



**THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF ANKARA
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**EXPLORING THE PEACE COMPONENT OF THE HUMANITARIAN-
DEVELOPMENT-PEACE NEXUS WITHIN THE POST-CIVIL WAR NORTH-WEST
SYRIA CONTEXT BETWEEN 2020-2023**

Master's Thesis

Enes T. Balyemez

Disaster and Humanitarian Aid Management Program

December 2023



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ABSTRACT

Staging the adaptation of the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus has been a significant development for the humanitarian sector in the past years. While there have been remarkable efforts embarking on this approach in humanitarian programming, the peace component of the nexus has remained unclear in most cases. This thesis study seeks solid answers to address this gap in the humanitarian sector. To reveal a formulation for a method to be developed for implementing necessary peace activities and establishing a suitable environment, the Northwest Syria (NWS) case, particularly between 2020 and 2023, is investigated in this study in this study.

The research employed secondary documents and interviews with experts engaged in humanitarian responses in the NWS. To comprehend and analyze the regional dynamics effectively, the study provides a detailed elucidation of the HDP nexus. It explores key viewpoints on peace, incorporating associated notions such as peacebuilding and peacekeeping, to establish a solid theoretical foundation. Drawing insights from peace practices observed in the Bosnia case is also included in the study. Additionally, presenting a comprehensive depiction of the situation in the NWS from 2020 to 2023 is aimed.

The first chapter comprises of introduction, literature review and methodology. The subsequent chapter delves into a theoretical foundation for the HDP nexus, emphasizing its peace aspects. Then the case of Bosnia is examined, offering an in-depth examination of it as a historical example of a concluded peace process. Following that, the focus shifts to Syria, specifically the NWS, drawing a detailed portrayal of the situation in the region from 2020 to 2023. The final chapter conducts a thorough analysis of peace efforts in the NWS, culminating in the introduction of a methodological pattern intended for future development and implementation in conflict scenarios.

KEYWORDS: Humanitarian, development, peace, nexus, Syria.

ABBREVIATIONS

HDP - Humanitarian-development-peace

NWS - Northwest Syria

HNO - Humanitarian Needs Overview

IDPs - Internally displaced people/persons

WASH - Water, sanitation and hygiene

UN - The United Nations

OCHA - Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

UNDP - UN Development Programme

UNHCR - UN Refugee Agency

WHS - World Humanitarian Summit

NWoW - New Way of Working

RCRC - Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

UNSC - UN Security Council

TRC - Truth and Reconciliation Commission

IFRC - International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

GHO - Global Humanitarian Overview

SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals

MENA - Middle East and North Africa

UNDAF - United Nations Development Assistance Framework

RPUNPO - Report of the Panel on the United Nations Peace Operations

NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization

JNA - Yugoslav National Army

UNPROFOR - UN Protection Force

IFOR - International Force

OSCE - Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

EU - European Union

RIICISAR - Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic

KPP - Kurdish People's Protection

NES - Northeast Syria

ISIL - Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant

SDF - Syrian Democratic Forces

FSA - Free Syrian Army

SNA - Syrian National Army

HTS - Hay'at Tahrir Al-Sham

GPI - Global Peace Index

SCHF - Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund

CERF - Central Emergency Response Fund

CBPF - Country-based pool fund

OHCHR - UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

BAH - Bab al-Hawa

UNMM - UN Monitoring Mission

FSL - Food security and livelihoods

SNFI - Shelter and non-food items

UNDRR - UN Office for Risk Reduction



MAPS AND TABLES LIST

Map 1. Approximate areas of influence, UN IICISAR, June 2023

Map 2. Intensity of Incidents: January – 30 November 2022, OCHA 2023

Table 1. Table of Interviewees

Table 2. Syria Arab Republic: Trends in reported funding, FTS 15 November 2023

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

As of the end of 2023, the Syrian Civil War has been occupying Syria for nearly 13 years. That is to say, the people of Syria have been facing severe survival challenges in every part of Syria from north to south and east to west for a long time, as 15.3 million people out of total population of 22.1 million remain in need of humanitarian assistance in 2023 (HNO 2023, 2022). Even if the control over the Syrian territory varies under different groups or authorities from one region to another, the difficulties in the living conditions that people have to go through daily are some of the common phenomena that remains in every part of the country. Naturally, considering that the living standards offered to people of Syria in different regions are diverse, the level of struggles is not at the same level everywhere. However, one thing is certain that they all are in worse situation compared to the pre-civil war time.

The protracted and polarized hostilities among various parties in power have left the Syrian people enduring a protracted humanitarian crisis. With more than a decade of conflict and continued localized hostilities, the situation in Syria has led to mass displacement, a worsening economic crisis, and profound hardships faced by the population, particularly women and children. The relentless violence, economic deterioration, and displacement have eroded the stability of the nation, leaving the people in dire need of assistance. The international community's continues efforts are still a must, as the crisis remains an enduring tragedy that requires sustained attention and support to alleviate the immense hardships faced by the population in every part of Syria.

One of the regions where the obstacles in the lives of Syrian people are at high levels is the NWS. People are living in beyond-poor conditions with limited life-sustaining resources. The main source of living basics for the people in the region is humanitarian aid provided by humanitarian organizations. The fact that their aid capacities are immensely limited due to underprovided funding and political disputes and restrictions, millions of internally displaced people (IDPs) barely survive in adverse living conditions. Beyond the insufficient intervention targeting the

people in need of non-food items, education and protection, their very basic needs of food, health and medicine, clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and shelter are still not secured to be flown sustainably even after over a decade has passed with the crisis. People have often been struggling with contiguous diseases. According to the latest Humanitarian Needs Overview projected for 2023 by the United Nations (UN) Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), around 15 million people (approximately 70 per cent of the total population) remain dependent on food and health assistance whereas 5.7 million people are in need of proper shelter units (HNO 2023, 2022).

As stated in a study commissioned by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), how the peace component of the HDP nexus should work is not revealed precisely. There are different perspectives on the matter. The study argues:

“The scope of the peace pillar is yet to be agreed. Some argue that the peace pillar should focus on “soft” interventions only, such as social cohesion, governance and rule of law (RoL). Others argue that the peace pillar should be broader and include “hard” interventions such as security sector reform (SSR); disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR); and militarized peacekeeping efforts. The agreed scope of the peace pillar has implications for funding and coordination mechanisms to implement the triple nexus (UNDP & UNHCR, 2020, p. 2).”

Additionally, when the academic literature was reviewed, it was seen that there was not a sufficient number of studies that particularly focused on this field. That being the case, answers will be sought to clarify how the peace component should work in this thesis study. The thesis particularly focuses on reveal the peace component of the HDP nexus within the context of NWS. With the examination of practices used in the NWS, along with those used in Bosnia, the study aims to contribute to the literature aiming to fill the gap in the matter.

The emphasis on the global humanitarian agenda has come to be concentrated on sustainable solutions for complex humanitarian crises, particularly in the last decade. In the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), which had a quite path-breaking impact on the humanitarian sector, the international community, with the participation of more than three thousand sector related attendees, acknowledged this trend by accepting the New Way of Working (NWoW) which introduced a new approach with the concerns mentioned above. The approach, published by the

UN's booklet, suggested that solutions for such crises cannot be found solely from a humanitarian perspective. There should be multi-faceted approaches to achieve solutions which will last long periods. In this regard, it was expressed at the summit that the best way to adopt such solutions is to combine humanitarian and development concerns and perspectives together, which was named the humanitarian-development nexus.

In the post-WHS period, humanitarian actors developed remarkable progress in line with the nexus. However, humanitarian crises in armed conflict zones remained problematic as serious restrictions exist on achieving persistent solutions. As the biggest source of these restrictions, the conflicting parties are complex in themselves generating constant problems for responding humanitarian actors as they do not recognize international law, humanitarian principles, moral values or norms of any sort, which makes them unreliable. Eventually, relevant responding organizations and authorities fail to make long-term plans for these regions and resident people. With all these facts, it came to be understood by the international society that sustaining solution for complex humanitarian cases, particularly in armed conflict context, efforts should go beyond the humanitarian-development nexus. It was agreed by the humanitarian community that peace component should be included to the nexus. Even though the idea was logical and there is no denying its possible positive impacts, how the peace component will be implemented in the nexus has not really been described clearly. Several scenarios have been developed by relevant scholars and experts along with relatively accurate implications, yet a specific method or an international mechanism have not been created.

To be able navigate through the region and make sense out of the situation in the region, the study will include precise explanation of the HDP nexus, prominent perspectives on peace and its associate concepts of peacebuilding and peacekeeping to establishing a theoretical background, peace practices from the Bosnia case several types to approach to the issue from an objective point of view and comprehensive illustration of the situation in NWS between 2020-2023. The Bosnia case was chosen as a supporting case because of three main reasons. One is that several ethnic groups were in conflict with each other as in the case of Syrian Civil War. Even though the exact number of fighting parties involved do not match, extreme levels of hostilities in their motivation have been observed in both cases. Another reason is that attention, and thus, intervention of a broad range of international society was significantly focused on the Bosnia case as it has been in Syria.

The situation and developments on the ground have been followed closely by numerous external actors along with direct and indirect involvements. Final and most important reason is that the case in Bosnia has caused great impact on initiating endeavors to bring clearer explanation to the concept of peace, peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities.

Thus, in order to bring an accurate explanation for the peace component's application on the nexus, this thesis will seek to answer the following questions by taking the Syrian Civil War as case study: Has there been any indicators of the peace component of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus during the Syrian Crisis since its outbreak? In light of the study, can a methodological pattern for similar cases be developed to guarantee peace in conflicts? If the peace efforts have been insufficient, what could have been done for establishing a certain level of peace in the region so that the humanitarian problems could be solved? Eventually, the study will also give place to certain assumptions as potential methods to overcome pointed out problems and challenges in securing peace both in the NWS and other similar cases.

The study employed qualitative methods rooted in the pragmatist approach. The research utilized secondary documents and interviews with experts engaged in humanitarian responses in NWS as primary resources. Various sources, including academic articles, official speeches, legal texts and reports from international organizations, government agencies and humanitarian entities, were taken into examination. Personal interviews with fifteen experts from a broad range of institutional backgrounds, selected through purposive sampling, formed the primary data source for the study. The interviews reflected their views on peace-related practices in the NWS context. Informal view exchanges with individuals from the humanitarian sector also contributed to the formation of a comprehensive analysis. Reports from UN agencies, the Red Cross and Red Crescent (RCRC) Movement and international/non-governmental organizations were analyzed for accurate assessments of the on-ground situation. The study delved into theoretical publications on peace practices within the humanitarian context of the NWS. The synthesis of these diverse sources was applied with the goal of explaining methods for fulfilling the peace component's role in the HDP nexus.

This thesis study is comprised of three chapters. The first chapter provided theoretical background on the HDP nexus and the peace component. Although there was limited literature that directly studied the HDP nexus and its peace implications, numerous significant academic works

have been brought together to establish a comprehensive analysis for the theoretical part of the study. Firstly, the chapter examined perspectives on the HDP nexus and its function. Secondly, the chapter introduced the theoretical background of the peace concept. Peacekeeping and peacebuilding descriptions along with brief touching on transitional justice have been studied in this section. Thirdly, the Bosnia case was investigated as a completed process example from the history of peace efforts. Peace practices in Bosnia were also focused on this part. The fourth section draw a picture on the case of Syria and the NWS in particular. Initially, background information including major events and key actors involved in the crisis was given covering the whole crisis period since its outbreak. Later, the situation in the NWS between 2020 and 2023 period was overviewed. In the last chapter, a comprehensive analysis on the NWS peace efforts have been conducted. Additionally, the study introduced an outline of a methodological pattern to be developed and implemented in conflict cases in the future. The chapter was finalized with a conclusion of the study.

1.1. Literature Review

The literature studying directly the HDP nexus is quite limited. There are a few reasons behind this. One of them is the term was introduced relatively recently. Additionally, it is still in progress how the components of the nexus should work in the most efficient way possible. Although humanitarian and development components are standardized and the paths to follow in the phases were described in certain levels, peacebuilding practices bear unique characteristics in every case which makes it difficult to define one single prescription to be applied for every case. Another reason why the literature on HDP is shallow is that it mainly lies within the sphere of humanitarian studies which is also a relatively new academic discipline. Thus, even though there is a dramatic increase in the last couple of years and most of the humanitarian sources are reports from UN agencies and leading humanitarian organizations, relevant academic programs and academic personnel studying the humanitarian discipline is in insufficient numbers. Nevertheless, the supporting fields of study such as peace, transitional justice, conflict and security have a long history of being pursued by academic society due to seeking solid answers to explain how to avoid wars, which naturally can and should be consulted to properly understand correlation between

peace and the other components of the nexus. Thus, several academic works are also taken into account for the literature review of this thesis.

Oxfam's paper was built on the core view of the nexus: all the nexus components are needed and each of them should be taken into consideration when preparing sustainable solutions for the vulnerable groups. The paper does not only explain the working of the nexus but also provides perspective on the matter from several angles. In its structure, it firstly describes the nexus and its components. Next, the paper includes the nexus's effects on the contents of humanitarian phases such as funding. Then the paper makes emphasis on the importance of the adaptation and dissemination of the nexus as comprehensive humanitarian strategy. Moreover, the paper seeks to convince the audience by stressing the benefits that it will create in the application of humanitarian programs. In brief, it is claimed in this part that nexus structure is more reliable which will enhance the mutual accountability of the program parties such as donors and executioners. In the final part, the paper discusses what was proposed by the nexus approach by assessing several alternative scenarios. The paper also has stimulant sections which are directly addressed to the Oxfam's related personnel (Oxfam, 2019).

The article, the first component of a series of study conducted by Dobbins, Martini and Gordon, sought answers how a peace might be possible in Syria. The study differs from this thesis study in regard to the fact that it suggests a peace solution which is specifically tailored for the Syria Case while this thesis produces a method to be used commonly after understanding primarily the NWS context and secondarily the Bosnian case. They focused on the steps to give way to permanent ceasefire which, they claim, would lead to governance consensus between the conflicting groups in Syria, excluding the Syrian state's position and demands as a state but including it as a conflicting party as well. They proposed that ceasefire, which they saw as a more solid step towards peace than trying to find a political solution including the situation of Assad, could be sustained through cooperation by international actors, enforcing a power control upon the chosen regions, participation and active roles of humanitarian actors, which eventually would contribute to the political progress in a sustainable way. They finally argued that the external powers getting involved in the conflicts in the region by supporting the related parties should give up on their individual interests and try to make a common stance in order to legitimize (and/or even to make it possible) the use of enforcement. At the end of the day, they implied, the actors involved in this

process would be considered as guaranteeing powers for the safe zones to be formed in the region. They made their inferences by conducting a case-analysis of the contemporary phenomenon in Syria from several aspects (Dobbins, Martini and Gordon, 2015).

Lie studied the definition and effects of humanitarian-development nexus on the vulnerable groups. He made the entrance with a brief evaluation of the nexus in the first part. Secondly, he sought to convince the audience that the nexus approach is a logical solution which was intentionally created. He also described the peace component of the nexus (third component) along with other implications of the nexus. Next, he claimed that there is a relation between the security and development and this nexus should also be understood to absorb the humanitarian-development-peace nexus comprehensively. In the following part, he examined the humanitarianism and development relation within a historical context. Then, he examined how the international institutions got involved with the concept and contributed to its making. After this, Lie scrutinized the in-life applications of the nexus by making a case study (Northern Uganda). In his final remarks, he concluded his claims with an emphasis on how natural and meaningful the humanitarian-development nexus is. He supported his arguments by making relations with the literature which came out prior to the emergence of the nexus approach, linked them to the present studies and consolidated his claims and definitions with a case study (Lie, 2020).

Esteves sought to explain the relation between humanitarian and development spheres, democracy and security by examining the late 20th century period. He firstly explained these concepts one by one. Then he synthesized the concepts' relations with each other. He further perused peacebuilding means that have been formed following the conflicts and how it has been perceived and used as an important need within the international system of liberal democracies. He eventually came up with the claim that the periods which have been shaped by the peacekeeping operations are unique in their nature. In other words, he argued that every such period requires their own evaluations and applications which are also variable on the time and place of the transformation periods under peacekeeping operations. He also added that these variables are shaped depending on the international and humanitarian perception of the situations. Finally, he gave examples of the cases where he claimed that participation within peacekeeping operations was used as a means of demonstration as being part of the democratic society (Esteves, 2010).

Mac Ginty and John analyzed the complex and evolving landscape of peace processes and peacebuilding in today's world. The authors touched on the various actors, mechanisms and approaches that are involved in contemporary peacemaking efforts. Moreover, they examined the challenges and opportunities that are associated with these efforts. The book was divided into three parts, which explored the different stages of peace processes, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution. The first part included the history of peacebuilding and the challenges of contemporary peacemaking. The second part focused on the role of peacebuilding in resolving conflicts, including the role of the international community and civil society organizations. The final part looked at the challenges of post-conflict reconstruction and the importance of building sustainable peace. They applied to a variety of examples from different regions of the world to illustrate the diverse ways in which peacemaking processes are implemented and the various forms of peacebuilding that take place in their aftermath. They also examined the different challenges and opportunities that arose in different contexts and how these could impact the effectiveness of peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts. The authors used an interdisciplinary approach, combining insights from political science, international relations, and sociology, providing a rich understanding of the subject matter (Mac Ginty and John, 2022).

