
Humanitarian Intervention in the Gaza Crisis after 7 October 2023: A Realist Analysis of International Responses

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Abstrak

Eskalasi konflik Israel-Hamas sejak 7 Oktober 2023 telah memperlihatkan ketegangan yang tajam antara keharusan untuk melindungi manusia dan politik kekuasaan internasional. Artikel ini mengkaji bagaimana respons kemanusiaan internasional terhadap krisis Gaza dibentuk oleh kepentingan nasional, distribusi kekuasaan, kontrol akses, dan ketergantungan kelembagaan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan analisis dokumen kualitatif. Korpus penelitian mencakup resolusi Dewan Keamanan Perserikatan Bangsa-Bangsa (PBB), laporan yang diterbitkan oleh OCHA, WHO, dan UNRWA, laporan hak asasi manusia, serta karya-karya akademik utama mengenai intervensi kemanusiaan, kemanusiaan, dan realisme. Data dianalisis melalui pengodean tematik yang berfokus pada empat kategori, yaitu kontrol terhadap akses kemanusiaan, politik donor, kapasitas organisasi internasional, dan penegakan norma. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tindakan kemanusiaan di Gaza tidak berlangsung dalam lingkungan yang netral secara politik. Mandat organisasi internasional dibatasi oleh otoritas teritorial, pertimbangan keamanan, dukungan negara donor, dan konfigurasi politik Dewan Keamanan PBB. Perspektif realisme menjelaskan mengapa negara-negara memprioritaskan keamanan, aliansi, dan posisi strategis, sehingga komitmen moral diterapkan secara selektif. Namun demikian, realisme tidak sepenuhnya mampu menjelaskan keberlanjutan operasi kemanusiaan, tekanan normatif, dan terbatasnya agensi institusi internasional. Artikel ini menyimpulkan bahwa efektivitas respons kemanusiaan bergantung pada interaksi antara kapasitas operasional, perlindungan hukum, dan kemauan politik negara-negara yang memiliki pengaruh besar.

Keywords :

Gaza; Humanitarian
Intervention; Aid Politics;
Realism; International
Response.

Abstract

The escalation of the Israel-Hamas conflict since 7 October 2023 has exposed a sharp tension between the imperative of human protection and international power politics. This article examines how international humanitarian responses to the Gaza crisis are shaped by national interests, power distribution, access control, and institutional dependence. The study employs a qualitative document-analysis approach. Its corpus includes United Nations Security Council resolutions, reports issued by OCHA, WHO, and UNRWA, human rights reports, and major scholarly works on humanitarian intervention, humanitarianism, and realism. The materials are analyzed through thematic coding focused on four categories: control over humanitarian access, donor politics, the capacity of international organizations, and norm enforcement. The findings demonstrate that humanitarian action in Gaza does not operate in a politically neutral environment. The mandates of international organizations are constrained by territorial authority, security considerations, donor-state support, and the political configuration of the Security Council. Realism explains why states prioritize security, alliances, and strategic position, thereby applying moral commitments selectively. Nevertheless, realism does not fully account for the persistence of humanitarian operations, normative pressure, and the limited agency of international institutions. The article concludes that the effectiveness of humanitarian responses depends on the interaction among operational capacity, legal protection, and the political will of influential states.



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INTRODUCTION

The escalation of the Israel-Hamas conflict on 7 October 2023 and the military operations that followed generated a complex humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. Damage to civilian infrastructure, population displacement, pressure on health services, and disruptions to the distribution of food, water, fuel, and medicines make Gaza an important case for assessing the relationship between humanitarian norms and security politics. OCHA reports describe the impact of the hostilities on civilians and the obstacles to humanitarian access, while WHO documents the decline in the operational capacity of health facilities amid growing medical needs (OCHA, 2023, 2024; World Health Organization, 2024). In such circumstances, humanitarian need is determined not only by the scale of suffering, but also by who controls access, borders, distribution routes, and the political decisions that make relief operations possible.

The international response to the Gaza crisis involves United Nations bodies, nongovernmental organizations, donor states, and transnational humanitarian networks. In November 2023, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2712, which called for humanitarian pauses and corridors to facilitate the delivery of

assistance to civilians (United Nations Security Council, 2023). At the operational level, OCHA performs coordination and reporting functions, WHO focuses on the health system, and UNRWA provides basic services to Palestinian refugees. However, the implementation of these mandates depends on security conditions, movement permits, cross-border access, financing, and the political support of member states. Humanitarian response therefore operates within structures of power rather than outside politics.

