

## The selective enforcement of human rights? The international response to violent humanitarian crises and gross violations of human rights in the Post-Cold-War era

Binder, Martin

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Arbeitspapier / working paper

Zur Verfügung gestellt in Kooperation mit / provided in cooperation with:

SSG Sozialwissenschaften, USB Köln

### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Binder, M. (2007). *The selective enforcement of human rights? The international response to violent humanitarian crises and gross violations of human rights in the Post-Cold-War era*. (Discussion Papers / Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung, Forschungsschwerpunkt Zivilgesellschaft, Konflikte und Demokratie, Abteilung Transnationale Konflikte und Internationale Institutionen, 2007-307). Berlin: Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung gGmbH. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-110960>

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**DISCUSSION PAPER**

**WZB**

WISSENSCHAFTSZENTRUM BERLIN  
FÜR SOZIALFORSCHUNG

SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH  
CENTER BERLIN

**SP IV 2007-307**

**The Selective Enforcement of Human Rights?  
The International Response to Violent Humanitarian Crises  
and Gross Violations of Human Rights in the Post-Cold-  
War Era**

Martin Binder\*

\*E-Mail: [mbinder@wzb.eu](mailto:mbinder@wzb.eu)



## **ZITIERWEISE ● CITATION**

Martin Binder

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Discussion Paper SP IV 2007-307, Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung 2007

Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung  
Reichpietschufer 50, 10785 Berlin, Federal Republic of Germany

Tel.: +49/30/25491-0 ● Fax: +49/30/25491-684

E-mail: [wzb@wzb.eu](mailto:wzb@wzb.eu) ● Internet: <http://www.wzb.eu>

**ABSTRACT**

How did the international community respond to violent humanitarian crises and gross violations of human rights after the end of the Cold War? While from an optimistic perspective on global governance it is argued that humanitarian crises have been increasingly addressed, skeptics maintain that this response has been highly selective. However, we know very little about the actual extent of selectivity, since so far the international community's reaction to humanitarian crises has not been systematically analyzed. The aim of this paper is to fill this gap by empirically examining the extent and nature of the selectivity. To do so, I identify the most severe humanitarian crises in the Post-Cold War era and examine whether and how the international community has responded to these crises. Concerning response, different modes of action, ranging from humanitarian aid to military intervention, and different actors, viz. states, international institutions, and NGOs, will be taken into account. This approach leads to a more precise picture of selectivity: While the international community responded inconsistently to human suffering, the extent of selectivity is smaller than often claimed, and none of the crises identified here remained completely unaddressed. At a more theoretical level this means that humanitarian norms matter though their impact varies significantly. Why? To understand the politics of selectivity it does thus not suffice to show that humanitarian norms matter: rather, we need to understand why and under what circumstances they do so and, conversely, why and under what circumstances they do *not*. Therefore, factors that are likely to impact upon the strength of norms-countervailing power considerations, economic interests and institutional path dependencies-will be taken into account in further research on selectivity.

## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

### **Die selektive Bearbeitung von humanitären Krisen und massiven Menschenrechtsverletzungen. Eine systematische Bestandsaufnahme.**

Aus einer optimistischen Global Governance Perspektive wird häufig argumentiert, dass die internationale Gemeinschaft humanitäre Notlagen nach dem Ende des Kalten Krieges stärker bearbeitet hat, als in den Jahrzehnten zuvor. Skeptischere Diagnosen verweisen hingegen darauf, dass diese Bearbeitung in hohem Maße selektiv geblieben ist. Allerdings wissen wir sehr wenig über das tatsächliche Ausmaß und die Beschaffenheit von Selektivität, da die Reaktion auf humanitäre Notlagen bislang nicht systematisch untersucht worden ist. Das Ziel dieses Papiers ist es, diese Lücke zu schließen. Dazu werden in einem ersten Schritt die schwerwiegendsten gewaltassoziierten humanitären Krisen nach dem Ende des Kalten Krieges identifiziert und auf eine Bearbeitung durch die internationale Gemeinschaft hin untersucht. Diese Untersuchung schließt zum einen unterschiedliche Formen der Bearbeitung mit ein, die von der Erbringung humanitärer Hilfe bis zum Einsatz militärischer Gewalt reichen. Zum anderen werden nicht nur Reaktionen von Staaten, sondern auch von transnationalen gesellschaftlichen Akteuren und internationalen Institutionen berücksichtigt. Als Muster zeigt sich, dass humanitäre Notlagen zwar in der Tat selektiv bearbeitet wurden, zugleich das Ausmaß an Selektivität insgesamt aber geringer ist als häufig behauptet, und keine der schwerwiegendsten humanitären Krisen komplett unbearbeitet blieb. Damit, so wird argumentiert, haben ‚humanitäre‘ Normen immer ein gewisses Maß an Wirkungskraft entfaltet, das gleichwohl erheblich variiert. Um den Gründen für diese Varianz künftig besser auf die Spur zu kommen, genügt es folglich nicht zu zeigen, dass humanitäre Normen wirken. Vielmehr muss herausgearbeitet werden warum und unter welchen Bedingungen solche Normen ihre Wirkung voll entfalten können und inwiefern andere Faktoren – Macht, Interessen, Institutionen - die Wirkkraft humanitärer Normen konterkarieren.

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## INTRODUCTION

In 1986 Jack Donnelly observed in a widely acknowledged article that the activities of the international human rights regime were limited to the promotion of human rights. What the regime lacked, however, were any kind of enforcement mechanisms to ensure that states comply with human rights norms, norms which Donnelly considered to be a “profoundly national–not international–issue” (1986: 616). “Who can *force* a government to respect human rights?”–he asked rhetorically–“The only plausible candidates are the people whose rights are at stake” (p. 617). Since then, obviously, much has changed. Not only is it widely agreed that human rights violations and humanitarian crises have become an international issue, but it has also been observed that, after the end of the Cold War, outside actors have increasingly responded to human suffering and in some cases have forced governments to end human rights violations.

This trend towards an increased response to gross violations of human rights and to humanitarian crises, however, seems to remain highly selective. While military action has been taken to end large-scale human suffering in Northern Iraq, Somalia, Kosovo, and elsewhere, it is often argued that nothing has been done in similar cases like the Congo, Myanmar, Chechnya, or, until recently, Sudan. Yet, while a high degree of selectivity is often maintained, we know very little about its actual *extent and nature*, since so far the international community’s reaction to humanitarian crises and gross violations of human rights has not been systematically analyzed.

The aim of this paper is to fill the gap by empirically examining how the international community has responded to large-scale human suffering, and determining how selective this response has been. To be sure, the question here is not *whether* this reaction has been selective. We do not live in a world state with a monopoly on the use of force and centralized enforcement capabilities that could ensure that breaches of rules are treated in a consistent manner. What is of interest here, therefore, is rather the extent and the nature of the selectivity. The degree of selectivity has implications for the effectiveness and legitimacy of the contemporary international order. Can the most basic human rights be enforced coherently, thus strengthening their universal binding character, or do double standards predominate, preventing the international system from getting closer to a normatively (more) exacting order (legalization, constitution-alization) (Zürn et al. 2007)? A better picture of selectivity could inform us about the force of humanitarian norms and at the same time serve as a starting point to grasp its underlying causes.

To systematically gauge the extent and nature of selectivity, I will first briefly sketch two opposite trends in responding to humanitarian crises after the cold war (1). I then identify the most severe humanitarian crises that occurred after the end of the Cold War (2), and examine whether and how the international community has responded to these crises (3). Concerning response, different modes of action, ranging from humanitarian aid to military intervention, and different levels of action, national or unilateral reactions of states, transnational responses of NGOs, and international reactions of international and supranational institutions will be taken into account. This approach should lead to a more precise picture of selectivity whose theoretical implications will then be discussed in the last part of the paper (4).