Howard's work offered a comprehensive exploration on the effectiveness of the UN peacekeeping approach along with practices. Comparative politics and international relations methodologies were employed in the study as research design and case study analysis. The main focus was concentrated on the importance of active learning by peacekeepers within the deployment environment. It was argued that successful peacekeeping involves adapting to local circumstances. It further claimed that the population on the ground instead of professionals in the UN offices that are remote to the crisis area should play more active role in shaping the relevant strategies. The argument of the book was produced through utilization of a comparative study on ten complex cases of the UN multidimensional peacekeeping implementations. Howard identified three interrelated conditions that can be considered crucial for the UN peacekeeping success. Favorable "situational factors" in post-civil war countries' setting the stage was the first condition that has been introduced. Secondly, it was suggested that consensual yet moderately intense interests should be demonstrated by the UN Security Council (UNSC) and its members. Thirdly, as stressed in the book, "first-level" organizational learning on the ground is imperative for mission success. As interpreted in the study, the mandate of implementation and the establishment of new

domestic institutions were significant for sustaining lasting peace. Howard included a descriptive model which illustrated that learning from a mission and its processing in the relevant UN offices, particularly HQ, provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the UN peacekeeping effectiveness (Howard, 2008).

Matyók, Senéhi, and Byrne examined the field of peace and conflict studies. The authors studied the subject in three separate parts as stated in the title of the book: theory, practice and pedagogy. They delved into the theoretical foundations of the field, exploring various schools of thought and their impact on the practice of peacebuilding and conflict resolution. They offered practical examples of peace and conflict interventions, highlighting the role of different actors, such as I/NGOs, governments, and international organizations. The book also integrated pedagogy in the subject, with suggestions and guidance on how to effectively teach the subject to students. The authors successfully linked theory with practice with an interdisciplinary approach. They, particularly, highlighted the fields of psychology, sociology, and political science as they can provide important perspective on understanding peace and conflict. Moreover, they presented practical guidance for those working in the field, with numerous case studies and examples of successful peacebuilding and conflict resolution interventions. In terms of pedagogy, they also integrated suggestions for class activities, discussion prompts, and assessment strategies (Matyók, Senéhi, and Byrne, 2011).

McKeown, Haji and Ferguson explored the interplay between social identity and peace and conflict by studying theories from both fields. The book was divided into two parts. The first part provided an overview of the key concepts of social identity theory and its application to peace and conflict studies. The second part consisted of case studies from around the world that illustrated how social identity theory can be used to understand and analyze various peace and conflict issues. The book began with an overview of key concepts and theories of social identity, including self-categorization theory, social identity theory, and intergroup relations. The authors addressed to a wealth of real-world examples to illustrate their points, including case studies from around the world. They also examined the role of social identity in shaping attitudes and behavior in the context of peace negotiations, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding efforts. The authors passed on to provide a number of recommendations for future research in this area, including the need for more interdisciplinary research that draws on multiple theoretical perspectives. They also

emphasized the importance of considering the cultural and historical context in which peace and conflict take place, and the need for more research on the impact of social identity on peacebuilding and conflict resolution processes. The book was concluded with a comprehensive overview of the implications of the research for policy and practice, including the need for peacebuilding and conflict resolution initiatives that are more inclusive and take into account the role of social identity. The authors of the book combined a diverse group of perspectives and experiences to create a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of peace and conflict. The book presented a comprehensive examination of the role of social identity in peace and conflict and demonstrated how this perspective can be applied to various settings and regions around the world. It intersected with peace and conflict studies, sociology, political science, psychology, and anthropology (McKeown, Haji and Ferguson, 2016).

McQueen put research on the concept of humanitarian intervention and its effectiveness in providing safety to populations during times of conflict. She focused on three major case studies: Iraq, Bosnia and Rwanda. Analysis on the effectiveness of international interventions in these countries was main focus of the study. The motivations behind humanitarian interventions and their outcomes along with the complexities and challenges faced during the efforts were examined in the book. Official reports, media coverages and interviews with key actors were used as sources of the study, which established a solid foundation for her arguments. This also made it possible for her to back her ideas with a more convincing influence. A useful framework for understanding the various forms of interventions that can be classified as humanitarian was also explained by McQueen. These intervention practices comprised military interventions, humanitarian assistance and establishment of safe zones, all of which were given detailed examination in the study. It can be interpreted that overviewing different response types to humanitarian crises along with how affected people were impacted by them were a remarkable framework that were put together by the author. Moreover, analysis on the challenges and complex issues in relevant international efforts with the purpose of elevating the negative impacts on people's lives in these crises was given place in the book (McQueen, 2006).

Paris comprehensively examined the challenges involved in post-conflict peacebuilding. The author divided the book into three chapters. In the first chapter, he touched on the theoretical foundations of his arguments. He examined several cases in the next chapter. In the final chapter,

Paris gave place to his recommendations over his analysis on the concluded problems. He argued that peacebuilding is a complex and multi-faceted process that requires a wide range of actors and approaches. Paris asserted that there is no one single solution for peacebuilding and that each case must be taken into consideration on its own terms. Paris claimed that peacebuilding involves not just the negotiation of peace agreements but also the creation of new political, economic, and social structures that support peace, stressing on the essence of taking into account the local context and the views and needs of the affected population. He included a wide range of case studies to illustrate his points, such as examples from Afghanistan, Bosnia, Cambodia, and Kosovo. He evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of various peacebuilding approaches and drew several recommendations for future efforts. The role of international actors, such as the United Nations and international financial institutions, in peacebuilding efforts was also addressed in the book with particular emphasis on a more coordinated and effective approach. It also provided a nuanced understanding of the challenges and complexities involved in post-conflict reconstruction and offers practical recommendations for future efforts (Paris, 2004).

Heraclides and Dialla delved into the historical evolution and certain perspectives concerning humanitarian intervention. They sought to explore the emergence of humanitarian intervention in public consciousness claiming that it started around 1990 and did not exist before. It was asserted that the concept came to be given place following the end of the Cold War in academic works, policies and public itself. Different approaches to humanitarian intervention such as liberal, realist and Marxist perspectives along with ethical discussions were also included in the authors' analysis. They also stress the fact that humanitarian intervention was introduced with unfamiliar approaches during and after the crises such as Kosovo intervention which particularly emerged the understanding of responsibility to protect. Heraclides and Dialla provided conducted an exploration in contemporary dilemmas regarding humanitarian intervention where sensitive aspects such as legitimacy of intervention, levels of intervention, relevant legal issues, points vulnerable to abuse, arranging time and obstacles on a successful conclusion were taken under examination (Heraclides and Dialla, 2015).

A deep analysis of contemporary armed conflicts and what is needed for latest peacebuilding perspectives was presented by Lederach. He built his main argument based on practical experiences related to conflict transformation. He advocated for a more thorough mechanism

which should be worked in societal levels as he questioned the effectiveness of conventional diplomatic approaches. His thesis asserted that external efforts certainly matter as long as there is solid commitment for strengthening local agents and opportunities to be used for reconciliation processes. He leveraged from his own experience from over twenty countries across the world ranging from Somalia to the Philippines, from Colombia to Northern Ireland where he assumed backchannel diplomatic roles as part of non-governmental endeavors. Instead of heavily basing the topic on theoretical assumptions, he preferred leveraging real-life practices in the field of peacebuilding and mediation addressing the obstacles within. He structured his study in two main parts: contemporary armed conflict and building peace – a conceptual framework. In the former, he drew an overview on the armed conflicts from the post-Cold War period up to today, explaining conceptuality of conflict along with the societies that are divided in fractions which embedded conflicts. In the latter part, he brought detailed examination to relevant practices associated, and often employed within related processes, with conflicts such as reconciliation, phases and underlying factors of conflicts and peacemaking. His work is notable in the sense that he combined theoretical framework with real-life practices which can be considered as an effective method as either can be insufficient to bring an accurate meaning to peace studies (Lederach, 1997).

Uvin presented a classification and critical examination of seven perspectives through which the development approach has been defined in terms of its relationship with conflict and violence. He takes under the spotlight all perspectives of rhetorical repackaging, military conditionality, post conflict agenda, do-no-harm, conflict prevention, human security and global system reform one by one. These perspectives were organized in an order based on their level of variation from the established status quo. The progression was built somewhat linear, with each perspective building upon or reacting to the preceding one. Essentially, these perspectives offered gradually thorough answers to how development aid and peacebuilding should be interlinked. Two key variables were used within this categorization. Firstly, the extent to which conflict is integrated into the development paradigm was taken into account. Whether conflict is seen as an external objective or an inherent aspect of development itself was indicated in this part. Secondly, the article assessed the level of the development explicitly is occupied in the political sphere. The traditional norms of sovereignty and the historical practice of political neutrality were challenged at this stage with implications that they are not necessarily good things in the cases of humanitarian crisis. The explanation between these categories was claimed to be artificial which recognized that they

overlap and interact with each other. He emphasized that the separation employed was solely to sustain an analytical clarity rather than contemplating distinct vivid evidence (Uvin, 2012).

Greedy studied an extensive examination of the aftermath of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa and its implications for the field of transitional justice. The book produced a detailed analysis of the TRC's successes and limitations and positioned it within the broader context of international efforts to address human rights abuses in periods following a mass violence. The book had an interdisciplinary approach. A range of theoretical perspectives extended empirical data and interviews with key actors that took part in TRC processes were brought together by the author. The TRC's impact on post-apartheid South Africa along with its role in promoting reconciliation, addressing socio-economic inequality and contributing to the country's democratic transition were also given part in Greedy's study. Another essential contribution by the book was examination of implications of the TRC for the field of transitional justice. It was claimed by Greedy that the TRC exemplified a paradigmatic shift in the way that societies deal with human rights abuses and that its inheritance had a deep wave on the change of transitional justice instruments across the globe (Greedy, 2011).

Yusuf and van der Merwe focused on the field of transitional justice and its role in promoting accountability and reconciliation after conflict and human rights abuses. The authors provided a detailed examination of the various theories and mechanisms of transitional justice, including truth-seeking, reparations, criminal trials and institutional reform. They also presented concise explanation of each mechanism. The authors made a critique on the arguments for and against each mechanism and offer valuable insights into the challenges and limitations of each approach. The authors also gave place to several case studies and examples from around the world to illustrate the different approaches to transitional justice and the impact that each has had in practice. The book had an interdisciplinary approach, incorporating perspectives from the fields of law, politics, and sociology. This helped the authors establish an understanding of the complexities of transitional justice and the various factors that impact its effectiveness. The authors also touched on the history of transitional justice, including its evolution and the key developments that have shaped the field over time. Moreover, the book also included a discussion of the challenges faced by practitioners and policymakers in implementing transitional justice programs. The authors

assessed the political, legal, and cultural obstacles to transitional justice and offer recommendations for overcoming these challenges (Yusuf and van der Merwe, 2021).

Although they are not the literature published in direct association with peace, international relations, critical security and global governance are also important for leading to an accurate conclusion regarding peace. They help us comprehend the context of how peace concept has been and might be issued. International relations theories explain the behavior of international actors such as sovereign states and international organizations such as the UN. Critical security studies, human centric ones in particular, on the other hand, constitutes a unique vision that highlights humanitarian perspective in security discussions. Lastly, global governance discussions, as another supporting theory that might enlighten our vision for a broader peace perspective, project the collective and inclusive governance at its highest degree.

Burchill and his colleagues Linklater, Devetak, Donnelly, Paterson, Reus-Smit and True presented an overview of the major theoretical approaches to the study of international relations. Each of them contributed to the book by writing separate chapters. The authors aimed to introduce the audience to the key debates and perspectives in the field and demonstrated the ways in which these theories inform our understanding of international politics. The authors yielded detailed explanations of the different theories, including realism, liberalism, constructivism, Marxism, feminism and postmodernism. They also revealed the historical and intellectual context in which these theories have developed and the ways in which they have evolved over time, covering more recent developments in the field such as critical theory and postmodernism. The authors used clear and accessible language to explain complex concepts and arguments, making the material accessible to students with a wide range of backgrounds and prior knowledge. Additionally, the authors gave numerous examples and case studies to illustrate the ways in which the theories are applied to real-world events and situations. They provided a comprehensive and well-organized overview of the key debates and perspectives in the field, using a clear and accessible language to explain complex concepts and arguments (Burchill, Linklater, Devetak, Donnelly, Paterson, Reus-Smit and True, 2005).

Bilgin, who brought a human centric perspective to security paradigm, analyzed the evolution of security studies with a special focus on the shift from a state-centered approach to security to a more comprehensive and inclusive perspective. Individual and societal dimensions of security was

centered on her discussion. She argued that, particularly after the Cold War era, world was introduced with new trends in the global security which required new methods to be studied and developed to comprehend with security issues which should go beyond state-centered security approach as the traditional doctrines suggests. Various dimensions of security, the correlation between them and essence of this individual and societal approach in security were combined with a detailed analysis. The need to broaden the scope of security studies for it to take into consideration different aspects of security was emphasized by Bilgin. The article was built around the idea that security and securitization matters might be subjective changing from one society to another as their interests and agendas might differ in different times. This study by Bilgin brought a striking point of view in the security studies (Bilgin, 2003).

A comprehensive examination of security as a global phenomenon was presented in Booth's study. Traditional notions of state-centric security were challenged whereas a new framework for understanding security in a rapidly changing world was introduced. It was claimed by Booth that security is not just a matter of military defense but a wider range of issues such as economic, political and environmental security are also embedded within. The need for a new security paradigm was highlighted in the book. According to Booth, the interdependence and interrelatedness of security related matters in a rapidly globalizing world were to be recognized. The book delivered a detailed analysis of the various actors involved in global security, including states, international organizations, and non-state actors such as civil society and multinational corporations. Booth also challenged the conventional wisdom of Realist theories by exploring correlation between security, power and ethics. He also brought forward the idea that moral considerations are essential in sustaining security. It was also underlined in the book that cooperation plays a vital role in having security in a global level. It was asserted by Booth that security must be seen as a shared responsibility. He further stressed that dialogue and cooperation between different actors significantly matters for addressing the complex security challenges of the twenty first century. The book is commonly considered as a groundbreaking work in the field of international relations and security studies in the sense that a new perspective on the nature of security and its role in the modern world was extended (Booth, 2008).

Barnett, Pevehouse and Raustiala aimed to demonstrate the importance of the question of transformation in the architecture of global governance and to map out the broad contours of the

phenomenon on their book. The book presented analysis of the architecture of global governance across multiple security issues. The role of actors and governance structures and arguing for more open governance strategies were highlighted. The post-World War II architecture of centralized governance was referred as an exception, as market- and network-based governance dominated the interwar period. It also suggested that a go back to less centralized governance in international monetary and financial affairs, cartels and international commercial arbitration was led by globalization. The conventional viewpoint about the architecture of global governance was criticized by the authors. They emphasized this through their examination of the changes in governance of trade, humanitarian aid, health, clean energy and international humanitarian law. The authors argued that the integration of diverse global institutional arrangements and challenges presented by their management was needed to be settled on a balance. A point of view on the relationship between changes in global governance and the concept of legitimacy was also set out by the book, claiming that alternative forms of governance might have relatively less legitimacy. Additionally, elites and peoples were attributed to have more reliability in organizations that operate with traditional hierarchy. Historical evidences along with statistical tables were often used by the authors across the book (Barnett, Pevehouse and Raustiala, 2022).

When academic literature is scanned, it is evident that peace is still a controversial issue. There are a variety of approaches to its description along with the ways on how to promote or even enforce it when necessary. Among all theories that have been glanced at, peace theories remain in the core of the arguments developed in this study. However, in order to have a solid foundation to study peace in its depths, the need to utilize from the practices themselves beyond the academic resources is inevitable as it has been a commonly employed method in most of the studies due to evident reality of the subject.

1.2. Methodology

The study examines the practices and the applications which have been implemented by the humanitarian actors within the context of ten year-long Syrian Civil War, and which could be

regarded as of the peace component of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Qualitative methods were used for this research.

The epistemology of the planned qualitative research is to be rooted to the pragmatist approach. As part of its qualitative analysis, secondary documents related to the humanitarian practices during the Syrian Civil War and interviews with experts engaged in the humanitarian response towards the NWS were preferred for the thesis.

To begin with, this study covered a variety of sources, including the period since the first years of the Syrian Civil War in from humanitarian aspect to recent developments, along with the process in which the humanitarian-development-peace was developed and accepted by the world leaders and sector members. Books, academic articles, official speeches, legal texts, journal or magazine articles, local newspapers, reports, factsheets and documents from relevant international organizations, humanitarian organizations, government agencies and think tanks compose the main sources to be used for this study. It is noteworthy to stress that particularly reports that have been carefully and comprehensively tailored by international relations and humanitarian experts have been used often due to the nature of the humanitarian and peace fields which are strongly shaped by practices themselves more than the theories. These reports reflect factual assessments on such practices and thus are more actually projected in shaping the future content of the relevant studies. Yet, this does not mean that academic works in these fields should be undervalued. On the contrary, the field of HDP nexus is highly dependent on both theoretical and practical works in similar degree.

Next, personal interviews were held to generate qualitative data which will compose the primary resource source of the study. The reason why this method is chosen is that the peace component of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus has not yet been revealed in a large scale, which makes the views, opinions and analysis of the experts essential to be evaluated for this study, despite the number of published sources focusing on humanitarian-development-peace nexus, most of them lack answering the question of how exactly the peace component of the nexus will work. Sixteen interviews were conducted with experts from a variety of institutions such as government entities, UN organizations, RCRC organizations, non-profit organizations and research institutions. Participants of the study were chosen by non-probability purposive sampling among the experts on humanitarian sector who particularly have been focusing on the Syrian

context. The selection of interviewees was made based on their high level of engagements in the humanitarian side of the crisis, thus their capacity to reflect accurate assessments and assumptions. The interviewees were selected from a variety of institutions with diverse backgrounds in terms of the roles and responsibilities that they have carried out in order to capture a broader perspective on the subject of the study. Interview questions were open-ended questions by which actual views and experiences of the participants were sought to be reflected on peace related practices in the NWS. Interviews were conducted in English and Turkish in person and recorded through notetaking. The interviewees' consents were also asked if their answers can be published within the scope of this thesis and whether their names can be mentioned in the study. In addition, informal exchange of ideas on the topic with other sector-related people was also used to develop the analysis of the study in a more comprehensive way.

