THE DOUBLE STANDARD IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS; WHY THE UNITED NATIONS FAIL TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY TO GAZA COMPARED TO OTHER CONFLICTS

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Abstract

This study explores the phenomenon of double standards in international relations, with a specific focus on the United Nations' (UN) response to the Gaza conflict compared to other global crises. Despite widespread condemnation of Israel's actions in Gaza, the UN has struggled to effectively implement resolutions, enforce ceasefires, or impose sanctions, raising important questions about political alliances and selective intervention. The research adopts **realist theory** as its theoretical framework, which emphasizes the role of state power and national interests in shaping international relations. A **comparative analysis** approach was used to assess the UN's interventions in Gaza versus other global conflicts, such as in Syria, Libya, and Ukraine. Data was collected through **content analysis** of UN resolutions, speeches, and official documents, alongside a review of secondary literature. The findings reveal that the political interests of powerful member states, selective humanitarianism, and the complex nature of international diplomacy significantly influence the UN's actions, leading to an uneven response to humanitarian crises. The study concludes that these dynamics hinder the UN's effectiveness in addressing long-standing conflicts like Gaza. Based on these findings, it is recommended that the UN reassess its operational mechanisms and adopt more consistent, impartial strategies for conflict resolution to ensure more equitable humanitarian responses.

Keywords: double standard, international relations, conflicts, Gaza, United Nation

Introduction

The United Nations (UN), established in 1945 to maintain international peace and security, has faced significant criticisms regarding its response to global conflicts, particularly in Gaza. While the UN is mandated to protect human rights and uphold international humanitarian law, its actions in Gaza have been criticized for their inconsistency, delays, and perceived ineffectiveness when compared to other global crises such as Ukraine, Syria, or Bosnia. The double standard in international relations highlights the influence of geopolitical factors and the limitations of international law, raising

important questions about the UN's capacity to act impartially in situations where political alliances, particularly those involving powerful member states, come into play. Despite widespread condemnation of Israel's actions in Gaza, the UN has struggled to implement resolutions or enforce meaningful consequences, revealing the complexities of navigating long-standing conflicts that involve a myriad of political, religious, and historical factors (Weiss & Thakur, 2018).

The disparity between the UN's response to Gaza and other conflicts becomes stark when comparing the international reactions. In cases like Ukraine, the UN has been part of a broader, more immediate global response, including sanctions, military aid, and humanitarian support. This contrast underscores the political dynamics at play, where collective action is often determined by the interests of powerful states, such as the United States' support for Israel. The use of veto power by permanent Security Council members, particularly the United States, frequently blocks resolutions critical of Israeli actions, limiting the UN's ability to act decisively. The complexity of the Gaza crisis is further compounded by the region's religious significance, the involvement of various actors such as Hamas and neighboring Arab states, and the broader geopolitical considerations that influence global powers. As such, the UN's actions in Gaza have often been seen as insufficient, with political interests playing a decisive role in shaping the international response (Patrick, 2021; Weiss & Daws, 2021).

The issue of selective enforcement of international law also plays a central role in the UN's response to Gaza. While the UN consistently calls for the protection of civilians and condemns violations of human rights, these principles are not always backed by strong enforcement mechanisms. This selective application of international law, influenced by the geopolitical interests of powerful member states, has led to accusations of bias and undermined the UN's credibility. Similar criticisms have been levied during past crises, such as the Rwandan Genocide and the Bosnian War, where the UN's inaction or delayed responses led to significant humanitarian suffering. The Gaza conflict stands out due to its persistent nature and recurring cycles of violence, highlighting the systemic limitations the UN faces in addressing entrenched conflicts. To restore its legitimacy, the UN must reform its approach, depoliticize its operations, and ensure more equitable application of international principles. Structural reforms, such as limiting the veto power in the Security Council for humanitarian crises, and strengthening enforcement mechanisms, are necessary to improve the UN's ability to effectively respond to global crises and maintain its credibility in international relations (Kelsen, 1950; Amnesty International, 2019).