In the International Relations literature, humanitarian intervention is a contested concept. In its narrow sense, the term generally refers to cross-border coercive action - including the possible use of force - intended to halt grave violations against humanity. The practices examined in this article, however, primarily include humanitarian assistance, humanitarian diplomacy, institutional coordination, political pressure, and efforts to establish humanitarian pauses. Accordingly, this article uses humanitarian intervention as an umbrella term while analytically distinguishing coercive intervention from noncoercive humanitarian responses. This distinction is important to avoid equating aid delivery with military action undertaken in the name of human protection (Weiss, 2016).

Normatively, humanitarianism rests on the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence. These principles direct assistance according to need rather than political affiliation. The history of humanitarian action, however, shows that aid organizations invariably operate amid war, power, bureaucracy, and donor interests (Barnett, 2011; Slim, 2005). The Gaza crisis makes this dilemma especially visible: humanitarian agencies are expected to remain neutral, yet their access is determined by actors involved in the conflict; donor states express moral commitments, yet their policies are also shaped by alliances and security interests; and international organizations adopt resolutions whose implementation depends on state support.

Realist theory provides a framework for explaining why humanitarian need does not automatically produce effective collective action. Classical realism emphasizes struggles for power and the pursuit of national interest, whereas structural realism focuses on the anarchic international system and the need of states to preserve their security (Morgenthau et al., 2006; Waltz, 1979). Mearsheimer (2001) further argues that states seek to maintain or improve their relative position because they cannot fully trust other actors. Within this framework, aid, diplomatic support, and institutional decisions can be understood not only as moral acts but also as instruments of legitimacy, alliance management, and security strategy.

The central problem addressed by this study is how the humanitarian response to Gaza can be explained when norms of civilian protection confront state interests and an unequal distribution of power. The research question is: how does realism explain the forms, limitations, and selectivity of the international humanitarian response to the Gaza crisis after 7 October 2023? This article does not seek to determine the moral justification of either party to the conflict. Its focus is on the political

mechanisms that shape humanitarian access, financing, the actions of international organizations, and norm enforcement.

The contribution of this article is analytical. First, it connects the literature on humanitarian intervention with the operational politics of aid, thereby moving beyond abstract debates over sovereignty. Second, it operationalizes realism through four observable dimensions: access control, donor politics, institutional dependence, and norm-enforcement capacity. Third, it identifies the limits of realist theory by assessing the agency available to international organizations and the constraining force of humanitarian norms. The article is organized into a literature review and analytical framework, research method, results and discussion, and conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Humanitarian Intervention and Humanitarian Response

Humanitarian intervention developed from debates about the obligations of the international community when a population faces severe violence and the responsible authorities fail or are unwilling to provide protection. These debates bring two principles into tension: sovereignty and human protection. Supporters of intervention argue that sovereignty cannot serve as a shield for mass atrocities, whereas critics emphasize the risk that powerful states may misuse humanitarian justifications. The central questions therefore concern not only whether intervention is necessary, but also who is entitled to act, under what authority, through which instruments, and in whose interests (Weiss, 2016).

Humanitarian response is broader than coercive intervention. It includes needs assessment, the provision of food and health services, refugee protection, access negotiations, humanitarian diplomacy, and advocacy for international humanitarian law. These activities generally rely on consent, coordination, and negotiation. Their noncoercive character, however, does not make them politically neutral. The availability of funding, the classification of aid recipients, security authorization, legitimizing narratives, and relations between organizations and host states or parties to a conflict can all shape operational priorities (Barnett, 2011).

Slim (2005) warns that humanitarianism risks losing its humanitarian orientation when it becomes too closely aligned with political strategy, yet it may also lose effectiveness if it ignores the distribution of power. This dilemma is relevant to Gaza. Operational neutrality is necessary for aid agencies to reach civilians, but neutrality does not mean refraining from analyzing the actors that control access and resources. An analysis of humanitarian response must therefore assess both the normative principles and the political structures that determine their implementation.