Table 1. Table of Interviewees

No	Name	Profession	Affiliation	Date of interview
1	Reem Alnajr	Formerly Assistant to Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator	Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	12.11.2023
2	Dogukan Donmez	Head of Cross-border Operations	Turkish Red Crescent Society	12.11.2023
3	Mustafa Sengul	Head of Cross-border Projects	Turkish Red Crescent Society	12.11.2023
4	Fatih Aytekin	Access and Liaison Officer	Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	13.11.2023
5	Amro Halima	Protection Consultant	United Nations Children's Fund	13.11.2023

6	Zana Erdogan	Formerly SCHF Officer	Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	13.11.2023
7	Eray Atay	Humanitarian Response Delegate for Europe Region	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent	13.11.2023
8	Interviewee 1	High-level Official	Médecins Sans Frontières	14.11.2023
9	Ahmad Alragheb	Head of NWS Projects	Mercy-USA	14.11.2023
10	Interviewee 2	Shelter Officer	International Organization for Migration	14.11.2023
11	Ufuk Gundogdu	Project Development Officer	Acted	15.11.2023
12	Batuhan Cenk Ozkan	Head of FSL Projects	Turkish Red Crescent Society	15.11.2023
13	Interviewee 3	Formerly High-level Official	CARE	15.11.2023
14	Fadi Farasin	Assistant Secretary General	The Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries	16.11.2023
15	Jonathan Brass	Co-Chair	Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board	16.11.2023
16	Interviewee 4	Official	Government Entity Related to Cross-border Operations	16.11.2023

The analyses of the reports of the specialized UN institutions such as the OCHA, the UNHCR and the UNDP and reports of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and other related red-pillar organizations such as National Societies or refugee councils concerning that they have produced analysis, datasets, insights and information directly from the field with the purpose to make the most accurate assessments regarding what the reality of the situation on the ground. In particular, this thesis examined theoretical publications on peace subject and peace practices and applications within the humanitarian context of Syrian Civil War. Eventually, their combination is planned to enlighten the methods to be followed in the sake of fulfilling the peace component's role of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND CASE STUDIES

As humanitarian crises, lasting a decade or even longer once taken case by case, became our global reality as a permanent part of our lives even though times, places and people affected vary, there is a growing risk of establishing enduring dependencies on humanitarian aid for the millions residing in prolonged displacement. According to the latest updates on the Global Humanitarian Overview (GHO) issued by the OCHA, 364.6 million people across the world were in need of humanitarian aid as of October 2023 (GHO, 2023). To address this problem in a way to decrease the dependency in longer terms, programming by humanitarian organizations must be focused on not only covering immediate needs but also diminishing them by actively supporting sustainable local and national systems, which would bring durable solutions for displaced populations. Alongside the basic humanitarian perspective, collaboration with development and peacebuilding entities is certainly crucial in this endeavor. Humanitarian actors, development agencies and peacebuilding organizations can aim to ensure that individuals can access fundamental social services and achieve a gradual self-sufficiency in alignment with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with special commitment and focus on the most vulnerable.

Many countries facing humanitarian challenges encounter obstacles in delivering basic social services as outlined in their relevant response plans. Although the primary responsibility for service delivery rests with governments, impediments such as territorial control gaps, their capacities to carry out these plans in a proper way can be hindered by political interests or administrative weaknesses. When they are withdrawn from financial support provided by relevant international organizations on implementing their response activities, the burden often falls on humanitarian actors, who are already dealing with high caseloads with very limited resources narrowing down for each case as the number of crises increase. Eray Atay's comments, IFRC Emergency Response Delegate for Europe Region, also reflect the level of challenge that humanitarian workers have to face in the field:

“...Another important element is funding. From my experience, humanitarian and development activities are underfunded in conflict areas. This makes it very hard to meet the requirements of the affected population; hence, creating a vicious cycle of growing needs and decreased services and supplies. There is also the question of neutrality for humanitarian actors in conflict zones. Often as humanitarian we have to communicate with different parties to the conflict to ensure safety and access. This can lead to challenges because humanitarian actors can be seen as taking part in conflict, which can decrease security and access to affected populations.” (E. Atay, interview, November 13, 2023)

Humanitarian organizations traditionally approach crises with a focus on immediate life-saving assistance. Yet, collaboration with development partners is substantially essential to ensure the sustained and stable provision of basic social services. It is needed in most of the cases that this collaboration in programming responses jointly also extends to peacebuilding actors as it is necessary to ensure the governance and security prerequisites for service delivery are considered accurately without gaps. This collective approach facilitates not only the fulfillment of basic needs but also addresses underlying risks, vulnerabilities and enhances resilience, securing an efficient and effective response. Ultimately, strengthening national and local systems stands out as one of the most sustainable strategies to deliver basic social services and respond effectively to future shocks.

Effective humanitarian aid management lies in combining different perspectives and designing the humanitarian programming accordingly. The HDP nexus was brought up by the humanitarian community as a means to sustain this. However, the nexus still requires further development as several aspects lack clear explanation such as the peace component and how it will exactly function as part of the nexus. To understand this, as an addition to understanding the definitions of peace theory, lessons-learned from history should also be examined comprehensively and projected into a analysis from the peace perspective adequately. The cases of Bosnia and the NWS have been picked to fulfill this purpose within the scope of this study.

2.1. The HDP Nexus

The WHS, held on May 23-24, 2016, was marked as one of the critical moments in humanitarian history in terms of the sector's evolution in a global manner. It was convened in Istanbul, Türkiye, and brought together more than three thousand participants who were experts in humanitarian and other relevant sectors from approximately a hundred and eighty countries, fifty-five of which joining in the heads of state level. Its primary objective was to address the challenges facing the humanitarian sector, discuss constructive solutions for these challenges and lay the groundwork for a more integrated and effective approach to crises.

One of the key outcomes of the WHS was the conceptualization and endorsement of the HDP nexus. It emerged as a fruit of prominent humanitarian donors' endeavors in seeking ways to enhance harmony between humanitarian and development fields as part of the Grand Bargain – a milestone consensus sealed between the leading humanitarian organizations and donors (Barakat and Milton, 2020). This paradigm shift represented a departure from traditional siloed approaches to humanitarian and development efforts among which peace was to be added as another essential of the nexus. The Nexus recognizes the interconnectedness of these three domains and advocates for a more cohesive and collaborative response to global challenges. It is characterized by its commitment to breaking down the artificial barriers that have historically separated humanitarian action, development initiatives, and peacebuilding efforts. The nexus approach is not merely a theoretical framework; it is a practical strategy that seeks to integrate these sectors to address the root causes of crises and promote sustainable solutions.

Since the summit in Istanbul, it has been observed that the HDP nexus has gained global traction and influenced policies and practices in various regions. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, in particular, has witnessed efforts to advance the nexus with initiatives that would promote collaboration in humanitarian, development and peace activities. The nexus approach recognizes that crises are not isolated events but are often interconnected and overlapping. It offers a more holistic and effective response to the crises by acknowledging the links between humanitarian needs, development goals and peacebuilding and preparing relevant actions and activities accordingly. In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on supporting the HDP Nexus in conflict and fragile settings, as this comprehensive approach is particularly relevant in such cases.

Following the summit, the OCHA prepared a document that has been serving as a guidance document on understanding how the nexus works: the NWoW. All aspects that there are to it along with the phases it covers have been explained in the booklet. However, it is seen that the peace component was not taken into consideration at the time as the nexus was initially put out as humanitarian-development nexus. The main purpose of the booklet is to explain the accepted method for humanitarian-development nexus in the WHS of 2016. The booklet started with an introduction part where there is background information regarding the altering necessities of humanitarian aid sector with the emphasis on extended duration of the aid actions in the previous years. It underlined the 2030 SDGs, how it is related to the nexus which largely occupied the agenda of the WHS and how nexus is prepared in absolute commitment to it (NWoW, 2016). In brief explanation of the NWoW, it was stated that the document details how development and humanitarian actors with local cooperation as well should work towards their aim of achieving collective outcomes set for risk and vulnerability reduction of the targeted groups or regions. It was stressed out that this newly adapted method presents a promising path which could be done and measured with concrete means (NWoW, 2016).

In the next “Defining The New Way of Working” part, the paper gives more information about how the method should work (NWoW, 2016, p. 6). Concepts of collective outcome, achievement of vulnerability, need and risk reduction for a targeted group or region; comparative advantage, essence of cooperation between organizations who have had related experiences before; and multi-year timeframe, planning the overall action throughout a specific period of time such as three-six years, were defined as such. Additionally, it was also remarked that the nexus refers to not giving all the responsibility to only one sector, but collaboration between humanitarian and development sectors are needed for this method to work properly. Moreover, the role of the locally working organizations was mentioned as important especially in respect to achieving maximum efficiency and success in the operational part of the programs (NWoW, 2016). Leaning to a more localized response with inclusion of local actors surely is logical as they would be the ones to understand the settings along with affecting factors in the most comprehensive way possible. Moreover, they are advantaged in liaison and logistical terms, two key areas shaping a response’s effectiveness, as they are familiar with the local entities, resources and opportunities. Therefore, their contributions are quite crucial.

In further parts of the paper, the working of the new method is explained with a brief analysis of “Cholera in Haiti” case (NWOW, 2016, p. 9). Is it was induced with this example that, when the case specific context is taken out, the sectoral contribution is narrated in five separate stages respectively: humanitarian, development, government, other related international institutions and civil society. In a process to achieve collective outcome, lifesaving and vulnerability reduction roles are attributed to humanitarian actors while the capacity building and providing essential services are assigned to the development sector. Government’s role was described more of a coordinating authority above all other pieces of the mechanism. Longer term solutions as part of the process, on the other hand, are stated as the responsibility of international partners who are specialized in specific fields such as finance, children, women, refugee etc. Last but not least, civil society’s participation in the process was defined as the labor power of the action that would respond to the cases directly in the local sphere (NWOW, 2016).

The booklet also underlined a set of methodologies for practicing above-described process in the best way possible. In this regard, it pointed out analysis prior to targeted action, planning and programming including a comprehensive framework, leadership and coordination by the related authorities, and financing, which is an important component in terms of realizing the sustainability of the action (NWOW, 2016). It was deducted in the booklet that identifying 'shared achievements' that mitigate risk and enhance resilience is essential for crafting a tangible and measurable contribution to the 2030 SDG Agenda in the coming three-five years ahead of a case. In certain scenarios, establishing a connection between these shared achievements and national strategies for achieving the SDGs, particularly in different sectors such as nutrition, shelter, education, human rights, health and several others, can serve as a clear strategy to synchronize short and medium-term initiatives. This alignment, as reflected in the booklet, aims to drive the most vulnerable populations toward developmental advancements. Acknowledging that the implementation of the NWOW might have different characteristics changing from context to context, the booklet outlined steps as fundamental illustration of how shared achievements can be established and accomplished in dynamic environments. It first suggested that conducting a comprehensive Common Country Analysis by utilizing the information from the HNO and various essential risk and vulnerability assessments as the first step, which aims to attain focus on vulnerability at the household and community levels and to understand the local capabilities to manage identified challenges. Secondly, defining the strategic priority areas within the United Nations Development Assistance

Framework (UNDAF) or equivalent national frameworks aimed at reducing vulnerability in critical domains of risk and susceptibility and establishing connections to SDGs where possible were advised. Identifying practical and achievable measures for significant and tangible declines in humanitarian and development challenges, including needs, risks and vulnerabilities was issued as the third step. It was further mentioned that these should be adopted as shared goals by both humanitarian and development actors with the possibility of translating UNDAF strategic priority areas and country-level SDG targets into action plans which also might involve creating a collaborative framework around each of these objectives. Next, the booklet pointed out that suggesting and aiding for methods to harmonize individual agency projects and work plans, and thus, contributing to the realization of shared objectives would be useful as the fourth step. As the final step, it was suggested that the mobilization of resources to support the achievement of shared goals should be organized, which would guarantee consistent funding for short, medium and long-term initiatives through alternative financing mechanisms over a timeframe of three to five years (NWoW, 2016). Nevertheless, implementation of development programming is also not as easy as reflected in the booklet. A significant reason for this is that development initiatives point to comprehensive plans that will take place as mostly permanent formations which directly affect a state's mid or long-term planning. Therefore, local authorities' consensus is crucial for development initiatives to succeed (Strand, 2020).

Since the Istanbul Summit, there has been an increased focus on peace as an integral part of the nexus. The UN Secretary-General António Guterres prioritized sustainable peace in his agenda, envisioning a UN capable of preventing conflicts by integrating development, human rights, peace and security approaches. Recognizing the significance of conflict resolution and prevention, this inclusion in the nexus aims to address human-made barriers hindering humanitarian needs, poverty reduction and sustainable development. Nonetheless, the relatively short history of peace integration into broader humanitarian and development activities has led to varying interpretations of what peace entails and its implications. Concerns also exist about potential compromises to humanitarian principles of independence and impartiality when engaging with peace processes, raising apprehensions about appearing to support or align with specific groups or solutions (Oxfam, 2019).

2.2. The Peace Component

It would not be inaccurate to claim that the peace component of the HDP nexus is the one that is least clear in the nexus, yet, very crucial (Barakat and Milton, 2020). Acknowledging that peace is an abstract concept such as happiness and justice and its existence can be felt the most when it is absent, Barash and Webel argue that there are two perspectives to peace: positive and negative. In positive peace, it is conditioned that certain concepts should be in place such as harmony, justice, equality and the like. From negative peace perspective, they simply define peace as the state where war is absent (Barash and Webel, 2022). Heavily criticizing the common point of view in the literature of peace and conflict studies, Galtung, on the other hand, intentionally disregards negative terms in his description such as military, violence and conflict. Rather, he emphasized that peace should be defined solely with positive concepts as the term itself implies. He asserts that peace embodies a constructive connection between individuals marked by unity and solidarity. According to Galtung, peace embodies a constructive connection between individuals marked by unity and solidarity. Heavily criticizing the common point of view in the literature of peace and conflict studies, he intentionally disregarded negative terms in his description such as military, violence and conflict. Rather, he emphasized that peace should be defined solely with positive concepts as the term itself implies. Positive concepts such as mutual respect, dignity, equality and reciprocal interactions are encompassed by the prerequisites for attaining peace. This approach takes peace definition from positive peace perspective of Barash and Webel's definition as Galtung stresses that "peace ... is a positive relation between parties, of union, togetherness" (Matyók, Senehi and Byrne, 2011, p. 3).

Certainly, the term peace in its core and its associate terms peacebuilding and peacekeeping are key elements of this study. Understanding these terms' true implications is crucial on understanding the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Peace is a multifaceted concept that surpasses dull absence of conflict in its essence. Harmony, serenity and the well-being of individuals and societies are embodied within it. Conversely, achieving and sustaining peace is quite a complex endeavor. The process requires the active involvement of various stakeholders along with detailed planning and programming. Peacebuilding and peacekeeping are among the practices that are commonly employed within this process. As the nexus highlights the

interdependence between humanitarian assistance, sustainable development and peace efforts, it is also stressed that these concepts derive from each other: development is hindered without peace and sustainable peace is difficult to attain without progress in development. Therefore, comprehending these terms and their interconnectedness is essential for effectively addressing sustainable development.

Peacebuilding refers to the process led by third-party forces that seek implementing peace efforts between confronting parties within a conflict. In other words, peacebuilding is stopping the conflicting parties from fighting each other and bringing peace to a conflict zone driven by external force. As it was described in the Report of the Panel on the United Nations Peace Operations (RPUNPO):

“Peacebuilding is a term of more recent origin that, as used in the present report, defines activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war. Thus, peace-building includes but is not limited to reintegrating former combatants into civilian society, strengthening the rule of law (for example, through training and restructuring of local police, and judicial and penal reform); improving respect for human rights through the monitoring, education and investigation of past and existing abuses; providing technical assistance for democratic development (including electoral assistance and support for free media); and promoting conflict resolution and reconciliation techniques” (RPUNPO, 2000, p. 3).

This report produced by the UN can be considered as a textbook of peace missions and relevant practices employed along. Even though it did not attribute a role or describe any other non-UN way of peacebuilding due to its very nature, certain ways for conducting effective peacebuilding were also studied and given part in the report. It was pointed out that actively engaging with local stakeholders using a comprehensive approach is essential for achieving effective peacebuilding. Empowering the mission to create remarkable improvements in the lives of the local population is also as important in the first stages of a peace mission. It is also a must that the mission leader has certain authority on how the mission budget should be managed such as on the projects that will make quick impacts and positively stipulate on people's life quality. These projects play a vital role in establishing and sustaining the mission's credibility in the eyes of international civil society

that closely watches such cases. Resident coordinator or humanitarian coordinator from the existing UN country team should be on top of these initiatives acting, as the primary advisor guiding main route for the operations, so that efficient resource allocation will be ensured and conflicts with other development or humanitarian programs will be prevented (RPUNPO, 2000).

The second point addressed for effective peacebuilding was addressed on elections that will be held in determining the government in charge in the aftermath of a conflict and so on. It was stated as a must that free and fair elections are seen within the context of broader initiatives which should fortify all governance institutions. The successful conduct of elections is highly dependent on creating an environment where a post-conflict population embraces the ballot as a credible means of expressing their views on governance and so participates in the process in a safe manner. Commitment to democratization and civil society development, effective civilian government, culture of fundamental human rights was also seen imperative to continue in the right direction following the elections. Even if the election process was successful but such true steps were not taken right after, it bears the risk that peace might not be a long-term state in the country as absolute power accumulation on the government might follow which might have serious consequences for minority population retriggering aggression in the country (RPUNPO, 2000).

