session on 10 December 1948 at the Palais des Nations in Paris as a resolution (217) of the General Assembly. It was proclaimed with the aim of ensuring the human dignity of every person. All systems of society, whether developed or underdeveloped, democratic or monarchical, socialist or capitalist, have been recognized and respected by the world community.

Second World War Human Rights: World War II was the greatest and most horrible conflict in human history to date. World War II is regarded as having happened between 1939 and 1945. Nearly every nation on the earth was either directly or indirectly involved in this conflict at the time, and two opposing power alliances—the Axis Powers and the Allied Powers—were formed. During this conflict, people were unable to exercise their common or human rights. It is evident from the pages of history that human rights have always been violated by war. The best example of this is the Second World War. The horrible weapons employed in this conflict seriously contaminated people's social and natural surroundings. This war took on a more horrific form due to the use of advanced technology in World War II.

During World War II, the indiscriminate massacre of civilians, the Holocaust (the genocide of the Jews by Hitler), and the only use of nuclear weapons in world history (in Hiroshima and Nagasaki) resulted in the deaths of about 70 million to 85 million people in this infamous war. Which was 3 percent of the world's population at that time. The number of military deaths in World War II was 20 to 25 million. And the number of civilian deaths was 55 to 60 million. These statistics prove that this was the most brutal war in world history. In the context of conflict and political instability, countless people became refugees during this time. At the end of the war, more than 40 million people were refugees in Europe alone. In 1943, the Allied Powers in World War II formed the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). Its main task was to assist refugees from countries under the control of the Axis powers, as well as from Europe and China during World War II. Under their control and direct assistance, 7 million people returned to their homeland. But about a million refugees refused to return to their homeland. In the last months of the war, about five million German civilians fled from East Prussia, Pomerania, and Silesia to Mecklenburg, Brandenburg, and Saxony as refugees to avoid the Red Army's onslaught. Since the Allies did not approve the decisions of the Potsdam Conference, thousands of ethnic Germans in Yugoslavia and Romania were sent back to the Soviet Union for slave labor. This was the largest refugee transfer in world history. All 15 million Germans were included. In addition, more than two million Germans lost their lives during the war.

The United Nations was established to maintain international peace following World War II. In a number of ways, the UN General Assembly has attempted to carry out initiatives for women, children, disabled slaves, refugees, and anti-racism. Now, it is evident that there are various states with distinct characteristics whose rights are uncertain outside of the economically powerful G7 and the Group of 77, which is made up of developing Third World countries. It must be acknowledged that putting the declaration of "rights" into practice in this situation is far more challenging. The Human Rights Committee and the UN Commission on Human Rights are two UN agencies that were tasked with implementing human rights into practice. The Human Rights Commission keeps an eye on how human rights are being protected globally. This commission makes contact with various states, conducts interviews with oppressed individuals, and plans visits to disturbed areas. Numerous international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have also been granted the ability to observe the Economic and Social Council and consult

with the UN. Protecting women's rights, protecting them from exploitation and discrimination, and establishing equality in education, employment, inheritance, property rights, and voting rights have also received a lot of attention.

The 1959 UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child places an extreme value on both adult responsibilities and children's rights. This is due to the fact that children lack political rights and are inherently dependent on adults. In this regard, it is important to note that the protection of children was the topic of a September 1990 World Summit. Prior to that, a Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) was held in order to safeguard children's rights. 139 states recognized the goal of protecting children's rights during this conference.

At this time, a section of thinkers identified an important issue, such as protecting the rights of minorities, as an internal matter of the state. This problem became acute when it took the form of racial discrimination and planned genocide. An attempt was made to stop such genocide through a charter recognized by the United Nations in 1948 (Covenant on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, 1948). However, it failed to play a particularly effective role. The reason can be said to be that between 1975 and 1999, the Indonesian military brutally killed one-third of the minority people of East Timor. The attempt to wipe out a people in this way is a major violation of human rights. In this context, it is also worth mentioning the Indians of North America, the so-called lower-class Aborigines of Australia, and the Maoris of New Zealand, who are unknown and rejected in their own land and are confined to the boundaries of their habitat. The year 1992 was declared as the International Year for Indigenous People, emphasizing the protection of the identity and culture of such minorities. However, it is needless to say that there has been a huge gap between the declaration and its implementation.