Realism and Humanitarian Politics

Realism regards states as the principal actors in the international system, although it does not deny the existence of international organizations and nonstate actors. Its basic assumption is that no supreme authority can consistently compel states

to obey rules. Under anarchy, state security and survival become priorities. Waltz (1979) explains that the structure of the system constrains actors' choices, while Morgenthau et al. (2006) emphasize interest defined in terms of power. Consequently, foreign policies that appear normative must still be interpreted in relation to security, reputation, and influence.

Offensive realism adds that uncertainty regarding the intentions of others encourages states to preserve or increase their relative power (Mearsheimer, 2001). In humanitarian affairs, this logic can produce selectivity. States may support civilian protection when it is consistent with their alliances and geopolitical positions, but reduce pressure when such action is regarded as harmful to strategic interests. Aid may also serve to preserve international legitimacy, manage domestic pressure, or balance security support for an ally.

From a realist perspective, international organizations have limited room for independent action because their mandates, budgets, and authority depend on member states. Resolutions may generate normative language and legitimacy, but they do not automatically produce compliance. These limitations become evident when collective decisions require compromise among states with divergent interests. Realism therefore predicts that humanitarian responses will be more effective when the interests of powerful states overlap with humanitarian objectives, and less effective when civilian protection is perceived to conflict with security strategy or alliance commitments.

Nevertheless, realism should not be applied deterministically. International organizations can generate credible information, coordinate actors, and increase the reputational costs of norm violations. States may also act in response to public pressure, law, identity, or ethical considerations that cannot be reduced entirely to power. This article therefore uses realism as its principal framework for explaining political constraints, not as the sole explanation for all humanitarian action (Baylis et al., 2020; Dunne et al., 2021).

Analytical Framework

The analytical framework links realist assumptions to four empirical dimensions. These dimensions were selected because they recur throughout the documents examined and allow the theory to be applied in a measurable way rather than merely as a general label.

Table 1. Operationalization of the realist framework in the analysis of humanitarian response

Dimension	Analytical question	Indicators	Realist expectation
Access control	Who determines the movement of aid and personnel?	Permits, borders, security inspections, corridors, humanitarian pauses	Actors with territorial control and coercive capacity determine the operational space.
Donor politics	How do state interests shape funding and support?	Continuation, suspension, or withdrawal of funds; aid priorities; public diplomacy	Aid follows a combination of strategic interests, alliances, and legitimacy.
Institutional dependence	How autonomous are international organizations?	Mandates, budgets, access, coordination, dependence on member states	Institutions facilitate cooperation but are constrained by the distribution of power.
Norm enforcement	Why are calls for civilian protection difficult to implement?	Resolutions, compliance mechanisms, diplomatic pressure, reputational costs	Norms are effective when supported by political will and enforcement capacity.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using a document-analysis design. This design is appropriate to the research objective of explaining the relationship among humanitarian norms, aid practices, and state interests in the international response to Gaza. The units of analysis are not separate individuals or organizations, but decisions, reports, and practices that demonstrate how access, funding, coordination, and norm enforcement are shaped by power relations.

The research corpus consists of two groups of sources. The first comprises institutional and policy documents directly related to the Gaza crisis: United Nations Security Council Resolution 2712, OCHA reports on humanitarian impact and access, WHO assessments of health services, UNRWA situation reports, and reports by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. The second consists of academic literature on humanitarian intervention, the history of humanitarianism, and realist theory, particularly works by Weiss, Barnett, Slim, Morgenthau, Waltz, and Mearsheimer. The documents were selected for their relevance to the research focus, the authority of their publishers, and their ability to provide information concerning the period after 7 October 2023.

The analysis was conducted in four stages. First, all documents were read to identify information concerning the scale of need, forms of response, operational obstacles, and the positions of international actors. Second, the information was reduced and categorized under the four themes established in the analytical framework: access control, donor politics, institutional dependence, and norm enforcement. Third, findings across sources were compared to identify consistencies and differences in emphasis. Fourth, the resulting patterns were interpreted through realist assumptions concerning national interest, anarchy, relative power, and the dependence of international organizations.