Research Problem

The double standard in international relations, particularly regarding the United Nations (UN) responses to global conflicts, has been a longstanding issue that raises critical questions about the organization's capacity to act impartially. The UN's failure to address the Gaza conflict with the same urgency and decisiveness as it has in other crises, such as

Ukraine, Syria, and Libya, highlights the influence of geopolitical power dynamics on decision-making. Despite the UN's mandate to maintain international peace and security, its actions in Gaza have been criticized for insufficient enforcement of ceasefires, lack of sanctions against Israel, and failure to implement effective humanitarian measures. This discrepancy prompts the need to examine whether the UN's inability to act in Gaza stems from structural limitations, selective application of international law, or the political influence of powerful member states within the Security Council, particularly the United States. These factors undermine the UN's credibility and raise concerns about the organization's ability to effectively mediate and resolve conflicts impartially (Weiss & Thakur, 2018).

Several studies have explored the UN's role in responding to global conflicts, highlighting the complex nature of its interventions. For instance, scholars such as Weiss and Thakur (2018) discuss the challenges the UN faces when geopolitical interests, particularly those of powerful states, shape its ability to act decisively. Other works, such as those by Patrick (2021) and Weiss and Daws (2021), underscore how strategic alliances and political considerations often result in inconsistent responses across different crises. However, while these studies have broadly examined the UN's selective interventions, fewer have focused on the specific gap in the UN's response to Gaza, considering the region's unique geopolitical, religious, and historical complexities. This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the UN's inconsistent actions in Gaza compared to its responses in other global crises, with a focus on the political and structural factors that influence its decisions. Ultimately, the research will provide recommendations for how the UN can implement a more impartial and effective approach to addressing humanitarian crises like Gaza, ensuring its credibility as a global peacekeeping and humanitarian organization (Kelsen, 1950; Amnesty International, 2019).

Research Objective

1. To analyze the political and historical context of the Gaza conflict in relation to UN responses.
2. To explore how geopolitical interests of powerful member states shape UN's agenda and response mechanisms.
3. To assess the institutional factors that hinder effective UN intervention in Gaza compared to other conflicts.

Research Questions:

1. What factors contribute to the UN's differential response to the Gaza conflict in comparison to other international crises?
2. How do the geopolitical interests of member states influence the UN's actions (or in-actions) in conflict areas?

3. In what ways do institutional limitations within the UN affect its ability to respond to humanitarian crises?

Literature Review

This section explores existing scholarly work and clarifies key concepts relevant to the study, including the "Role of the United Nations," "International Law and Human Rights," and the "Israel-Palestinian Conflict." These concepts provide a theoretical foundation for analyzing the UN's actions and in-actions in addressing the Gaza conflict.

The Role of the United Nations in Global Conflict Resolution

The United Nations (UN) plays a pivotal role in global conflict resolution, guided by its mandate to maintain international peace and security, as articulated in the UN Charter. This mandate involves promoting peaceful coexistence among nations, preventing conflicts, and providing mechanisms for resolution through diplomacy, peacekeeping, and humanitarian assistance. The UN's peacekeeping operations have been central to its response to various global crises, including facilitating negotiations and deploying peacekeepers to conflict zones. However, the success of these efforts has been mixed, with some missions falling short due to constraints such as limited resources, ambiguous mandates, and political challenges. Notably, the UN's failure to prevent the 1994 Rwandan genocide, despite early warnings, demonstrated the organization's limitations in crisis intervention. The peacekeeping mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) lacked the authority and resources to act decisively, leading to a tragic loss of life and prompting widespread criticism of the UN's inability to prevent mass violence (Crisp, 201).

