
CONFLICT INTENSITY AND HUMANITARIAN AID

An Empirical Analysis of ECHO Humanitarian Aid Allocation to the Middle
East



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Abstract

Conflict Intensity and Humanitarian Aid: An Empirical Analysis of ECHO Humanitarian Aid Allocation to the Middle East

(Under the supervision of B. J. Carroll)

The European Union has become one of the largest donors of humanitarian aid worldwide through the provision of funding for humanitarian assistance by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO). The literature on humanitarian aid has so far not paid attention to the determinants of the allocation of humanitarian aid by multilateral entities to different regions over time. This research aims to uncover what determines the humanitarian aid allocation to the Middle East by ECHO. I argue that the level of conflict intensity has a significant influence on the decision to allocate humanitarian aid to a particular region. The case studies on Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Iran, Jordan and Lebanon have demonstrated that an increase in the level of conflict intensity has indeed an effect on the amount of humanitarian aid provided to the country. The rationale is as follows: when the level of conflict intensity in a country increases, an increasing number of people are deprived of their fundamental human rights and are unable to suffice in their basic human needs, like housing, food, healthcare services and education. This means that the affected people have no equal moral standing. Consequently, donors will provide humanitarian aid in order to improve the humanitarian situation. Shortly put, humanitarian aid is provided in order to restore the equal moral standing among all human beings.

Keywords: European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), the Middle East, humanitarian aid, conflict intensity, equal moral standing, human rights, basic needs.

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Preface

Before you lays my thesis on the relationship between conflict intensity and humanitarian aid allocation to the Middle East by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO). This thesis has been written in partial fulfilment of the Master Degree Public Administration: International and European Governance at the Faculty of Governance and Global Affairs, which is part of Leiden University.

The aim of this research project is to provide the reader an insight into the determinants of humanitarian aid allocation by ECHO. In particular, I want to show the reader that there is a positive relationship between the level of conflict intensity and the allocation of humanitarian aid. As this research project contains an analysis of seven cases – Iraq, Palestine, Syria, Yemen, Iran, Jordan and Lebanon – it was quite an extensive and challenging job. Nevertheless, I am very grateful that I have been given the chance to conduct such an extensive analysis on a topic which highly interests me.

Therefore, I would like to specifically thank my supervisor, Brendan J. Carroll, for the opportunity to write my Master Thesis under his supervision and for his guidance throughout the project. Without his constructive feedback and recommendations, I would not have been able to produce the thesis I have produced right now. In addition, I want to thank my fellow students for proofreading my thesis and providing me with relevant comments. In particular, my thanks go out to Iris Hofstee, Irene Adelmeyer, Claudia Scandol, Lennart Sluis, Niek Roelands and Marliese Vollebregt. Last, but not least, I would like to thank my parents, brother and friends for supporting me throughout the past year and past few weeks. I would not have been able to finish this master and this thesis successfully without your help and support.

Adája Stoetman

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List of Abbreviations

BAFIA	Iranian Bureau for Alien and Foreign Immigration Affairs
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
DG	Directorate General
EC	European Commission
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EU	European Union
GNP	Gross National Product
HIPs	Humanitarian Implementation Plans
HRL	Human Rights Law
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IR	International Relations
IS	Islamic State
MSSD	Most Similar Systems Design
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
RRM	Rapid Response Mechanism
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
USA	United States of America

Introduction

Humanitarian issues remain in the spotlight these days. Conflicts, wars and crises in Africa, the Middle East and Asia demonstrate that peace and security for all human beings is not self-evident. A good example is the continuous threat that is being posed to citizens of countries like Syria, Yemen, South Sudan and Myanmar. These examples highlight that, very often, innocent citizens are involved in and affected by conflicts and wars which are created by others. Eventually, these conflicts may lead to a high number of civilian casualties, a high number of internally displaced persons and refugee flows.

