

The impact of
the Russian-Ukrainian

WAR

on civil society-directed funding

The Russian-Ukrainian war caused disturbing global repercussions. At a time when the world was on its way out of the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had the most severe impact on countries, whether in developed or developing economies, the Russian-Ukrainian war broke out.

The importance of this war appears due to the fact that the two warring countries, Russia and Ukraine, are the most important producers of agricultural commodities in the world. Both countries are net exporters of agricultural products and are major suppliers of foodstuffs and fertilizers to global markets. In 2021, both countries ranked among the largest exporters of wheat, barley, maize, rapeseed, rapeseed oil, sunflower seeds and sunflower oil. Russia also ranked first in the world in the export of fertilizers⁽¹⁾.

According to the World Food Program, there are about 828 million people suffering from hunger around the world, and the impact of the food shock is felt everywhere⁽²⁾. While civil society organizations are trying to play a role in order to ease the burden on the poor and marginalized groups in times of crisis, the funding directed to these organizations has been affected by the crisis. Thus, the poor and marginalized groups suffer from a double impact as a result of the Russian-Ukrainian war and its impact on food prices on the one hand and on the other hand the obstruction of the role of civil society organizations in providing the necessary care and relief.

(1) Kumar, Nikhil. (2022). Global food crisis: Beyond the Ukraine–Russia grain deal, what else can the world do? Grid
<https://www.grid.news/story/global/2022/07/27/global-food-crisis-beyond-the-ukraine-russia-grain-deal-what-else-can-the-world-do/>.

(2) Kristalina Georgieva, Sebastián Sosa, Björn Rother. (2022). Global Food Crisis Demands Support for People, Open Trade, Bigger Local Harvests. IMF Blog.
<https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2022/09/30/global-food-crisis-demands-support-for-people-open-trade-bigger-local-harvests>



First: - The importance of funding directed to civil society organizations.

International organizations recognize the importance of collaborating with civil society, because doing so reinforces their ideals, helps support their work, and creates and builds a better, safer, and more sustainable world. Hence, the United Nations defines a civil society organization, or non-governmental organization, as any voluntary, non-profit group of citizens organized at the local, national or international level ⁽³⁾ .

The Civil Society Unit of the United Nations Department of Global Communications (formerly DPI) is the link between the United Nations and approximately 1,500 UN-affiliated NGOs and supports them in publishing their information materials related to priority issues on their agenda. Accordingly, the objectives of civil society financing are as follows ⁽⁴⁾ :

- Sustainable development, creating a safer and more secure world
- Helping countries in transition.
- Empowering women and youth.
- Addressing poverty, and other issues.
- Achieving the link between non-governmental organizations and managing global communication on building knowledge.
- Supporting the organization at the grassroots level.

Therefore, civil society organizations play a complex and evolving role in financing programs that will shape social welfare policy in many countries (Junaid and Youssef, 2021). According to (Rabhi and Bin Balash, 2017), civil society organizations work to promote and disseminate a set of values and principles that aim to develop and develop societies and achieve the principles of good governance, especially in the field of protecting human rights and freedoms. The nature of the work of civil society can be summed up as being the true backup of power in any country, because one of the most important works of these institutions is monitoring and evaluation, accountability and accountability, follow-up and development, and most importantly the active contribution to the development and development of society and good governance by spreading the concepts of civil life, basic rights and freedoms, and the protection of human rights.

(3) United Nations. 2023. Civil Society
<https://www.ohchr.org/ar/resources/civil-society>

(4) The previous reference

Likewise, the World Bank recognizes the importance of involving civil society in development, in order to facilitate organizations to participate in development, and the purpose of the Civil Society Fund established by the Bank is to provide financing through the country offices of the World Bank for activities that support civil participation of the marginalized and the weak groups⁽⁵⁾.

In light of the above, civil society contributes periodically to the promotion, protection and improvement of human rights all over the world. Whatever they may be called - human rights defenders, human rights NGOs, bar associations, student clubs, labor unions, university institutes, bloggers or charities working with groups subject to discrimination - The active elements in civil society work for a better future and share general goals to achieve justice, equality and respect for human dignity.

Civil society institutions are considered the main pillar in the consolidation of the democratic system, as the infrastructure of international civil society organizations has recently witnessed a remarkable development in enhancing the protection of human rights and the rights of the marginalized, the poor and minorities. The study (Lashin, 2022)⁽⁶⁾ found that civil society organizations at the international level play a prominent role, especially in democratic societies, by building the foundations of democratic life that contribute to the promotion of civil behavior and the consolidation of democracy in all its aspects, because they can provide controls on government power, which helps and contributes to improving its performance by enhancing accountability and transparency. Therefore, the entire international community has adopted the support of civil society organizations and institutions as one of the legal mechanisms to strengthen the frameworks of the human rights system.