Thirdly, the argument continued with the role of civilian police appointed for peace missions. It was extended that UN civilian police monitoring missions do not necessarily serve as peacebuilders unless their role is identified beyond documenting or attempting to deter abusive or intolerable behavior by local armed forces such as police or military. This conventional and shallow approach on civilian police capabilities was described as outdated. It was asserted that contemporary missions can and should include task assignments for the civilian police such as reforming, training, and restructuring local police forces to meet international standards for democratic policing and human rights. Certain security equipment, perhaps even heavy or light arms depending on the sensitivity of cases, with the purpose of intimidating potential attackers and enabling to perform effective handling of civil disorder and self-defense situations should also be provided to them. The local courts and the penal system, the backbones of sustaining and securing justice within society, should be structured in such a way that it will be politically impartial and free from intimidation or intervention by any other institutions or individuals. In support of this idea, international judicial experts, penal experts, human rights specialists and civilian police

should be available in sufficient numbers to be deployed and assigned with their respective tasks in a guiding role to strengthen rule of law institutions in cases where it is demanded by peace-building missions. In addition to this, in the times when justice, reconciliation and the fight against freedom are necessary, experts, criminal investigators and forensic specialists should be authorized by the UNSC to back the apprehension and prosecution of individuals indicted for war crimes in collaboration with the UN international criminal tribunals in a just way. It was highlighted that even though the collaborative approach seems as a useful method, nevertheless, the UN has encountered instances in the last decade where the UNSC sanctioned the deployment of several thousand police in a peacekeeping operation while hesitating to include even around twenty five / thirty five criminal justice experts. Additionally, there is a pressing need for a comprehensive understanding and development of the contemporary role of civilian police. It was claimed as necessary action to be focused on that the doctrine through which the UN perceives and employs civilian police in peace operations is in need of major shift. At the same time, it is also obliged that a well-funded team strategy to support the rule of law and human rights are in place involving judicial, penal, human rights and policing experts conducting their respective tasks in a collaborating way in coordination with one another in a joint manner (RPUNPO, 2000).

As another method to enhance peacebuilding efforts in a more effective way, the report presented a fourth recommendation which emphasized the human rights aspect of a peace operation. It was suggested in the report that UN professionals who are specialized and dedicated to human rights could take a leading role, such as taking active part in the implementation of a comprehensive program for national reconciliation efforts. However, the human rights components in peace operations have not consistently received the necessary political and administrative support and their functions have not always clearly understood by other elements because of the fact that the process is intensely political and sensitive in its nature. Consequently, the Panel saw it critical for training military, police and other civilian personnel on human rights issues and the pertinent provisions of international humanitarian law in order to mitigate risky situations. At this point, the Panel underlined the Secretary-General's bulletin with the date of August 6, 1999 and title of "Observance by United Nations forces of international humanitarian law" (ST/SGB/1999/13) (RPUNPO, 2000).

Last but not the least, efforts to sustain stability of the peace and prevent reescalation of the conflicts through disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating formerly fighting individuals in the conflict were attributed significance. This aspect of peacebuilding is directly related with public security and establishment of law and order, contributing to their promotion. It was also emphasized that in order for all these components to work efficiently, not any of them should be disregarded, and therefore, all should be strictly implemented in equal importance. Considering that former combatants who might retain some amounts of weapons used during conflict even after demobilization, it is likely for former combatants to return to violence unless they find legitimate livelihood opportunities, which is crucial in the integration phase. A risk posing aspect in making this work is that the funding for the reintegration element of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration is provided on a voluntary basis, securing necessary initiatives might be insufficient than planned or required (RPUNPO, 2000).

Although there are several approaches to the term's explanation, Roland Paris explained peacebuilding basing it to the first UN peacebuilding initiations after the Cold War with his own interpretation. According to him, with the decrease in tensions between the East (led by the Soviet Union/Russia) and the West (led by the United States) following the Cold War, it was not favorable for both superpowers to provide the same level of military and economic support to their allies as before. This shift in approach was particularly notable in regions that were considered strategically less significant, like sub-Saharan Africa. As a result, international organizations, such as the United Nations, stepped forward for a role in resolving longstanding conflicts. The powers who were previously rivals, with the aim of reducing their costly foreign commitments, decided to delegate responsibilities to international agencies for these tasks (Paris, 2004). Having superiority over one another certainly played a key role in the transition to more diplomatic behaviors in the international arena and particularly in conflict resolution. The UN and other global organizations became more willing and capable of assuming the attributed roles of providing assistance for these new missions. At the same time, a newfound sense of collaboration within the UN Security Council stipulated the possibility of reaching to agreed decisions, in the cases when the consensus was not on the table, they at least put efforts to avoid vetoes, regarding proposals to initiate new operations in countries grappling with civil conflicts or post-conflict recovery (Paris, 2004).

He took the Secretary General of the UN between 1997 – 2006, Kofi Annan's statement on the objective of the UN's peacebuilding efforts. Annan had expressed that the main aim was to establish an environment where peace would last long following the conflict and the enemy groups would no longer seek armed engagements towards each other (Paris, 2004). Thus, peacebuilding bares implications beyond targeting ending an ongoing conflict. With a more comprehensive and multilayered approach, its initial goal is to remove the reasons of the conflict wholly and create a consensus and sustainable peaceful circumstances for all parties involved so that reescalation of aggression would not occur. Despite what is to be achieved is clear, considerations and related actions to be implemented while reaching it are not easy for a mission.

Paris claimed that peacebuilding efforts in UN's definition are made from a liberal perspective. He conveyed that liberalization was required by the efforts on the conflict zones, thus, respective local authorities and resident people. It pointed out to democratization practices such as organizing fair elections for governing the state, establishing solid constitution that draws borders on power of the head of state, clearly grants certain human rights and liberties for people, transforming economy to free market largely limiting state's interference in it (Paris, 2004). In other words, for Paris, peacebuilding was a "social engineering" (Paris, 2004, p. 6) through which it was assumed that all mentioned alterations would create a social cohesion and sustainable prosperity in the economy. This for sure points out the implication that properly planned peace brings development. Nevertheless, considering that this peacebuilding approach is a product of a certain ideology, its working in variety of regions where different ideologies is dominant at the local level is a matter for controversy.

Peacekeeping refers to sustaining a peaceful environment in a post-conflict zone. It does not attribute to the UN as strong roles as in the case of peacebuilding on the executing actors. Their main responsibilities are to observe the post-conflict situation and produce periodical reports, a process which does not include any arm use. Peacekeeping underwent a significant transformation in the 1990s. It shifted from its conventional role of involving military observation of ceasefires and separation of forces after inter-State wars to adopt a more intricate approach. This new approach pointed out joint efforts between military and civilian components, underlining working together to establish peace in the times following civil wars (RPUNPO, 2000).

The Panel touched on a few critical points regarding the perception and implementation of peacekeeping. They are quite useful insights in order to understand potential challenges during peacekeeping processes. It was acknowledged in the report that taking consent of local parties, sustaining impartiality at all costs and limiting use of force exclusively to self-defense cases should remain among the fundamental principles of peacekeeping. Nonetheless, consent might be manipulated by local parties in contemporary peace operations dealing with internal state or transnational conflicts. In accordance with their interests, they might choose to approve the UN presence at some stages while they might tend to change opinion and refuse UN's involvement in the later stages revoking their consent as their interests suggest at the time. Potential changes in the local parties' attitudes being the case, attempts to restrict the operation's movement, adopting a strategy of persistent non-compliance with agreement provisions, or entirely withdraw their consent are possible scenarios to be steered by them. The control over fighting forces, moreover, may be considerably less severe than that of traditional armies despite group leaders' commitment to peace, which might lead to separations not foreseen in the peace agreement under which the UN mission operates. As it was confessed in the report, the UN faced failures in responding to these challenges in its past endeavors. Yet, their report emphasized a crucial premise indicating that the UN must be equipped to address such challenges. UN peacekeepers must carry out their mandate with professionalism and success starting from the time of deployment. Specific attribution was made to preparation of the military units as if they should be ready to operate beyond self-protection covering the security of all other mission components and assets to guarantee mission's success on its mandate (RPUNPO, 2000).

The rules of engagement should be set in such a way that responses to straightforward reciprocity are not restricted while permitting proportional actions to neutralize a threat of deadly force aimed at UN troops or the people under their protection. Importantly, UN assets should not be compelled by rules to surrender the initiative to potential attackers in high-risk situations (RPUNPO, 2000). It follows that defenseless and unarmed civilians are vulnerable to any attacks coming from a third-party. When there are attacks directed towards them, it requires absolute intervention to protect with using whatever means necessary. As it was evident in the series of events in the Bosnia case, it might result in tremendous catastrophe as presence of such authority with the assumed role of guaranteeing the protection of people under their responsibility creates a trust bound with the people protected.

Howard, professor in the field of peace, war and security at the Georgetown University and the President of the Academic Council on the UN System, comprehensively examined the UN peacekeeping. She criticized the defects in the system yet explained its structure along with case studies that she gave place. According to her assertion, most commonly employed approach in peacekeeping is the UN's multidimensional peacekeeping missions. These operations' initial goals are to reconstruct the fundamental institutions of states in the post-civil war period. Political, military, police, refugee, humanitarian, electoral, and frequently human rights elements are incorporated by them. There are no superior international mechanisms that have been devised to restore order in the chaotic atmosphere of civil wars, despite challenges faced by the UN as well as the inherent complexities of peacekeeping. Nonetheless, it is imperative to scrutinize and enhance comprehension of UN role in peacekeeping as it is still the best solid mechanism there is as of now (Howard, 2008).

Another field that is occupied with bringing an explanation to transition phase from conflict to peace with a particular focus on justice and human rights perspective is transitional justice. Transitional justice refers to the set of judicial and non-judicial measures implemented in societies transitioning from conflict or authoritarian rule to address past human rights abuses systematically. As in the words of Beth van Schaack it refers to "the range of measures – judicial and non-judicial, formal and informal, retributive and reconciliatory – that may be employed by societies in response to a legacy of authoritarianism or mass violence following a period of political transition" (Khen, Boms and Ashraph, 2020, p. 243). Providing relevant recovery for victims, identifying the perpetrators and holding them accountable, actualizing societal reconciliation and establishing proper mechanisms and structures to guarantee the rule of law are among the primary objectives of the phase explained by the concept of transitional justice include. There are certain practices that are employed during the phase of transition. The practices used to support the phase are supported by criminal tribunals, truth and reconciliation commissions, recovery programs and institutional reforms. This multi-layered approach aims to constitute a balance between justice and the practicalities of political realities while advancing a transformative process towards a more just and stable society in parallel. As there are parts where peace and transitional justice intersect with each other, familiarizing with the transitional justice concept will contribute to our broader perspective regarding peacebuilding periods. Yet, as it is also not directly related to peacebuilding practices, deeper discussion in the field is not needed for the argument of this thesis.

As interpreted from the literature, activation of peacebuilding efforts for a crisis is highly dependent on the UNSC consensus since it serves as a legitimate authority to carry out this role. In the cases where the UNSC member countries, particularly five permanent members each of whom has the right to veto any decision, dilemmas on how else to reach peace are still inevitable. This is also the case in the NWS. For the cases where the UNSC cannot jointly agree that a civil war is at a very critical level for people that it urgently requires the international community's intervention, the conflicts are either intervened by external powers individually or just left as it is. Adaptable to either case, the UNSC might at least agree on humanitarian action. Yet, since the whole process is highly politicized, there is no standard description on how the humanitarian aid should be conducted for these regions. Terms and conditions for each case is determined uniquely. International humanitarian pressures and common public opinion certainly play a significant role on shaping these rules. Relevant humanitarian agencies along with observing countries carry out advocacy efforts in line with their own specialization or agenda.

2.3. The Case of Bosnia from the Peace Perspective

We have witnessed many real-life experiences where peace efforts have been put through serious test. Although these operations' success rate is a controversial issue, there are lessons to be learned from every case even with their failures. Yet, due to the complicated and politicized nature of the conflicts, applying what has been learnt from the history might not be as easy as it seems. In order to have a broader perspective in understanding peace efforts' nature and make accurate projections and assumptions for other ongoing or potential cases, different case types in terms of the parties involved, geography, local culture and political situation and conclusion of the cases should be analyzed. In consideration of this, this study takes the Bosnia case into investigation. Bosnia is taken as a case where the peace efforts were carried out and brought to conclusion by international institutions such as the UN and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Although their respective interventions and their effectiveness had both negative and positive echoes across the world, still the history was marked by the story of this case in terms of the peace related engagements to be used in conflict cases. Considering the essence of this case in peace studies and that the peace engagements in the NWS have been a mixture of both similar and new types of

peace responses, learning about it will certainly enlarge our vision, which will help us better understand the situation in the NWS along with peace aspect of the HDP nexus.

Roland narrated the Bosnian case taking it from the time when the war escalated at first as this study will in order to draw a broad picture first to be able to make sense out of the peace efforts conducted. Getting familiarized with the main events and key actors who took part in the conflict will provide a solid background to be able make sense of the peace practices employed. The conflicts in the former Yugoslavia were first sparked in June 1991 when Slovenia and Croatia declared independence, which caused emergence of a short conflict in Slovenia and a relatively longer one in Croatia, where ethnic Serb militias supported by the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) clashed against Croatian nationalist forces. A cease-fire in Croatia was arranged at the end of 1991 after some more intense clashes in the province, at which point Serb militias and the JNA were in control of a significant portion of the Croatian territory. The UNSC formed the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in February 1992 with a mandate to monitor the cease-fire in Croatia. Having the proper environment ready, Bosnia held a referendum for independence in March 1992. Division along ethnic lines had been created as a result: Muslims and Croats on one side and the Serbs on the other. The Bosnian Serb armed group whom Serbia backed initiated cruel attacks on Muslims and Croats in the areas where Serbs dominated. These attacks were brutal extending beyond ethnic cleansing through extensive practices of torture, rape, forced movements and cruel execution in masses. A very large population of innocent and non-armed Muslim Bosnians experienced the beyond-savage actions of Bosnian Serb militias. More than half of Bosnia's population was forcibly displaced due to these ruthless and organized ethnic cleansing campaigns conducted throughout the conflict. Nearly nine hundred thousand people out of the original population of over four million had become refugees whereas over one million of them became IDPs (Cutts, 1999). Worst part of the cruelty was that non-armed people in safe zones were targeted in front of the eyes of whole world. In the following stage, in spite of the fact that Muslims and Croats collaborated in the first phases, they later turned against each other which turned to a full-scale civil war that lasted until the late 1995. Serbian forces were more advantaged in terms of the military throughout the conflict. They managed to gain control over seventy percent of the Bosnian territory thanks to this advantage (Paris, 2004).

Given the outline of the conflicts among Muslims, Croats and Serbs, and extraordinary course of human cruelty, international civil society's role and actions disappointed all. Beyond the failure of participation of the collective international institutions such as the UN in the crisis was also highlighted by Howard, calling it "the collapse of the multidimensional UNPROFOR" (Howard, 2008, p. 43). The UN intervened in the Bosnian war by deploying peacekeeping forces to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and safeguard designated safe areas starting in 1992. This mission, which was conducted as an extension of the ongoing UNPROFOR operation in Croatia, faced serious challenges as Bosnian Serb forces blockaded and eventually plundered two safe areas, which were the Muslim towns of Srebrenica and Zepa. In parallel, international attempts to mediate negotiation for a consensus alongside the UN mission repeatedly failed to secure agreement among the conflicting parties. Due to not being willing to leave the areas that were ethnically cleansed by the Serbs, the Bosnian Muslims kept out from peace proposals including such indications. On the other hand, the Bosnian Serbs who had dominance over the battlefield were also distant to negotiating peace. Peace not reached yet, Croats and Muslims initiated a joint offensive in the summer of 1995 to retake the territories occupied by the Bosnian Serbs since 1992. After having their hands weakened, Serbs came to the point where they were ready to accept negotiating peace (Paris, 2004).

US led mediation talks with the parties in November 1995 in Dayton, Ohio. Following three weeks of intense negotiations, the initialing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, commonly referred as the Dayton Accord, was agreed. The accord comprised eleven annexes where the responsibilities of Bosnian parties and international agencies overseeing implementation were outlined. National elections for pan-Bosnian political institutions, a three-member presidency and a bicameral parliament, ethnic subunits dividing the country based on a detailed map were among the important topics that were mandated by the agreement. The agreement formed the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina for areas controlled by Muslims and Croats and Republika Srpska for the areas under Serb control. Both states were also designated with democratically elected institutions, draft constitution and federal powers as defined in the parts of the accord. Another important aspect about the agreement was that it had items forcing the permanent cease-fire, withdrawing military forces from a designated separation zone, negotiating military force limits, ensuring civilian movement, facilitating refugee return and cooperating in

investigation and prosecution of war crimes (Paris, 2004). This initiation was a practice exercised to sustain peace in the region.

It was claimed by the peace-forcing powers that the Dayton Accord aimed to transform Bosnia into a liberal democracy to remove the risk of conflict from reescalation. However, there were also economic implications among the institutions, which indicates that the only aim was not only peace but also from an economic perspective. It was explicitly stated in the preamble of the newly prepared constitution that having democratic governmental institutions and fair procedures is significant in achieving peaceful relations in a pluralist society. It was agreed by the involved parties and given part in the constitution that Bosnia should operate as a democratic state under the rule of law which would be endorsed by guaranteeing free and democratic elections. As a guarantee particularly for all ethnic divisions, parties of the agreement also committed to the protection of the civil liberties of all individuals in Bosnia. These liberties included but were not limited to freedom of expression, assembly, movement, thought, conscience and religion. As another trait that indicates the transformation towards a liberal-oriented state from an economic aspect as well, the Accord expressed the parties' commitment to developing welfare and economic growth ensuring the protection of private property and promoting a market economy. It was also agreed that the IMF was to appoint the first president of the Bosnia's new central bank, by which it was planned that market-oriented economic policies would be implemented effectively (Paris, 2004).

To oversee matters such as military aspects, election security, refugee allocation and aid responses in the peace era, International Force (IFOR) under NATO was among significant peacekeeping related initiatives established by the Dayton Agreement. It was also confirmed that UNPROFOR was to be replaced by unarmed police monitors for civilian law enforcement training. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) was involved in parallel to supervise elections, monitor whether there are any violations regarding human rights and assist in arms-related negotiations. UNHCR is among the external institutions that were tasked as they were mandated by the agreement responsible to create a recovery plan for the refugees. The transfer of authority between UNPROFOR and IFOR was formally realized in December 1995. Right after assuming the authority, IFOR cleared the four-kilometer buffer zone with a successful attempt in January 1996, redeploying Bosnian forces and demobilizing around three hundred thousand

fighters eventually, although there was persistent resistance by the Bosnian Serbs during the process (Paris, 2004).

