

Analysis of the ICRC's role in the Ukraine-Russia conflict: Humanitarian aid and civilian security in the midst of war

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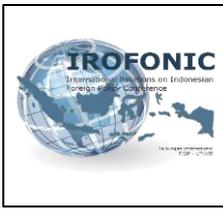
ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the role of the ICRC in the Ukraine-Russia conflict, with a particular focus on humanitarian assistance and civilian security during the war. Using the human rights theory framework, this study explores the various forms of roles carried out by the ICRC, including the provision of medical assistance, distribution of food and basic necessities, provision of clean water and sanitation, psychosocial support, and protection and identification of missing persons. The results show that the ICRC plays a significant role in protecting and fulfilling the basic rights of civilians affected by the conflict, despite facing various challenges such as unstable security conditions, difficult accessibility, and limited resources. Through a human rights-based approach, the ICRC not only provides urgent humanitarian assistance but also advocates for the protection of civilians from violence and human rights violations. This study emphasizes the importance of continued international support to strengthen humanitarian efforts and human rights protection in conflict areas. In addition, this study provides comprehensive insights into the ICRC's contribution to responding to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine-Russia and highlights the relevance of a human rights approach in addressing the impact of armed conflict.

Keywords: *Ukraine-Russia conflict, humanitarian aid, civilian security, human rights.*

INTRODUCTION

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukraine became independent and established relations with Western countries, and Ukraine also expressed its desire to join NATO and the European Union. This led to tensions with Russia, which considered Ukraine as its biggest influence (sef, 2022). After mass demonstrations known as the Revolution of Dignity and the ouster of pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich in February 2014, this led to increased tensions. In March 2014, Russia took control of the Crimea region of Ukraine and supported separatist groups in the Donbas region including Luhansk and Donetsk (Q, 2022). After the annexation of Crimea, armed conflict broke out in the Donbas between Ukrainian forces and Russian-backed separatists. Although the Minsk agreement was signed in 2015 to ease tensions, fighting has continued in the region. In late 2021, Russia began a massive troop buildup on the Ukrainian border, numbering up to 190,000 soldiers, this has raised concerns in the West about a possible invasion (sef, 2022).

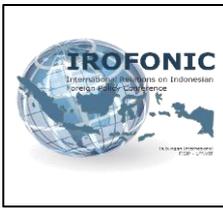


Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022, millions of people were forced to flee their country as a result of this invasion. President Vladimir Putin in his speech before the invasion stated that a group of extremists were controlling Ukraine. This conflict has not only affected Ukraine, but also created a broad international response, including economic sanctions against Russia and military support for Ukraine from Western countries. The war between Russia and Ukraine has shaken global politics and international markets so that this global crisis brings new challenges to international relations (Connie Rahakundini Bakrie¹, 2022). The number of civilian casualties has continued to increase since the invasion began in February 2022. According to data from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, as of June 2023 around 24,425 civilians have been victims of war, and more than 9,000 people have been reported killed and 15,779 others injured (Manitik, 2022).

International organizations are very important in dealing with humanitarian disasters around the world. Various efforts have been made to respond to and reduce the consequences and address the main problems that cause humanitarian crises. International organizations implement global policies that cover a variety of things, such as coordinating humanitarian assistance to support human rights (Siregar, 2023). International organizations, such as the United Nations (UN), the Indonesian Red Cross (ICRC), and the World Health Organization (WHO), play a major role in dealing with humanitarian crises around the world. They lead, provide assistance, maintain peace, and defend human rights in efforts to address various humanitarian problems (Siregar S. , 2023). Armed conflict is one of the greatest challenges facing the international community in maintaining global peace and security. The wide-ranging impacts include loss of life, destruction of infrastructure and a severe humanitarian crisis. In such situations, the role of international organizations becomes crucial to provide assistance, mediation and protection to affected communities. International organizations, such as the United Nations (UN), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and various non-governmental organizations, have the mandate and capacity to operate in conflict zones with the aim of alleviating human suffering and promoting peace.