Since the Second World War, Europe has been plagued by chaos and displacement. The refugee problem has become dramatically important since the 1950s. An organization called the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has taken on the responsibility of dealing with this problem. Although its headquarters are in Geneva, its representatives have worked in many countries around the world. It is worth noting that this organization won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1954 and 1981 for its activities.

Vienna held an international conference on human rights in June 1993. 1,000 representatives from non-governmental organizations and 5,000 representatives from 160 countries attended. The efforts to implement human rights over the past 50 years were discussed extensively, and a number of issues were brought up in this context. For instance, the North-South divide, the lack of progress in fundamental liberties, the roughly two million individuals who were forcibly relocated in order to gain independence, etc. The budget for this conference emphasized the refugee issue.

Therefore, it is indisputable that numerous commissions, organizations, and laws were created to safeguard human rights following World War II. Despite this, it is evident that human rights are currently in jeopardy everywhere in the world. Every state must reconsider and take a different stance if human rights are to be upheld. NGOs can have a significant impact in this area. NGOs are stepping up to carry out their duties because we have witnessed numerous instances where the state is failing.

Globalization and Human Rights

The most discussed topic in the current world is globalization. Globalization is a process that has brought the entire world into the hands of people. It can be said that it has turned the entire world into a global village by removing the boundaries of nation-states. Although the word "globalization" is used especially in the economic context, its manifestations are inevitably seen in the political, social, and cultural fields. Globalization has reduced the distance between countries and people. As a result of the close contact of languages and cultures between people, cooperation and mutual communication increase, and the free flow of information and the progress of world civilization are accelerating on one hand, but in some cases, they are also deteriorating. As people are gradually becoming global citizens, regional terrorism has taken the form of global terrorism, global commodity prices have increased, inflation has appeared, the idea of internationalism has become clear, and capital flows have increased. On the other hand, globalization is actively establishing the hegemony of the West in the world. Still, it can be said that globalization holds thousands of possibilities, difficult challenges, and unknown dangers.

Human rights have been violated as a result of the globalization-induced competition among developed nations to show off their superiority. Globalization has created a global economy today that actually means the opposite of upholding equality. Therefore, injustice, chaos, and favoritism are today's true effects of globalization. Globalization is causing many states' voices to be dismissed and people's rights and common needs to be violated.

Globalization has both advantages and disadvantages. As a result, on the one hand, the standard of living of many poor people in underdeveloped and developing countries has improved; on the other hand, many beneficiaries have faced new competition. Many people have risen above the poverty line. Again, as a result of globalization, income inequality has increased everywhere within countries. According to the World Bank, the difference in per capita income between the North and the South has increased threefold in the last 50 years. In the context of the economic crisis, the cracks in the wall of consensus on globalization have reached such a level that there is no sign of consensus today. Economists who were once staunch supporters of globalization have become its staunch critics. The previous staunch supporters are now partially accepting that it has created downward pressure on inequality, unemployment, and wages. That is why opposition to globalization has emerged recently. Even the once staunch globalists are now joining the opposition camp. However, these opponents are not all on the same side but on opposing sides. They differ in class and power. The opposition of the poor people, including women and children of developing and underdeveloped countries, who have lost their land and joined labor-intensive factories under the prescription of globalization and migrated abroad as labor slaves, is low-pitched. They do not have a good opportunity to express their opinions and influence