## 1. TWO CONTENDING PERSPECTIVES ON GLOBAL SECURITY GOVERNANCE

Two opposite trends have been identified in the international community's response to humanitarian crises and gross violations of human rights. From an optimistic perspective on global governance, it has been argued that during the last two decades *the international community has responded more strongly* to large-scale human suffering than in the past. Optimists point inter alia to an increase in humanitarian aid, the rising numbers of peacekeeping operations, and an increased use of "supranational coercion" in the form of transitional administrations, economic sanctions, and humanitarian interventions. Furthermore, they consider the establishment of international and internationalized ad-hoc criminal courts and the creation of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to be first signs of an unexpected legalization in the sphere of international security. Skeptics, on the other hand, maintain that this trend is characterized by countervailing processes of "de-legalization" and that it has remained highly selective.

Global Governance optimists ascribe the increased humanitarian activity to three factors: the transformation of global security threats, the change of international norms, and the end of the East-West conflict.

First, the *transformation of international security threats* required a stronger response by the international community. This transformation of security threats refers to the changing nature of conflict, the problem of state collapse, and complex humanitarian emergencies (Jackson 1990; Zartman 1995; Kaldor 1999). Conflicts within states are considered to be a major source of humanitarian crises (Nafziger et al. 2000); moreover, such conflicts have gained in relative importance vis-à-vis wars between or among states. While the number of such *inter-state* wars remained on a relatively low level, the number of *intra-state* conflicts—and with them the number of humanitarian emergencies—has risen steadily since the beginning of the Cold War, coming to a



peak in the mid-1990s, “the age of humanitarian crises,” according to Väyrynen (1996). Since then, civil wars have declined significantly (Human Security Report 2005). Yet, today, intra-state war still occurs eight times as frequently as war between states (Chojnacki 2006: 28). Thus, humanitarian crises like those in the Congo or currently Darfur remain a highly relevant problem of international politics—and not only for humanitarian reasons. The case of Afghanistan reveals the strong links between human rights violations, state failure, and international terrorism (Wheeler 2003).

Second, the stronger reaction to humanitarian crises is considered to have been promoted by a *change of international norms*. The significance of human rights norms has grown considerably over the past 30 years. According to Sandholtz (2002: 201) “a globalization of basic human rights values has occurred, such that there seems to be a universal consensus that no culture or political system is justified in curtailing the essential rights of its people.” International institutions and transnational human rights networks that brought pressure on states from “above” and from “below” to acknowledge human rights standards were crucial in this process (Brysk 1993; Keck/Sikkink 1997; Risse et al. 1999). While human rights norms became more powerful, the principle of state sovereignty declined in importance. Of course, sovereignty remains a fundamental norm of the international system; however, it is no longer solely understood as the supreme power to exercise political authority. Sovereignty is now conceptualized as a state’s responsibility towards its citizens (“sovereignty as responsibility,” responsibility to protect) and bound to certain conditions (Deng et al. 1996; ICISS 2001). Sovereign rights might be forfeited “where a population is suffering serious harm, as a result of internal war, insurgency, repression or state failure and the state in question is unwilling or unable to halt or avert it” (ICISS 2001: XI). In September 2005, the concept of the “responsibility to protect” was approved by all states in the UN World Summit as a new norm of international law. It was also incorporated into the Charter of the African Union (AU). This apparent evolution in international law seems to be reinforced by the emergence of “cosmopolitan solidarity” (Linklater 1998; Radtke 2007). According to Archibugi (2004: 439), “Globalization engenders new social movements engaged with issues that affect other individuals and communities, even when these are geographically and culturally very distant from their own political community.” The significant increase of humanitarian interventions after the end of the Cold War indicates that, in cases of norm collisions between human rights and sovereignty, the former now frequently supersede the traditional rules of non-intervention and the non-use of force (Wheeler 2000; Finnemore 2003).

Finally, according to global governance optimists, it was *the end of the Cold War* and, as a result, the breaking of the UN Security Council's stalemate that led to an increase in international humanitarian activity. For decades the veto powers had been unable to assume their primary responsibilities, that is, the maintenance of international peace and security. This changed, however, after 1990. The number of vetoes declined sharply and the Council used its enlarged room for maneuver to authorize a high number of both UN and non-UN peacekeeping missions (Bellamy/Williams 2005). Additionally, the Council expanded the scope of what constitutes, according to article 39 of the UN Charter, a "threat to international peace and security" to include inter alia civil wars, humanitarian crises, and coups against democratically elected regimes (Chesterman 2001: 127 ff.; Wallensteen/Johannson 2004: 28 ff.). As a consequence, the Security Council increasingly applied "supranational coercion" under chapter VII: By majority decisions and against the will of the concerned state or party to the conflict the Council responded to humanitarian crises through the establishment of transitional administrations (see Chesterman 2005), the imposition of economic sanctions (see Cortright/Lopez 2000; Wallensteen/Staibano 2005), and the setting up of international and internationalized criminal courts (see Romano et al. 2004). Finally, in some cases (for example, North Iraq, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo), the Council also authorized humanitarian interventions to halt systematic abuses of human rights (Wheeler 2000; Finnemore 2003; Welsh 2004).

The second, more skeptical, perspective on global governance points to *opposite trends, shifts, and inconsistencies* in the field of international security and human rights, which optimists often tend to ignore. Von Schorlemer (2004), for example, shows that, parallel to some initial indications of legalization, we can also observe significant processes of "de-legalization" like the US resistance to the ICC, or the wars in Kosovo and Iraq, which were conducted without UN authorization. To this list one could add the open breach of international humanitarian law in the "war on terror." Other scholars have identified a gap between the increased rhetorical commitment to and formal acceptance of human rights norms, on the one hand, and the continued violation of these same norms on the other (Cardenas 2004: 213; Liese 2006: 14), a fact that Krasner (1999) has described as "organized hypocrisy." Such discrepancies have also been detected with respect to humanitarian interventions. While states intervened militarily in northern Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo to come to the rescue of threatened populations, they chose not to do so in other at least equally flagrant crises like Angola, Congo, Burundi, and Myanmar (not to mention Kurdistan or Chechnya). More specifically, Kühne (2000: 299) identifies an "intervention gap," resulting from the fact that the Security Council now frequently qualifies gross violations of human rights and humanitarian crises as a "threat to international peace and

security” (UN Charter, article 39), often without taking then subsequent measures under chapter VII to respond to these situations.<sup>1</sup>

This point deserves attention. Paradoxically, it is only because of the expansion of article 39 and the increased willingness of the international community to respond to human suffering that these “governance gaps” emerge and are perceived as such. The factors described above—that is, the new security threats, international norm change, and the end of the Cold War—extended states’ and international institutions’ room for maneuver in dealing with human suffering. Accordingly, the international community responded to more *but not all* crises (cf. Boulden 2006: 413). The visibility of this gap is further heightened by the activity of non-state actors. Human rights NGOs not only verify compliance with human rights standards, and generate reputation costs for norm violators, they also decry the international community’s inaction in the face of massive human suffering. According to Franck (1990: 143) selectivity or inconsistency can be described as the unfulfilled expectation that “conceptually alike cases will be treated alike,” or in Damrosch’s (2000: 405) words, that there is no “principled treatment of comparable cases.” The problem of selectivity results from the fact that, on the one hand, human rights as embodied in the UN Charter, the Universal Declarations of Human Rights, the Genocide Convention, the Geneva Conventions, and the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are universally valid and, in some parts, even compelling (*jus cogens*), while, on the other hand, their application often remains inconsistent. In the long run, this practice undermines both the effectiveness and the legitimacy of the international order.

As regards effectiveness, according to Dworkin (1986), the coherent application of a rule can be considered to be a key factor in explaining why rules compel. Accordingly, when applied or enforced only selectively, human rights norms lose their binding character. By the same token, consistency is critical for the legitimacy of global governance:

Concern with principle and principled application are critical if the system of international relations is to evolve beyond mere state interests and power politics toward fulfilment of the aspiration for the rule of law. Critics of international law complain that a system can hardly qualify as ‘law’ when its rules are enforced only selectively and only in accordance with the preferences of great powers (Damrosch 2000: 405).

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1 For the Security Council’s selective treatment of conflicts and humanitarian crises see also Zangl (2002: 15-119), Rittberger/Zangl (2003: 304), Wallensteen/Johansson (2004), and Boulden (2006).