Formulation of the problem: What is the role of the ICRC in the Ukraine-Russia Conflict? How does the ICRC provide humanitarian assistance and ensure the safety of civilians in the midst of war? Research purposes: Analyzing the role of the ICRC in providing humanitarian assistance. Assessing the ICRC's efforts to ensure the safety of civilians Benefits of research: Providing insights for academics and practitioners into the role of humanitarian organizations in armed conflict. Understanding the importance of international support in crisis situations.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



In the research Analysis of the role of the ICRC in the Ukraine-Russia Conflict with a case study of humanitarian aid and civilian security in the midst of war, this analysis will use the theory of Human Rights. Human rights theory focuses on the recognition and protection of individual rights inherent in every human being. In the context of armed conflict, human rights include the right to life, the right to protection from violence, and the right to humanitarian assistance. Human rights are basic rights that every individual has because they are human. These rights are universally recognized and include civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. In the context of armed conflict, the protection of human rights includes the right to life, the right to protection from violence, the right to humanitarian assistance, and the right to refugee and civilian protection (sabila, 2019).

Theodoor van Boven stated that fundamental rights are “supra-positive” rights, he said that the validity of fundamental rights does not depend on the acceptance of these rights in the field of legal science, but rather that the acceptance of these rights is the basis for the existence of the international community. Some experts agree that the existence of some fundamental rights does not depend on international law and treaties. Rougier at the beginning of this century as quoted by Carmen Tiburcio, stated that violations of human rights in the sense of “fundamental rights” such as the right to life, the right to physical and moral freedom, can be a reason for carrying out humanitarian intervention (ashri, 2018).

Human rights are universal rights that apply to all people without exception. Human rights may not be revoked by anyone or under any circumstances, including in armed conflict. States and non-state actors are responsible for respecting, protecting and fulfilling human rights. Everyone is entitled to human rights without discrimination on the basis of religion, race, sex, language, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Non-state actors include armed groups and humanitarian organizations such as the ICRC. Civilians must be protected from direct hostilities, according to international Humanitarian law. One of these is not to be attacked, evacuated or taken hostage .

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) is the body of international law that governs the protection of civilians and victims of war. The ICRC acts as a monitor and enforcer of IHL, encouraging all parties to a conflict to comply with the humanitarian principles that protect civilians from the effects of war. The ICRC is responsible for ensuring that civilian rights are protected during conflict. This includes: The ICRC provides food, water, medicine and medical support to civilians affected by war and urges all parties to respect the rights of civilians and to refrain from disproportionate attacks and attacks on civilian objects.

Right to Protection from Violence The ICRC seeks to protect civilians from violence, including sexual violence, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions. The ICRC encourages parties to conflict to comply with international humanitarian law and to protect the right to life and safety of civilians. Right to Humanitarian Assistance The ICRC is committed to ensuring that people affected by conflict have access to food,



water, health services and shelter. This is in line with the right to an adequate standard of living and the right to health (M Ramadhan Islami A.S, 2024).

Taking this theoretical framework into account, it is clear that the role of the ICRC in the Russia-Ukraine Conflict is crucial to protect the Human Rights of civilians. To improve access to the affected areas, it is better to work closely with the relevant parties. Address misinformation that interferes with their operations by improving communication and transparency. Provide stronger support to all parties to protect the rights of civilians and respect IHL. This theoretical framework is used to analyze the role of the ICRC in the context of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict by examining their work in providing humanitarian assistance and keeping civilians safe during the war.

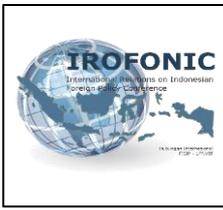
METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research method. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore and understand the role of the ICRC in the Ukraine-Russia conflict through in-depth analysis of various written data sources. This study uses one source, namely secondary sources, where this research is written from ICRC reports, journal articles, news, and official documents. This study is descriptive and uses a qualitative approach, which emphasizes the process rather than the product or outcome. This study uses a qualitative type that is library research. This research is conducted through data collection from various sources, such as books, journals, and previous research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The role of the ICRC in the Russia-Ukraine conflict

