Humanitarian Evidence and Discourse Summary

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Monthly Humanitarian Evidence and Discourse Summaries aim to signpost FCDO and others to the latest relevant evidence and discourse on humanitarian action. It is structured around **FCDO humanitarian framework** themes**:**

- **Protect**: Protect civilians, IDPs, refugees, marginalised groups including women and girls, and humanitarian access.
- **Prioritise**: Prioritise effective humanitarian assistance to people in greatest need
- **Prevent**: Prevent and anticipate future shocks and rebuild resilience in protracted and recurring crises

Further detail on methodology and scope at the end. Click on the hyperlinks to bring you to the relevant literature.

We hope this is a useful resource and you can read all the articles produced by brilliant authors and organisations(!), but each month we also invite a guest to identify their five "star reads" from the wider HCRI list. This does not represent an organisational position or assessment of rigour, but rather a personal choice of published evidence, guidance or discourse that are of special interest or impact. This month Julia Steets, director of the Global Public Policy Institute (GPPi), highlights her five star reads.

Protect

Publication date	Title/URL	Author(s)/publication/publication type (evidence, discourse or policy/guidance)	Summary	Top reads
October 2023	Six essential lessons to remember while negotiating "safe zones"	Frontline Negotiations Discourse	Summary of lessons relevant to negotiating arrangements for civilian 'safe zones' in conflicts.	
October 2023	Reflections on humanitarian negotiation	Hugo Slim; Norwegian Centre for Humanitarian Studies Discourse	Reflections on a recent roundtable on the ethics of humanitarian negotiations,	

October 2023	ICRC engagement with armed groups in 2023	Matthew Bamber-Zryd; ICRC Law & Policy Discourse 💬	Blog summarising findings from the ICRC's annual review of its engagement with armed groups.	
October 2023	The role of civil-military cooperation in protection of civilians: the Ukraine experience	Serhii Tarasov; Center for Civilians in Conflict Evidence 🔬	Assess the development of civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) for civilian protection in the Ukrainian army since the Russian invasion in 2014, and notes challenges and opportunities for improvement.	
October 2023	Closing the loop: protection of civilians	Humanitarian Advisory Group Policy/guidance 🔺	Links to research on threats to civilian safety and measures for protection, such as IHL, guidance or advocacy organisations.	
October 2023	Eighth Annual Report on the Most Notable Violations by Russian Forces Since the Launch of Russia's Military Intervention in Syria on September 30, 2015	Syrian Network for Human Rights Evidence 🔬	Evidence on attacks on civilians and other violations by Russian forces in Syria since 2015.	
October 2023	How have Israel and Hamas broken the laws of war?	Eric Reidy; The New Humanitarian Discourse 💬	International law professor Marco Sassòli discusses the IHL implications of Israel and Hamas' recent actions.	
October 2023	Think Change episode 32: Israel/OPT crisis - what's needed to stop the bloodshed?	Sara Pantuliano et al.; ODI Discourse 💬	Podcast featuring guests from the ICRC, ODI, Human Rights Watch, and Law for Palestine, discussing how to ensure IHL is upheld in Israel/Palestine.	Upholding International Humanitarian Law in high-profile conflicts like Israel/Palestine and the ⭐ Ukraine is one of the most pressing & acute challenges for the international political and humanitarian systems. This podcast discussion with Ihsan Adel, Sari Baish, Robert Mardini and Sorcha O'Callaghan helps understand the type and magnitude of the

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				challenge as well as the importance of applying consistent standards in different contexts.
October 2023	IHL and information operations; Protecting civilians against information threats; Algorithms of war	Various authors; ICRC Discourse	Three ICRC blogs on digital risks, including AI use in conflict decision-making, key digital threats to civilians, and IHL's position on information in war.	
October 2023	Global risk analysis	ACAPS Evidence	Identification of contexts with high levels of risk. Includes the recent intensification of conflict in Israel/Palestine only very briefly given the publication date.	
October 2023	GEM releases new global earthquake hazard and risk products	Global Earthquake model Evidence	Features recording of a discussion and 'products' including a global risk, hazard, exposure and vulnerability maps and models.	

Prioritise

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October 2023	Neutrality of aid	Groupe URD Discourse	Series of three podcasts on the principle of neutrality.	For the French speakers: Very interesting reflections on the evolution of the humanitarian principle of neutrality and its frictions with the drive to localize humanitarian action in highly polarized conflict contexts.