To maintain analytical caution, reports by advocacy organizations were treated as institutional claims and documentation that must be read in light of each publisher's mandate, rather than as final legal determinations. Reports by the United Nations and humanitarian agencies were likewise not regarded as wholly free from limitations of access and verification. Triangulation was conducted by comparing the functions and information provided by several types of sources. The study did not employ interviews or field observation and therefore does not attempt to measure program effects quantitatively. These limitations are revisited in the concluding section.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Gaza Crisis as a Multidimensional Emergency

The documents examined show that the Gaza crisis cannot be reduced to fatalities alone. The hostilities affect housing, health care, water, food, sanitation, energy, and population movement. OCHA reports widespread impacts on civilians and the need for cross-sectoral coordination, while WHO highlights damage to and declining capacity among health facilities (OCHA, 2023, 2024; World Health Organization, 2024). These conditions generate cascading effects: damage to health facilities increases the risk of preventable deaths; disruptions to energy and fuel reduce hospital capacity; and population displacement places greater pressure on shelters and basic services.

Human Rights Watch highlights restrictions and damage affecting access to water, while Amnesty International presents documentation assessing actions against Gaza's population within the framework of grave violations (Amnesty International, 2024; Human Rights Watch, 2024). This article does not determine the legal status of those claims, but the findings of multiple organizations demonstrate that civilian infrastructure and access to basic necessities are central components of the crisis. In other words, civilians' ability to survive is heavily influenced by decisions beyond their control.

From a realist perspective, the scale of need does not automatically determine the scale of response. What matters is whether actors possessing material capacity are willing to use their influence to open access, pressure parties to the conflict, or bear political costs. The multidimensional crisis increases the need for coordination, but it

also deepens dependence on actors that control territory, borders, airspace, and security decisions. This is where human security and state security intersect: civilian needs are urgent, while states and conflict parties view access through the lenses of threat, control, and strategic advantage.

The Architecture of the International Humanitarian Response

The international response to Gaza takes the form of an institutional network rather than a single intervention. The United Nations Security Council provides a normative framework through resolutions; OCHA coordinates information and needs; WHO conducts assessments and coordinates health activities; UNRWA provides basic services and assistance to Palestinian refugees; nongovernmental organizations address operational gaps; and donor states supply funding and diplomatic support. This division of labor makes a large-scale response possible, but it also creates multiple points of dependence.

Resolution 2712 shows that the Security Council can produce a minimum consensus on the need for humanitarian pauses and civilian protection (United Nations Security Council, 2023). A resolution, however, is not a direct aid-distribution mechanism. Its implementation depends on actors capable of changing conditions on the ground. This illustrates the distinction between normative authority and coercive capacity. The United Nations can create legitimacy and expectations, but it does not always possess independent means to guarantee compliance.

UNRWA occupies a critically important position because of its service network and operational experience in Gaza. At the same time, its dependence on donor-state funding makes humanitarian operations vulnerable to political change. Allegations involving some staff members following the 7 October 2023 attack prompted several states to review or temporarily suspend funding before some support was restored. Regardless of how those allegations are assessed, the episode demonstrates that donor decisions can rapidly affect the capacity of an organization serving a civilian population (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, 2024).

Table 2. Actors, functions, and constraints in the humanitarian response to Gaza

Actor	Primary function	Source of capacity	Political/operational constraints
United Nations Security Council	Establishes normative frameworks and political legitimacy	Resolutions and institutional authority	Compromises among permanent members' interests and dependence on state implementation

Actor	Primary function	Source of capacity	Political/operational constraints
OCHA	Humanitarian coordination, needs reporting, and advocacy for access	United Nations network and field information	Access, personnel security, and dependence on cooperation from parties to the conflict
WHO	Assessment and coordination of health services	Technical expertise and health networks	Damaged facilities, shortages of supplies and fuel, and restricted access
UNRWA	Basic services, shelter, and support for Palestinian refugees	Local infrastructure and donor funding	Funding dependence, political pressure, and security conditions
Donor states	Funding, material assistance, and diplomacy	Economic resources and political influence	National priorities, alliances, domestic pressure, and reputation

Access Control as a Form of Power

The most consistent finding across the documents is that humanitarian access constitutes a source of power. Aid does not move merely because it is available; it requires authorization, safe routes, inspections, time coordination, and assurances for personnel. Actors controlling borders, movement, and security procedures have the ability to accelerate, restrict, or delay humanitarian operations. OCHA (2024) identifies access as a central issue, demonstrating that logistical obstacles cannot be separated from political decisions.