One way to address these issues is through the delivery of humanitarian aid. Even though the idea of providing aid in order to support the poor is already very old, the idea to provide humanitarian aid to citizens of countries that experience severe conflicts and wars can be traced back to the 20th century in particular (Davey, Borton, & Foley, 2013). The central idea behind the contemporary provision of humanitarian aid is to alleviate the suffering of the most vulnerable populations (Fink & Redaelli, 2011). In this research, the focus will lay on the provision of humanitarian aid to countries that are affected by conflicts and wars. The Global Humanitarian Assistance Report of 2017 shows that the provision of humanitarian assistance has been on the rise for the past few years. Whereas in 2012 the amount of money provided for humanitarian assistance was approximately \$16.1 billion, this number increased to \$27.3 billion in 2016 (Global Humanitarian Assistance, 2017). One of the regions that has received an increasing amount of humanitarian assistance over the past few years has been the Middle East (Global Humanitarian Assistance, 2017). With conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Palestine and Yemen, this region has been experiencing grave humanitarian conditions. Furthermore, Iran, Jordan and Lebanon have become affected by the consequences of the conflicts and wars occurring in their neighbouring countries.

What the Global Humanitarian Assistance Report of 2017 also shows is that the European Union (EU) has been one of the most important donors worldwide, ranking fifth in the list of top donors of humanitarian assistance in 2016 (Global Humanitarian Assistance, 2017). The increasing importance of the EU at the international humanitarian level reflects a general trend in which the EU has become a more relevant actor at the international stage (Hix & Høyland, 2011). With reference to the international humanitarian field, the relevant institution that is responsible for the allocation of humanitarian aid within the EU is the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), which is one of the many Directorate-Generals (DGs) of the European Commission (EC).

Since its establishment in 1992, DG ECHO has aimed “to save and preserve life, to prevent and to alleviate human suffering, and to safeguard the integrity and dignity of populations affected by natural disasters and man-made crises” (ECHO, 2018a). One way through which ECHO has tried to fulfil its

objectives is through the provision of humanitarian aid. One of the regions where ECHO has been active in allocating humanitarian aid is the Middle East, with humanitarian aid provided to nine countries between 1994 and 2018 (ECHO: EDRIS, 2018). However, what should be noted is that humanitarian aid is not directly delivered by ECHO, but rather through ECHO's partners. These partners have established humanitarian assistance programs to which ECHO provides funding. This leads to say that the humanitarian aid allocated by ECHO should be seen as funding for the humanitarian projects that are executed on the ground by ECHO's partners. An example is the partnership between ECHO and the humanitarian agencies of the United Nations (UN), which is built upon the collective aim of alleviating suffering of the most vulnerable populations. Altogether, the EU has approximately 200 partners for the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Considering the fact that the EU is currently one of the most significant donors of humanitarian aid worldwide and the Middle East is one of the biggest receiving regions of (EU) humanitarian aid, it is relevant to dive deeper into the phenomenon of EU humanitarian aid allocation to the Middle East. The justification is twofold. Firstly, as the EU is one of the most important donors internationally, it is justified to look into the drivers of EU humanitarian aid allocation. Secondly, as humanitarian aid delivery to the Middle East has been increasing over the past few years, it is worth analysing what has caused the increasing amount of aid allocated to the region. To tie this together, it can be said that this research is aimed at discovering what has motivated ECHO to provide funds to humanitarian assistance programs in the Middle East. Therefore, the research question of this thesis is as follows: *What determines the allocation of humanitarian aid to the Middle East by ECHO?*

So far, the relationship between conflict intensity and humanitarian aid allocation has not been sufficiently investigated. Previous research has mainly focussed on the external effects of humanitarian aid (Wood & Sullivan, 2015), and in particular on the impact of humanitarian aid on the gravity of conflicts (Masterson & Lehmann, 2017). However, the opposite, the impact of conflict intensity on humanitarian aid allocation, has not been subjected to research so far. Furthermore, research has been conducted on what generally motivates donors to provide humanitarian aid but has not paid attention to the causal relationship between conflict intensity and humanitarian aid allocation specifically. Hence, as little attention has been paid to the relationship between conflict intensity and humanitarian aid allocation, and as the EU has humanitarian assistance high on its agenda, it is justified to dive deeper into whether the level of conflict intensity has actually determined aid allocation by ECHO. Therefore, the broader goal of this research is primarily concerned with unfolding how humanitarian aid allocation by ECHO can be explained. As this research focuses on humanitarian aid that has previously been provided to the Middle East, it can be classified as retrospective research and thus does not address the future of humanitarian aid allocation to the Middle East by ECHO.