October 2023	Loss and damage – a humanitarian kairos moment	Dr Andrea Steinke and Sonja Hövelmann; CHA Berlin Discourse	Blog discussing the possibilities to reorient humanitarian aid in the face of the climate crisis.	
October 2023	Humanitarian Recession Index	Humanitarian Funding Forecast Evidence	Update of the index of humanitarian needs and funding using the concept of recession to describe two years of a growing funding gap. Shows percentage of funding needs met by sector over the last 4 years.	
October 2023	Accountability in social protection and humanitarian contexts	Jo Sharp; Social Protection.org Discourse	Discussion on ways to ensure accountability where social protection is used in humanitarian contexts.	
October 2023	Social assistance and humanitarian relief	M Cavani et al.; PASTRES Discourse	Comic strip on social assistance in humanitarian contexts, arguing that the uncertainties of such situations mean that fixed plans are not helpful.	
October 2023	Gender-transformative social protection in crisis contexts: guidance note	Paola Pereznieto and Rebecca Holmes; STAAR Policy/guidance	Guidance on making social protection gender-responsive and gender-transformative in crisis contexts.	
October 2023	Sex, health and rights in displacement and humanitarian response: crises upon crises in Lebanon and beyond	Megan Daigle et al.; ODI Evidence	Case study of unmet need in sexual and reproductive rights (SRHR) in humanitarian response in Lebanon. Argues that it is an often unmet need and is often too narrowly focused on 'maternal health and interventions related to gender-based violence for heterosexual, cisgender women of reproductive age'	
October 2023	Breaking the culture of silence and women's protection groups in North and South Kivu (Democratic Republic of Congo)	Jeremy Allouche et al.; Journal of Pacifism and Nonviolence Evidence	Analyses the 'culture of silence' around women's vulnerabilities in the region, and the strategies of women's groups to advocate for protection.	

October 2023	Acute Malnutrition in Africa's Drylands	Helen Young et al., eds.; Food and Nutrition Bulletin Evidence 🔬	Special issue addressing malnutrition, food systems, and forecasting, among other issues, in the region.	
October 2023	Evidence on malnutrition in Isiolo and Marsabit Counties, Kenya	Various authors; Feinstein International Center Evidence 🔬	Series of learning briefs on nutrition in Isiolo and Marsabit Counties, Kenya, assessing the extent of malnutrition, the role of pastoralism, and drivers of vulnerability, risk and resilience.	
October 2023	Reena Ghelani	Humanitarian Fault Lines podcast Discourse 💬	Interview with the United Nations Assistant Secretary-General, Famine Prevention and Response Coordinator on the drivers of global hunger and how to improve response and prevention.	
October 2023	Rethinking vulnerability, fairness, and CVA targeting – what if we let people decide?	Heba Ibrahim; CALP NETWORK Discourse 💬	Blog based on evidence on affected peoples' preferences over aid distribution, finding that, in Somalia many prefer more people to have small amounts of aid than fewer people to have larger amounts, to fit with local norms and reduce targeting errors. Argues that the principle of involving recipients in targeting decisions is more broadly applicable.	
October 2023	Mutual aid in Sudan: the future of aid	Nils Carstensen and Lodia Sebit; ODI HPG Evidence 🔬	Discussion of the emerging evidence on the different types of mutual aid responses to the Sudan crisis, their roles, methods, and the implications for humanitarian aid.	⭐ This blog unpacks what local "mutual aid" looked like in practice when conflict re-erupted in Sudan. It challenges international humanitarian actors to come up with better answers on how such local approaches can be supported, while providing the necessary details to inform this search.
October 2023	Khartoum State ERR's First Fund Narrative Report	Khartoum State Emergency Response Room Evidence 🔬	Report on the activities of the ERR in providing aid during Sudan's ongoing conflict.	

October 2023	[Germany's rise as a humanitarian donor: the interplay of narratives, new foreign policy ambition and domestic interests](#)	Corinna Kreidler, Sonja Hövelmann and Alexandra Spencer; ODI Evidence	Uses Germany as a case study to assess the role of narratives in aid policymaking. Assesses the institutional structures and public opinion, and narratives of Germany's foreign policy role and the role of aid in stemming migration.	

Prevent

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October 2023	[Displaced during crisis: lessons learned from high-frequency phone surveys and how to protect the most vulnerable](#)	Yeon Soo Kim and Jeffery Tanner; World Bank Evidence	Report on forcibly displaced populations since the covid-19 pandemic, based on high-frequency phone surveys in 14 countries. Finds that forcibly displaced persons 'were deeply impacted by the pandemic and often fared worse than their hosts across five primary dimensions: employment, income, assistance and coping, food security, and education and learning'.	
October 2023	[Forced Displacement Literature Review](#)	Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement Evidence	Review of recently published articles on refugees.	
October 2023	[UNRWA: In Anticipation of a Double Collapse](#)	Jørgen Jensehaugen; PRIO Evidence	Blog highlighting the dangers for the West Bank if UNWRA collapses due to a continued deficit.	
October 2023	[Climate-resilient development for Somalia](#)	Manisha Gulati et al.; SPARC Evidence	Identifies climate risks, and institutional barriers and opportunities for climate adaptation finance in Somalia.	