national politics except for voting or the farce of voting once every four or five years. Still, many countries have turned around as a result of globalization. Their opposition to globalization is not global but local. But the privileged workers of developed countries who have lost their jobs to foreign workers due to globalization are not easy harbors. Again, the capitalists of developed countries whose profits have decreased due to the import of foreign goods are not weak either. They are loud and have much more opportunity and power to unite than the people of poor countries. The opposition that is heard softly in the global South becomes a roar in the global North. In the globalization of the developed world, opponents can unite under various pretexts. They blame the minority population for all their misfortunes. They gather under the flag of nationalism, religion, caste, etc. They can control the politics of votes. By spreading lies and money, they put nationalist, fanatical, and racist parties and individuals in power. Once in power, they start exploiting foreign workers, creating trade blockades, and erecting huge walls on the borders. The advocates of free trade at one time declared war on free trade.

A few years ago, In the name of globalization, their predecessors supported the undemocratic leaders of developing and underdeveloped nations while advocating for structural change, the privatization of public assets, etc. They have consequently caused the people of developing and underdeveloped nations to endure unending pain and suffering. In addition to invading and occupying Afghanistan and Iraq, they have killed millions of people. They want their products to be sold all over the world. They want a massive wall on the border that their soldiers can easily pass through because they do not want people. For this reason, they support globalization when it is convenient and oppose it when it is not. When it's convenient for them, their words and opinions shift.

Human Rights and Global Politics in the 21st Century

The twenty-first century has seen the emergence of a new type of international politics. Globalization is the primary cause of this shift in world politics. Human rights protection and human rights violations are equally present in this situation. Human rights are important to some world leaders, but there is a class of rulers who violate human rights in order to gain more authority and demonstrate their strength.

The economic power of wealthy nations has grown significantly as a result of the development of new economic and cultural tactics to regulate the unrestricted movement of capital and goods throughout the world from a single location. Globalization has given capitalists the chance to increase their capital. Globalization has given capitalists the right to dominate global politics, the economy, and culture. Globalization has replaced military force as the means of ruling the entire world from a single location. Globalization is being used as an excuse for imperialism. Military aggression is being carried out in many nations in the name of peace, undermining those nations' sovereignty. In the name of security, looting is occurring. In the name of peace negotiations, conflict is being incited. Enemies are destroying one another. Furthermore, these heinous acts are being justified by globalization. For instance, globalization is giving terrorists the advantages they require by arming them. Terrorists are creating a legitimate means of interfering in other nations by upsetting global politics. Additionally, imperialist nations are exploiting this for their own gain. Globalization is the idea of the wealthy and capitalist ruling class, which includes organizations like NATO, the European Union, the G-20, and the Security Council. By establishing institutions and organizations, wealthy nations are taking advantage of globalization. These nations have excellent political and commercial ties. They don't need a visa to travel between these nations. They step forward at each other's peril. These nations collaborate. And the impoverished and underdeveloped nations bear the brunt of all the challenges. The world's arms trade has been sustained by armed militants, but for a long time, poor developing nations have been the victims rather than capitalist nations. Once more, these capitalist nations are exploiting both sides by acting as a third party in an attempt to resolve the conflict between militants and the governments of numerous nations.

These imperialist nations are attempting to subjugate both sides and transfer the government to the private sector. The so-called civilized states demonstrate that they are supporting terrorists in the name of globalization by acknowledging the illicit funds that terrorists have stolen. Right now, one percent of the world's military budget could be used to force every child to stand in front of a blackboard. But what's going on? Poverty, hunger, and inequality have all increased due to globalization. The ecosystem is being destroyed. The level of discord and conflict in society is rising.

The world has been more or less affected by the Corona pandemic for the past two years. Many have lost their loved ones. Just when the world is starting to see a glimmer of hope after overcoming despair, Europe has returned to where it was a hundred years ago. Will Germany's Hitler remain in the pages of history for a hundred years? Putin, the terrifying character of the technological age, whom the world once welcomed with a garland of flowers. The countries that destroyed the Soviet Union today are watching Putin's game with some shock. It seems that there is no need to say whether the United States is a blessing or a curse for the world. However, Putin's evil deeds have shaken the world in a big way; there is no doubt about that now. Of course, nobody is in any way endorsing the attack on Ukraine. Everyone is denouncing the entire problem. Every nation, regardless of size, is very concerned. Human rights in the twenty-first century have also been called into question by Israel's occupation of Palestinian land, Netanyahu's autocratic style, the cruel and destructive attacks on common people, including Palestinian children, and Hamas' counterattacks. It is possible to see Putin's and Netanyahu's authoritarian behavior as a recurrence of Hitler's persona from nearly a century ago.