The ICRC has been working in Ukraine since 2014 with a team of over 600 staff members. Working closely with the Ukrainian Red Cross and our Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, we are stepping up our response to the enormous and growing humanitarian needs in Ukraine. The ICRC as an international organization plays a key role in several conflicts, one of which is the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The ICRC focuses more on protection and humanitarian assistance to victims of war and those affected by the conflict. (Russia-Ukraine international armed conflict: Your questions answered about ICRC's work, 2024). Since the start of the conflict, the ICRC has increased its presence in Ukraine with almost 800 employees working in places such as Kyiv, Odesa and Lviv. They provide assistance such as food, clean water, medicine and protection equipment. The ICRC spent around CHF 416 million in 2022 to assist affected populations, the majority of which was allocated to needs in Ukraine. (icrc, Russia - Ukraine international armed conflict: ICRC continues to help people in need, 2023). The ICRC explains that Human Rights must be upheld properly, for both civilians and the military, in this case the ICRC always reminds that the presence of the ICRC must receive attention and must not be disturbed in carrying out its humanitarian mission (Ahmad Faris Fauzan, 2023).



The ICRC must urge all parties to the conflict to comply with International Humanitarian Law, which includes the protection of civilians. They emphasize the need to avoid disproportionate attacks and indiscriminate attacks, and they call for a ceasefire so that humanitarian aid can be easily accessed (fakihudin, 2022). The ICRC does not take sides in providing assistance to victims of the war, whether with Russia or Ukraine, the ICRC only focuses on its goal of providing appropriate, fast and correct humanitarian assistance. In this regard, the ICRC always works diligently to protect and assist the victims. The ICRC has operated a Central Search Bureau to collect and pass on information on missing persons, both military and civilian. This helps separated families obtain information on the whereabouts of family members who may be detained or missing (icrc, Russia - Ukraine international armed conflict: ICRC continues to help people in need, 2023). The ICRC provides medicines, medical equipment, and supplies to under-resourced hospitals and clinics in conflict areas, trains some victims to provide emergency care, distributes food to families affected by the conflict, distributes items such as clothing, blankets, and hygiene kits, and builds clean water infrastructure (Setiyono, 2017).

ICRC's efforts, challenges and impact in ensuring civilian security

Protection and humanitarian assistance to victims of armed conflict is a primary focus of the ICRC . They call on all parties involved in the Russia-Ukraine conflict to comply with International Humanitarian Law. This includes the obligation to protect civilians and civilian property from attack and to respect humanitarian law during military operations (icrc, Russia - Ukraine international armed conflict: ICRC continues to help people in need, 2023). Throughout the war, the ICRC actively calls on both parties to protect humanitarian rights. They stress the importance of avoiding disproportionate attacks and prohibiting indiscriminate attacks that could harm civilians. The ICRC also calls on the warring parties to create safe passage for civilians fleeing the fighting. (sef, 2022)The ICRC assists in the safe evacuation of civilians who wish to leave dangerous areas. They ensure that evacuations are voluntary and do not force people to leave their homes. In addition, the ICRC works to improve humanitarian access to affected areas, helping people trapped in conflict with medical assistance, food and other basic necessities (Nadia Maulidatul Qudsiyah, 2023).

The ICRC has launched an emergency response to help the affected population. They are providing support to medical workers struggling to cope with the rising number of casualties and monitoring the reunion of families separated by the conflict (apatisme, 2022). Through the ICRC's efforts to ensure the protection and safety of civilians in Ukraine, despite the enormous challenges it faces, its efforts demonstrate its commitment to adhering to humanitarian principles and supporting the needs of civilians in the midst of the ongoing conflict.

The challenges faced by the ICRC include the difficulty of reaching the affected areas, especially in high-risk areas. Because of these limitations, they are unable to assist civilians trapped in the fighting and in need of assistance. The safety of ICRC staff is also

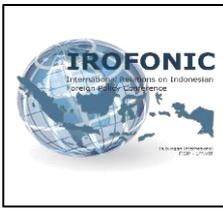


critical, especially with the escalation of violence on the ground. Humanitarian workers are in great danger and misinformation can put them at risk and hinder their access to people in need (A. DA CUNHA, 2023). The ICRC strives to ensure that everyone complies with international humanitarian law. This challenge arises when parties to the conflict do not respect the law. With the increasing number of refugees and victims, the ICRC faces the challenge of meeting the urgent needs of civilians. Supplies of food, clean water and medicine are low, while demand for assistance continues to increase, requiring rapid adjustments in its response (s, 2016).