In contrast, the UN's response to the Yugoslav Wars in the 1990s exemplified both its potential and its limitations. Despite deploying peacekeepers (UNPROFOR) and facilitating negotiations, the UN struggled to address the complexities of ethnic violence, particularly during events like the Srebrenica massacre. Similarly, the Syrian civil war, which began in 2011, underscored the challenges faced by the UN in managing conflicts with entrenched geopolitical interests. Divisions within the UN Security Council, especially the blocking of resolutions by veto-wielding member states such as Russia and China, have hindered effective UN intervention in Syria. These challenges reveal the need for reform within the UN system to ensure rapid, coordinated responses to evolving global conflicts. Despite these shortcomings, the UN has made substantial contributions to conflict resolution, prompting ongoing discussions about improving its peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts to better protect civilians and uphold human rights (Bellamy, 201).

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the UN's Involvement

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been a core issue in international diplomacy, with the UN deeply involved since its inception. The UN's initial involvement dates back to the 1947 Partition Plan, which proposed the creation of separate Jewish and Arab states in Palestine, leading to the establishment of Israel in 1948 after the Arab rejection of the

plan. This set the stage for decades of conflict, particularly between Israel and Palestinian groups. The UN's role in this ongoing dispute has been primarily through the passing of Security Council resolutions and facilitating peace talks. Notably, UNSC Resolution 242 (1967) called for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied territories and affirmed the right of all states in the region to live in peace, while UNSC Resolution 338 (1973) reinforced the necessity of negotiations. However, these resolutions have been criticized for lacking enforcement mechanisms, which have limited their practical impact on achieving peace on the ground (Khalidi, 2006).

The UN General Assembly has also been a forum for addressing the Palestinian situation, adopting resolutions that emphasize Palestinian self-determination and the right of return for refugees. However, the effectiveness of the UN in mitigating the humanitarian crises in Gaza during periods of intense conflict, such as the Gaza Wars in 2008-2009, 2012, and 2014, has been questioned. Critics argue that the UN's actions have been constrained by geopolitical dynamics, particularly the influence of powerful member states like the United States, which has historically supported Israel. This political influence has led to the perception that the UN is biased, undermining its credibility as an impartial mediator in the conflict. Despite these challenges, the UN has remained central in framing international discourse on the conflict, yet its ability to facilitate a lasting resolution continues to be hindered by both internal and external political pressures (Sampson, 2017).

The Influence of Major Powers in United Nations Decision-Making

The United Nations' ability to respond to international crises, such as the situation in Gaza, is profoundly shaped by the influence of major powers, particularly within the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The UNSC is composed of five permanent members—the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom—each with veto power, allowing them to block substantive resolutions. This mechanism often leads to deadlocks, as the interests of these powers frequently conflict, limiting the UN's capacity to take decisive action. For instance, the United States has used its veto power to protect Israel, blocking resolutions that would have condemned Israeli military actions in Gaza. This support, rooted in broader U.S. geopolitical interests in the Middle East, particularly its alliance with Israel and its stance against Iran, has led to accusations that the UN is unable to act impartially, undermining its credibility as a global mediator (Khalidi, 2006).

Meanwhile, Russia and China, seeking to challenge U.S. dominance, have occasionally used their vetoes to advance their foreign policy goals, such as advocating for Palestinian rights and statehood. These geopolitical tensions often complicate the UN's ability to respond to crises like Gaza, where both the U.S. and Russia have entrenched positions. The veto system's implications are significant, as it prevents the UN from taking unified action, often resulting in stalemates that leave humanitarian crises unresolved. This situation has led to calls for reforming the UNSC, including suggestions to expand the

number of permanent members or alter the veto system to better reflect the changing power dynamics of the international community. These proposed changes aim to enhance the UN's ability to respond more equitably and effectively to global conflicts (Sampson, 2017; Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007).