Accordingly, the selective response to human rights abuses and humanitarian crises has been sharply criticized.<sup>2</sup> If conducted only selectively, it is argued, then the motives behind intervention cannot be truly humanitarian. Not only NGOs systematically condemn the existence of double standards, the international community's selective reaction to these crises also serves as an argument for critics of humanitarian intervention.<sup>3</sup> The United Nations, too, has criticized countries for selectivity in many cases. In 1992, for example, former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali accused western states of waging "a rich man's war in Yugoslavia while not lifting a finger to save Somalia from disintegration" (Boutros-Ghali cited in Hirsch/Oakley 1995: 37). Pointing to the intervention in Kosovo, his successor, Kofi Annan, stated:

If the new commitment to intervention in the face of extreme suffering is to retain the support of the world's peoples, it must be—and must be seen to be—fairly and consistently applied, irrespective of region or nation. Humanity, after all, is indivisible (Annan cited in Damrosch 2000: 106).

Yet, other scholars defend selectivity. Consistency, they argue, is simply unachievable because economic and especially military resources are limited, the permanent members of the Security Council can veto decisions, and great powers and their allies are protected from interventions due to their military capabilities (see, for example, Chayes/Chayes (1995: 63). For some authors consistency is not even desirable. The decision to intervene (or not to intervene), they argue, is the result of open political bargaining processes in which the costs and benefits of an intervention have to be weighed against other legitimate considerations like the risk to one's own troops or the stability of the international system (see Kritsiotis 2004: 71; Weiss 2005: 237 f.).

These issues will not be discussed here in further detail.<sup>4</sup> In the remainder of this paper I will systematically examine how the international community responded to humanitarian crises, since both diagnoses mentioned above are methodologically weak. Global governance optimists are guilty of selection bias—they mostly focus on crises to which the international community responded (militarily), but ignore cases where states and international governmental organizations (IGOs) chose *not* to intervene (Gilligan/Stedman 2003: 42). The skeptics' finding of a highly selective response to humanitarian crises, however, is also problematic. First, the critique of selectivity and double standards can only be formulated against the backdrop of the international community's having responded more strongly to humanitarian crises in the first place.

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2 The problem of selectivity is mostly addressed in the context of humanitarian intervention. Selectivity, however, is also relevant for non-military means, like sanctions or peace-keeping (Brown (2003). 33).

3 For an overview of these arguments, see Brown (2003).

4 For this debate, see Damrosch (2000), Evans (2002), Brown (2003), and Brillmayer (1995).

Put differently: While there was an increase on the supply side, the demand for strong responses to humanitarian crises augmented even more. What is more, the skeptical diagnosis usually relies on anecdotic evidence and in most cases focuses exclusively on states (which chose not to act) and military interventions (which did not take place), while the role of non-state actors and non-military means in addressing human rights violations go largely unnoticed. The resulting dichotomy between “military humanitarian intervention” versus “doing nothing” might easily overstate the real extent of selectivity (Chesterman 2001: 236; Bellamy 2003).

To overcome these methodological weaknesses, the most severe crises after the end of the Cold War will be reproducibly identified and then tested for the international community’s response. At the same time, the double analytical restriction on state actions and the use of military force will be given up so as to include non-state actors and non-military means. This approach should yield more nuanced results on selectivity, the theoretical implications of which will then be discussed in the last part of the paper.

## **2. HUMANITARIAN CRISES**

It is difficult to “objectively” select the most severe cases of humanitarian crises or, in Wheeler’s words, “supreme humanitarian emergencies” after the end of the Cold War (Wheeler 2001: 34). Yet, to arrive at a reproducible, largely non-arbitrary case selection of the most serious crises, it is necessary to first define such crises operationally. In order to limit the case selection to the most severe humanitarian crises it is then necessary to set minimum thresholds for each of the indicators of a crisis.

### **2.1 DEFINITION**

The core element of humanitarian crisis is large-scale human suffering resulting from the violation or destruction of the physical integrity of many people. Accordingly, humanitarian crises are not only characterized by a large number of casualties, but also by substantial dislocations of populations and insufficient access to food and health care. Drawing on Väyrynen (2000: 49), this paper operationally defines a humanitarian crisis as a “profound social crisis which is characterized by high numbers of casualties, a large scale of internal and external displacement, and widespread hunger and disease.”<sup>5</sup>

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5 Most definitions of humanitarian crises include these four dimensions: armed conflict, displacement, hunger, and disease. Some authors add economic downturn or state collapse: see, for example, Natsios (1997), Auvinen/Nafziger (1999); Eberwein/Chojnacki (1998), Chojnacki (2002), Weiss (2005).

This definition is sufficiently broad to cover not only direct casualties but, through the indicators “displacement,” “hunger,” and “disease,” also the indirect victims of a humanitarian crisis, whose number is often many times higher. Furthermore, the definition used here does not consider the causes of a crisis, and thus *a priori* covers different types of crises (human-made as well as natural disasters). This paper, however, only focuses on violent humanitarian crises, namely, human-made crises *that are directly linked to violent conflict*. This limitation is justified by empirical findings that consider violent conflicts, especially intra-state conflicts, to be the main source of humanitarian crises (Nafziger et al. 2000). Thus, humanitarian crises and armed conflicts are closely linked but not identical: that is, armed conflict is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the existence of a violent humanitarian crisis. The definition in this paper applies only to situations in which collective violence goes along with displacement and/or hunger and/or disease.

## 2.2 OPERATIONALIZATION AND CASE SELECTION

The operationalization of the key indicators also relies on Väyrynen (2000).<sup>6</sup> The casualties of a conflict are measured by the number of “battle-deaths” and the conflict intensity. For displacement, I determine the number of refugees and IDPs (internally displaced persons), while hunger and disease are operationalized, respectively, by the share of undernourished people in the total population of a country and by the mortality rate of children under five.<sup>7</sup> In addition to Väyrynen, I collect data for all years of a crisis to capture the course and peaks of an emergency. This allows us to evaluate whether the international community responded timely to a crisis. Second, to better compare the extent of displacement, the number of refugees and IDPs is systematically weighed against the total population of the affected country. Finally, I include gross human rights violations as an additional key element of humanitarian crises that will be operationalized by a country’s level of political terror.

In order to single out the most serious instances of humanitarian crises after the cold war, minimum thresholds for the indicators discussed above need to be set. The thresholds will be those of the crisis in Kosovo that has been described as rather limited but nevertheless led to a very strong response on the part of the international community. Up to the time of the intervention in March 1998, about 1,000 people died while approximately 400,000 people were displaced (200,000 of these internally). This amounted to 20 percent of Kosovo’s total population (Independent International

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6 Raimo Väyrynen (1996, 2000) offers a valuable and detailed discussion on the concept of humanitarian emergencies.

7 Väyrynen operationalizes hunger by the share of underweight children under five years of age; yet, this operationalization is difficult because of insufficient data.

Commission on Kosovo 2001: 2). Since data is lacking for the indicators “hunger” and “disease” in the case of Kosovo (they are available only for Serbia and Montenegro), I set minimum thresholds of 27% for the share of undernourished people in the total population (hunger), and 123 per 1000 live births for the mortality rate of children under five (disease).<sup>8</sup> These thresholds relate to that fifth of the world’s counties, which is most affected by hunger and disease. The aim of this approach is to reproducibly identify the most serious humanitarian crises after 1991 and to avoid selection bias. However, a number of problems arise in connection of this procedure. First, the thresholds for hunger and disease are still arbitrary; second, the availability and reliability of data are insufficient in many cases; third, most information on casualties, displacement, hunger, and disease is available only for nation-states, while humanitarian crises, even the most serious crises, are often limited geographically. However, if only national data were considered, many crises would go unnoticed. In Chechnya, for example, one-third to one-half of the country’s total population was displaced during wartimes. This, however, accounts for less than one percent of Russia’s population. For these reasons, I try to include as many sub-state-level data (regional, provincial, etc.) as possible, use not only quantitative but also qualitative data,<sup>9</sup> and handle unclear cases separately.