Civil society active elements carry out their human rights work in several ways: such as carrying the concerns of citizens and public opinion; Working to heal the rift in societies suffering from conflicts; defending groups that suffer discrimination or disadvantage; information exchange; advocacy and monitoring of the implementation of human rights standards; report any violations related to this topic; assistance and support for victims of abuse; campaigning for the development of new human rights standards; providing policy advice to advance the human rights agenda; And contribute to the provision of an effective protection system at the national level and provide training in this field⁽⁷⁾.

(5) World Bank. 2020. Resources for Civil Society Organizations

http://web.worldbank.org/archive/website01538/WEB/0__CON-4.HTM

(6) Lashin, Muhammad Abd al-Nabi. (2022). the role of civil society organizations in protecting human rights. *Legal Review*, 14(1), 277-310. doi: 10.21608/jlaw.2022.269820.

(7) United Nations. 2023. Civil Society, reference previously mentioned

Within the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for the year 2030, civil society is a major partner in setting, implementing and evaluating sustainable development plans, and organizing community participation in preserving and sustaining resources. In addition, civil society is a tool for communication between citizens and decision-makers, ensuring a real community dialogue with citizens at the local level, in order to achieve awareness building and conviction in implementing sustainable development programs⁽⁸⁾.

The widespread violations of human rights in various regions of the world have gradually prompted an increase in regional and international interest in following up on these violations and trying to reduce and protect them in various countries of the world, as interest in the issue of protecting human rights has grown, and it is considered one of the most important issues of international relations. The globalization of human rights has led to the emergence of movements to promote democracy, and the emergence of civil society organizations for human rights that are concerned with international legal rules and democracy as a political belief⁽⁹⁾.

By working and collaborating with a diverse range of stakeholders, donors/financiers of international community organizations such as: OHCHR and the World Bank seek to advance development dialogue and action at all levels to help address countries' development challenges, as well as issues of critical importance, including human capital, fragility, gender, sustainability, and during the COVID-19 pandemic⁽¹⁰⁾.

Finally, these organizations in all countries of the world, especially in democratic societies, play a prominent role in building the foundations of democratic life and contribute to the promotion of civil behavior. These organizations are also supposed to play an effective role in protecting human rights and consolidating democracy, as they can provide controls on government power, which helps improve its performance by enhancing accountability and transparency. Therefore, international interest in civil society and its institutions has increased as one of the mechanisms to strengthen the human rights system.

Second: - Funding civil society organizations prior to the Russian-Ukrainian war.

In 2011, members of the European Union's DAC allocated US\$19.3 billion in official development assistance (ODA) to CSOs, compared to an average of US\$17.3 billion

(8) Abaza, Hussein Muhammad. 2022. Civil Society and Sustainable Development. Social Horizons Magazine. Issue 3. Center for Information and Decision Support. Cairo. May. p3.

(9) Laroussi, Rabeh and Kaibouche, Omar. 2019. The role of civil society organizations in promoting and protecting human rights in light of the current international transformations. Pioneer Journal of Political Studies. Volume 1. Issue 1. Algeria

(10) The World Bank. 2022. Building partnerships to enhance development impact
<https://www.albankaldawli.org/ar/about/annual-report/development-impact>