September 2023	Financing disaster risk reduction in humanitarian and crisis settings	UNDRR Evidence	Report on the existing funding of DRR and potential to improve it through the nexus or other means. Finds low levels of DRR funding, as well as data limitations.	
October 2023	Effects of anticipatory humanitarian cash assistance to households forecasted to experience extreme flooding: evidence from Bangladesh	Clemens Gros et al.; Hydrology Research Evidence	Assessment of the effectiveness of the Bangladesh Red Crescent's use of anticipatory cash transfers before 2020 floods, finding they were effective in helping evacuation, protecting health, and safeguarding assets, but not in avoiding food-based coping mechanisms or regaining productive capacity afterwards.	
October 2023	Global mapping of humanitarian disaster risk finance: Mapping the current disaster risk finance landscape	R. Choularton and E Montier; USAID Evidence	Mapping of more than 35 types of disaster risk finance instruments and initiatives	
October 2023	Measuring the crisis protection gap: a summary of research exploring technical approaches for estimating global crisis protection costs	Conor Meenan et al.; Centre for Disaster Protection Evidence	Advances a model for estimating the 'crisis protection gap', to help target pre-arranged financing, with discussion of their scale, characteristics, function, place in the disaster response cycle, institutional support, etc.	
October 2023	Climate vulnerability, climate finance (ODA) and protracted crisis	Development Initiatives Evidence	Data tool visualising volumes of climate finance by country and purpose and level of vulnerability.	
October 2023	Geospatial analysis of displacement in Afghanistan	Anais Dahmani-Scuitti; World Bank working papers Evidence	The paper shows how geospatial data can be used to monitor displacement, using the 2018 drought in north-eastern Afghanistan. The use of night-time light data correctly classified 63.2 percent of the settlements as net inflow or net outflow.	
October 2023	HDX Dataset Deep Dive with the World Food Programme	Centre for Humanitarian Data Discourse	Webinar on the WFP's generation and use of datasets on food, markets and humanitarian need in prediction and response.	

October 2023	Generative AI for humanitarians	Nasim Motalebi and Andrej Verity; UN OCHA Evidence	Paper on the uses and challenges of AI in the humanitarian sector, derived from a literature review and interviews with technology and humanitarian professionals.	⭐	Important contribution to get us thinking and talking about how we can use AI in humanitarian work and what rules & risks we should keep in mind when doing so.
October 2023	Assessing the promise of innovation for improving humanitarian performance a 10-year review for the State of the Humanitarian System report	Catherine Komuhangi et al.; ALNAP Evidence	Report identifying and assessing the key trends in humanitarian innovation since 2011, split into operational, humanitarian-to-humanitarian, local and non-traditional actor, and programme and enabling. It notes barriers to scaling innovations.		
October 2023	Guidelines on Disaster Risk Governance (Pilot Version)	IFRC Policy/guidance	New pilot guidance on disaster risk management from the IFRC.	⭐	These IFRC draft guidelines provide much needed clarity on what anticipatory action is and how it fits into – and should be treated as part of – a broader disaster risk management effort.
October 2023	Laws, policies and plans for disaster recovery: multi-country synthesis report	IFRC Evidence	Maps the maps the legal, policy and planning framework for disaster recovery in Australia, Brazil, Italy, Indonesia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Spain and The Bahamas, as well as global evidence, to assess the state of disaster national recovery plans.		
October 2023	Interconnected Disaster Risks	UNU EHS Evidence	Identifies 6 interconnected risk tipping points: Accelerating extinctions; groundwater depletion: mountain glaciers melting: space debris: unbearable heat: uninsurable future.		

Methodology

Given the wide range of topics covered, this monthly summary includes guidelines, blogs, news articles, dashboards, data, and editorials, in addition to policy and academic literature. Resources are selected based on their relevance to the themes of protect, prioritise and prevent. Entries are categorised as **evidence** (academic peer-reviewed articles or reports that have gone through a quality assurance process); **discourse** (opinion and discussion of key issues in the humanitarian sector); and **policies and guidelines** (newly published policies and guidelines on humanitarian response).

The sources included are found through searches of academic literature, humanitarian think tanks, resource hubs and NGO websites. The searches are restricted to articles published in the previous month, in English. This is complemented by email recommendations from FCDO advisors and leading experts. It is the result of 1 day of work per month and is not intended to be a comprehensive summary of available evidence on humanitarian action but aims to make original documents easily accessible to decision-makers. This is trial and error approach, which will be refined over time. If you have literature to include in the weekly summary, please email – luke.kelly@manchester.ac.uk

About this report

The monthly humanitarian evidence and discourse summaries (HEDS) are produced by the Humanitarianism and Conflict Response Institute (HCRI) at the University of Manchester. They are a continuation of a series published by the Knowledge for Development (K4D) consortium from 2020 to 2022. The monthly HEDS are not intended to replace professional advice and the researcher or HCRI cannot be held responsible for any decisions made on the basis of the summaries alone.

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The Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute (HCRI) is a leading global centre that is part of the University of Manchester. HCRI combines multiple disciplines from medicine to the humanities for the study and research of humanitarianism and conflict response, global health, international disaster management and peacebuilding.
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