### (1) *Armed conflicts*

Armed conflicts—especially those within a state—are considered to be one of the main sources of humanitarian crises. Sometimes such internal conflicts take the form of genocide or politicide, and are then automatically included in the case selection because of the sheer magnitude of human suffering (Väyrynen 2000: 54). Barbara Harff (2003) identifies three cases of genocide after the end of the Cold War—Bosnia 1992-1995, Burundi 1993, and Rwanda 1994—and five cases of severe politicide with annual numbers of deaths totaling more than 16,000—Iraq 1990-1991, Angola 1990-2002, Afghanistan 1990-1992, and Sudan 1990-2000 and since 2003.<sup>10</sup> In contrast to genocide, civil wars occur much more frequently. Harbom/Wallensteen (2005: 624), for example, count 111 intra-state conflicts after the Cold War that are categorized as “minor armed conflicts” (less than 1,000 battle-related deaths during the conflict),

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8 Own calculations on the basis of FAO data for 173 countries for the years 2001 to 2003 <[http://www.fao.org/faostat/foodsecurity/Files/PrevalenceUndernourishment\\_en.xls](http://www.fao.org/faostat/foodsecurity/Files/PrevalenceUndernourishment_en.xls)>, accessed February 2007; and UNDP Human Development Report data for 177 countries in 2003 <<http://hdr.undp.org/statistics/data/indicators.cfm?x=94&y=1&z=1>>, accessed February 2007.

9 For a large number of case studies on humanitarian crises and humanitarian policies, see the Humanitarianism and War Project at Tuft’s University <<http://hwproject.tufts.edu/about.html>>, accessed February 2007.

10 See <<http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/genocide/>>; magnitude greater than three out of five, i.e., more than 16,000 deaths per year. See also PITF Codebook: <<http://globalpolicy.gmu.edu/pitf/pitfcode.htm>>, accessed February 2007.

“intermediate conflicts” (more than 25 but less than 1,000 deaths per year), and “wars” (more than 1,000 battle-related deaths per year).<sup>11</sup> This paper *a priori* includes all those conflicts which, as in the case of Kosovo, were coded as “wars” for at least two consecutive years. Conflicts that qualify as “war” for only one year are also included if they were coded as a “minor” or an “intermediate” conflict in the year that preceded or followed. The aim is to only include those crises which display a sustained, high level of collective violence, presenting the international community with a realistic opportunity to react. If these thresholds are applied to the time period from 1991 to 2004, such conflicts took place in 27 countries.

## (2) *Displacement*

Displacement is often divided into external and internal displacement. The former is measured by the number of refugees, and the latter by the number of IDPs. Data is drawn from Monty G. Marshall’s *Forcibly Dislocated Populations 1964-2002*<sup>12</sup> data-set which is based on the *World Refugee Surveys* of the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI). The number of refugees and IDPs will be summed and weighed against the affected country’s total population.<sup>13</sup> All displacements are considered which, as in the case of Kosovo, exceed 20 percent of the total population. Of the 27 countries witnessing conflicts considered here, 18 also display this kind of displacement. In many cases, population movements did not affect the entire territory of a country, but rather just a particular region. This was the case in Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh),<sup>14</sup> Iraq (Kurdish territories in the North),<sup>15</sup> Russia (Chechnya),<sup>16</sup> Sri Lanka (Tamil Elam),<sup>17</sup> Sudan (southern Sudan and Darfur),<sup>18</sup> Turkey (Kurdistan),<sup>19</sup> and northern Uganda.<sup>20</sup> In these cases, therefore, sub-state data was gathered.

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11 For the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflicts Dataset 1946-2005, see <[http://www.pcr.uu.se/publications/UCDP\\_pub/Main\\_Conflict\\_Table46-05.xls](http://www.pcr.uu.se/publications/UCDP_pub/Main_Conflict_Table46-05.xls)>, accessed February 2007. For the number of battle-field deaths, see Lacina/Gleditsch (2005) <<http://new.prio.no/CSCW-Datasets/Data-on-Armed-Conflict/Battle-Deaths-Data2/Battle-Deaths-Data/>>, accessed February 2007.

12 See <<http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/aci.htm>> accessed February 2007.

13 The FAO provides data on population figures, which is updated annually. See <<http://faostat.fao.org/site/550/default.aspx>>, accessed February 2007.

14 According to Rau (2003:11), the entire Azeri population had to flee the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

15 In Northern Iraq up to 700,000 of the approximately 3.5 million Kurds were displaced see Arbeitsgemeinschaft Kriegsursachenforschung <[http://www.sozialwiss.uni-hamburg.de/publish/Ipw/Akuf/kriege/117\\_irak-kurdistan.htm](http://www.sozialwiss.uni-hamburg.de/publish/Ipw/Akuf/kriege/117_irak-kurdistan.htm)>, last accessed September 2007.

16 Some one-third to one-half of the approximately 1.3 million Chechen people has fled Chechnya, according to the WHO; see <<http://www.who.int/hac/crises/rus/en/>>, accessed February 2007.

17 Up to one million of the approximately 2.5 million people living in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka were displaced during the crisis. For population statistics, see “Brief Analysis of Population and Housing Characteristics,” Department of Consensus and Statistics Sri Lanka <<http://www.statistics.gov.lk/PopHouSat/index.asp>>, last accessed September 2007.

18 Approximately nine million people live in the provinces of southern Sudan, while three million live in Darfur. See <<http://bevoelkerungsstatistik.de/wg.php?x=&men=gadm&lng=de&dat=32&>



### (3) *Hunger and Disease*

Hunger is measured by the share of undernourished people in the total population, while disease levels are determined by the mortality rate of children under five years of age. Data is drawn from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and from the World Health Organization (WHO).<sup>21</sup> As noted above, I only consider that fifth of the countries with the highest rates of undernourishment and child mortality, but also include more developed countries if one of the indicators deviates significantly from the prevailing standard (i.e., a change of more than 50% from the last measured value). Applying these criteria, 19 countries were affected by hunger and 17 by disease. Among these countries, there are two that were more developed but showed significant deviation from the prevailing standard—Kosovo and Colombia.<sup>22</sup>

### (4) *Human Rights Violations*

Gross violations of human rights are a further core element of humanitarian crises, but this element is difficult to quantify. One attempt to measure the human rights situation in individual countries is the *Political Terror Scale* which was developed by Linda Cornett and Mark Gibney.<sup>23</sup> Using annual reports from Amnesty International and the US State Department, they assign values to countries ranging from one to five according to their human rights record, with “level one” countries displaying a secure rule of law, and “level five” countries, at the opposite end of the scale, exhibiting gross violations of basic human rights, including arbitrary detention, torture, and extrajudicial executions, which affect the whole population.<sup>24</sup> In the case selection, if those countries are taken into account, which reached at least level four in two consecutive years, then all but three countries—Mozambique, the former Yugoslavia (Kosovo), and Georgia (Abkhazia)—are to be included.

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geo=-188&srt=plan&col=aohdq>, last accessed September 2007. Of these nine million, more than five million were displaced in the South, while almost two of the three million Darfuris had to flee. See USCRI Country Report Sudan 2005 <<http://www.refugees.org/>>, last accessed September 2007.

19 At times, more than two million of the five million Kurds living in the southeastern provinces of Turkey were displaced. For population statistics see Turkey’s Statistical Yearbook 2005, pp. 54-55. See also <<http://www.die.gov.tr/ENGLISH/>>, last accessed September 2007.

20 Up to 1.5 of the five million people living in northern Uganda were displaced. For population statistics see Uganda Bureau of Statistics <<http://www.ubos.org/census%20tabulations/cenannext1a.pdf>>, last accessed September 2007.

21 See <[http://www.fao.org/faostat/foodsecurity/Files/PrevalenceUndernourishment\\_en.xls](http://www.fao.org/faostat/foodsecurity/Files/PrevalenceUndernourishment_en.xls)>, accessed February 2007; and the World Health reports <<http://www.who.int/whr/annexes/en/>>, accessed February 2007.

22 UNDP (2002: 111).

23 Political Terror Scale 1980-2005 <<http://www.unca.edu/politicalscience/DOCS/Gibney/Political%20Terror%20Scale%201980-2005.xls>>, accessed February 2007.