The challenge that the ICRC faces in finding victims is that the ICRC has received nearly 30,000 requests for missing persons related to the conflict in Ukraine. This very high volume of requests can strain the organization's resources and ability to conduct effective searches (Fathun, 2022). Limited access to conflict-affected areas makes it difficult for the ICRC to investigate and search for possible missing persons. Security instability in conflict areas also hampers search efforts. Misinformation about the situation on the ground can cause confusion and hamper search efforts. Inaccurate information about the location or status of missing persons can lead the ICRC in the wrong direction in their search. Identification of missing persons is further complicated by the instability of the situation and the possibility of physical damage or difficult field conditions. The ICRC must use a variety of methods to gather information and conduct identifications, which can be time-consuming and resource-intensive (setiyono, 2017). To obtain the necessary information, the ICRC must work with various parties, including governments, non-governmental organizations and local communities. However, political conflict and lack of effective communication between the parties involved can hinder cooperation in finding victims.

As for the impact of the ICRC in dealing with victims of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Humanitarian assistance, including the provision of medical supplies, food and clean water, is essential to save the lives of civilians caught in the conflict. The ICRC, for example, has sent medical supplies to hospitals in Ukraine, assisting local medical teams in treating the wounded. This assistance not only helps in emergency situations but also supports the recovery of overall public health. The ICRC plays a role in protecting the rights of civilians by appealing to all parties to the conflict to respect international humanitarian law (icrc, Russia - Ukraine international armed conflict: ICRC continues to help people in need, 2023). They advocate for the protection of civilians and appeal to all parties to refrain from attacks that could endanger the civilian population. Thus, humanitarian assistance also serves as an effort to reduce violence and human rights violations (lonban, 2020).

Humanitarian aid also includes physical and psychological assistance. The ICRC helps alleviate the suffering of civilians by providing basic assistance such as food and shelter. This assistance is essential to reduce the trauma experienced by people who have lost their families, homes and security during the conflict. The ICRC also tries to help reunite families who have been separated by the conflict. They search for missing persons and inform families about the fate of those who have disappeared. This is an important



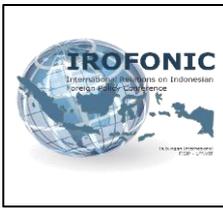
component of humanitarian aid that helps restore emotional stability to individuals and communities (kemanusiaan, 2023)

CONCLUSION

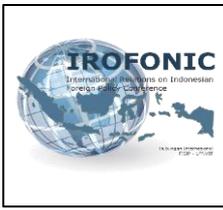
The rights of civilians affected by conflict are protected and fulfilled by the ICRC, even in difficult conflict situations. The ICRC ensures that the right to an adequate standard of living and the right to health are fulfilled through various forms of humanitarian assistance such as the provision of food, clean water, health services and shelter. The ICRC plays a key role in identifying missing persons and assisting families separated by conflict. This is part of the right to identity and family life. These efforts not only provide certainty for families who have disappeared, but also emphasize the importance of the right of every person to have a recognized identity and the right to live with their family. The ICRC is committed to protecting civilians from violence and human rights violations, including sexual violence, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions. The ICRC seeks to educate parties to conflict about the importance of complying with international humanitarian law, with the primary objective of protecting the right to life and safety of civilians. The ICRC acts as a monitor of the human rights situation in conflict areas by monitoring and reporting violations. This activity supports the right to information and accountability, with the aim of raising international awareness and urging corrective action against violations. The ICRC faces a number of challenges in carrying out its work, including security and accessibility issues in conflict areas, complex coordination with the warring parties, and resource and logistical constraints. Nevertheless, the ICRC continues to overcome these obstacles to ensure that humanitarian assistance and human rights protection can be delivered effectively. The ICRC's human rights-based approach demonstrates the relevance and importance of this approach in addressing the impact of armed conflict. By focusing on the protection and fulfillment of fundamental rights, the ICRC not only helps alleviate the suffering of civilians but also supports long-term efforts to build peace and justice in conflict-affected areas.

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