In order to determine whether there is a relation between conflict intensity and humanitarian aid allocation, this study will examine seven cases: Iraq, Palestine, Syria, Yemen, Iran, Jordan and Lebanon. I will try to uncover the motivations behind ECHO humanitarian aid allocation through looking at the detailed reports and the humanitarian implementation plans (HIPs), which are produced by ECHO. In addition, I will look at the level of conflict intensity, which is based upon the number of casualties, displaced persons, and Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. The analysis on conflict intensity will be used to see whether a change in the intensity level of a conflict triggered a change in the amount of humanitarian aid provided. As the objective of this research is to trace the impact of conflict intensity on the provision of humanitarian aid to the Middle East, it should be acknowledged that this research does not attempt to generalize about explanations for humanitarian aid allocation for cases that fall outside the scope of this research. To determine the external validity of the argument further research will be required.

The main findings of this research are twofold. Firstly, it can be said that humanitarian aid is provided to countries that experience conflict. However, conflict-experiencing countries are not the only recipients of humanitarian aid. Countries that are affected by conflicts and wars in neighbouring countries, through for example refugee flows, have also received a substantial amount of humanitarian aid from ECHO. Secondly, the intensity of a conflict has determined the allocation of humanitarian aid to the selected countries in the Middle East. The rationale is as follows. The rising numbers of casualties and displaced persons indicated an increase in the level of conflict intensity. Furthermore, in some cases the rising number of UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and its sometimes changing content have demonstrated that the international community paid increasingly attention to internal situation of the selected countries. In turn, the intensification of a conflict worsened the humanitarian situation because fundamental human rights were violated and populations were not able to suffice their basic needs. The deprivation of human rights and the inability to suffice basic needs leads to say that the citizens affected by conflicts and wars were not able to achieve an equal moral standing. Consequently, to restore the equal moral standing, and thus improving the humanitarian situation, humanitarian aid was provided. This shows that a higher level of conflict intensity will lead to a higher amount of humanitarian aid provided, as the effects for the population will be more severe than when conflicts have a low intensity level. Overall, it can, therefore, be concluded that conflicts have a significant impact on the decision to allocate humanitarian aid.

To discover the relationship between conflict intensity and the allocation of humanitarian aid to the Middle East, this research is structured as follows. The subsequent chapter contains a literature review, in which the history of humanitarian aid and the determinants of humanitarian aid allocation will be discussed. The third chapter is then devoted to establishing the theoretical framework that underlies this thesis. Through describing the central elements of normative theory and in particular ethical

cosmopolitanism, the two main hypotheses will be established. Additionally, this chapter will contain a discussion of the main alternative explanation of aid allocation by ECHO: the interests of the donor. The fourth chapter of this thesis will describe the research design, the methodological choices that have been made, the data collection strategies per variable and will shortly discuss the selected cases. In essence, this thesis is a cross-peak comparative analysis of a relatively small number of cases. This means that I will analyse the peaks in the amount of humanitarian aid provided to the seven selected countries: Iraq, Palestine, Syria, Yemen, Iran, Jordan and Lebanon. Subsequently, I will look at whether these peaks can be explained on the basis of an increase in the level of conflict intensity. The fifth chapter consists of a description some of the central features of EU humanitarian aid allocation. In addition, I will provide some context on humanitarian aid provision to the selected countries. This chapter will serve as a stepping stone towards the subsequent chapter, in which the main hypotheses will be tested on the basis of the seven case studies. After the analysis has been conducted, the final chapter of this research will discuss the results, the implications, the limitations of the research and will provide recommendations for future research.