International Law and Human Rights in Gaza

The conflict in Gaza is a focal point for the application of international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law, which aim to protect civilians and ensure accountability during armed conflicts. IHL, primarily outlined in the Geneva Conventions, dictates that parties to a conflict must distinguish between combatants and civilians, ensuring that the use of force is proportional and necessary. Both Israeli forces and Palestinian groups, including Hamas, have been accused of violating these principles. During the 2014 Gaza War, for example, numerous reports from human rights organizations, including the UN Human Rights Council, documented extensive civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure, raising concerns about indiscriminate attacks and disproportionate use of force (UN Human Rights Council, 2015). Hamas has also been accused of committing war crimes, such as launching rockets at Israeli civilian targets, further complicating the legal landscape of the conflict (Amnesty International, 2018).

Despite these violations, the enforcement of IHL and human rights law in Gaza is hindered by the political dynamics surrounding the conflict. The UN has established investigative mechanisms, such as the Commission of Inquiry on the 2014 Gaza conflict, but these efforts are often undermined by geopolitical interests, particularly the U.S. support for Israel. This support has led to a lack of accountability, as Israel has been shielded from international legal scrutiny. The blockade of Gaza by Israel and Egypt has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis, creating widespread poverty and a deteriorating health infrastructure, with the UN condemning the blockade as collective punishment, which is prohibited under international law (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2021). However, the international community has been largely ineffective in challenging the blockade, which further highlights the difficulties in enforcing international law in Gaza. The situation exemplifies the broader challenges of upholding IHL and human rights law in politically sensitive conflicts, where enforcement is often blocked by powerful member states.

Comparing UN Responses: Gaza vs. Other International Conflicts

The UN's responses to conflicts around the world vary significantly, largely shaped by geopolitical interests and the specific dynamics of each situation. In Gaza, the UN has struggled to achieve meaningful action, particularly in the face of vetoes from the United States, which has historically supported Israel. During the 2014 Gaza conflict, proposed UN resolutions calling for ceasefires and investigations into human rights violations were blocked due to U.S. opposition, which consistently argued for Israel's right to self-defense

(UN Security Council, 2014). While the UN General Assembly passed several resolutions condemning the violence in Gaza, these lacked binding authority, and their lack of enforcement rendered them ineffective. This contrasts with other conflicts, such as Syria, where the UN's response has also been stymied by geopolitical rivalries but on a larger scale, with Russia's support for the Assad regime frequently obstructing attempts at meaningful intervention.

In Syria, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2254 in 2015, which called for a political solution and a ceasefire, but the divisions among Security Council members, particularly over Russia's backing of the Assad regime, have hindered more decisive action (UN Security Council, 2015). Similarly, in Yemen, the UN's efforts have been complicated by the military intervention of a Saudi-led coalition, supported by the U.S. and other Western nations, which has limited the UN's mediation role. The Security Council passed resolutions such as Resolution 2216, imposing an arms embargo on the Houthi movement, but the lack of enforcement mechanisms has allowed the humanitarian crisis to escalate (Gordon, 2019). In contrast, the UN's response to Ukraine, especially after Russia's annexation of Crimea, has been relatively more robust, with the UN General Assembly passing Resolution 68/262 affirming Ukraine's territorial integrity. Although Russia's veto power has prevented peacekeeping operations, the Western consensus against Russia has led to diplomatic pressure and sanctions, showcasing the UN's ability to act decisively when major powers align (UN General Assembly, 2014). This comparison underscores the varying degrees of effectiveness the UN has in different conflicts, influenced largely by the geopolitical interests of major powers.

The Impact of Media and Public Opinion on UN Action

Media coverage and public opinion play a significant role in shaping the United Nations' response to humanitarian crises, particularly in conflict zones like Gaza. Extensive media coverage of human rights violations and civilian suffering often mobilizes global public opinion, increasing pressure on the UN and its member states to act. For example, during the 2014 Gaza conflict, images of civilian casualties and the destruction of infrastructure led to widespread international outrage, with activists and public protests demanding that the UN take action (Hawkins, 2014). This heightened public awareness often creates a political environment that encourages stronger UN responses, although these actions are still constrained by the geopolitical realities that influence member states' decision-making. Despite the global calls for intervention, the UN often faces difficulties in acting decisively due to the political divides among its most powerful members.