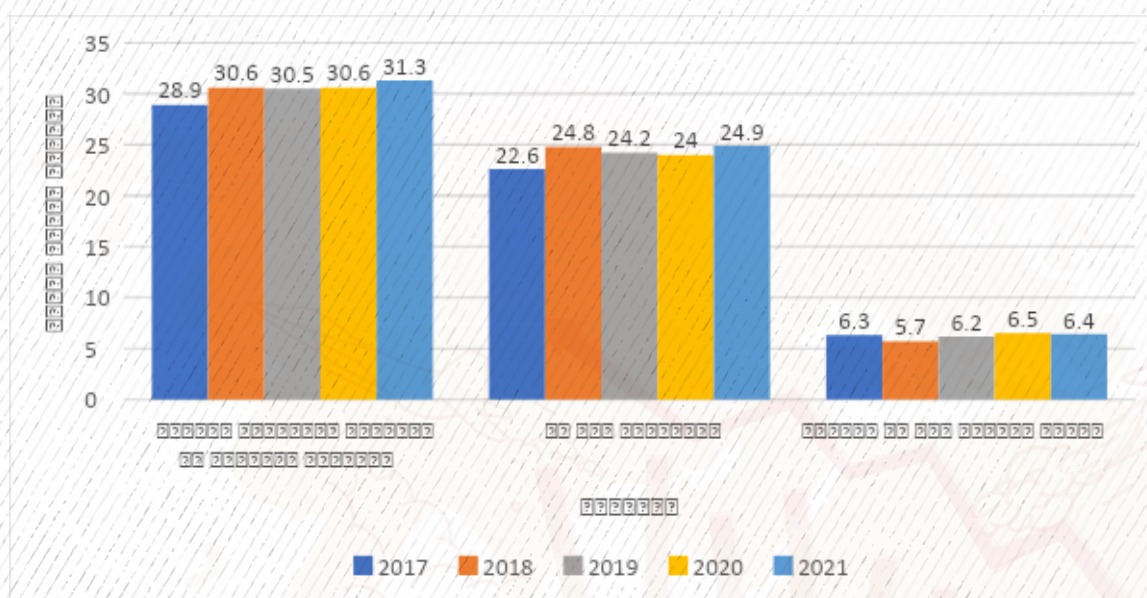


over the period (2008-2011). About 20.5% of total bilateral ODA was directed to or through civil society organizations. Civil society organizations based in the member states of the European Union’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) raised at least US\$32 billion in 2011 from private sources ⁽¹¹⁾.

In 2021, total international humanitarian assistance increased to US\$31.3 billion, although needs continue to grow. This compares to an annual growth rate of more than 10% between 2012 and 2018. In the same year, a total of US\$38.4 billion was requested through appeals launched by the United Nations. This was 2.3% (US\$895 million) lower than it was in 2020. Funding has been requested for 48 UN-coordinated appeals, compared to 55 in 2020 and 36 in 2019. The gap between needs and requirements has narrowed slightly but remains significant. In 2021, 56% of identified funding requirements have been covered, up from 51% in 2020. This represents the second highest shortfall ever in the amount of financing provided at US\$16.9 billion, down from US\$19.1 billion for 2020. The overall pattern of individual group funding has remained largely unchanged over the past four years, despite some annual fluctuations. Food security has consistently received the largest amount of funding, with US\$6 billion in 2021 ⁽¹²⁾. Figure No. (1) summarizes the total international humanitarian assistance provided by governments during the period (2017-2021).

Figure No. (1)

Total aid and its distribution between the government and private sectors during the period (2017-2021)



Source: Development Initiatives based on Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), and UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) data

(11) OECD.2013. Aid for CSOs. Statistics based on DAC Members’ reporting to the Creditor Reporting System database, at <https://www.oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/Aid%20for%20CSOs%20Final%20for%20WEB.pdf>

(12) Development Initiatives (DI). 2022. Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2022. 12 JULY <https://devinit.org/resources/global-humanitarian-assistance-report-2022/>

Collectively, the European Union is the world's largest donor of international aid, providing more than €50 billion annually to help overcome poverty and promote global development. Committed to implementing international agreements on aid effectiveness and to being accountable to EU citizens, who make solidarity initiatives possible. (European Commission, 2021)⁽¹³⁾.

The United States, Germany and the United Kingdom have been the top three donors each year for the past decade. In 2021, these three donors combined accounted for 59% of general international humanitarian aid, down slightly from 60% in 2020. Despite declining contributions, the UK has remained one of the top three donors, and has recently announced a new international three-year development strategy, which indicates funding levels will stabilize but at lower levels than in 2020⁽¹⁴⁾.

Third: - The reality of the Russian and Ukrainian war and its impact on funding civil society organizations in the Middle East.

The Russian-Ukrainian war has negative effects on the sources of funding for civil society in the Middle East. The war broke out at a bad time globally, as the world had not yet recovered from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic until the Russian-Ukrainian war broke out. According to a report issued in September 2022 by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees entitled “Lack of Funding”, twelve countries were highlighted in which the percentage of funding for their operations does not even reach 50%. In late October, the Commission made another appeal to donors, expressing its need for at least \$700 million by the end of the year and its fear that, if these funds are not secured, “the next round of cuts will be disastrous for those in need”⁽¹⁵⁾.

Likewise, last November, the United Nations launched its humanitarian appeal for 2023, which is an unprecedented call to urge donors to work to secure the necessary funds. During this year, the gap widened between the funding needs of most United Nations agencies on the one hand, and the funds received by these agencies from donors on the other hand. Although the war in Ukraine is one of the main factors that exacerbated the lack of funding, it is not the only factor⁽¹⁶⁾. There are many reasons that led to this effect, the most important of which are:

- Western aid, especially American and European, decreased to humanitarian organizations and civil society in the region due to the focus on supporting Ukraine.

(13) European Commission. 2021. Recipients and results of EU aid
https://commission.europa.eu/aid-development-cooperation-fundamental-rights/human-rights-non-eu-countries/recipients-and-results-eu-aid_en

(14) Development Initiatives (DI). 2022. Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2022, Op.cit.