Literature Review

This chapter is devoted to elaborating on the debate surrounding the allocation of humanitarian aid. It will start with providing a historical overview of the international humanitarian system. The second section will shed a light on the drivers of humanitarian aid allocation. Different determinants of humanitarian aid allocation have been put forward over time. Therefore, this second section will describe and discuss the most frequently mentioned drivers of aid allocation.

Humanitarian aid: a historical overview

Even though the idea of alleviating the suffering of others is already centuries old, the origins of the international humanitarian system as we know it today, can be traced back to the 20th century (Davey *et al.*, 2013). Humanitarian action initially originated from the European experience of war. However, nowadays, it is active across the globe in multiple forms of operations: responding to needs in countries that are affected by conflict and natural disasters, risk reduction, conflict resolution and peace-building (Davey *et al.*, 2013). The history of the international humanitarian system can be divided into four broad periods: the early 19th century until the end of the First World War, the Wilsonian period in the interbellum, the Cold War period, and finally, the post-Cold War period (Davey *et al.*, 2013). The most remarkable tendency when describing the different eras of humanitarianism is that when moving from one period to another, it is evident that more protections are assigned to an increasing number of populations that were once neglected (Barnett, 2011).

Firstly, the period from the early 19th century until the end of the First World War can be characterized as imperial humanitarianism, in which compassion encouraged individuals to imagine new obligations to one another (Barnett, 2011). There are a number of factors that contributed to the flourishing of humanitarianism. The most remarkable one is the creation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in 1863 (Davey *et al.*, 2013). The ICRC is a neutral organization that ensures humanitarian protection and assistance for victims of wars and armed violence (ICRC, 2018). This shows the increasing importance that is attached to humanitarianism internationally. The flourishing of humanitarianism in this period can also be contributed to the more advanced technologies of industrializing nations, which increased the human costs of war and conflicts. A good example is the improvements in the transport and communication technology that led to a reduction of the relative distance between countries, which made citizens more aware of the activities of their country during a war. To contain the possible discontent of the people at home and due to the more advanced technologies, it was desired to minimize the impact on soldiers through providing humanitarian assistance (Davey *et al.*, 2013).

Next, the interbellum years can be defined as the Wilsonian period of international humanitarianism. It was the period in which the idea of international government was born, with the establishment of the League of Nations as the most remarkable moment. Not only the idea of an international government emerged in this period, also the creation of multiple international organizations that addressed humanitarian issues can be subscribed to the Wilsonian era of humanitarianism (Davey *et al.*, 2013). Even though humanitarian action in this period encompassed a broad range of activities, it was the consequences of the ‘Great War’, such as the number of casualties and the high economic losses, that determined subsequent humanitarian action (Davey *et al.*, 2013).

Despite the fact that these two periods are remarkable in the history of humanitarian aid, the design of the contemporary international humanitarian system, in which humanitarian assistance is mainly provided on a needs-basis, can be traced back to the post-World War II period. This era featured two particularly important developments: The Cold War and processes of decolonization. In the first place, humanitarian action on behalf of the superpowers, the United States of America (USA) and the Soviet Union, during the Cold War should be seen in light of maximizing their self-interest (Barnett, 2011). They provided aid to regions that were of strategic interest. The end of colonialism, which left a power vacuum in the Third World, reinforced this trend. The Great Powers, non-governmental organizations and international organization quickly occupied this vacuum because they were advocating for bringing progress and modernity to these countries. The vacuum that existed after decolonization was not the only motivation to shift humanitarian assistance towards the Third World. Another imperative was that humanitarian need was now perceived through the lens of global poverty and inequality (Davey *et al.*, 2013). The image of starving African children dominated the conceptions of providing humanitarian aid. While humanitarian action right after the Second World War was mainly focussed on Europeans in need, it paid now more attention to all people in need. This leads to say that the neo-humanitarianism period became more inclusive.