In other conflict zones, such as Syria and Ukraine, media coverage has similarly shaped public opinion and, by extension, influenced the UN's actions. In Syria, images of refugees fleeing violence and reports of chemical weapon attacks drew global attention to the humanitarian crisis, leading to calls for action from organizations like Amnesty International (Kälin, 2015). In Ukraine, media portrayal of Russia's annexation of Crimea

galvanized international condemnation, resulting in the UN General Assembly passing a resolution affirming Ukraine's territorial integrity (Baker, 2014). However, while media attention can drive activism and push the UN toward action, the complexities of multilateral diplomacy often prevent meaningful resolutions. The UN's decision-making process, which requires consensus among member states, can limit the effectiveness of responses despite the widespread media attention and public outcry over humanitarian crises, as seen in Yemen (Gordon, 2019).

The UN's Structural Limitations: Bureaucracy, Funding, and Political Will

The United Nations (UN) faces significant structural limitations that hinder its ability to effectively address humanitarian crises, including those in Gaza. One major issue is the organization's bureaucratic inefficiencies, which can delay decision-making and resource mobilization in times of urgent need. During the 2014 Gaza conflict, for example, the UN's response to the growing humanitarian crisis was slow, with many criticizing the delay in delivering critical assistance to civilians (Pillai, 2014). The UN's complex administrative structure, which involves multiple agencies and departments, often results in coordination problems, preventing timely interventions. Moreover, the UN's reliance on member state contributions to fund its operations exacerbates these issues, as chronic funding shortfalls, particularly for agencies like the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), limit the UN's ability to carry out effective humanitarian relief efforts (UNRWA, 2020).

Another critical structural challenge is the lack of political will among member states, which often prevents the UN from acting decisively. The Security Council's requirement for consensus among its members—especially the five permanent members with veto power—can paralyze the UN's response to crises. This has been particularly evident in the Gaza conflict, where divisions among member states have led to deadlocks on key resolutions, such as calls for ceasefires and humanitarian access (Morris, 2015). In other cases, such as Syria, political considerations have undermined the UN's ability to address humanitarian needs effectively. Negotiations with the Assad regime and competing interests among Security Council members have resulted in stalled aid deliveries and delayed peace efforts (Weiss, 2015). These structural inefficiencies and the lack of political resolve highlight the need for reforms that would allow the UN to operate more swiftly and effectively in addressing global crises.

Alternative Approaches to Conflict Resolution: Regional Organizations and Non-State Actors

Given the challenges faced by the UN in responding to conflicts, alternative approaches to conflict resolution have gained importance, particularly through regional organizations and non-state actors. Regional entities like the Arab League and the European Union have played active roles in mediating conflicts and providing humanitarian assistance, especially

in the Middle East. The Arab League, for example, has proposed peace initiatives such as the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, which sought to normalize relations between Israel and Arab states in exchange for Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories (Khalidi, 2013). Similarly, the European Union has used its diplomatic and economic leverage to support peace negotiations and humanitarian projects in Gaza (Dandashly & Elgström, 2017). However, these regional efforts often face limitations due to geopolitical rivalries and a lack of unity among member states, which can hinder their overall effectiveness.

Non-state actors, particularly non-governmental organizations (NGOs), have also become crucial players in addressing humanitarian crises and fostering dialogue in conflict zones. In Gaza, organizations like Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have provided essential medical care and emergency relief to civilians affected by the ongoing conflict (MSF, 2020). Local NGOs, with their intimate knowledge of the affected communities, can often deliver aid more efficiently than larger international organizations. Additionally, NGOs are instrumental in advocating for accountability, raising awareness about human rights violations, and promoting peaceful dialogue in conflict areas (HRW, 2023). Innovative grassroots initiatives, such as community-based reconciliation programs, also show promise in addressing the underlying causes of conflict, fostering long-term stability. Collaborative efforts between regional organizations, NGOs, and traditional institutions like the UN could enhance conflict resolution strategies and improve outcomes for those affected by war.