24 For coding rules, see <<http://www.unca.edu/politicalscience/images/Colloquium/faculty-staff/Gibney%20Doc/Gibney%20Political%20Terror%20Scale.pdf>>, accessed February 2007.

Taken together, the application of these indicators yields the following case selection. From 1991 to 2004, 27 countries experienced major humanitarian crises. Ten cases—Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan (southern Sudan and Darfur) and northern Uganda—display all four dimensions, that is, armed conflict, displacement, hunger, and disease. The crises in Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh), Congo-Brazzaville, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Georgia (Abkhazia), Guinea-Bissau, northern Iraq, Sri Lanka (Tamil Elam) and the former Yugoslavia are characterized by three of these indicators; the crises in Bosnia, Colombia, Myanmar, Nepal, Peru, Russia (Chechnya) and Turkey (Kurdistan), respectively, exhibit two of the four criteria. In addition, gross violations of human rights occurred in almost all of these cases. Finally, India (Kashmir) and Tajikistan are included as “unclear cases,” since they show a high level of armed violence but fall slightly below the threshold for the indicator “hunger.” Overall, this case selection seems to cover most crises also referred to in other accounts, with the notable exceptions of Indonesia (Timor-Leste) and Haiti, where the international community intervened militarily as well. That these and other cases do not qualify as humanitarian crises in this paper in no way means to suggest that those countries did not experience human suffering: it simply means that those crises do not meet the criteria established in this work and have therefore been excluded from the analysis.<sup>25</sup>

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25 For example, Timor-Leste and Haiti are not included here, because they have never been coded “war” in the UCDP data.

### Countries Witnessing Major Humanitarian Crises (1991-2004)

|   | 1<br>Armed<br>Conflict                     | 2<br>Displacement | 3<br>Hunger  | 4<br>Disease | Human Rights<br>Violations |
|---|--|-------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| Countries displaying all four indicators (1-4)          | Afghanistan, 1991-2001                     | x                 | x            | x            | x                          |
|   | Angola, 1991-1995,<br>1998-2002            | x                 | x            | x            | x                          |
|   | Burundi, 1993-                             | x                 | x            | x            | x                          |
|   | Liberia, 1991-1995,<br>2000-2003           | x                 | x            | x            | x                          |
|   | Mozambique, 1991-1992                      | x                 | x            | x            | x                          |
|   | Rwanda, 1991-1994,<br>1997-2002            | x                 | x            | x            | x                          |
|   | Sierra Leone 1991-2000                     | x                 | x            | x            | x                          |
|   | Somalia 1991-1996                          | x                 | x            | x            | x                          |
|   | Sudan (1+2) 1991-                          | x                 | x            | x            | x                          |
|   | Uganda 1994-                               | x                 | x            | x            | x                          |
| Countries displaying three of the four indicators (1-4) | Azerbaijan (Karabakh),<br>1992-1994        | x                 | x            | x            | x                          |
|   | Congo-Brazzaville,<br>1997-1999            | x                 |              | x            | x                          |
|   | DRC, 1996-2001                             | x                 |              | x            | x                          |
|   | Georgia (Abkhazia),<br>1992-1993           | x                 | x            | x            |                            |
|   | Guinea-Bissau,<br>1998-1999                | x                 |              | x            | x                          |
|   | Iraq, 1991-1996                            | x                 | x            | <i>n. a.</i> | x                          |
|   | Sri Lanka, 1991-2001                       | x                 | x            | x            | x                          |
|   | Yugoslavia (Kosovo),<br>1998-1999          | x                 | x            | <i>n. a.</i> | x                          |
| Countries displaying two of the four indicators (1-4)   | Bosnia, 1992-1995                          | x                 | x            |              | x                          |
|   | Colombia, 1991-                            | x                 |              | x            | x                          |
|   | Myanmar, 1991-2003                         | x                 | <i>n. a.</i> |              | x                          |
|   | Nepal, 1996-                               | x                 |              |              | x                          |
|   | Peru, 1991-1999                            | x                 |              | x            | x                          |
|   | Russia (Chechnya),<br>1994-1996, 1999-2002 | x                 | x            | <i>n. a.</i> | <i>n. a.</i>               |
|   | Turkey (Kurdistan), 1991-                  | x                 | x            | <i>n. a.</i> | <i>n. a.</i>               |
|   | India (Kashmir), 1991-                     | x                 |              | x            | x                          |
|   | Tajikistan, 1992-1996                      | x                 |              | x            | x                          |

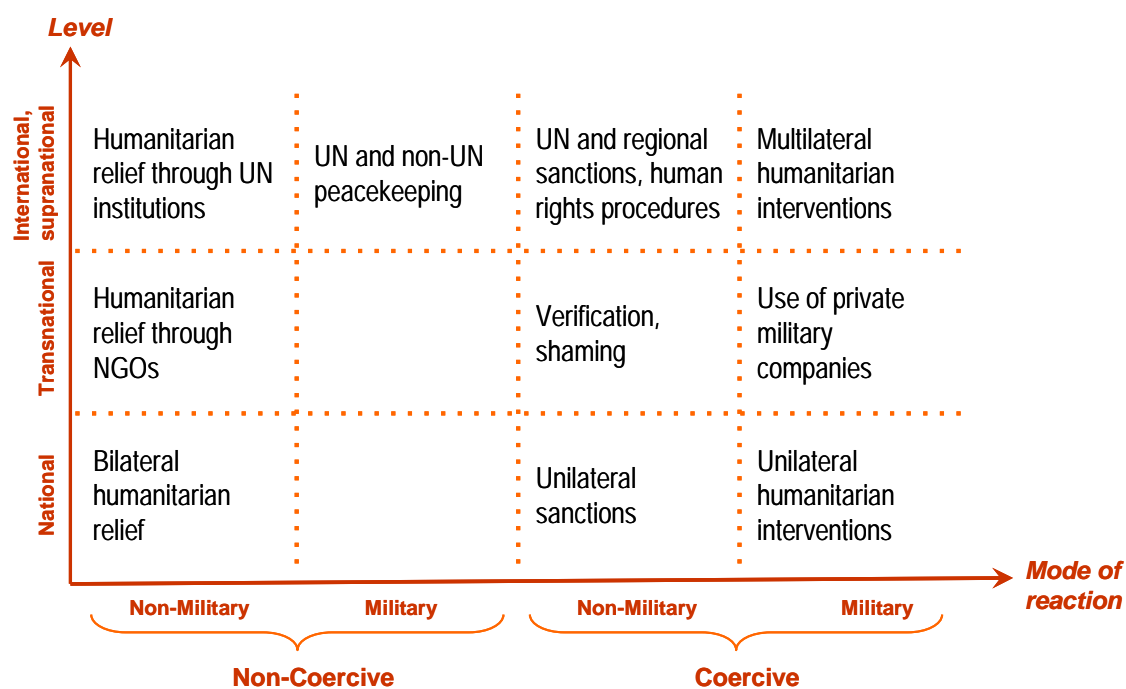
### 3. THE RESPONSE TO HUMANITARIAN CRISES

Having determined the most serious humanitarian crises after the end of the Cold War, the question of whether and how the international community has responded to these crises can now be addressed. What can outside actors do in the face of massive human suffering? Using a broad definition of humanitarian intervention, Ramsbotham/Woodhouse (1996) distinguish four possible modes of reaction to such crises: forcible military intervention, coercive non-military intervention, non-forcible military intervention, and non-coercive, non-military intervention. According to these categories, I will now examine whether, in response to large-scale human suffering, the international community conducted military humanitarian interventions and related peace-enforcement operations to forcibly end a humanitarian crisis (3.1), imposed “material” and “social” sanctions to generate costs for non-compliant behavior of a party to the conflict (3.2), deployed consent-based peacekeeping missions to contribute to a peace process (3.3), or provided humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of people in need (3.4). If none of these measures are taken, a crisis is considered to be not addressed; reactions like the routine diplomatic condemnation of human rights abuses, mediation efforts, or the deployment of civilian observer missions will be excluded from the analysis.