A new status quo agreed by all fighting parties was eventually reached. The intervention might be considered as a gradual success from this point of view. Nevertheless, the cost of coming to this point of agreement was too high due to large numbers of innocent civilian casualties and beyond extreme cruelty imposed to Bosnian families, the case is far from ever being labelled as a success. One of the most striking points of failure is that all these cruelties were watched by the international society, with the UN and NATO taking the lead in the first rows. Although there were thousands of security personnel deployed under UNPROFOR, which reached nearly thirty thousand until the peace agreement (Cutts, 1999), and mandated for the peacekeeping in the field, particularly in the areas declared as safe areas with authorization to use force in defense of them, no solid action when needed was taken for the sake of protecting the innocent civilians. There are several accusations and assumptions why the UN failed executing what should have been done in the right place at the right time. Was it that people who were responsible in the decision making of the method of the peacekeeping in Bosnia lacked sufficient experience, knowledge and competence to not foresee what was about to happen despite all personnel appointed in the field and report flow which was constant; or, was it that the political context was too fragile so that decision-makers, who were after liberal expansion, hesitated to order a direct intervention as they were intimidated by a possible failure that would complicate the region where was being taken away from the socialist influence following the Soviet dissolution; or was it that certain group of people were hated because of their ethnic and cultural identities by certain group of people who were in charge of leading the security forces in the field for peacekeeping? The most concerning part about these questions are that there were implications in the case for each of them. This sad and unfortunate chain of incidents certainly became a turning point for international civil society. This interpretation does not imply that UN's efforts were none discrediting the hard work of the field staff in such difficult conditions from reporting to delivering humanitarian aid, rather that UN is to be blamed for certain non-action occasions causing a tragic example ethnic cleansing and genocide in human history.

The international community still witnessed certain patterns in terms of how to approach dealing with complex conflicts and humanitarian crisis. Different levels of peace interventions

were applied in different stages of the civil conflict in Bosnia. As it can be inferred from the peace efforts, perhaps not limited to, authorization of third-party organizations such as UNPROFOR and NATO, initiating negotiations, advocacy works to direct the attention and influence of international society, establishment of safe areas / no-fly zones, monitoring, coordination and mediation are the prominent ones that have been applied throughout the crisis. Not getting into a comparison argument in terms of measuring their efficiency, all these played vital roles aiming to protect civilian lives, create spaces for them to refuge and deliver basic humanitarian assistance to the people in need.

Authorization of neutral field forces for solely peaceful reasons has proven to be a key practice in conflicts. UNPROFOR, which was already present in the region having been deployed for the conflict in Croatia recently, was expanded in its mandate and strength for the crisis arose in Bosnia to ensure the security and operation of Sarajevo's airport, facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid to the city and its surroundings in mid-1992. Around this time, NATO's involvement with the crisis also started (NATO's Role in Bosnia and the Dayton Peace Accords, 1997). By September 1992, UNPROFOR's mandate was further broadened to support UNHCR's humanitarian relief efforts across Bosnia and Herzegovina and to safeguard convoys of released civilian detainees at the request of the ICRC. In collaboration with NATO, UNPROFOR also monitored the no-fly zone in Bosnia, as well as UN-designated safe areas around five Bosnian towns and Sarajevo. Although UNPROFOR was authorized to use force against attacks on these areas, and NATO having power to do the same, such engagement was not exercised by either in the most brutal times of the massacres. In the later stages, it was observed that UNPROFOR still remained away from using force and rather collaborated with NATO when there was need for use of force such as air strikes. Additionally, numerous cease-fire agreements between the Bosnian Government and Bosnian Serb forces were also overseen by the UNPROFOR, effective from January 1, 1995 (United Nations Protection Force, 1996).

Another technique was initiating frequent and intense negotiations with the parties individually. This step is important in regard that it provides initial lines of leverages, objectives and red lines that parties have. Effective negotiation is very determinant on the fate of conflicts and affected people. Even if the conflicts continue, negotiation should also continue in parallel for the sake of peace and preventing catastrophe. All parties one way or another involved and have

demonstrated a certain capacity of making impact in a conflict should be approached even if it must be through unofficial channels, without any concern of giving legitimacy as unofficial contacts would not imply such understanding. The timing of initiating negotiation processes is also vital in saving lives. Later the negotiation is initiated, and more civilian lives are likely to be lost within a conflict.

A diverse array of actors participated in the negotiation processes. UN through its specialized agencies such as UNSC, UNPROFOR, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, NATO, ICRC, European Union (EU) and Western European Union was among the actors involved in the negotiations at the international level. At the local level, besides the main actors of the conflict, there were several impacting parties from both Bosnian and Bosnian Serb sides mainly as government agencies. These stakeholders engaged in multiple interactions, encompassing meetings, briefings, conferences and discussions for negotiations. Most of the time and energy were concentrated on managing extensive written communication exchanged between these parties. A spectrum of content such as requests, complaints, explanations, denunciations, warnings, reports, updates, analyses, proposals, agreements, action plans and legal documents were among this correspondence. Negotiation was also applied during the entire process of preparing, reviewing, disseminating and addressing these materials across various levels (Cutts, 1999).

Without establishing and activating proper coordination channels through which vital information flow is communicated and sustained among key actors including the warring parties, chaotic environment will dominate crises leading to vast levels of human suffering and other complications and thus making the peacebuilding course last longer. Consequently, coordination is also a prerequisite for peace making processes. Several factors that can influence the efficiency and functioning of coordination can be observed from the Bosnia case. One of them is different agendas and interests among not only conflicting parties but also intervening organizations such as UN and NATO. While one decision might be appealing for one, the other might consider an opposing argument more favorable. Besides this, even UN agencies themselves have gone through such disputes among each other. Cutts narrated "Internal conflicts within the UN itself were common. An instance involved the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, suspending UNHCR operations in Bosnia in 1993. This decision was swiftly overturned by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali, leading to the resumption of humanitarian activities"

(Cutts, 1999, p. 5). Another factor is the harsh conflict environment with lack of means to communicate and coordinate. Such environments particularly impose technical challenges on relevant personnel to carry out their work in the field. Additionally, not having self-safety and security during clashes, their involvement is very limited which undermines them to maintain a healthy coordination. Lack of will for cooperation between warring parties and peace-making organizations is another significant problem which might be come across during conflicts as had been in Bosnia case. Bosnian Serbs, having a hostile attitude against the third-party personnel in the field for peace efforts, made it difficult for them to carry out their relevant works. Not sharing accurate information to feed proper coordination is aside, there were cases where relevant personnel were captured as hostages by the Bosnian Serbs. “The Bosnian Serbs, in particular, were very hostile to UNPROFOR after it called for punitive NATO air-strikes against them” as reflected by Cutts (Cutts, 1999, p. 9).

Creating safe areas was another method used to sustain a peaceful environment at some levels so that human suffering could have been alleviated at a point. Normally, if these safe areas were secured and guarded as they were mandated to be, it might have been a notable method to create a peaceful solution at a certain level in the middle of the crisis. Hence, the theoretical version of the idea of applying safe areas can be considered as a peace component. As McQueen claimed, the concept of a safety zone was first used during the Franco-Prussia war in late 19th century. Henry Dunant, founder father of the Red Crescent Red Cross Movement, suggested in his letter to the Prussian Empress that designation of some regions as neutral should be declared so that those places would be used for local civilians to take refuge and treat wounded (McQueen, 2005). The idea was later placed in the Geneva Conventions as demilitarized zones. According to the Article 60 of the 1977 Geneva Protocol I, conflicting parties were prohibited from any forms of hostilities in areas declared as demilitarized zones where all combatants were evacuated and all military operations were cleared off (Geneva Protocol I, 1977). In the Bosnia case, in line with the purpose of Article 60, safe areas and no-fly zones were issued by the UNSC starting with the resolution 819 in 1993 following the Srebrenica siege (McQueen, 2005).

In the last phase of most conflicts, mediation can be viewed as peacemaking practice. In the cases where conflicting parties fail to find a common ground that will stop the fighting and bring peace, a need for involvement of a third party might arise. External support initiates, conducts and

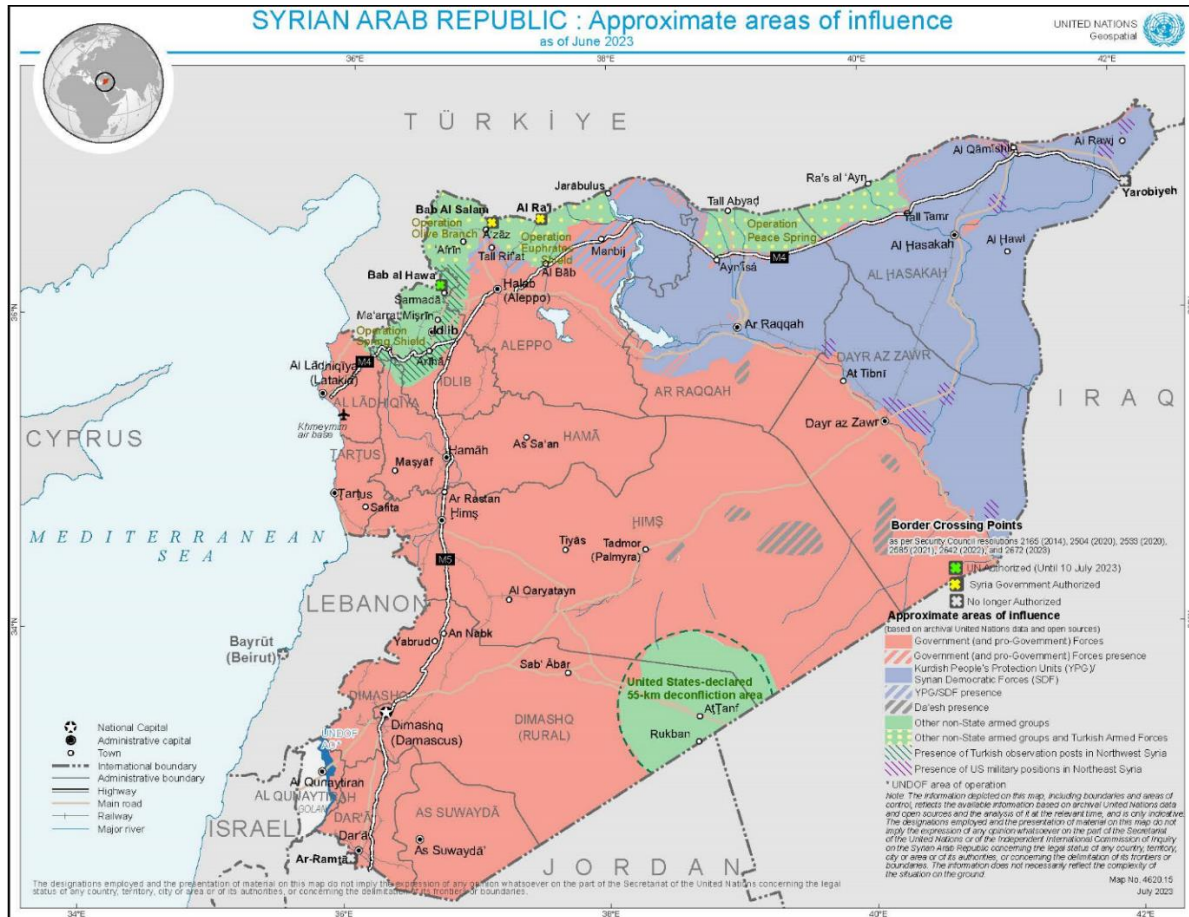
successfully concludes a peace process. Consequently, what is commonly viewed as a two-sided negotiation evolves into a three-sided process, involving at least one-third party that facilitates the mediation between conflicting parties. In such instances, leaders from external societies that are not part of the conflict provide intermediary assistance to unite adversaries, aiming to reach an agreeable resolution, ultimately ending violence and facilitating compromises on the issues (Ginty and John, 2022). Such as the role that the US assumed in the end of the conflict in Bosnia which was concluded in Dayton with a peace accord.

Overall, the efficiency and effectiveness of the peace practices that were employed as different types of intervention activities in different times throughout the Bosnia civil war are still a topic of debate even today. We can talk about two ends of measuring it: one is civilian casualties; and the other is peaceful solutions whether partial or ultimate. When the former was scrutinized, a dark reality that the people had to experience in such huge numbers strikes us so hard that no other aspect can make this case considered as a success story whatsoever. But, on the other hand, the efforts that have been employed are important in the sense that they might be examined and learned from to be developed and projected in other modalities.

2.4. The Case of the NWS: the Background, the Major events and the Key Actors

This section is comprised of two parts. Since understanding the situation in the NWS, the HDP nexus analysis and the peace component's place in all these between 2020 and 2023 lies on mastering at least the major events throughout the crisis along with the key actors who took an active part in it in a certain level as the first part. All aspects across the whole of Syria are examined without any particular focus on a specific region or actor covering the all period since the outbreak of the crisis. The chain of events and involved actors will be taken without much deep interpretation in order to demonstrate an objective understanding. In the second part, specifically the humanitarian situation in the NWS from 2020 and 2023 will be given place. Relevant facts and data will be analyzed to make sense of them from a humanitarian perspective. The general picture of the situation in the NWS, humanitarian context, constraints on HDP nexus and major peace efforts will comprise the main direction for this part.

Map 1. Syrian Arab Republic: Approximate areas of influence, UN IICISAR, June 2023



Multiple Middle Eastern and North African countries experienced an unfolding of unrest starting in February 2011. Syrian people were among the ones who took part in this storm. Issues such as rural poverty, corruption, political prisoners' detention and the absence of democratic rights and freedom of expression were the main drivers of motivation behind their cause. The situation escalated in March when a group of children in Dar'a was taken and subjected to detention and torture for painting anti-government graffiti. This event triggered additional protests in the city. A few more cruel police practices upon protesters led to the expansion of the protests spreading all over the country. The government's response emerged as widespread arrests, ground operations and checkpoint actions, as well as attacks on demonstrators. Attention from the international public opinion grew subsequently. Although the Syrian government promised reforms to be done to a certain extent in 2011, brutal suppression to demonstrations and activists continued. The detachments from the military and other governmental security forces contributed to the rise of

anti-government armed groups that had enhanced organizational and logistical capabilities. During this period, the Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (RIICISAR) had already documented severe human rights violations, crimes against humanity by government forces and a range of human rights abuses by non-state armed groups (RIICISAR, 2021).

Brief attempts of initiating ceasefire and the UN monitoring missions in 2012 did not end the protracted conflict. Additional armed groups and the imposition of sieges emerged as government forces conducted extensive arrest and detention campaigns. Diverse armed groups with opposite interests and ideologies came to be supported by numerous states and other third-party entities/people. This certainly even catalyzed the fragmentation, competition and swinging alliances and hostilities among armed groups. Government of Syria was also supported by external forces being provided with security and military assets. All these caused to increasing and spreading militarization of the crisis. First reports of civilian casualties due to aerial shelling and artillery attacks started to be seen in 2012 (RIICISAR, 2021).

After armed groups that were designated as terrorist organizations by the UN gained control over several settlements in Syria between 2012 and 2016, the Syrian government, in response, employed sieges and conducted bombardments in areas where opposition activity was suspected without considering whether they were intensely populated areas or not. The fact that the government forces began to be supported by Iranian Republican Guard forces, Lebanese Hezbollah and Iraqi Shi'a militias was not enough on changing the course of the conflict. Control of cities such as Eastern Aleppo, parts of Homs, Idlib, Raqqah, Dayr al-Zawr and Dar'a, along with multiple areas in Rif Damashq, including eastern Ghutah, among others were seized by a number of armed opposition groups. It was observed that these armed groups went through several changes, such as internal conflicts, separations, name changes or establishing new alliances in the following stages of the conflict. In mid-2012, Kurdish People's Protection (KPP) units took over the control of the Northeast Syria (NES) after the government forces had to withdraw from the region, becoming the major armed actor in the region until the emergence of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (RIICISAR, 2021).

Other groups emerged in the civil war, claiming lands in different parts of the Syrian Arab Republic. Jabhat al-Nusra, founded as a group formed in close relation with Al-Qaida in Iraq, came

to the stage in 2012. ISIL was also expanding, particularly in the Eastern part, with the claim of caliphate throughout 2014. Armed non-state actors on one hand, some state actors increased their involvement in the crisis as well. Led by the US and several European allies, International Coalition was established in 2014. The main objective of this formation of the coalition was declared as to combat ISIL. The alliance later launched military operations towards ISIL forces in both Syria and Iraq. The Russian Federation and Türkiye, not taking sides with the coalition forces despite their collaboration on the attacks against ISIL, got also involved in the war siding with the government for former while opposition groups in Northern part of the country for the latter upon their invitation respectively (RIICISAR, 2021). As the parties' combats got more intense, their destruction to environment and harm to surrounding people also amplified. Chemical weapons, air strikes and artillery bombardments were several extreme methods that caused many civilian casualties.

Due to continuously worsening humanitarian conditions and consequent international pressure, the Resolution 2165 was issued by the UNSC in 2014, which permitted the utilization of four international border crossings for humanitarian aid (Resolution 2165, 2014). As of July 2020, however, this number was diminished to authorization of solely one crossing point in Resolution 2533 in 2020, although the humanitarian crisis was still at extreme levels. Constant governmental administrative constraints hampered the access of people in recaptured areas to humanitarian assistance (RIICISAR, 2021). In this case, with the lack of humanitarian-development aspects, it can be seen clearly that having the peace component on its own in the crisis times might not be enough to alleviate human suffering. This is why all the components of the nexus should be exercised as they are tied to each other in a steel manner.