(15) The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). 2022. UNDERFUNDED REPORT. SEPTEMBER 2022, at
<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/underfunded-report-september-2022>

(16) The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). 2023. HOME EVENTS GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN OVERVIEW 2023.
<https://www.unocha.org/2023gho>



- Donor support for development projects in the region has declined, and funds have been directed to help displaced Ukrainians and rebuild damaged areas in Ukraine.
- The number of international organizations and institutions working in the field of supporting civil society organizations in the Middle East has decreased in order to focus on Ukraine.
- Economic sanctions against Russia have led to a decline in the ability of Western donors to support development projects in the region due to the economic downturn.
- The volume of donations and charitable donations by individuals and companies to civil society organizations in the region has declined due to the economic recession.

The funding gap has already strained UNHCR's ability to provide critical support for essential humanitarian assistance, child protection services and livelihood opportunities. And in December 2022, the United Nations estimated that it would need a record \$51.5 billion in 2023 to respond to massive humanitarian needs, an increase of \$10.5 billion compared to last year's forecast for 2022. This comes at a time when United Nations agencies are already struggling to find funds to fund their growing needs (United Nations, 2022).

Table No. (1) shows the reality of operations, needs, the level of funding coverage, and the size of the gap. It is clear that coverage rates in all countries in the table do not exceed 42%, the highest in Bangladesh, Ethiopia and South Sudan, and the lowest in Iraq and Sudan, at 31% and 34%, respectively.

Table No. (1): Funding status in different countries until August 2022

Country of operations	Needs	Funding provided	Funding coverage ratio%	Gap
Bangladesh	285	120	42%	165
Chad	160	57	36%	103
Colombia	122	50	41%	72
Democratic Republic of the Congo	225	74	33%	151
Ethiopia	335	135	40%	200
Iraq	347	106	31%	241
Jordan	408	151	37%	257
Lebanon	534	213	40%	321
South Sudan	215	81	38%	134
Sudan	349	118	34%	231
Uganda	343	132	38%	211
Yemen	291	104	36%	187
Total	3614	1341	37%	2273

Source: The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). 2023. HOME EVENTS GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN OVERVIEW 2023. P12.
<https://www.unocha.org/2023gho>

Despite the rapidly evolving context of humanitarian needs driven by the Covid-19 pandemic, the ongoing effects of climate change and emerging conflict (for example, in Afghanistan in 2021 and in Ukraine in 2022), the humanitarian funding picture has not changed significantly in recent years. And in 2021, Covid-19 overshadowed other pre-existing and emerging crisis risks as humanitarian needs remained at historically high levels. In the same year, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance has increased. An estimated 306 million people were assessed as in need, an increase of 90.4 million from 2019 before the Covid-19 pandemic, meaning that half of those in need of humanitarian support (155.9 million) live in just nine countries. And because protracted crises are increasingly normal, the number of countries in protracted crises has increased to 36 in 2021. These countries were home to three-quarters (74%) of all people in need. Those experiencing a humanitarian crisis have been left behind in the recovery efforts from the COVID-19 pandemic⁽¹⁷⁾.

In 2022, the financing package directed by the World Bank to the Middle East and North Africa region has increased to exceed \$5 billion, in order to support the countries of the region to mitigate the repercussions of the Corona pandemic and the war in Ukraine⁽¹⁸⁾.

In conclusion, the Russian-Ukrainian war has led to a decline in funding directed to civil society organizations and a widening gap between the required funding and what is available for civil society organizations to play their role in providing relief to a number of fragile Middle Eastern countries. This article shows the following:

- The existence of an important role for civil society organizations in the global context and the ever-growing need for them in the most fragile economies.
- This role was directly and indirectly affected by crises and conflicts, especially in light of the continuity and periodicity of crises, while the world was recovering from the Corona pandemic until it collided with the repercussions of the Russian-Ukrainian war.
- The increase in humanitarian needs and the growth of conflicts in many parts of the world during the last decade, which made the value of international humanitarian assistance increase to 31.3 billion US dollars between 2018 and 2021.
- At that time, the value of direct funding for civil society organizations recorded small percentages of this aid, as the percentage of this funding declined from 2.8% to 1.2% between 2017 and 2021.
- The widening gap between needs and requirements within the countries in which

(17) Development Initiatives, op.cit

(18) World Bank, World Bank Assistance to the Middle East and North Africa Region, July 2022, <https://shorturl.at/EHLMZ>

operations are taking place, and the ability of civil society organizations to cover less than half of these needs only.

- The existence of a negative impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war, as the turmoil in the international supply chains increased, affecting the production and transportation of major crops, in light of the fact that Russia and Ukraine record a fifth of global production, which led to an increase in the numbers and rates of hunger and poverty in the world, and then the increasing pressure on funding requirements for civil society organizations.