There is a war in Europe during the winter, when the market prices for gas, oil, and electricity are high. Russia provides more than half of Germany's gas needs. Russia is being targeted by the US and Europe in a number of ways. However, Russia is also

aware that Germany and all of Europe will suffer severe economic losses if the gas supply is cut off. In terms of economic diplomacy, China might prevail in this conflict. as was the case during the Corona era.

There are wars in many countries of the world, but those discussions are hardly ever seen on TV screens. For centuries, Europe and America have been selling weapons to the people of the world. The people of the world are destroying each other with those weapons. The way everyone talked or assured before Putin's attack on Ukraine does not seem to be fully effective now. Ukraine will have to handle this situation itself. Everyone is now starting to understand that Putin will not hesitate to cause any incident. Therefore, if another country intervenes, it will suffer the consequences. Sweden did not directly participate in World War II. Alfred Nobel's dynamite was used in that world war. The Swedish nation will not break its tradition. However, there was an idea that it would help Ukraine mentally and economically. But no, that idea is not right; the thoughts of Swedish politicians have become one, and they are directly helping Ukraine with weapons of war.

The Corona pandemic has caused the world to regress somewhat over the past two years, and this war is a new shock that is thought to be extremely detrimental to the entire world. The capitalists, on the other hand, hold the opposite view. Because breaking and building is what they do. It doesn't matter how many people died or whether a war is won or lost. Hatred between people will rise during this conflict more than it has in the past. Will the destroyed Soviet Union ever come back to life? Putin's statements suggest that. It is highly likely that Putin dislikes the NATO alliance. On the other hand, many countries are also unable to accept the dominance of the United States everywhere in the world.

China has recently started to exert a good influence in international politics; the days of the United States and its previous monopoly have ended. All in all, the international political situation has started to become quite complicated. Dictators and capitalists have started to destroy the peace of Europe and the whole world. In the past, many countries, such as England, France, Germany, and the United States, have destroyed many countries of the world bit by bit. In reality, almost everywhere, most of the rulers are cruel dictators, and those who fuel them are capitalists. Every day, those rulers are destroying peace in their own countries, their own citizens! Therefore, today, every day is a sad day for humanity, and the capitalist countries of the world are responsible for this. Because they are giving orders as judges, using missiles when necessary. As a result, ordinary people are dying, being raped, leaving their countries and taking refuge in foreign countries, and some are slowly decaying in the burning of sorrow and crying pitifully. Overall, it can be said that human rights are being violated constantly.