In realist theory, access control is a manifestation of material capacity and territorial authority. International organizations may possess expertise, funding, and legitimacy, but they cannot substitute for physical control over entry routes. This asymmetry creates a bargaining relationship: aid agencies require the approval of

those controlling security, while those actors may use access to pursue military, political, or reputational objectives. Because no supranational authority can consistently guarantee operational freedom, humanitarian principles depend on negotiation with powerful actors.

This condition also explains why calls for humanitarian corridors or pauses do not always produce a stable flow of aid. Pauses are temporary and vulnerable to changes in the security situation. A corridor may reduce risk at one point but cannot resolve the entire distribution chain, including unloading, storage, internal transport, and last-mile delivery to recipients. Access is therefore not a binary variable that is either open or closed, but a sequence of decisions that can be constrained at every stage.

Realist analysis helps demonstrate that these obstacles are not merely technical failures. When access is directly connected to security calculations, operational improvements require political agreement. A realist approach, however, must also be complemented by legal and humanitarian perspectives. Explaining control as power does not justify disproportionate restrictions; descriptive analysis must be distinguished from normative evaluation of obligations to protect civilians.

Donor Politics and Humanitarian Selectivity

Funding is essential to the continuity of assistance, but donor decisions are not entirely neutral. States determine the amount, channel, timing, and type of aid on the basis of a combination of needs, foreign-policy interests, domestic pressure, and risk assessments. In the Gaza case, some states maintain security and diplomatic support for Israel while simultaneously providing assistance to Palestinians. This pattern can be understood as an effort to manage two interests: preserving a strategic alliance and reducing humanitarian and international reputational costs.

Realism explains this dual policy as the balancing of interests rather than an incomprehensible contradiction. Humanitarian aid may serve to demonstrate concern, reduce criticism, maintain relations with regional partners, and preserve the legitimacy of the international order. Conversely, states supporting Palestine may use aid and multilateral forums to strengthen their diplomatic position, political identity, or regional influence. Moral motives and strategic interests can therefore coexist.

The temporary suspension of funding to UNRWA illustrates the direct effect of donor politics on operational capacity. When an organization depends on voluntary contributions, changes in risk perceptions or political pressure within donor states can reduce resources within a short period. This dependence reinforces the realist prediction that international institutions are not fully autonomous. The restoration of some support, however, also indicates that donor decisions are shaped by operational need, institutional assessment, public pressure, and reputational considerations, rather than by narrow security calculations alone.

Humanitarian selectivity emerges when moral standards are applied differently across cases or actors. Realism associates such selectivity with inequalities

of power and the strategic value of interstate relationships. Selectivity, however, does not erase the significance of the aid delivered. For recipients, assistance has tangible material value. A sound analysis must distinguish humanitarian consequences from political motives: an action may save lives while simultaneously serving state interests.

The Constraints of International Organizations and Norm Enforcement

International organizations possess important capacities to generate information, coordinate assistance, establish standards, and create reputational pressure. Reports by OCHA, WHO, and UNRWA help transform field-level experiences into international issues open to debate. Security Council resolutions also provide a shared language concerning civilian protection and humanitarian access. These functions demonstrate that institutions are not merely passive reflections of states.

Yet these capacities are not equivalent to coercive power. The Security Council depends on the political agreement of its members, while operational agencies depend on access and funding. When major states differ in their assessments of threats, responsibility, or the conflict's ultimate objectives, institutional outcomes tend to represent a minimum compromise. Realism predicts this condition: cooperation may occur, but its scope is constrained by the interests of the most powerful actors.

The Gaza crisis reveals a gap between norms and implementation. Appeals for civilian protection, respect for international humanitarian law, and unimpeded access may be accepted rhetorically, but practical implementation requires monitoring mechanisms, consequences for violations, and political support. Without these three elements, norms function primarily as sources of legitimacy and moral pressure. They may raise reputational costs without necessarily changing behavior in the short term.

It would nevertheless be excessive to conclude that norms are irrelevant. States and organizations continue to invest resources in legal and moral justification, indicating that legitimacy has value. Humanitarian documentation creates a public record, provides a basis for advocacy, and influences policy debates. The relationship between power and norms is therefore interactive: power determines implementation capacity, while norms shape how actions are justified, criticized, and assessed.