As a major turning point in the civil war, control of Idlib was seized by armed groups in March 2015. This caused mass displacement of civilians that were resident in the region. Afterwards, Russia, backing the Syrian government, initiated airstrikes helping the recapture of some of the lost areas in the country, which expanded destruction and sorrow for people in this area, Idlib became a safe place to refuge by the civilians who fled from the conflict zones and/or from specific groups due to their unliked ethnicities by the dominant identity/culture. Hay'at Tahrir Al-Sham (HTS), another non-state armed group that took part in the seizing of Idlib from the government forces, gained prominence Idlib Governorate over time. As of today, they are still the group that

has control of the Idlib region (RIICISAR, 2021). The fact that there was a specific area with relatively less violence comparing to other areas constituted exercise of peace which allowed the flow of humanitarian assistance.

The KPP units, backed by the international coalition, successfully seized substantial territory from ISIL in the NES. Later, in 2015, as fractions of armed groups were forging their powers, KPP as well with their allies from Arab and Assyrian armed groups joining transformed into the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). Subsequently, they continued their march and gained control over an area covering parts in the NES alongside the southern border of Türkiye which comprised Ayn al-Arab (Aleppo) and Tall Abyad (Raqqa) by the end of 2015. Having SDF and ISIL forces settled near in its southern border, whom are categorized as terrorists by the Turkish government, Türkiye initiated the first of their four major operations in August 2016. Through the cross-border Operation Euphrates Shield, Turkish troops and affiliated Free Syrian Army (FSA) groups penetrated predominantly ISIL-controlled areas in northern Aleppo Governorate (RIICISAR, 2021). This was also an important mark in the course of the civil war in terms of its essence in creating peaceful zones for people to refuge and get humanitarian assistance, which was claimed by the government of Türkiye as a main objective of the operation. By April 2017, the Turkish Armed Forces and the FSA groups successfully secured an area located in I'zaz, Jarabulus and Bab triangle (RIICISAR, 2021).

The Syrian Government reclaimed eastern Aleppo which marked another pivotal moment in the civil war. An evacuation agreement between government forces and armed groups were reached in mid-December following the destruction of most of eastern Aleppo because of the shelling and airstrikes launched by the Syrian government. In compliance with the agreement, the remaining fighters, their families and other willing civilians in the area were transported to Idlib Governorate on government buses. With this event, a phase of government consolidation and the implementation of reconciliation agreements have been initiated which is beyond the strategic value of regaining control over a major city. These agreements led to population movements across various locations in Syria throughout 2017 and 2018, most of them being towards the Idlib region (RIICISAR, 2021).

Although there was still escalation of conflicts due to continuing partial power struggles, not only between the local parties of the war but also external forces as in the case of attacks towards

certain Syrian government facilities with the accusation of containing chemical weapons by a group of states comprised of the United States (US), France, the United Kingdom (UK) and Northern Ireland in 2017, extensity, intensity and frequency of the conflicts came to follow a decline. Owing to this trend, along with agreements, cease-fires and UN resolutions, humanitarian aid delivery was able to be reached to people in need in the region as affected populations concentrated in certain designated areas. The trend towards more peace was exercised by several external actors. With the gradual aim of achieving permanent peace in long term but at least partial peace in the short term, Türkiye, Russia and Iran initiated Astana (presently changed as Nur-Sultan) Peace Talks in May 2017 in the capital of Kazakhstan. One of the agreements in these talks was establishing a ceasefire and designating "de-escalation zones" in four regions. Certain level of reduction in violence in some areas such as Idlib, western Aleppo, and Dar'a was sustained by this agreement while instability continued to remain in eastern Damascus and northern Homs. Fighters and civilians were compelled to either pledge loyalty and reconcile with the Government side or undergo relocation to Idlib Governorate through reconciliation agreements in the areas where the Syrian government gained control following the agreement in Nur-Sultan. Negotiations and reconciliation processes led to the removal of the armed groups in Dar'a while the Government took back eastern Ghutah in 2018, by which a prolonged five-year siege came to an end (RIICISAR, 2021).

SDF and the international coalition forces led by US took over Raqqa in 2017 which was de facto capital of the ISIL. Nevertheless, this operation damaged the city in a great deal which caused numerous civilian casualties along with the evacuation of many of the survivors in thousands. A sharp decline in the territorial dominance of ISIL was forced after ISIL stronghold Baghuz was also taken from them in March 2019. Following these operations, thousands of Syrian and Iraqi people among which there are foreign fighters, women and children were taken captive and placed in camps most of whom are still there under SDF control (RIICISAR, 2021). During this period, the SDF experienced a setback as it lost control of the Afrin region. Türkiye, bothered after observing the expansion and strengthening of SDF along its border, initiated another cross-border military campaign called Operation Olive Branch in early 2018 with their newly formed ally Syrian National Army (SNA). Türkiye's suppression towards this region in order to weaken the SDF power in the region continued with the Operation Peace Spring in October 2019, after which territory between Tall Abyad and Ra's al-Ayn along the border was captured by the SNA

(RIICISAR, 2021). Stopping SDF was highly critical to Turkish government as they claimed that SDF possessed strong threat to Türkiye's national security not only due to their closeness to the border but also particularly due to their ties with the terrorist organization PKK operating inside Türkiye.

Tragically, despite the regional peace efforts initiated in the Astana agreement and established observation posts as mandated to monitor the Idlib de-escalation zone, conflict emerged from late 2019 to early 2020. Pro-government forces made advancements out of this conflict. They employed airstrikes and artillery attacks after which approximately 960,000 civilians were displaced mostly towards northern Idlib and Aleppo in the NWS. Türkiye, having had to let millions of fleeing Syrian refugees in throughout the civil war, launched the Operation Spring Shield in February 2020 with the objective of ending the Syrian government's attacks and thus preventing more refugees fleeing towards Türkiye. Eventually, not long after, parties agreed on a ceasefire with Türkiye and Russia leading the way (RIICISAR, 2021).

In the latest situation, Syrian government forces and associated militias with the support of Iranian and Russian forces have reclaimed considerable territory. On the other hand, they still do not have the control over a large portion of the Syrian territory due to the ongoing presence of several opposition groups distinctly backed by Türkiye and US. Exercise of patrols in certain de facto borders within the Syrian territory was agreed and carried out jointly between Turkish, Russian and US military personnel even though each of them supports different parties in the field (RIICISAR, 2021). This practice was a strong demonstration of collaboration by the externally involved parties playing guarantor role on the ground, as Syrian territory hosts five active foreign military forces.

2.5. The NWS in the 2020-2023 Period

NWS refers to the approximate areas of influence by the opposition, which corresponds to nearly ten percent of the country, and involves the parts of Idlib and Aleppo as shown in the Map 1. HTS, a political and armed Sunni Islamist organization, controls the Idlib governorate and parts of the northern countryside of Aleppo, while the Turkish-backed FSA is in charge in the areas in

the north and northeast of the Aleppo governorate. These areas host most of the IDPs, and thus, have been targeted by the major portion of the humanitarian assistance crossed from Türkiye.

The conflicts that originated in late 2019 continued into 2020 particularly until March, causing severe effects for local communities. In the meantime, significant depopulation was witnessed by approximately 100 communities in southeast Idlib and western Aleppo in the NWS following the change in the controlling authorities in the region. This case was also observed in some neighboring parts of Aleppo where residents fled to some other places. Since there were access problems towards these conflict areas, people who stayed faced extreme vulnerability. Airstrikes and shelling damaged ten healthcare facilities; at least seventy two hospitals and healthcare centers in Idlib and Aleppo governorates ceased, suspended, or scaled back operations due to insecurity or mass displacement by February. These all led to serious shortages on life-saving aid services towards people in need. Not having local capacities, humanitarian assistance became the main source of their needs (SCHF 2020 Annual Report, 2021).

Based on the data provided by the Global Peace Index (GPI), Syria ranked as the second least peaceful country globally in 2020. Regardless of this, a notable decrease in active hostilities was evident following the March 2020 Idlib ceasefire agreement between Russia and Türkiye. Consequently, fighting reduced substantially compared to prior terms, which also had a positive impact on slowing displacement movements. Drastically, areas of control have remained unchanged for twelve consecutive months for the first time since the outbreak of the crisis. It was also monitored that casualties were measured in their lowest levels since 2011. Nevertheless, the humanitarian situation did not immediately get better due to the persistent negative consequences of over ten years of violence in the region. The security landscape remains unstable and prone to escalation particularly in regions with mixed or disputed control and near frontline areas even though there was an overall reduction in hostilities (HNO 2021, 2021).

Syria went through increasingly severe humanitarian crisis denoted by continuing hostilities, significant displacements, rough winter conditions and escalating needs as the conflict extended into its ninth year in 2020. The situation degraded due to increased violence and constantly changing frontlines. This posed direct risks to vulnerable populations which resulted in widespread displacements in the first months of the year (SCHF 2020 Annual Report, 2021). Syria's population was around 22 million before the onset of the civil war. As of January 2021, in contrast, over half

of this pre-war population fled. Out of this displacement, approximately 6.2 million were IDPs, while 5.3 million were officially registered as refugees in mostly neighboring countries (RIICISAR, 2021). Urgent, concerted efforts are needed to advance a lasting ceasefire and a sincere peace process, as the risks of escalation of conflicts remain. This uncertainty itself still has severe negative impacts on the Syrian people as it inhibits development and even humanitarian service. In parallel with this, Amro Halima, Protection Consultant in UNICEF Gaziantep Office, reflected on the situation stating “Having uncertain situation in NWS Syria has always been the biggest challenge into providing sustainable access to services for the beneficiaries, where the refugee communities are on constant movement and enduring multiple displacements within NWS region. The lack of flexibility of the designed projects is one of the main challenges that stands in the way of proper service provision where it is not quick enough to reflect the changes in the security changes on the ground” (A. Halima, November 13, 2023).

The ongoing humanitarian needs in Syria stem from the prevailing impact of this long-lasting conflict and the hardships that came along with it which were exacerbated by economic challenges and legal restrictions that limit people's rights. Numerous civilian casualties and the displacement of around 1 million people occurred after the violence escalated in NWS in December 2019 - February 2020 period resulted in many civilian casualties and the displacement of one million people. The COVID-19 pandemic, on the other hand, has further worsened the situation, caused an extensive socio-economic impact by diminishing livelihood opportunities, distorting markets, heightening protection risks such as gender-based violence for women and children and disrupting access to basic services. Rising food insecurity, in unprecedented levels, socio-economic problems, severe effects of the pandemic and regional economic crises exacerbated the humanitarian crisis in across Syria (SCHF 2020 Annual Report, 2021).

Up until 2021, over 2.7 million individuals faced displacement in NWS, 1.6 million out of which turning into IDPs residing in 1,302 designated sites. Many people had to seek refuge in damaged or incomplete structures, public facilities such as mosques and schools, custom-made makeshift shelters in various locations such as roadsides, under olive trees or other available spaces. They literally sheltered any place they could find. The intense influx of IDPs across Aleppo and Idlib governorates exacerbated challenges for host communities, placed an immense burden on already inadequate basic services and infrastructure and surpassed their capacities. Women and

children constituted more than 80 percent of the affected population (SCHF 2020 Annual Report, 2021).

One of the most critical incidents of 2020 was undoubtedly the outbreak of the COVID-19 as it was across the globe. The humanitarian situation was affected substantially in a negative way owing to the pandemic, which came along with new humanitarian needs and requirements, aggravating the existing ones. Measures such as movement restrictions and constraints on commercial activities were implemented to curb the virus's transmission. This also was another driver that amplified the demand for humanitarian aid and had harmful consequences on the economy. Key humanitarian operations were organized as well as relevant protocols to minimize the risks (SCHF 2020 Annual Report, 2021).

When the humanitarian funds channeled through UN, which is overlooked by the Syria Cross-Border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF), is examined, it is observed that there was notable increase in the donor contributions in 2020. With a 15 percent increase in comparison to 2019, a total of \$155.1 million was donated throughout the year. The SCHF is the largest Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) country-based pooled fund (CBPF). Fifteen donor countries contributed to the fund in 2020. These contributors included Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Republic of Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Qatar, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK. With the added fund, the SCHF achieved a balance of \$210.2 million available for allocation for the year 2020 as it had transferred \$55.1 million remaining funds from 2019. Six allocations in total value of \$185.9 million were allocated throughout 2020 under SCHF (SCHF 2020 Annual Report, 2021).

SCHF is not the only means of funding for the humanitarian operations in NWS. Countries, governmental, non-governmental and private organizations and individuals often might tend to fund the humanitarian efforts in Syria with their direct endeavors. This funding is transferred through UN agencies, INGOs, local NGOs and other relevant parties. Since the data on funding is not clear by the category of region, overviewing the whole of Syria funding flow data might be useful to have a more accurate idea on the total funding targeting the NWS, bearing in mind that most of the humanitarian operations targeting Syria is focused on the NWS region despite uncertain distinction. According to the data obtained from the OCHA Financial Tracking Service

(FTS), the humanitarian funding used for Syria in 2020 was \$2.35 billion despite the required funding was assessed to be US\$3.82 billion (OCHA FTS Syrian Arab Republic, 2020).

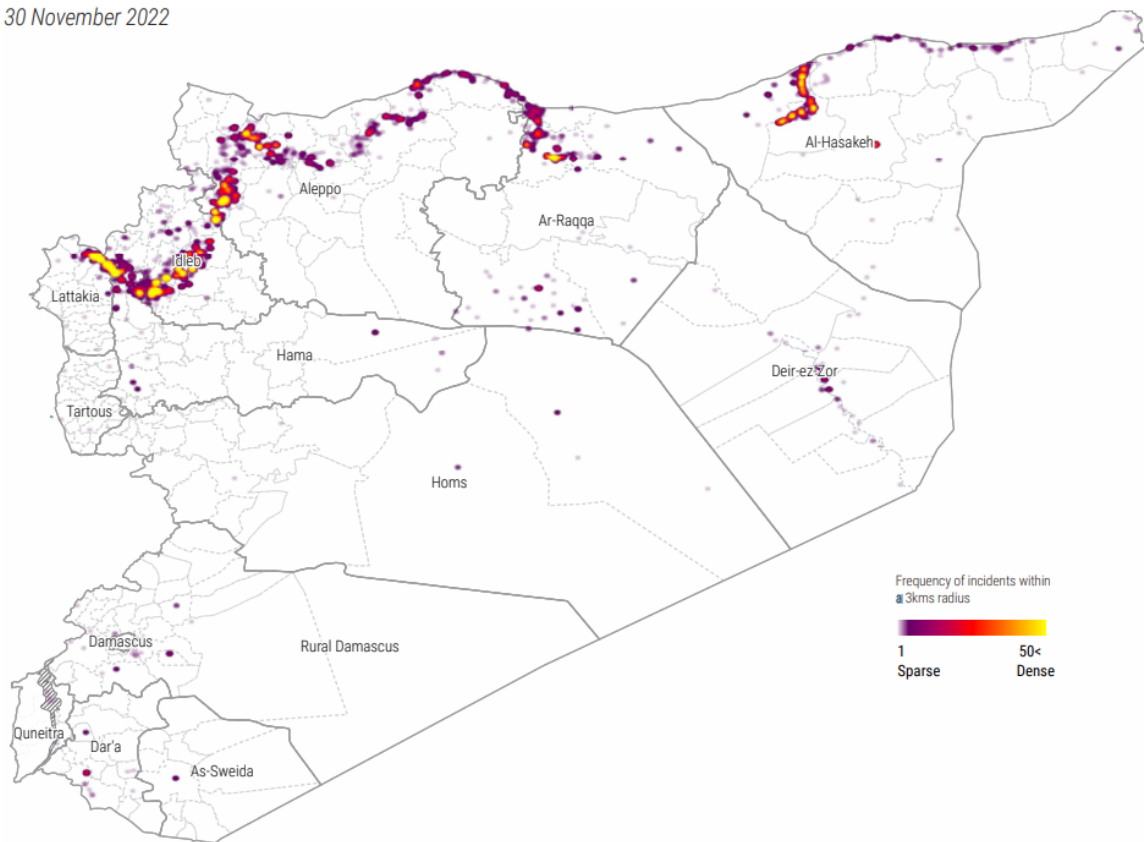
Hostilities intensified in the NWS throughout 2021, particularly in the frontlines without a dramatical incline yet exacerbating the humanitarian needs. Disfranchising of people continued due to persistent political divisions, exclusion and the absence of accessible justice mechanisms. Economic conditions deteriorated throughout 2021 and continued to exacerbate (OCHA 2022, 8). Therefore, Syria remained as one of the most intricate humanitarian crises globally, marked by persistent conflicts that have resulted in the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives. This situation caused one of the most severe displacement crises in history and widespread destruction of civilian and agricultural infrastructure such as homes, schools, health facilities, water supplies and several others inside NWS along with broader Syria. In 2021, the number of people in need of humanitarian aid in Syria reached to 13.4 with a 21 percent increase (SCHF 2021 Annual Report, 2022, p. 7), 3.4 million of which being located in NWS (SCHF 2021 Annual Report, 2022, p. 6).

A decline was observed in the military confrontations, despite few daily artillery shelling and occasional airstrikes persisted in the NWS. Although there were numerous incidents reported in residential zones and thus imposed destruction upon civilians and local infrastructure, hostilities were mainly seen in frontline areas. A minimum of 214 civilians lost their lives while 624 suffered injuries because of the shelling and airstrikes as reported by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in 2021. The humanitarian community was also affected by these attacks as ten humanitarian personnel lost their lives within 2021 (SCHF 2021 Annual Report, 2022). Attacks combined with ongoing COVID-19, seasonal harsh conditions such as cold weather, heavy snow, heavy rain and extremely hot weather and economic scale-back worsened the negative impacts for people creating additional challenges on access to basic humanitarian needs. In seek of better life conditions, approximately 300,000 people went through displacement in the NWS, most of which came from the communities located in the frontline areas (SCHF 2021 Annual Report, 2022, p. 6). The funding allocated to the SCHF showed stability from 2020 to 2021. Throughout the year, \$155 million coupled with an additional \$16.8 million carried from 2020 was contributed to the SCHF (SCHF 2021 Annual Report, 2022, p. 10). Total funds organized for the whole of Syria was reported around \$ 2.3 billion despite required amount of \$ 4.2 billion (OCHA FTS Syrian Arab Republic, 2021).