In addition to these different modes of reaction, three levels of response can be distinguished. Most generally, a *national* or unilateral response is the outward-directed action of an individual state (see Czempiel 1981), while *transnational* forms of reaction are characterized by the inclusion of at least one non-state actor (Risse-Kappen 1995: 3). Finally, *international* or intergovernmental reactions result from consent-based decision-making procedures between two or more states, which take on a supra-national character when the consensus principle is replaced by majority vote or legal procedures (Zürn et al. 2007: 143).

This matrix allows us to systematically grasp the international community’s responses to the humanitarian crises and gross violations of human rights identified in this paper. The focus is on responses to *ongoing* crises to ensure that there is a temporal relationship between the emergence of a crisis and the international community’s reaction to it. However, not all reactions that are theoretically conceivable can also be observed empirically. Moreover, the different modes of reaction are not watertight. In some cases, for example, it is unclear whether a peace operation qualifies as consent-based peacekeeping or coercive peace-enforcement. Finally, and most importantly, I will only control for *whether and how* states, international institutions, and non-state actors responded to crises. The important question of whether or not this response was effective cannot be addressed here.

## Levels and Modes of Response to Humanitarian Crises



### 3.1 COERCIVE MILITARY RESPONSES: HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION AND PEACE-ENFORCEMENT

Although instances of the use of military force to end large-scale human suffering have increased, this option nevertheless remains a rare phenomenon in international politics. In contrast to other possible reactions to humanitarian crises, humanitarian military intervention might be the only means to effectively end such crises. Humanitarian military interventions can be conducted *unilaterally*, like India's intervention in East Pakistan (1971), or Tanzania's intervention in Uganda and Vietnam's intervention in Cambodia (both in 1979).<sup>26</sup> Today, however, unilateral military action has almost entirely disappeared.<sup>27</sup> As a rule, groups of states or international institutions intervene multilaterally. What is more, the principle of consensus has been increasingly superseded when intervention is at issue. Since the end of the Cold War, the UN Security Council has applied "supranational coercion" by authorizing the use of force by majority vote and against the will of a government or party to the conflict (Zangl/Zürn 2003: 206-208). Of the 27 countries identified in this paper, which experienced major humanitarian crises after the end of the Cold War, humanitarian

26 The humanitarian character of these interventions is controversial (see Wheeler 2000; Chesterman 2001).

27 The British intervention in Sierra Leone in 2000 to support UNAMSIL (Operation Palliser) and the deployment of French troops in Côte d'Ivoire in 2002 (Opération Licorne), however, come close to such unilateral interventions.

interventions occurred in the following cases: Liberia (ECOMOG), northern Iraq (Operation Provide Comfort), Somalia (UNITAF/UNOSOM II), Rwanda (Opération Turquoise), Bosnia (Operation Deliberate Force) and Sierra Leone (ECOMOG). To this list one could probably add the—albeit controversial—case of Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom),<sup>28</sup> while the humanitarian intervention in Kosovo was not authorized by the Security Council. In some cases military interventions also contained *transnational* components: states, international organizations, or NGOs relied on so-called private military companies during their interventions in conflict regions (Singer 2003). For example, the United States and Great Britain made use of such companies in Bosnia and Sierra Leone (Binder 2007).

### 3.2 NON-MILITARY COERCIVE RESPONSES: “MATERIAL” AND “SOCIAL” SANCTIONS

Compared to the use of force, non-military coercion occurs more frequently. The underlying logic of sanctions which can range from comprehensive economic to more specifically targeted sanctions is to generate costs up to a state judged as violating international law, and thereby to induce policy change. In reaction to violent crises, arms embargos were imposed on a number of occasions as a special kind of sanction, the “primary objective of which was not to inflict economic pain, but rather to deny access to weapons, thereby inducing military stalemates and preventing the conflicts from escalating (de Jonge Oudraat 2000: 10). The international community responded to humanitarian crises not only by imposing “material” sanctions or international criminal prosecution, but also generated reputation costs through “social” sanctions.

After the end of the Cold War, the UN Security Council made increasing use of supranational sanctions under chapter VII of the Charter.<sup>29</sup> During the Cold War, the Security Council made use of sanctions only twice (Rhodesia and South Africa). Since 1990, however, sanctions were imposed in more than a dozen cases. Of the cases identified in this paper, the Council imposed sanctions with explicit humanitarian components against Afghanistan, Angola (UNITA), former Yugoslavia, Iraq, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Sudan (Darfur). In order to prosecute war crimes, the Council furthermore established ad hoc international criminal tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, while “internationalized” or “hybrid” courts were created in Sierra Leone and Kosovo (see Romano et al. 2004). What is more, the

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28 The UN Security Council authorized both ECOMOG missions and the establishment of no-fly zones in Iraq only *a posteriori*. The ECOMOG operations were originally conceived as peacekeeping but then became peace-enforcement missions (see Nuamah/Zartman 2004: 141)

29 See <<http://www.un.org/News/ossg/sanction.htm>>, accessed February 2007.

Security Council referred the crisis in Darfur to the International Criminal Court (resolution 1593).

In addition to the Security Council, regional organizations and individual states also imposed international and unilateral sanctions to respond to human rights violations. Not all of these sanctions can be examined here, so I only consider (1) arms embargoes by the European Union, which were decided by consensus according to article 15 of the Treaty on European Union (Maastricht), for regional sanctions, and (2) the sanctions policy of the United States which is by far the preeminent exerciser of unilateral sanctions (see Elliott 2005: 6). The European Union responded to the crises identified in this paper by imposing arms embargoes in seven cases, three of which were not targets of UN sanctions, namely, Azerbaijan, Myanmar, and southern Sudan (see de Vries/Hazelet 2005: 95-107; Kreutz 2005). The United States unilaterally imposed sanctions with humanitarian components against Azerbaijan, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar, Peru, Rwanda, Sudan and Kosovo (cf. Elliott et al. forthcoming).<sup>30</sup> Altogether, sanctions were imposed against 16 countries experiencing humanitarian crises and gross violations of human rights.<sup>31</sup>

“*Social*” sanctions are a second type of reaction that falls into the category of non-military coercion. The verification of human rights violations and the subsequent process of “shaming” by transnational advocacy networks as well as international human rights procedures fall into this category. Although social sanctions lack enforcement mechanisms, the possibility to publicly criticize individual states for human rights violations is nevertheless considered to generate significant reputation costs (see Liese 2006: 103 ff.).

To examine transnational social sanctions, I consider two main functions of human rights NGOs, namely, the collection and dissemination of information on human rights abuses, and the effort to influence decision makers (advocacy) (see Forsythe 2006: 188-206). Because of the plethora of NGOs in the realm of human rights, the publication of detailed country reports by both Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch will be used as a proxy for the information function;<sup>32</sup> written statements by NGOs with consultative status to the Commission on Human Rights will serve as a

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30 For a comprehensive list of US unilateral sanctions, see <<http://www.iie.com/research/topics/sanctions/sanctions-timeline.cfm>>, accessed February 2007.

31 ECOWAS imposed sanctions against Burundi.

32 For Amnesty International country reports, see <<http://web.amnesty.org/library/engindex>> (accessed February 2007), and for Human Rights Watch Country Reports, see <<http://www.hrw.org/reports/world/index.html>>, accessed February 2007.

proxy for the advocacy function.<sup>33</sup> The analysis of NGO activity reveals that NGOs reported in detail on all humanitarian crises and, with the exception of only very few cases, addressed written statements to the Commission on Human Rights.

For the use of international social sanctions, I focus on human rights procedures of the UN Commission on Human Rights which has been described as the “single most important institution of the global human rights regime” (Donnelly 1998: 52). Here, two key human rights mechanisms are of particular interest. The first mechanism, the so-called “1503 procedure,” enables the Commission to investigate human rights violations in a particular country, on the basis of individual complaints.<sup>34</sup> The second important mechanism is the appointment of country “rapporteurs” who report over a longer period of time to the Commission on a country’s human rights situation. Both mechanisms are supranational to some degree, since it is not the members of the Commission who act, but widely independent experts of the sub-commission and the country rapporteurs who can take action with relatively few political constraints (Donnelly 1998: 53-55). In the crises identified here, Azerbaijan, Liberia, Myanmar, Rwanda, Sudan, and Uganda were examined under the 1503 procedure. Moreover, the Commission appointed country rapporteurs for Afghanistan, Bosnia, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Myanmar, Rwanda, Sudan, and the Kosovo.