Implications for Middle-Power Diplomacy and Indonesia's Role

For a middle power such as Indonesia, the Gaza crisis demonstrates that humanitarian diplomacy can generate normative pressure and broaden support for humanitarian access, although its influence remains shaped by the distribution of power. Support through multilateral forums, humanitarian contributions, and cooperation with international institutions can strengthen the legitimacy of demands for civilian protection. Without direct control over access routes or major influence over the principal parties, however, the ability to produce operational change remains limited.

Within a realist framework, these limitations do not render middle-power diplomacy irrelevant. Coalitions, reputation, consistency of position, and agenda-setting capacity can increase collective influence. Middle powers can help reduce coordination costs, strengthen more stable funding, and promote accountability mechanisms. Claims of effectiveness, however, must be assessed cautiously through concrete indicators such as changes in access, continuity of funding, or implementation of multilateral decisions. The corpus used in this study is insufficiently detailed to evaluate the outcomes of Indonesian policy specifically; this section is therefore presented as an analytical implication rather than a comprehensive empirical evaluation.

Theoretical Synthesis: The Explanatory Power and Limits of Realism

Overall, four patterns support the explanatory power of realism. First, humanitarian access follows the distribution of territorial control and security capacity. Second, funding and diplomatic support reflect a combination of national interests, alliances, and legitimacy. Third, international organizations play important roles but depend on states for resources and implementation. Fourth, humanitarian norms face limitations when they are not supported by political will and enforcement capacity.

These patterns explain why an international response can be institutionally extensive yet remain limited in its outcomes. Numerous actors, reports, resolutions, and aid commitments do not automatically create safe and sustained access. This gap is not merely a coordination problem; it is rooted in conflicting interests and unequal power. Realism therefore shifts the question from 'why does the international community not care?' to 'whose interests and capacities determine what can be done?'

Realism nevertheless has three limitations. First, it tends to reduce humanitarian motivations to instruments of interest, even though aid workers, international bureaucracies, and some policymakers may act on the basis of norms and professional identities. Second, realism does not adequately explain how information, public opinion, and advocacy alter state preferences over time. Third, its focus on states may overlook local networks that shape aid distribution. Future research could therefore combine realism with constructivist, institutionalist, or human-security approaches to provide a more comprehensive explanation.

Within these limits, realism is used in this article in a focused manner. The theory explains the conditions that constrain humanitarian response; it does not negate moral or legal values. The findings show that humanitarianism requires more than goodwill: it requires predictable access, protection for humanitarian personnel and civilian facilities, funding that is resistant to political disruption, and support from states with direct influence over the parties to the conflict.

CONCLUSION

This article answers the research question by showing that realism explains the forms, limitations, and selectivity of the international humanitarian response to Gaza through four principal mechanisms: access control, donor politics, the dependence of international organizations, and weak norm enforcement in the absence of political backing. Humanitarian response does not operate in a neutral space. It functions within a conflict in which civilian needs confront state calculations of security, alliance, reputation, and strategic position.

The Gaza crisis underscores the distinction between normative capacity and implementation capacity. Resolutions, reports, and advocacy can generate legitimacy and pressure, but their influence depends on actors that control access and resources. International organizations can coordinate assistance and produce essential information, yet they are not fully independent of member states and donors. The success of a response should therefore not be measured solely by the number of commitments made or institutions involved; more substantive measures include the continuity of access, the safety of civilians and humanitarian workers, the functioning of basic services, and the ability to translate norms into operational change.

Realism also shows that humanitarian assistance may perform a dual function. It can reduce suffering while supporting the diplomatic interests of states. These mixed motives do not invalidate the benefits of assistance, but they call for transparency and institutional arrangements that reduce dependence on short-term political decisions. More stable funding, mechanisms for monitoring access, institutional protection for humanitarian agencies, and stronger diplomatic coordination are practical implications of these findings.

This study is limited to document analysis and does not include interviews, field data, or a quantitative evaluation of aid effectiveness. Its corpus also ends with the sources listed in the study and therefore does not capture every policy change that occurred afterward. Future research could compare Gaza with other cases, examine donor decisions in greater detail, or investigate how local organizations negotiate access. Nevertheless, the findings affirm that humanitarian protection can be effective only when norms, operational capacity, and political will move together.

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