Map 2. Intensity of Incidents: January – 30 November 2022, OCHA 2023

Intensity of Incidents* (shelling or air strikes)

January - 30 November 2022



* Intensity is defined by the number of incidents in a specific area between January and 30 November 2022.
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

People in NWS were exposed to life-threatening conditions as it can be inferred from the fact that GPI marked Syria as the third peaceful country in the world in 2022, Syria remaining on the very top of the list. Ongoing highly hazardous conflict environment continued to set blocks on the way of humanitarian efforts in the region. Hostilities between the conflicting parties clinched with artillery shelling, air strikes and land mines caused the tragic loss of 495 lives and injuries to 252 individuals in the NWS. The overall security situation remained unpredictable as tensions deteriorated intermittently, particularly in areas under mixed or contested control and near frontlines as before. The unstable environment was impacted by the airstrikes targeted at airports and ports in Aleppo, Damascus and Latakia Governorates. Additionally, the regions located in the south of the M4 highway in Idlib, northern areas of Aleppo, including Tal Refaat and Afrin, as well as the neighborhood of Ain Al Arab, Tal Abiad, Ain Eissa, Ras Al Ain and Tal Tamer in northern Syria, was subject to shelling. Shelling, airstrikes and clashes also occurred in the areas

near Idlib which caused destruction of homes of IDPs in three different camps. At least 9 deaths and 75 injured people were reported casualties as the group included children, leading to displacement of over 400 families. The intensity of conflict incidents reported in Syria up until December 2022 was mostly concentrated in NWS region as it can be inferred from the Table 2. All these armed engagements caused halts in humanitarian works and heavily damaged infrastructures (HNO 2023, 2023).

Besides armed conflicts, several other incidents were marked to have worsened the humanitarian situation in the NWS. These included another COVID-19 wave and cholera spread effects of which continued throughout the year. It was assessed that 4.1 million people were still in need of humanitarian support. In total, the percentage of households facing challenges in adequately covering their basic needs has shifted up to 77 percent from 70 percent as recorded in 2021. Over 130,000 people went through displacement predominantly in the governorates of Aleppo and Idlib, coming from the areas close to the frontlines (OCHA 2023, 6). In response to the remaining needs, the funding was traced to be increasing in total numbers compared to the previous year while a notable decrease was seen in the funding through SCHF. Total yearly funding for SCHF reduced 23 percent from \$ 155million to \$ 118 million, whereas overall yearly funding for Syria came to \$ 2.6 billion from \$ 2.3 billion (OCHA FTS Syrian Arab Republic 2022).

CHAPTER 3: CONCLUSION

In conclusion of this thesis, we embark on a comprehensive examination of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus within the complex and tumultuous context of northwest Syria spanning the critical years from 2020 to 2023. In navigating the intricate web of challenges and opportunities that characterize this region, our analysis extends beyond the immediate circumstances to draw valuable insights from the historical context, with a particular focus on the parallels between the northwest Syria case and the earlier experiences in Bosnia. By delving into these distinct yet interconnected cases, it is aimed to uncover patterns, lessons and traces that illuminate the intricate dynamics at play in peace, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction. Following this comparative analysis, the thesis transitions to the second section, wherein policy recommendations are presented. A pivotal highlight within this section is the proposed outline for a sustainable peace securing mechanism designed for civil wars in particular after examining several attempts that have been made in a similar direction. Building upon the empirical evidence and theoretical frameworks explored in earlier chapters, these recommendations aspire to provide actionable strategies for stakeholders invested in fostering enduring peace within the northwest Syria context. As it is traversed the contours of our policy recommendations, the overarching goal is to bridge the gap between humanitarian efforts, development initiatives and the pursuit of peace. The proposed mechanisms seek not only to address immediate needs and challenges but to create a resilient framework capable of withstanding the complexities inherent in post-conflict environments. Finally, the chapter is finalized with a conclusion section where the key findings, lessons learned and implications for future research and practice have been synthesized. In essence, it is our hope that the insights garnered from this thesis will not only contribute to academic scholarship but will also resonate with policymakers, practitioners and advocates committed to shaping a more peaceful and resilient future in conflict-affected regions worldwide.

3.1. Analysis on the NWS and Peace

The interviews with sixteen humanitarian experts who have actively worked in the NWS shed light on the multifaceted challenges surrounding peace in the region. The prevalent uncertainty of peace emerges as a significant barrier affecting both the local population and humanitarian actors. The interviews underline the severity of rivalry among conflicting parties, which can be identified as one of the most formidable obstacles impeding the path to peace. It has been commonly shared that the presence of multiple conflicting parties with unsimilar interests further complicates matters. This also intensifies the complexity for humanitarian actors engaged in the crises around the region as claimed by the interviewees. The necessity of peace has explicitly been emphasized for sustainable humanitarian efforts to succeed. They also stressed the essence of interdependence between stability and successful aid initiatives. Achieving peace demands unwavering commitment from various stakeholders such as from government entities to international actors. The need for a collaborative approach to conflict resolution has been particularly bolded. The analysis of interviews marked a shortfall in current peace efforts which reveals a gap in ensuring a more sustainable security framework for the people of the NWS. Despite this insufficiency, the interviews acknowledged occasional successes through peace initiatives, such as negotiations with representatives of warring parties, providing a glimpse of peace achievement amid ongoing challenges.

As also can be projected from the previous sections, not only direct threats and violent incidents but also the uncertainty of conflict escalation and peaceful environment possess serious risks for lives of people in the region. Formerly SCHF Officer Zana Erdogan, one of the interviewees, pointed out that:

“In the NWS more than 3 million people live in camps, as the result of the uncertainty of peace or conflict. The negative impacts of living in tents or camps can be countless, access difficulties to health, hygiene, education and shelter being the main issues. The inability to establish production mechanisms due to conflicts or the uncertainty of the peace environment leads to the formation of a community dependent only on humanitarian aid and the destruction of a generation in every field” (Z. Erdogan, November 13, 2023).

It was observed that most effective humanitarian efforts were able to be delivered only when there was peace even in limited levels. However, constant violations in the peace status in the NWS kept the humanitarian response in a way which did not fully comply with the HDP nexus approach as the development aspect was yet to be advanced. The main reasons that hindered the nexus approach in the NWS can be listed as continuing hostilities among the fighting parties, unresolved political disputes, funding requirements and preferred humanitarian project trends motivated with the non-nexus approach and uncertainty of renewal of the UNSC's resolutions and thus limited access channels to the region: all these reasons are interrelated and affecting one another, all being tied to peace in the end.

A persistent conflict environment creates serious sets on delivering humanitarian assistance in the field. Humanitarian personnel face significant access difficulties while conducting their work beyond the threat to their own lives. The fighting parties, lacking and sometimes ignoring a comprehensive understanding of the essentials of humanitarian action might not accept every effort made. Thus, communicating with them has been necessary for humanitarian operations to work in a safe and secure environment. OCHA's Access Team played a crucial role in this. Fatih Aytekin, OCHA Access and Liaison Officer reflected on the main challenges encountered as:

“The challenge in conflict areas from the access and civil-military perspective is usually to engage with the de-facto authorities, non-state armed groups and their relations with the other parties to the conflict. In majority of the cases, de facto authorities or the non-state armed groups in ongoing conflict zones have lack of humanitarian-development knowledge. Especially when the humanitarian principles get into the situation, the response on the ground gets complicated. UN access teams usually have to engage with them on behalf of all the humanitarians to either sensitize them for the humanitarian response. On the other hand, other parties to the conflict have to also be dealt with from the neutrality/impartiality perspective so create a workable environment for the humanitarians on the ground to reach the people in need” (F. Aytekin, November 13, 2023).

Sometimes, negotiations with the conflicting parties have been carried out unofficially. Government officials, humanitarian sector representatives, INGOs and local NGOs took part in such negotiations on occasion. Communication with the de-facto groups has been a critical issue to be handled sensitively.

“In the absence of a political solution, we must ensure the necessary access and funding for the ongoing humanitarian response” emphasized, Mark Cutts, formerly Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator in his statement in 2021, as unresolved political confrontations among parties also created causes that impacted local people in the NWS negatively (OCHA 2021, p. 5). The fact that there are many parties to the conflict along with external third-party states that backed variety of groups made it difficult for a peace settling in the region. Reem Alnajr, Assistant to the Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator, highlighted this point in the interview held with her saying:

“The multiple actors in NWS have negatively affected efforts of building peace, due to the clash of interests, and competence over areas of control, enabling de-facto militias and ad-hoc authorities to unjustly control people’s lives and put them in situations where they have limited control over their lives, economy, and limiting their livelihoods opportunities, in addition to demographically and ethnically changing the area and it’s dynamics which forced many people to leave their homes, refrain from investing in the very challenging environment, and rather depend on humanitarian aid, in addition to the lack of basic services and poor vision of the political leadership internationally, these factors have served to destabilize the NWS and the broader region” (R. Alnajr, November 12, 2023).

Funding mechanisms, along with the cluster mechanism coordinated by the OCHA from the Gaziantep humanitarian hub needed to be cautious on effective use of the limited funding. Additionally, political will, particularly behind the Western funding, interpreted concrete development initiatives such as building advanced solid structures and infrastructures as intervening the future of the conflict and people which they sought to prevent with the aim of remaining objective without taking any side. For instance, the requirements set by the SCHF allocation strategies were strictly against funding such structures as also the cluster guiding documents for the allocations highlighted. Instead, they encouraged developing projects with portable or semi-permanent building options such as prefabricated or tent-made structures. Even more complex structures that required more solid building methods were suggested to be designed as temporary units without the use of any permanent materials such as concrete or bricks. However, the problem with the temporary solutions was that they were not only eliminating the risks towards sustainable humanitarian solutions but also were uncomfortable and inefficient for the people

targeted. According to information exchanged with shelter officials operated for the NWS, beneficiaries were complaining about the temporary units with a desire to have a wall in their homes so that they could sit leaning their backs against it which they could not do inside tent units. The lifespans of such structures were also very short, which would create problems after a few months following their installation.

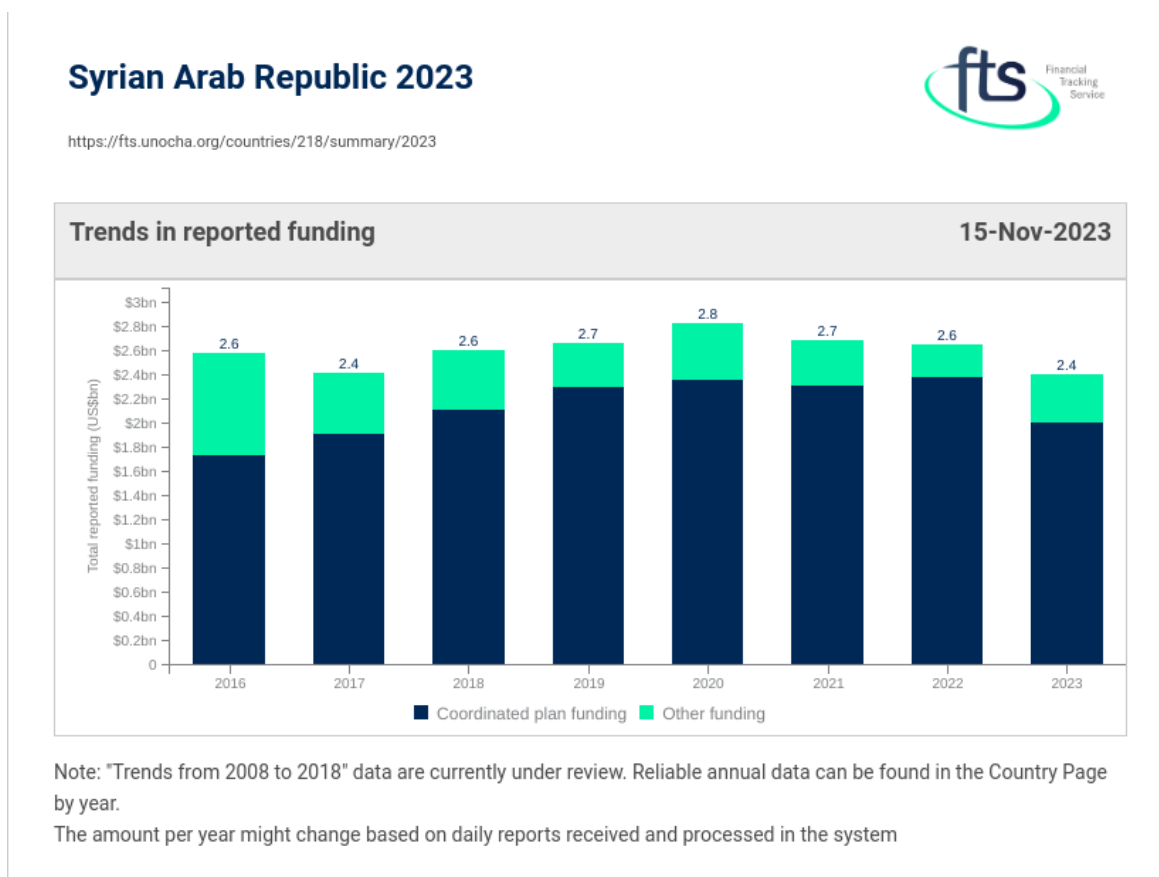
Livelihood efforts were very limited. Education implementation was mainly conducted in tent schools where students go through serious challenges in harsh weather conditions: too hot in summer and freezing cold in winter. Health issues were also problematic as all were tied to each other in a sense. Main funding being channeled through donors from the EU, the UK or the US mostly supported temporary solutions such as delivering prepared food items, carrying water, clothing distribution, conducting septic and garbage collecting under WASH activities and protection activities consisting of awareness raising and psychosocial support initiatives. Not undermining the significance of these efforts, remarkable progress was not seen on the humanitarian action as the civil war is about to complete its thirteenth year. Aware of the infelicity of the situation, relevant humanitarian personnel engaged in intense negotiations with the donors advocating for wheeling the focus in the right direction, which resulted in certain gains albeit limited. As a high-level MSF official stated in one of the interviews:

“Humanitarian activities generally impact affected people by bringing in a bit of a “normal” life, which builds into peace. With other activities such as community building, psychosocial support, workshops and so on, it supports the rehabilitation of a population riddled by war, trauma and crises. You cannot have peace unless you have communities rehabilitated and ready to partake in daily normal life. These events are not easy, they are very traumatic and deep, and you need these sorts of humanitarian activities on the ground to support peace efforts. Humanitarian actors whether consciously or indirectly are supporting these efforts. But, this alone cannot be enough and needs to be complimented by the government and international community” (Interviewee 1, November 14, 2023).

On the other hand, funding from other parts of the world, mostly Türkiye and Gulf countries, made it possible to initiate more sustainable solutions as their political agendas did not conflict with what affected people needed for a durable recovery. They tended to support concrete establishments for schools, health centers and houses. Numerous projects funded by them even

included solid workplace structures to promote and revive the market functioning and economic progress. Yet, the threat of escalation of conflicts was always there which hindered any kind of progress in the region. Moreover, the decreasing trend, as can be seen on the Table 2, on the funds due to other crisis emerged in the world such as Afghanistan and Ukraine impose risks on the lives of the Syrian population as well.

Table 2. Syria Arab Republic: Trends in reported funding, FTS 15 November 2023



It was in 2014 when the international community decided to act on the fact that access of humanitarian action should be secured without influencing the course of the conflict in favor of any party. Thus, it was agreed in the UNSC that a method should be initiated to reach the people in immense need in the region with necessary lifesaving aid. The UNSC authorized the delivery of humanitarian aid from Türkiye to the NWS through a resolution for cross-border transshipment. To ensure the access to vital aid, a series of resolutions provided a lifeline for millions of affected people in Syria, mostly targeting the NWS where the intensity of population was highest. Yet, the fact that the resolution had to be renewed in short terms imposed serious negative impacts on

shaping the form of the humanitarian assistance forcing on more practical and only humanitarian solutions ignoring any solid long-term approaches. As it was confessed in the SCHF 2022 Annual Report, the uncertainty in the resolution caused “short term” humanitarian assistance which is against the very idea of the HDP approach agreed back in Istanbul by the global humanitarian community (SCHF 2022 Annual Report, 2023).

The Security Council with its Resolution 2165 authorized the humanitarian agencies and partners to utilize routes crossing conflict areas and specified border crossings like Bab al-Salam, Bab al-Hawa, Al Yarubiyah and Al-Ramtha, in addition to existing ones. This is aimed at ensuring the direct and efficient delivery of humanitarian aid, including medical supplies, to people in need across Syria. In the following years, the number of border gates were reduced to one with renewal resolutions as Bab al-Hawa (BAH) remained the only border crossing gate. This also imposed new challenges on the delivery of humanitarian supplies. As Atay pointed out, “decisions made by the United Nations Security Council have confined humanitarian aid crossings from Turkey to the north of Syria solely through the Cilvegözü (BAH) border crossing point. This limitation has posed significant challenges in distributing aid to those in need” (E. Atay, interview, November 13, 2023).

In practice, there were a few conditions to the agreement. Establishing a logistics hub located in Türkiye was one of them. The hub, under the supervision of the Logistics Cluster and the UN Monitoring Mission (UNMM), functioned as a point where all the humanitarian transshipments to be sent to the NWS through the UN facilitation should be brought in and recorded. The trucks would come from the NWS with a special permit by granted by the Turkish government as part of the agreement to pick up humanitarian assistance and bring it inside the NWS to be distributed. As the Syrian government requested as a guarantee that the UNMM would track all humanitarian aid that went inside the NWS through the UN Hub along the way up until the final destination of the trucks.