Furthermore, as states increasingly got involved in providing humanitarian aid the idea emerged that the provision of humanitarian assistance should no longer be determined by maximizing self-interest. Instead, the provision of assistance should be guided by principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence (Barnett, 2011). However, even though this period acknowledges the shift towards universality, an important side note should be made. Barnett (2011) concludes fairly that the creation of human rights ‘institutions’, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the Geneva Conventions, were not proof of increased levels of compassion towards the Third World, but indicated “the fear of further acts of barbarism” (Barnett, 2011, p. 103). It was an acknowledgement that the world was capable of committing horrible crimes.

The fourth and final period within the history of the international humanitarian system, is the period from the end of the Cold War until the present. With the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 it was thought that peace would prevail (Davey *et al.*, 2013). However, the reality was rather different. With the newly independent countries in Europe and the departure of the superpowers in the former colonized countries in Africa, a fertile soil was created for internal conflicts. Initially the strive for independence, and later onwards the strive for national power gave rise to conflicts (Szirmai, 2015). This environment contributed to an increase in the level of humanitarian assistance provided. Furthermore, the cessation of the Cold War, and thereby the end of rivalry between the USA and the Soviet Union reinforced that it was easier to establish humanitarian operations based on a mandate by the UN. An indicator is the increasing number of peacekeeping operations that were deployed by the UN after the end of the Cold War (Bellamy & Williams, 2015).

Two other important events that shaped the humanitarian system of this period were the failure of peacekeeping operations in the former Yugoslavia, Somalia and Rwanda (Davey *et al.*, 2013), and the emergence of the doctrine that in some instances it was allowed to intervene in the national affairs of other states (Soguk, 1999). In the first place, the failure of the peacekeeping missions in Yugoslavia, Somalia and Rwanda made clear that reforming the humanitarian system was required in order to make future humanitarian operations more effective. In both Yugoslavia and Rwanda, peacekeeping forces were not able to prevent ethnic cleansing from occurring, as a result of inadequate equipment and a mandate that was too narrow. In addition, during the missions in Somalia and Rwanda a great number of peacekeeping soldiers were murdered. This proved that the forces were not even able to protect themselves, let alone the civilians of the countries they were operating in (Davey *et al.*, 2013). Secondly, during the 1990s the belief emerged that when states were unable to maintain peace and order in their country and to protect their own population, the international community was allowed to intervene into that country and had the responsibility to protect the population and restore peace (Weiss, Forsythe, Coate, & Pease, 2017).

Concluding this section, it can be said that the framework for international humanitarian action in the 19th century and particularly 20th century is characterized by the global relationships. The two World Wars, decolonization, the end of the Cold War, and the different failed peacekeeping operations, are remarkable moments that have shaped the contemporary international humanitarian system, which is based on the premise to provide humanitarian assistance on a need-basis. This means that humanitarian aid is provided to countries where the populations suffer the most from natural or man-made disasters. Consequently, humanitarian aid is provided in order to address the effects of such disasters. This section has shown that humanitarian assistance is mainly provided to countries in the South. However, contemporary events like 9/11 and the development of former underdeveloped countries challenge the

classification of humanitarian action according to the North-South divide. Nevertheless, the Global South remains one of the most important receiving regions of humanitarian aid in the 21st century.

Determinants of humanitarian aid

The previous section highlighted that the decision to allocate humanitarian aid is partly motivated by the prevailing global relationships. However, this does not define what drives the motivations of actors to decide to whom humanitarian aid is provided. The allocation of humanitarian aid to countries that experience conflict or suffer from natural disasters has not always been self-evident. Even though the origins of humanitarian aid can be traced back to the end of the 19th century, it was only in the 1980s that large-scale government-led relief was provided in response to disasters around the world (Barnett, 2011). The past decades have shown that an increasing amount of money is spent on humanitarian assistance and aid (Global Humanitarian Assistance, 2017). Internationally, as well as at the European level, the provision of humanitarian aid has become an important tool to alleviate suffering. With the increasing amount of money spent on humanitarian aid, questions arise about what motivates actors to provide humanitarian aid. Therefore, this section will focus on describing the most frequently mentioned determinants of contemporary humanitarian aid allocation. A distinction should be drawn between two phases of aid allocation. The first phase is concerned with the decision to start allocate humanitarian aid to a country. The second phase is deals with aid allocation over time.