The Future of the UN and Its Role in Addressing Double Standards

The future of the United Nations (UN) hinges on its ability to address perceptions of double standards in its responses to global crises, such as the ongoing situation in Gaza. Critics argue that the UN often exhibits bias in its actions, selectively responding to crises based on the political interests of powerful member states, particularly the United States. This perception of double standards undermines the UN's credibility and its ability to mediate conflicts impartially. To address this issue, reforms are needed within the UN's structure to ensure more equitable responses to international crises. One proposed reform is the expansion of the UN Security Council (UNSC) to include representatives from underrepresented regions, which could improve the legitimacy and responsiveness of the Council (Zifcak, 2018). Additionally, enhancing the UN's humanitarian agencies, such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), to better address the needs of Palestinian refugees would help address some of the long-standing criticisms regarding the UN's actions in the region (Duss & O'Connell, 2021).

Another critical step toward addressing double standards involves establishing a dedicated UN mechanism to monitor and report human rights violations in conflict zones, providing an objective basis for international responses. This would help reduce the perception of bias and ensure accountability for all parties in a conflict. Furthermore, the UN must adopt a more proactive approach to peacekeeping and conflict resolution, focusing on local

engagement and incorporating the voices of those most affected by the conflict. By prioritizing accountability, human rights, and a consistent application of international law, the UN could regain its credibility and fulfill its mandate as a mediator and protector of human rights. These reforms would promote equity and justice, reinforcing the UN's foundational principles of peace and security for all (Power, 2016).

Theoretical Framework:

This study adopts the realist theory of international relations to explore the double standard in the United Nations' (UN) response to conflicts like the Israeli-Palestinian crisis in Gaza. Realist theory emphasizes the anarchic nature of the international system, where states act in their self-interest to secure power and maintain stability, with limited regard for humanitarian concerns. Scholars like Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Waltz have laid the foundation for this approach. Morgenthau's classical realism, articulated in "Politics Among Nations" (1948), argues that power politics drives state behavior, while Waltz's structural realism, as presented in "Theory of International Politics" (1979), focuses on how the international system's structure compels states to prioritize security and power. In this context, the UN's response to Gaza can be understood through the lens of power dynamics, national interests, and the influence of major state actors, particularly the United States, which plays a pivotal role in shaping the UN's actions.

Realist theory offers a compelling explanation for the double standard in international responses to conflicts. The U.S.'s unwavering support for Israel, particularly in the UN Security Council, has consistently shaped the international community's response to Gaza. The U.S. holds veto power, which it has used to block resolutions critical of Israel, such as vetoing over 40 Security Council resolutions from 1972 to 2021 (UN Watch, 2021). This highlights the role of powerful states in influencing multilateral institutions like the UN, leading to a perception of bias, as responses to conflicts involving less powerful states are often less hindered by such political considerations. Additionally, realism underscores the role of national sovereignty and territorial integrity in limiting the UN's actions, as seen in Gaza, where concerns about respecting Israel's sovereignty and regional stability have often outweighed humanitarian imperatives. This selective engagement is evident in other conflicts, like Kosovo or Libya, where NATO's interests aligned with humanitarian intervention, showcasing the prioritization of strategic state interests over universal human rights concerns. Ultimately, realism provides a framework for understanding how power and national interests shape the UN's response, often to the detriment of consistent and impartial humanitarian action.