Unlike Bosnia, it was witnessed during the conflict in Syria that third-party states carried out peace talks and relevant negotiation processes among each other not directly involving any fighting group, which directly influenced the course of the event in the region, particularly in the NWS, such as the Astana agreement signed back in early 2020. The event marked a notable peace environment despite not an absolute one. In terms of peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities, having joint patrols on the frontlines of factions in Syria by the third-party states’ military forces

in the region can be considered as such an initiative. As another peacemaking effort, Türkiye suggested establishment of buffer zones in the northern border of Türkiye where any violent activity would be permitted as it was implemented in the safe areas in the Bosnia case. Yet, the initiative was not successful. Thus, on the contrary of the Bosnia case, we have not yet witnessed solid peace-making practices so far such as deployment of UN peace forces and mediation attempts. Even though mediation intentions have been raised at times, the consensus between the warring parties and their ally states are far from being reached.

As it can be concluded from the situation in the NWS, humanitarian and development efforts have been highly dependent on the status of peace. In places and times where and when peace was enjoyed even if provisionally, humanitarian aid was able to be delivered to people in need effectively. The NWS case proved that the only way to bring HDP nexus on the table in humanitarian crises is to have guaranteed peaceful conditions. Currently, although there are strong safeguards for humanitarian situations in crises such as International Humanitarian Law, faith of the people in need is mostly tied to possibilities of success on establishing peace in a non-certain way: conflicting parties to make peace with each other very rapidly with absolute discipline on protection of civilians; UNSC to make a consensus on a proper intervention which will need to be designed with all perspectives; humanitarian organizations to successfully sustain good terms with parties involved in the conflict zones at all times. This dilemma strikes that existing methods to deal with the peace cases in the world is neither satisfactory for the sake of well-being of affected populations nor sufficiently practical securing a peaceful environment for them protecting from constant and arbitrary harm. The interviews conducted with the variety of practitioners that were directly involved in the humanitarian response works targeting the affected people in the NWS also commonly stressed that peace efforts that have been initiated so far have not been sufficient. Thus, this study sheds light on a potential structure to be established to fill this gap.

3.2. Establishing a Standardized Methodological Pattern

Understanding the OCHA's current mandate and role is key as they could also be extended to include a more solid peace mandate. OCHA's establishment in 1991 and initiation of cluster

mechanism in 2005 are quite remarkable efforts to secure humanitarian aid delivery to people in need. OCHA is mandated to coordinate the relief efforts so that the response could flow in an effective way preventing duplications (Brennan and Sondorp, 2006). Cluster mechanism on the other hand works as guiding bodies specialized in each sector separately. They work jointly in a way that they benefit from each other's functioning. The sectors/clusters, which might change from one setting to another as establishing a cluster for some of them might not be needed, are mainly food security and livelihoods (FSL), nutrition, shelter and non-food items (SNFI), WASH, health, protection, education and logistics; and one cluster is established for each of them. Humanitarian organizations operating in a cluster system is expected to join the coordination meetings and contribute to the relevant reporting circulation by providing essential information on each humanitarian activity that they initiate. In some cases, as in the NWS, these mechanisms are supported with the CBPF. When this is the case, providing funding for humanitarian organizations is conditioned with their active participation in the relevant cluster which their planned project lies under in terms of the theme of the project.

They are specialized organizations that rapidly take action, deploy in the crisis zone and establish the coordination mechanism. For sure, local governments also take crucial part in all these processes. One of the most important roles that the governments play in this is that the mechanisms are activated only when the affected government calls for it through official channels. Other parties involved in this setting is I/NGOs who voluntarily take part in the OCHA coordination and cluster reporting mechanisms. Additionally, in the times when the humanitarian assistance came to a knot point or humanitarian staff deployed in the field faced access challenges due to occasional conflicts or disputes of opinions on the flow of the aid or the organization that delivered the aid itself, the OCHA steps in in the negotiations through their access team along with assistance by the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator or Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator. They initiate contacts with both local actors and government authorities that have influence over the related local actors.

It is an understandable fact that reaching a peace agreement and ending a conflict or dispute between the parties permanently is not an easy task. However, creating environments where civilians can stay away from violence and receive more sustainable humanitarian aid is not a difficult task and should have been perfected already. There is a notable gap in this crucial field

which affects the lives of millions of people every year. Moreover, the peace practices that have been witnessed throughout history showed that impartiality has not been guaranteed in the relevant interventions which solely depend on political interests. Humanitarian interventions were commonly employed as a tool to sustain peace in conflicts. Humanitarian intervention refers to involvement of military force authorized by a state with the aim of humanitarian motivations while humanitarian action can be performed by both state or non-state actors such as government agencies, Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement agents, UN agencies and NGOs (Heraclides and Dialla, 2015). As it has been observed in the past interventions, governments who have power to shape a decision on humanitarian action might tend to act according to their own interests rather than sole humanitarian necessities which highly politicize the process of humanitarian action or intervention (Booth, 2007). This idea was also supported by Choi as he gave place the realist perspective on the humanitarian intervention when he stated sharply “morality has no bearing on military engagement in the first place, and that humanitarian intervention is another foreign policy tool that is used to promote national security interests or to pursue economic interests involving natural resources such as oil, iron and copper” (Choi, 2013, p. 124).

There have been several attempts to describe solid methods that would serve as reference points for developing approaches that will enhance the reliability and effectiveness of humanitarian action. The Mohonk Criteria for Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies (Mohonk Criteria) stands out as a notable one among the efforts to influence the nature of humanitarianism towards a more impartial direction. In 1993, in order to overcome the problems that occurred in humanitarian action due to the application of different approaches from different humanitarian organizations, a task force was agreed to be formed by the Program on Humanitarian Assistance at the World Conference on Religion and Peace: gathering experts and representatives from leading humanitarian organizations and relevant UN agencies as Task Force on Ethical and Legal Issues in Humanitarian Assistance (Task Force). The Task force project, funded by a wide range of humanitarian organizations which included and not limited to CARE, UNHCR, UNICEF, US Institute of Peace and the USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, worked on developing certain definitions and recommendations with four separate meetings. After the meetings, they came up with the Mohonk Criteria, which was named after the place where the last meeting was held, Mohonk Mountain House in New Paltz (Ebersole, 1995).

The Mohok Criteria document starts with acknowledgment of fundamental rights and responsibilities for humanitarian action. The recommendations were addressed separately to political leaders, humanitarian actors and military personnel who take part in humanitarian interventions. The criteria highlighted the vitality of approaching the crises with the sense of responsibility, coordination among parties, strategic planning and accountability. Numerous means to be employed to sustain these responsibilities effectively were also suggested by the criteria such as missions to be conducted for getting true facts on the ground, assigning relevant UN offices, third-party diplomatic efforts by NGOs or independent persons and initiating safe areas to be established with mutual agreements. They also mentioned a few enforcement mechanisms which should be applied in cases of serious rights violations and abuses by parties. It was suggested that consensus need not to be sought in such cases. The mechanisms given place for enforcement included imposing economic and diplomatic sanctions, effective use of UNSC accordingly and implementing of cross-border humanitarian aid channels from the surrounding countries in the neighborhood of the conflict zone. The Task Force also comprehensively identified points to be paid attention to by the field personnel such as humanitarian workers and security personnel (Ebersole, 1995). Although remarkable and on point recommendations were highlighted in the Mohok Criteria which certainly shredded light in the humanitarian operations since then, it did not require solid structural changes or offer an activation of new methodological mechanisms, which did not clear humanitarian action off political will and remained as a soft attempt instead. Galtung also attempted to develop a methodology for concluding conflicts with peaceful means. He described the roles of actors involved in conflicts as well as its phases in a detailed model. According to his model, peaceful transition of a conflict is composed of ten main components. These included people assigned to work in the conflicts, establishing the initial dialogue among the actors, theory and practical parts of conflict and violence, determining transformation requirements, initiating peace dialogue among the parties and transformation out of conflict and towards peace (Galtung, 2000). Even though Galtung's model contained more solid descriptions with clearer lines in terms of the phases of a conflict and roles of the players, projection to real-life practicality was not issued in his work as well.

Despite numerous productive and remarkable efforts to trigger a positive change in the structure for securing humanitarian action, humanitarianism, unfortunately, is still in need of being cleared off political influence. Unless such a revolutionary progress is achieved for a solid

methodology that will guarantee humanitarian action in conflict zones, it will remain as a tool for powerful countries to implement their political agenda as it will remain up to them whether an intervention should be activated or not. To overcome these problems in peace making, establishing a reliable, impartial, predictable and practical peacebuilding mechanism as well as having it recognized and accepted universally such as IHL is extremely crucial. It can be outlined that this mechanism should include the following stages: producing a standardized pattern or mechanism and mandating the OCHA with additional roles accordingly; identifying a crisis as a conflict: conflict validation process; determining the proportion and form of the response properly: categorization process; identifying the parties of impact within this conflict: parties of impact validation process (the order of the phases can be changed). Of course, when a more specialized and comprehensive study is conducted, as this study suggests an outline, additional phases might be added.

Leveraging the conclusions which can be inferred from this study, producing a standardized methodology to challenge conflicts stands as a crucial aspect to formalize an impartial and neutral approach to conflicts and associated parties. Initially, it requires the UN's recognition and legitimization for it to be activated automatically where and when necessary. In order not to lose time and struggle with decision making process on who should be responsible for what roles, jurisdictions and role distribution should be included in the ultimate peace implementation plan, creating a prepared pattern is essential. Success of such practices exists in parallel fields such as disaster management and Sendai Framework developed for disaster risk reduction. The Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 was established during the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Miyagi, Japan in March 2015, mainly with the aim of countries to collectively develop a comprehensive and action-oriented disaster risk reduction plan, work on lessons learned from the previous disaster and collaboration practices and plans and develop standardized modalities for risk reduction. During the conference, participating states reiterated their commitment to addressing disaster risk reduction and building resilience with urgency within the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. The integration of these efforts into policies, plans, programs and budgets at all levels, within relevant frameworks was also emphasized by them (Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030, 2015).

Similar roadmaps can also be followed for creating a peace sustaining mechanism in conflicts. Having it in use will prevent any misbehavior and bad intentions on the basis of ethnic, cultural or geographical characteristics. It will also dramatically decrease the level of politicization of a conflict by third-party states. Reconciliation, the process where future of conflict zones and affected people are settled based on the historical evidence of disputes (Lederach, 1997), will be a more achievable option as the objectivity of the peace efforts, even if partial such as for specific zones or time periods, might have a better chance of convincing conflicting parties. In other words, conflicts will be able to be dealt with relatively more detached from political interests. It will be possible through this mechanism that saving human lives, providing them with the most effective assistance and creating a peaceful environment for affected people will remain at the core.

As mentioned above, the OCHA is a specialized organization that has been working with core humanitarian principles accumulating knowledge and information on how to engage in a humanitarian situation in a systematic way. Due to its advanced capacity on coordinating humanitarian professionals and thus the humanitarian assistance in an effective way, along with their currently existing similar roles, the OCHA might be an ideal body to assume the new peacemaking mandate. The access works that the OCHA engage in are already advantage for successfully expanding the mandate in a similar direction.

When a conflict outbreaks, what should be done in the first phase is identifying relevant incidents whether or not they are conflict. This phase is the conflict validation process. A specific and standard criterion should be developed for this purpose so that validation of conflict can be carried out without involving any political aspect which might change from one case to another. Once the criterion is in motion, the execution of it should be done with a dedicated committee whose members are chosen with regard to impartiality. The competency of the committee, on the other hand, is also significantly essential as the process of identifying a crisis as a conflict will be sensitive as it might conflict with political interests of some states depending on the case.

Once they are identified as conflict, categorizing it should be the following step. For this step, specific categories should have be studied so that the case can be matched with the most suitable category. Creating the categories of conflicts should be done based on historical examples and related predictions and projections. The size of affected population, number of groups and people taking part in the conflicts, extent of ethnic diversity, accessibility of humanitarian assistance in

accordance with the geographical conditions, and portion of the area where the conflicts are taking place should certainly be taken into account in the process of designing the categories. Specific timelines for certain activities such as periodical negotiations, ceasefires, establishment of safe zones and initial mediating meeting should also be given place in accordance with the category of the conflict. That is to say, each category should include a different timeline and intensity and frequency of activities.

Another leg of this mechanism should be the parties of impact validation process by which conflicting parties will be acknowledged. Considering that only naturally legitimate parties in a conflict are states/governments who are involved themselves, deciding on who to recognize as a party in a conflict is trickier once there are local fragments involved such as armed opposition groups, separationists and other sorts of militias. Thus, it is vital for the mechanism to operate impartially and thus effectively that the decision-making process for declaring a group as a recognized party is dealt with precise delicacy. A dedicated committee should be convened for specifically this purpose, decisions of which would directly be accepted by the UN. This committee can be the same one which was mentioned for the conflict validation process. This process is important in the sense that obstacles that derive from the UNSC's political inconsistency in decision-making of humanitarian action and peace can be surpassed and executed autonomously with full efficiency. Acceptance of this whole mechanism once and for all by the UNSC as it is designed will obtain this autonomy, even though convincing particularly the permanent members will be intense and challenging.

Despite its complexity in the decision making, one of the most important things that should be regarded as a priority in this process is timing. In order not to spoil the effective response, time management is significantly valuable. In this case, the quicker the response is the less people will suffer. It should not be disregarded that every component of this process is interrelated with each other with importance of similar degrees. Therefore, prioritization of them should be done with equal attention without undervaluing either.

This phase is important as the legitimate parties of impact in a conflict will be recognized. They will be able to be contacted for negotiation or access-related purposes. It should be accepted that non-state actors can create significant damage to people, their property and environment. Another aspect that needs to be strictly stressed is that this recognition does not imply any

recognition as a state or nothing of the sort. The purpose of the recognition should be clearly drawn with definitive borders and lines in order to prevent political abuse and keep the focus solely on humanitarian intentions. Such a mechanism can fill the gap in the meaning of the peace component of the HDP nexus. Moreover, sanctions should be formulated to be applied on the parties once they do not comply with the procedures and activities set out in the timeline. Once it was reported, they will automatically be opted out of being a legitimate party in the conflict. This means, they will no longer be part of the negotiation processes and declared as “hostiles of humanity” or any other proper tag which carries the implication. The security and resilience of civilians in conflict zones and humanitarian personnel and their operations should, of course, be highly regarded while making and implementing these decisions.

Considering that having such a mechanism, which is most certainly open to modifications with further specialized and detailed studies on it, is highly difficult in the political context of today’s world as it suggests curtailing a certain power of the UNSC and transferring it somewhere else. However, human sufferings due to conflicts and non-peace environments never end and always remain as an issue that requires complicated resolutions. Thus, humanitarianizing the current international system is both necessary and inevitable. If the design of this mechanism and its advocacy afterwards are dealt with properly, there might be a good chance to convince the world and permanent UNSC members in favor of it. Once the mechanism is functioning, it certainly can be interpreted that peace and humanity will have won one battle at least.

3.3. Conclusion

The Syrian Civil War, which is approaching to approximately thirteen years of human suffering in total, has caused widespread catastrophe across the nation, irrespective of regional variations in control. Overall living standards and conditions have dramatically deteriorated in comparison to the pre-civil war era, as is the case in every part of the country. When both the evolution of the humanitarian situation and what has been highlighted by the interviewees taken into account, the fact that peacemaking initiatives are critical in determining the course of humanitarian action and wellbeing of the affected population can be sensed evidently. In particular, for sustaining an

effective and secured humanitarian aid management and development initiatives to be realized, the peace component is the missing piece in the puzzle.

In the post-WHS period, significant progress within the HDP nexus has been achieved. However, armed conflict zones still pose persistent challenges due to the complex nature of conflicting parties, hindering the implementation of sustainable solutions. These parties, who choose not to comply with international law or humanitarian principles, create obstacles for humanitarian actors on the ground. Consequently, long-term planning for affected regions and residents becomes challenging. Recognizing the limitations of the HDP nexus, the humanitarian community acknowledges the need to integrate a peace component. While this idea has logical merit, the precise implementation method or international mechanism remains unclear. Various scenarios have been proposed by scholars, yet a specific approach has not been established.

Securing a sustainable development for the people lies on having peace in the region, as it has also been proved throughout the unduly years of this crisis. Even though it was limited and controversial with several aspects which will be expanded in the following sections, the UNSC Resolution played a part achieving this at a certain level. But what does having peace mean exactly? In order to understand why the humanitarian crisis in the NWS remains unresolved after so many years, it is essential to digest the peace component of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus within this context.

As inferred from the study, the peace component of the HDP nexus, despite its vitality in the humanitarian settings, still has huge gaps on its absolute interpretation and thus implementation. Therefore, a comprehensive and robust mechanism for implementing peacemaking is imperative to address the complexities of crises effectively, which will fill the gap once and for all. Such a mechanism should prioritize the cultivation of an impartial approach to each crisis which will ensure fair and unbiased intervention that will uphold justice and equality. Additionally, the development of this mechanism will attempt to eliminate political interference to the highest extent possible so that the integrity of the peacemaking process from external agendas that could compromise its effectiveness would be safeguarded. Equally crucial is the proactive preparation for crisis management well before any escalation occurs. This is significant to sustain proper foresight, strategic planning and coordination among stakeholders. This proactive stance will enhance the capacity to respond swiftly and efficiently which eventually will minimize the

potential impact of crises on affected people. Moreover, it will be ensured that the sustained efforts of the peacemaking mechanism will remain committed to securing civilian lives and supporting humanitarian operations. Prioritizing the protection of innocent lives and facilitating the unconstrained delivery of humanitarian aid not only mitigates the immediate impact of crises but also contributes to the establishment of a stable and secure environment conducive to long-term peace. In essence, the development and sustenance of such a peacemaking mechanism are paramount for fostering stability, justice, and resilience in the face of crises.



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