Determinants of first phase aid allocation

Political arguments

Aid allocation to a country can be influenced by several factors. Alesina and Dollar (2000) mention that cross country differences in patterns of aid allocation can be explained by political factors. These include colonial links, alliances, and strategic interests. For example, during the Cold War it was common for the USA to provide aid to states that were of strategic interest, meaning allocating aid to states that were necessary to contain the communist sphere of influence. Therefore, it makes sense that countries like Vietnam received a substantial portion of US bilateral aid during that period (Lumsdaine, 1993). Another example can be provided by aid allocation patterns of France. After processes of decolonization, France sought to maintain ‘good’ relations with its former colonies. Furthermore, France followed a policy of *rayonnement* in which they aimed to spread the French culture and language (Schraeder, Hook, & Taylor, 1998). Consequently, a substantial degree of French foreign aid was provided to countries that belonged to the former colonial territory of France (Alesina & Dollar, 2000). These examples show that political factors have played a significant role in determining which countries receive aid.

The importance of political factors, including colonial links, alliances and strategic interests, in determining which countries receive aid is underlined by realist theorists, who argue that aid policies are primarily driven by strategic interests of states (Schraeder *et al.*, 1998). Within the realist perspective, “international relations are conducted in a Hobbesian state of nature in which national security and self-preservation become the primary objectives” (Schraeder *et al.*, 1998, p. 297). Consequently, aid should be perceived of as being related to the benefits for the donor country, and not to the recipient country.

Despite the relevance of this argument, it is unlikely that states will pursue aid policies only when it is beneficial for themselves. Aid policies during the Cold War and decolonization processes could have been explained on the basis of the realist argument (Stokke, 1995), but contemporary aid practices do no longer fit the realist explanation of international politics. One of the reasons for this is that states and organizations, like the EU and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), outsource the task of delivering aid programs (Lumsdaine, 1993). It is difficult to understand how states want to gain personal advantages when they are no longer in control of the actual delivery of aid. Furthermore, aid is often delivered through banks, like the World Bank (Nielsen, 2010). This means that multiple countries collectively influence the aid allocation process. Consequently, they constrain each other’s ability to individually exert influence on the aid allocation decision (Nielsen, 2010), which decreases the possibility that strategic interests have a substantial influence. Therefore, the realist argument, centred on explaining state’s policies on the basis of strategic self-interest, among which political interests, fails to explain contemporary patterns of aid allocation.

Economic arguments

Political factors are not the sole determinants of aid. Economic factors are also an important driver of the decision to allocate aid. The first factor that is of importance is the economic condition of recipient countries. The economic condition of recipient countries plays an important role in determining which countries will benefit from aid programs. Aid is not provided to countries that are perceived to be economically well-developed, rather aid is provided to ameliorate poverty and achieve economic development (Schraeder *et al.*, 1998). Therefore, it can be assumed that underdeveloped countries are more prone to receiving foreign aid than developed countries.

The economic development explanation closely fits the idealism paradigm. This paradigm suggests that humanitarian need should be regarded as the “cornerstone of many foreign aid programs” (Schraeder *et al.*, 1998, p. 298). Situations in which humanitarian need is the cornerstone of delivering aid, are situations in which a population is not able to suffice their basic needs, i.e. the minimum resources necessary in order to achieve long-term well-being. Examples include food, water, shelter and clothing. Following the humanitarian need argument, aid is then provided to those countries in which the basic

needs are not sufficed. When a population can benefit from aid programs and is able to fulfil its basic needs, this might be a first step towards growth and economic development. Therefore, aid provided in terms of humanitarian need can contribute to ameliorating poverty and thus supporting economic development (Pankaj, 2005). Lumsdaine (2013) supports this line of reasoning by stating that aid is allocated to countries for the reason of providing those countries with opportunities to increase their well-being.