Methodology

This study employs content analysis as its primary methodology, a qualitative approach that is well-suited for systematically examining communication patterns, resolutions, and actions taken by the United Nations (UN) in response to global crises. By analyzing official

documents, media reports, and scholarly works, content analysis allows for the identification of recurring themes, underlying biases, and trends, thereby shedding light on the disparities in the UN's responses to conflicts. The study focuses on Gaza due to its prominence in international discussions and compares it with the UN's interventions in other conflicts, such as those in Ukraine, Syria, and Sudan, to highlight variations in response timing, resource distribution, and overall effectiveness. These cases were selected to illustrate a range of geopolitical contexts, from occupation and civil wars to interstate conflicts. Secondary data sources, including UN documentation, media reports, scholarly articles, and reports from NGOs and human rights organizations like Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the UN's humanitarian agencies (such as UNRWA), provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the UN's interventions and the on-the-ground realities in each case.

Findings of the Study

The study presented the following key findings

1. **Influence of Powerful States**: The UN's response to humanitarian crises is shaped by the political interests of powerful states, particularly those with veto power in the Security Council, such as the U.S., which has blocked action on Gaza while facilitating swift responses to Ukraine.

2. **Institutional Limitations**: The UN's consensus-based decision-making in the Security Council, along with limited resources and reliance on voluntary funding, restricts its ability to address crises effectively and equitably.

3. **Media Influence on Global Attention**: Media coverage significantly impacts global public opinion and political will, with crises like Ukraine receiving more attention due to framing as a direct challenge to Western values, while Gaza is seen as a regional issue, affecting the urgency of UN interventions.

4. **Perception of Double Standards**: The UN's inconsistent responses, particularly in comparing Gaza and Ukraine, have led to perceptions of double standards, undermining its credibility as a neutral mediator.

Conclusion

The United Nations (UN), established to uphold human rights and promote global peace, has often faced criticism for inconsistencies in its responses to international conflicts, particularly in the context of the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza. This disparity is evident when comparing the UN's actions in Gaza with its responses to other crises like Ukraine or Syria. While Gaza has been marked by widespread destruction and civilian casualties, the international response has often been delayed or insufficient. In contrast, crises such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine saw swift,coordinated action, including sanctions, humanitarian aid, and military support, highlighting the influence of geopolitics and the strategic interests of powerful member states. The disparity in the UN's responses

can be attributed to several factors, including the influence of powerful states, institutional limitations, and the media's role in shaping global attention. These factors not only challenge the UN's credibility but also undermine its effectiveness as a neutral mediator in global crises.

The contrasting international responses to Gaza and Ukraine illustrate how political considerations and institutional challenges often override humanitarian needs, leading to uneven enforcement of international law. The UN's reliance on consensus within the Security Council and its dependence on voluntary funding further constrain its capacity to act decisively, particularly in politically sensitive conflicts like Gaza. This systemic bias in the international system leads to perceptions of double standards, which erode the legitimacy of the UN and deepen mistrust among affected populations. Addressing these disparities will require comprehensive reforms, such as reducing the veto power in cases involving humanitarian crises, enhancing accountability mechanisms, and increasing the participation of the Global South in decision-making processes. These changes could help ensure more consistent and impartial responses to global conflicts and strengthen the UN's role in safeguarding international peace and security.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations were proposed for the United Nations:

1. The United Nations should develop and adopt clear, transparent criteria for intervention that prioritize humanitarian needs over political considerations. This ensures consistent and impartial responses to conflicts, irrespective of geopolitical dynamics.

2. The UN must enhance and rigorously apply mechanisms to hold states accountable for breaches of international humanitarian law, reaffirming its commitment to protecting civilians and upholding global justice.

3. The UN should invest in strengthening the capacities of local organizations and communities in conflict-affected areas, enabling them to implement sustainable, context-specific solutions and reduce reliance on international interventions.

4. The UN should foster a more inclusive multilateral approach by engaging a diverse range of international stakeholders to ensure that conflict resolution efforts are equitable, comprehensive, and less influenced by the interests of dominant states.

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