Numerous instances of human rights abuses in the twenty-first century have caused a great deal of controversy among the world's peace-loving and humanitarian citizens. The Uyghur Muslims in China, the Rohingya in Myanmar, and the ethnic cleansing campaign, which the UN has declared to be genocide, were all brutally attacked by the Chinese government. Once more, Gaddafi, the despotic leader of Libya, killed 3,000 people during the genocide in Kenya. The US attack on Syria led to thousands of innocent people's death marches and human rights abuses, while the Israeli attack on Gaza claimed hundreds of thousands of children's lives. Once more, crimes against humanity have been committed in Rwanda, Sudan, Libya, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. In Bosnia, the majority Serbs committed genocide there while trying to eliminate the minority Muslims. The genocide in Rwanda, where the majority Hutus were trying to exterminate the minority Tutsis, killed between 500,000 and 900,000 people. The violence between the Meitei and Kuki communities in Manipur took on inhuman dimensions. Ethnic cleansing campaigns were also carried out in Darfur, Sudan. The 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War and the mass uprisings in that country, including the attacks and subsequent violence by the ruling party, resulted in the deaths of thousands of people, including human rights violations.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains the defining human rights crisis of the 21st century, marked by staggering human toll and systematic violations. Since October 7, 2023, at least 72,045 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza and the West Bank, with over 171,686 injured. A UN report raises "concerns over ethnic cleansing" in both Gaza and the West Bank, citing the "methodical destruction of entire neighborhoods" and forcible transfers aimed at permanent displacement. The report also documented 463 starvation deaths in Gaza, including 157 children, calling it a direct result of aid restrictions—acts that may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. In the West Bank, violence has intensified, with 86 settler attacks documented in just two weeks of February 2026, displacing 146 people. Nineteen countries, along with the Arab League and OIC, jointly condemned Israeli decisions to reclassify Palestinian land as "state land," warning these actions advance "unacceptable de facto annexation" and destroy prospects for a two-state solution. The international community faces mounting criticism over "pervasive impunity" enabling continued violations.

Human Rights and Humanitarian Intervention

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) theory, adopted by the UN in 2005, asserts that sovereign states must protect their citizens from genocide, war crimes, and ethnic cleansing. When they fail, the international community has a responsibility to intervene through diplomatic, humanitarian, or military means.

In practice, however, R2P application reveals a troubling pattern of selectivity driven by great power interests rather than humanitarian need. The theory was invoked for NATO airstrikes in Libya (2011) to protect civilians from Gaddafi, aligning with US, British, and French interests. Yet when Israeli attacks killed thousands of Palestinian children in Gaza, R2P was conspicuously absent—and no action against Israel is anticipated due to US protection.

The results of intervention are mixed at best. Libya's intervention successfully removed Gaddafi but left the country divided into three parts with no central government and rampant militancy. Syria saw ISIS weakened through airstrikes but became a "city

of destruction.” Kenya offered an alternative model in 2008, when UN mediation brokered a power-sharing agreement between warring ethnic groups after election violence—a compromise that reduced bloodshed despite eventually faltering.

Meanwhile, crimes against humanity continue where strategic interests are absent. In Myanmar, the UN itself labeled Rohingya persecution “a textbook example of ethnic cleansing,” yet no R2P military action followed. The pattern mirrors Bosnia, Rwanda, and Darfur—genocide occurred, but intervention only materialized when powerful nations had stakes.

Even when intervention occurs, coordination failures worsen suffering. In Somalia (1990s), US troops in a UN operation answered only to American commanders, leading to a disastrous confrontation with militants and eventual withdrawal amid international criticism. R2P remains necessary—some crises demand international response. But its application remains politically selective, serving power before humanity.

Evaluation

Contemporary peace efforts show a troubling pattern: wars end not through diplomacy but through one side’s total victory, like in World War II or Vietnam. The standard peacemaking approach—UN resolutions, sanctions, and aid incentives—rarely achieves lasting harmony. Warring parties often sign agreements under pressure only to regroup and resume fighting, creating an endless cycle where citizens’ rights remain violated. Early interventions can even prolong conflicts, as seen in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Korea.

Wars ideally should conclude when underlying causes are resolved internally, but this seldom happens. Modern conflicts prove especially resilient, particularly when external sponsors support different sides. Despite spending billions and deploying thousands of peacekeepers, our peacemaking skills lag far behind our knowledge of war. Last year saw 120,000 direct war deaths – triple early 2000s levels – with countless indirect casualties uncounted.

With geopolitical tensions, climate change, and resource competition rising, future conflicts appear inevitable. Yet human rights movements have strengthened civil society and organized opposition to authoritarianism, making rights a crucial element in international relations.

Acknowledgment: No

Author’s Contribution: *Samiul Alim:* Data Collection, Literature Review, Methodology, Analysis, Drafting, Referencing

Funding: No

Declaration: Not Applicable

Competing Interest: No

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