### **3.3 NON-COERCIVE MILITARY RESPONSES: PEACEKEEPING**

In contrast to these coercive measures, the third category of responses to humanitarian crises, peacekeeping, requires the consent of the parties to a conflict. Peacekeeping operations cannot end humanitarian crises. Rather, they are designed “to contribute to, implement and sustain a peace process” (Wallensteen 2002: 252). Peacekeeping operations rose dramatically in numbers after the end of the Cold War. These are conducted mostly by the United Nations or regional organizations (ECOWAS, AU, NATO, EU, OSCE, CIS, CEMA, etc.) (Bellamy/Williams 2005). Falling between chapters VI and VII of the Charter, such missions can assume the form of military observer missions to monitor cease fires or create buffer zones (first-generation peacekeeping). On a number of occasions, UN personnel have also had to execute more complex tasks like supporting elections or setting up civil administrations (second-generation peacekeeping). Finally, in some cases, the mandates also provided for the use of force (third-generation or “robust” peacekeeping). Peacekeeping missions are

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33 Written statements by NGOs with consultative status can be accessed via the Human Rights Documents database of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. See <<http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/mainec.aspx>>, accessed February 2007.

34 These procedures are confidential. Since 1978, however, the Commission publishes lists with those countries that were examined under the 1503 procedure (Liese 2006: 78).



only considered here when they contain an at least partially humanitarian mandate. Such operations were deployed in Angola (UNAVEM II, UNAVEM III), Bosnia (UNPROFOR)<sup>35</sup>, Burundi (OMIB, AMIB, ONUB), Georgia (UNOMIG), Guinea-Bissau (ECOMOG), Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), Liberia (UNOMIL, UNMIL), Mozambique (ONUMOZ), Rwanda (UNAMIR), Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL, UNAMSIL), Somalia (UNOSOM I), Sudan/Darfur (AMIS), Tajikistan (UNMOT) and Kosovo (OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission)<sup>36</sup>.

### 3.4 NON-COERCIVE, NON-MILITARY RESPONSES: HUMANITARIAN AID

The provision of humanitarian aid through individual states, non-governmental organizations, and international institutions is by far the largest class of responses to human suffering and has risen significantly over the past years (albeit to the detriment of development aid) (see, for example, Macrae (2002: 11)).<sup>37</sup> Traditionally, the guiding principles of humanitarian assistance are impartiality and neutrality. The emergence of “new” civil wars, in which civilian populations have been major targets, has meant that the provision of humanitarian aid be enforced. As a consequence, humanitarian relief has lost its neutral character and has become increasingly politicized and militarized (Duffield 2005). Humanitarian assistance will nonetheless be subsumed under non-coercive responses, first, because humanitarian relief in most cases still does not need to be enforced and, second, because the principal actors on the ground—NGOs and UN agencies—are themselves unable to use military force.

The analysis of *bilateral* assistance is limited to the United States as the largest donor in absolute terms (Smilie/Minear 2004: 12-13). The most important institution of bilateral humanitarian aid is USAID’s Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) (see Stoddard 2002: 39-50). According to the OFDA’s annual reports from 1991 to 2004, the United States provided bilateral humanitarian assistance in all but four cases of humanitarian crisis, namely, Peru, Russia (Chechnya), India (Kashmir) and Turkey (Kurdistan).<sup>38</sup>

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35 Formally, peace-enforcement.

36 Source: SIPRI-Database on Multilateral Peace Operations. See <[http://conflict.sipri.org/SIPRI\\_Internet/](http://conflict.sipri.org/SIPRI_Internet/)>, accessed February 2007; and UNDPKO <<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/>>, accessed February 2007. We only consider the deployment of military personnel, while mere civilian observer missions are excluded.

37 It is not always possible to decide if humanitarian assistance is provided bilaterally or trans- and internationally, since states usually do not provide relief directly, but allocate resources to NGOs and UN agencies.

38 See <[http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/humanitarian\\_assistance/disaster\\_assistance/publications/annual\\_reports/index.html](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/publications/annual_reports/index.html)>, accessed February 2007. In the case of bilateral assistance, funds are allocated as “earmarked contributions” to NGOs and international institutions. Multilateral relief, in contrast, consists of “non-earmarked” contributions (Macrae 2002: 12).

The number of *transnational* NGOs working in the realm of humanitarian relief has increased dramatically during the last twenty years. Today, the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) alone maintains framework agreements with 180 NGOs (Macrae 2002: 15). For this reason, I only focus on the humanitarian activity of two principle organizations in this field: the International Committee of the Red Cross and Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) (Doctors Without Borders). Annual reports for the years 1991 to 2004 show that, in all cases of crisis, with the exception of Turkey, at least one of the two organizations, ICRC or MSF provided humanitarian assistance.

Finally, the examination of multilateral or *international* humanitarian aid through the UN's humanitarian aid system (WFP, UNHCR, FAO, UNICEF, and others) leads to the following picture: With the exception of Myanmar, Nepal, Peru, Turkey (Kurdistan), and India (Kashmir), in all cases of humanitarian crisis, the United Nations launched a so-called Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) through which, in response to disasters and emergencies, the UN raised and coordinated funds. Outside the CAP channels, UN agencies provided relief to all countries which experienced major humanitarian crises except Peru, Turkey, and India.<sup>39</sup>

Altogether, for bilateral, transnational, and international humanitarian, the international community provided humanitarian relief in response to virtually all crises identified in this paper. The exception to the rule has been Turkey, because Turkish authorities refused to allow outside access to the Kurdish territories for humanitarian purposes. In other cases like in Chechnya or Myanmar, however, governments hindered the provision of humanitarian relief (Cohen 1999).

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39 The Financial Tracking System records all reported international humanitarian aid see <<http://www.reliefweb.int/arfts/>> (accessed February 2007).

| Country (Region)       | Period             | Chapter VII | Humanitarian Relief |                |                | Social Sanctions |                | Peace-keeping  | Material Sanctions |          |                | Interventions  |                |                |
|------------------------|--------------------|-------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                        |                    |             | Bilateral           | Trans-national | Inter-national | Trans-national   | Supra-national | Inter-national | Unilateral         | Regional | Supra-national | Trans-national | Inter-national | Supra-national |
| Afghanistan            | 1991-2001          | x           | x                   | x              | x              | x                | x              |                |                    | x        | x              |                |                | x              |
| Angola                 | 1991-95; 98-2002   | x           | x                   | x              | x              | x                |                | x              |                    |          | x              |                |                |                |
| Azerbaijan             | 1992-94            |             | x                   | x              | x              | x                | x              |                | x                  | x        |                |                |                |                |
| Bosnia                 | 1992-95            | x           | x                   | x              | x              | x                | x              | x              |                    | x        | x              | x              |                | x              |
| Burundi                | 1993-2004          | x           | x                   | x              | x              | x                | x              | x              |                    | x        |                |                |                |                |
| Colombia               | 1991-2004          |             | x                   | x              | x              | x                |                |                | x                  |          |                |                |                |                |
| Congo-Brazzaville      | 1997-99            |             | x                   | x              | x              | x                |                |                |                    |          |                |                |                |                |
| Congo-Kinshasa         | 1996-2001          | x           | x                   | x              | x              | x                | x              | x              | x                  | x        |                |                |                |                |
| Georgia (Abkhazia)     | 1992-93            |             | x                   | x              | x              | x                |                | x              |                    |          |                |                |                |                |
| Guinea-Bissau          | 1998-99            |             | x                   | x              | x              | x                |                | x              |                    |          |                |                |                |                |
| Iraq (North)           | 1991-96            | x           | x                   | x              | x              | x                | x              |                |                    |          | x              |                |                | x              |
| Liberia                | 1991-95; 2000-03   | x           | x                   | x              | x              | x                | x              | x              |                    |          | x              |                |                | x              |
| Mozambique             | 1991-92            |             | x                   | x              | x              | x                |                | x              |                    |          |                |                |                |                |
| Myanmar                | 1991-2003          |             |                     | x              | x              | x                | x              |                | x                  | x        |                |                |                |                |
| Nepal                  | 1996-2004          |             | x                   | x              | x              | x                |                |                |                    |          |                |                |                |                |
| Peru                   | 1991-99            |             |                     | x              |                | x                |                |                | x                  |          |                |                |                |                |
| Russia (Chechnya)      | 1994-96; 1999-2004 |             |                     | x              | x              | x                |                |                |                    |          |                |                |                |                |
| Rwanda                 | 1991-94; 1997-2002 | x           | x                   | x              | x              | x                | x              | x              | x                  |          | x              |                |                | x              |
| Sierra Leone           | 1991-2000          | x           | x                   | x              | x              | x                |                | x              |                    |          | x              | x              |                | x              |
| Somalia                | 1991-96            | x           | x                   | x              | x              | x                |                | x              |                    |          | x              |                |                | x              |
| Sri Lanka (Elam)       | 1991-2001          |             | x                   | x              | x              | x                |                |                |                    |          |                |                |                |                |
| Sudan (South, Darfur)  | 1991-2004          | x           | x                   | x              | x              | x                | x              | x              |                    | x        | x              |                |                |                |
| Turkey (Kurdistan)     | 1991-2004          |             |                     |                |                | x                |                |                |                    |          |                |                |                |                |
| Uganda (North)         | 1994-2004          |             | x                   | x              | x              | x                | x              |                |                    |          |                |                |                |                |
| Yugoslavia (Kosovo)    | 1998-99            | x           | x                   | x              | x              | x                | x              | x              | x                  | x        | x              |                | x              |                |
| <i>India (Kashmir)</i> | <i>1991-2004</i>   |             |                     | x              |                | x                |                |                |                    |          |                |                |                |                |
| <i>Tajikistan</i>      | <i>1992-1996</i>   |             | x                   | x              | x              | x                |                | x              |                    |          |                |                |                |                |

