

Humanitarian Evidence and Discourse Summary

October 2023
Luke Kelly, University of Manchester

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 Hugo Slim highlights his five star reads. Dr Hugo Slim leads the ‘What is Climate Humanitarianism?’ project at the Las Casas Institute for Social Justice at Blackfriars Hall, University of Oxford).



Protect

Publication date	Title/URL	Author(s)/publication/publication type (evidence, discourse or policy/guidance)	Summary	Top reads
September 2023	Five ways to protect civilians in contemporary armed conflict	Dan Mahanty; SIPRI	Blog outlining the main challenges to civilian protection, and five recommendations for civil society.	
September 2023	Sexual violence in conflict and weapons: unpacking the links for better prevention	Hana Salama; ICRC Law & Policy Discourse	Blog on how the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is linked to sexual violence in armed conflict, with recommendations on gender-sensitive arms control.	

September 2023	Sexual and gender-based violence in migration contexts: does faith sensitivity matter?	Sandra Iman Pertek et al.; ICRC Law & Policy Discourse	Discussion of the role of faith sensitivity and faith actors in combatting SGBV.	
September 2023	Protecting education from non-state armed group attacks and Protecting education from attack during armed conflict	ICRC Law & Policy Discourse	Blogs outlining the problem of attacks on education and steps to prevent them.	
September 2023	Armed conflict and the pandemic accord: what states should do next for conflict-affected populations	Micaela Serafini and Avigail Shai; ICRC Law & Policy Discourse	Discusses the problem of pandemic response during conflict, with the ongoing Pandemic Accoding negotiations in mind.	
September 2023	How disasters can increase armed conflict risks, but also facilitate diplomacy	Tobias Ide; bLISS Discourse	Blog outlining how disasters can reduce conflict intensity, and offer opportunities for relief and diplomacy. In countries with high levels of vulnerability, disasters can affect conflict dynamics. In half the cases studied, the disaster had no impact on conflict; in one quarter, fighting intensified; in the rest, disasters led to de-escalation. It highlights the importance of addressing the root causes of disaster and conflict vulnerability.	 <p>Tobias Ide gives a good quick summary of his important book comparing a disaster's impact on conflict in 21 countries. With more disasters and probably more conflicts heading our way, the news he brings is not all bad. Some disasters do have a peace dividend, even if most of them don't.</p>
September 2023	Leveraging emerging technologies to enable environmental monitoring and accountability in conflict zones	Wim Zwijnenburg and Ollie Ballinger; International Review of the Red Cross Evidence	Article discussing recent developments in the use of open source intelligence to monitor environmental risks in conflict, and the prospects for greater use in environmental accountability.	
September 2023	The environmental dimensions of Libya's flood disaster	Malak Altaeb; CEOBS Evidence	Assessment of the long- and short-term consequences of the flood in Libya, their links to the history of conflict, to inform humanitarian response.	

September 2023	Frontline Negotiations publications	Frontline Negotiations Evidence	Four publications on humanitarian access and negotiations, covering: the influence of third parties in negotiations with NSAGs ; the impact of humanitarian staff turnover ; access and humanitarian principles ; and negotiating with beneficiaries of aid	
September 2023	Navigating narratives in Ukraine: humanitarian response amid solidarity and resistance	Zainab Moallin, Karen Hargrave and Patrick Saez; HPG Evidence	How the conflicting narratives on the war in Ukraine create dilemmas for humanitarian actors.	

Prioritise

Publication date	Title/URL	Author(s)/Publication/Publication type (evidence, discourse or policy/guidance)	Summary	Top reads
September 2023	Cash transfers amid shocks: A large, one-time, unconditional cash transfer to refugees in Uganda has multidimensional benefits after 19 months	Prankur Gupta; World Development Evidence	Finds that a one-off transfer of USD 1,000 'significantly increased households' consumption, asset values, business ownership, business revenue, psychological well-being, and self-reliance.'	
September 2023	Sudan's crisis: can cash transfers prevent starvation and state collapse?	Susanne Jaspars and Tamer Abd Elkreem; African Arguments Discourse	Discusses the aid networks and strategies in Sudan with many banks collapsed and limited internet access. While cash transfers should be part of the response, they should be careful to avoid exploitation, and be accompanied by broader reforms.	 <p>This is a nice example of academics pooling their knowledge fast to produce some remote real-time research, which can guide humanitarian policy and practice in an ongoing emergency. Once again, Sudan's "neighbourhood committees" emerge as life-savers.</p>
September 2023	Aligning humanitarian assistance with social protection gaps	CCD Network Discourse	Discussion paper on the 'various programme options that can inform the design of humanitarian cash assistance programming to better align with and complement the	 <p>This report by Clara Decamps and Louise Lippi is one for Social</p>


			existing Ukrainian social protection system.'	Protection people. 8 million Ukrainians have now received multi-purpose cash assistance. The report shows how humanitarian cash can be better aligned with a resilient national SP system to provide ongoing welfare in war. No executive summary meant I had to read most of the report, which I suppose was a good discipline for me.
September 2023	Aid theft in Somalia is not what you think	Erik Bryld; The New Humanitarian Discourse	Argues that aid diversion in Somalia is not simple extortion, but based around an informal political economy centred on 'informal settlement managers' who provide services.	
September 2023	Is it right to count humanitarian aid as loss and damage?	Hugo Slim; Humanitarian Practice Network Discourse	A blog highlighting the 'risk of humanitarianising loss and damage' ahead of key decisions at COP28. Funds directed to humanitarian efforts could make it difficult to achieve the 'significant structural investments to make good....economic and non-economic losses from climate change.'	
September 2023	Nutritionists' experiences and reflections from across the globe	Field Exchange: Issue 70 Evidence	Articles from the field and research snapshots including on the relevance of maternal mid-upper arm circumference.	
September 2023	Ukraine: Insights and implications	Forced Migration Review Evidence	Articles on responses to displacement from the conflict, and broader implications.	
September 2023	The Nexus Agenda: How to Stay the Course UNHCR's Engagement in Humanitarian-Development Cooperation 2021 – 2022	Dr. Julian Lehmann, Dr. Julia and Marie Wagner; GPPI Evidence	Evaluation of UNHCR's engagement in the 'nexus' during 2021-2.	
September 2023	Review of the OECD DAC criteria for evaluating humanitarian action:	Jo-Hannah Lavey et al.; ALNAP Policy/guidance	Maps the guidance on evaluating humanitarian programmes according to the OECD DAC criteria.	