#### 4. RESULTS AND THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

How selective has the international community's response to violent humanitarian crises and human rights abuses been? An empirical analysis of selectivity reveals that both the optimistic and the more skeptical perspective on global governance are correct to some extent. First, of course, the international community did respond selectively to humanitarian crises and gross violations of human rights. Comparable cases of human suffering have not been treated alike. Differences in responding, however, not only exist among similar crises, but also within individual crises. In Afghanistan, for example, states only began to act after the Taliban seized power. In the years before, they did not respond, despite massive human suffering. And even though an instrument like the provision of humanitarian relief was applied in almost all cases, its use still varied significantly in scope. According to Oxfam (2000), for example, donor countries gave 207 US dollars for every needy person in Kosovo, while those suffering in Sierra Leone were given only 16 and those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo just eight US dollars per capita. This paper did not address such differences, although they clearly merit more research.

Second, although the international community responded selectively to humanitarian crises, none of the crises identified here remained *completely* unaddressed. Humanitarian relief was supplied in virtually all cases. This is noteworthy, since aid is not provided automatically. While the norms governing humanitarian assistance stipulate that the people in need have a right to receive humanitarian assistance, states and international institutions are not obliged to provide it (de Jonge Oudraat 1996: 194). In addition, for all crises, NGOs provided information on the human rights situation, verified norm violations, and exerted moral pressure on states that abused human rights and the international community whenever it failed to take action. In a number of instances, the International Commission on Human Rights also made use of their partially supra-national procedures in "high profile countries" (Donnelly 1998: 55) like Burma, Bosnia, or Rwanda. In the light of severe humanitarian crises, such "soft measures" like the provision of humanitarian relief and the application of "social sanctions" are often criticized for being insufficient. Without a doubt, humanitarian crises, especially violent ones, cannot be ended by such means alone. On the other hand, humanitarian assistance has saved millions of lives. And although NGOs' influence is difficult to measure the "naming and shaming" of human rights abuses, which is often a first but necessary step to putting such crises on the international political agenda, had an impact on human rights policies (see Forsythe 2006: 200-206).

Third, whenever the international community has provided humanitarian aid and imposed social sanctions in cases of crisis, then selectivity was restricted to three

modes of reaction: consent-based peacekeeping missions, the imposition of coercive sanctions, and the use of military force. These measures have indeed been applied selectively. Of the 27 crises identified here, the international community deployed peacekeeping missions and imposed sanctions in not more than half of the cases. Military humanitarian interventions were conducted in only six or seven cases, respectively, if Operation Enduring Freedom is included as a humanitarian intervention. What is more, the UN Security Council only considered about half of the crises as actually constituting a “threat to international peace and security” under chapter VII. The other crises did not even appear on the Council’s agenda. If, however, we add up all of the peacekeeping missions, sanctions, and interventions, taken together they yield a slightly different picture, namely, that the international community responded by applying least one of these measures in 20 out of 27 cases. Even if only sanctions and interventions are considered, this still yields 16 out of 27 cases in which such coercive measures were applied. Thus, if all these measures are taken together, selectivity does exist, but to a lesser extent than often claimed.

Fourth, the supposed “intervention gap”—situations that the Security Council qualified as “threats to international peace and security,” but that were not handled according to chapter VII—does not exist or, more precisely, takes another form. Indeed, with only very few exceptions,<sup>40</sup> the UN Security Council applied enforcement measures under chapter VII to all crises that had previously been considered to constitute “threats to international peace and security.”<sup>41</sup> Thus, in contrast to the supposed “simple” intervention gap, there is instead a “double” intervention gap: despite their severity, a number of crises were *neither* considered to constitute a threat to international peace and security, *nor* were they handled according to chapter VII. These cases include Colombia, Congo-Brazzaville, Myanmar, Nepal, Peru, Russia (Chechnya), Sri Lanka, southern Sudan, Turkey (Kurdistan), Uganda, and India (Kashmir).

From a theoretical perspective, these results support the thesis of an increased trend towards trans- and supranationalization (Zürn et al. 2007) which, against all expectations, can also be observed in the field of international security: On the one hand, non-state actors not only play a more important role in the provision of humanitarian relief, but also in the “naming and shaming” of human rights violations. In addition, NGOs have responded more consistently and more timely to humanitarian crises than states. At the same time the inter-state principle of consensus has been replaced by “supranational” coercion in a number of instances: material sanctions or humanitarian interven-

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40 The exceptions are Burundi and Sudan (Darfur). Yet, “robust” peacekeeping missions with chapter VII mandates have been deployed in Burundi and Sudan.

41 See also Wallensteen/Johannson (2004).

tions have been increasingly decided by majority vote and against the will of the affected state or parties to the conflict. Apart from this trend, initial evidence of the underlying causes of selectivity can be inferred from the analysis. The fact that none of the crises remained completely unaddressed indicates that humanitarian norms matter strongly. It can be shown that, against the backdrop of changes in the international normative structure, states that are unwilling to end (or which are incapable of ending) gross violations of human rights and humanitarian crises within their own territories are always confronted with a reaction by the international community—even when this suffering occurs in geographically remote locations or highly dissimilar cultures, and even when the norm-violators are very powerful. For example, European states used the IMF to exert pressure on Russia to end the massive human rights abuses in Chechnya (Finnemore 2000: 6). In the same vein, referring to the human rights situation in the Kurdish territories, the European Parliament threatened Turkey with blocking the customs union (Krauss 2000). In numerous other cases the international response was much stronger and has meant that the affected states forfeited sovereignty rights and eventually even became targets of humanitarian interventions. Yet, at the same time, in at least as many cases, the international community did not respond to the same extent to such crises, even when strong responses appeared propitious. So why is it that the international community strongly responded to some crises but not to others? To understand the politics of selectivity, it does not suffice to show that “humanitarian” norms matter. Rather, it has to be shown when and under what conditions norms affect state behavior, and when and under what circumstances they do *not*. Since the decision to intervene is obviously not influenced by norms alone, other factors like countervailing power considerations, political and economic interests, or institutional path dependencies that are likely to constrain norm effects also have to be taken into account. The question of how exactly norms, interest, and institutions interact and jointly produce a strong response to humanitarian crises (or not) will thus be subject to further research.

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