	a mapping of literature, guidance and practice			
--	--	--	--	--

Prevent

Publication date	Title/URL	Author(s)/Publication/Publication type (evidence, discourse or policy/guidance)	Summary	Top reads
September 2023	Climate challenges in fragile and conflict-affected states	Laura Jamarillo et al.; International Monetary Fund Evidence	Paper on the macroeconomic costs of climate change in fragile states because of underlying fragilities, which are themselves worsened by climate change.	
September 2023	Tailored forecasts can predict extreme climate informing proactive interventions in East Africa	Chris Funk et al.; Earth's Future Evidence	Suggests 'how attribution-based insights can be combined with the latest dynamical models to predict droughts at 8-month lead-times'. Also discusses the barriers to use of such models, and investments needed in EWS.	 <p>I have to force my arty self to read scientific papers but I stuck with this one, which is important and encouraging. Written by a mix of scientists and humanitarian scholars, it offers hope for Early Warning in East Africa. It suggests we can see 8 months ahead and tackle our age old behavioural problems around early warning and early action.</p>
September 2023	A fair share of climate finance? The adaptation edition	Laetitia Pettinotti et al.; ODI	Data on the delivery of pledged climate adaptation finance, showing shortfalls.	
September 2023	Financing climate adaptation In fragile states	Adriana Quevedo et al.; SPARC	Policy brief on ways for the government and humanitarian actors to improve climate adaptation in Somalia.	
September 2023	Social protection and anticipatory action to protect agricultural livelihoods	FAO Evidence	Uses the existing literature to highlight key concepts, opportunities, and challenges in linking social protection and anticipatory action.	

September 2023	Food security programming: Strengthening preparedness, responses and prevention	Mirella Bilalagic and Dr Simone Bunse; SIPRI Evidence	Backgrounder on recent global increases in food insecurity, drivers including conflict and covid-19, and barriers to humanitarian response, and ways forward including nexus programming, gender sensitivity and early warning.	
September 2023	Climate, Peace and Security Fact Sheet: Somalia	Kheira Tarif et al.; SIPRI Evidence	Outlines the effects of climate change on Somalia and 'four pathways linking climate change to peace and security issues: livelihood deterioration, migration and mobility, military and armed actors, and political and economic exploitation and mismanagement'.	
September 2023	Divergent dynamics: disasters and conflicts as 'drivers' of internal displacement?	David James Cantor; Disasters Evidence	Shows how disaster and conflicts can be understood as contexts for displacement rather than drivers, and develops 'a comparative analytical model of internal displacement dynamics in the disaster and conflict contexts'.	
September 2023	Humanitarian numbers	Journal of Humanitarian Affairs Evidence	Articles on numbers in humanitarian aid, including in famine, medical research and the Russia-Ukraine war.	 <p>I liked the introduction to this special issue by Joel Glasman and Brendan Lawson with their "10 Things We Know About Humanitarian Numbers." Because I am almost innumerate and terrified by the new data tsunami, I was glad to read that numbers are not all they are cracked up to be and we still need personal testimony and verbal description to understand emergencies.</p>
September 2023	Quality measures for humanitarian data	Centre for humdata Discourse	Outlines improved quality assessment practices for the humanitarian data exchange that still allow large scale collection.	
September 2023	Underfunded Crisis Index	Humanitarian Funding Forecast Evidence	An update to the index tracing persistently underfunded contexts, with additions of Colombia; the Regional Migrant Response Plans of the Horn of Africa and Yemen; and Lebanon.	

September 2023	Understanding the age-sex patterns of crisis deaths: towards a more standard mortality estimation approach	Colin Mathers et al.; Working paper, United Nations Children’s Fund Evidence	Estimates age-sex distribution from 164 crises using regression and bootstrap resampling, finding higher risks for particular demographics by crisis type.	
September 2023	Why the international community is failing urban refugees: four myths about protracted displacement	Lucy Earle; IIED Evidence	Paper overturning four myths shaping policy on protracted displacement in urban areas, and makes recommendations to better support displaced persons in urban areas.	 <p>Lucie Earle is myth-busting here, and shows that I have been wrong to assume that urban refugees who are not living in camps are melting into cities well and living a better life than encamped refugees.</p>
September 2023	What aid actors need to know about social cohesion in displacement: a Tanzania case study	Caitlin Sturridge et al.; HPG Evidence	Evidence on social cohesion and displaced populations in Tanzania, the role of government policy and aid, and recommendations for aid actors.	

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



UKaid
from the British people

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. This evidence summary was prepared for the UK Government’s Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and its partners in support of pro-poor programmes. It is licensed for non-commercial purposes only.

HCRI cannot be held responsible for errors, omissions or any consequences arising from the use of information contained in this health evidence summary. Any views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of FCDO, HCRI or any other contributing organisation.

About HCRI

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.

Room C1.49, Ellen Wilkinson Building

Oxford Road

Manchester

M13 9PL

Email: hcric@manchester.ac.uk

Tel: +44 (0)161 275 3718