However, such an argument should be approached with some caution. In the first place, development does not only depend on aid. Economic growth and development cannot be achieved by the provision of aid only. Additional requirements are necessary to actually achieve growth and development. Factors like the creation of stable government institutions should also be taken into account (Pankaj, 2005). Secondly, the provision of aid may also have negative consequences for the recipient country. One of these consequences is highlighted by neo-Marxist theorists, and in particular proponents of dependency theory, who highlight that as a result of foreign aid, recipient countries might become dependent upon their donors (Schraeder *et al.*, 1998). Consequently, this dependence on donor countries results into the inability of the recipient countries to develop themselves.

The second economic factor is the economic interest hold by donor countries that influence aid allocation. The assumption is that donors who seek to promote economic security, through for example safeguarding trade partners, would favour recipients that represent the most powerful economies in their region (Schraeder *et al.*, 1998). According to Schraeder (1998), the most powerful economies in the region are those countries that have a high GNP per capita and a high level of trade with the donor country, measured by the recipients import from the donor country relative to its total imports. Subsequently, this means that aid is provided to countries that import a substantial percentage of their total imports from the donor country, as the provision of aid to those countries will secure that the recipient country maintains its level of imports from the donor country. This argument is supported by proponents of neo-realism, who argue that not only political interests are of relevance when discussing the self-interest of states, but that attention should also be paid to economic interests (Schraeder *et al.*, 1998). Potential trade benefits that may arise from the provision of aid to a country are, thus, the most apparent piece of evidence that can support the neo-realist claim.

Even though economic interests can influence the decision to provide aid to a country, it is not the only motivation for countries to deliver aid. Focusing only on economic interests of the donor country results into a situation in which additional, potentially important, motivations are being excluded. Examples of different drivers of aid allocation are ensuring that basic needs are sufficed, that economic development can be achieved, to promote human rights or to protect populations after a (natural) disaster has occurred and to spread the sphere of influence. Not including these elements results into a situation where one

cannot get a complete image of the reasoning behind the decision-making process of aid allocation. Furthermore, similar to the counter-argument against realist claims of political self-interest, it is unlikely that achieving economic self-interests is the sole objective, as aid programs are delivered through third parties (Lumsdaine, 1993).

Humanitarian arguments

The final driver of humanitarian aid allocation discussed in this thesis is related to the idealism paradigm. Advocates of the idealist paradigm argue that humanitarian need is to be regarded as the most important determinant of foreign aid programs (Schraeder *et al.*, 1998). The rationale behind this is that aid should be provided on the basis of need, which means that aid should be allocated to those countries that are severely affected by poverty (Lumsdaine, 2013) and natural or man-made disasters (European Council, 2008). The main characteristic of need-based aid is that it does not discriminate on any basis (Fink & Redaelli, 2011), so that aid can be given to those countries who suffer the most (Drury, Olson, & Belle, 2005). The goal of such aid is then to alleviate suffering in emergency situations (Fink & Redaelli, 2011). Presumably, this is also the main reasoning behind contemporary aid programs. A good example of an actor that provides aid on the basis of need is the EU. Through DG ECHO, the EU provides money to aid programs that are subsequently delivered by third parties, like UN agencies or the ICRC. Central in the EU decision-making process of aid allocation is that aid is to be provided on a need-basis (European Council, 2008).

The theoretical basis for this rationale can be found within normative theory, which is a theory that encompasses a variety of approaches that seek to explore moral expectations, decisions and dilemmas in international politics (Erskine, 2013). Normative theory consists of multiple different theoretical approaches. The one which is of most relevance to this argument is ethical cosmopolitanism. This approach assumes that we have duties to all other human beings because each individual has an equal moral standing (Erskine, 2013). I argue that an equal moral standing is in place when all human beings are able to suffice their basic needs and are able to enjoy their fundamental human rights.¹ Consequently, we have a duty to ensure that each human being is able to suffice their basic human needs and to enjoy their fundamental human rights. Therefore, aid should be provided to countries where populations have no equal moral standing. This theoretical perspective substantiates the allocation of aid on a need-basis argument. Even though contemporary humanitarian aid is presumed to be based upon this argument, one should always look nuanced at such issues since decisions to allocate aid can never be fully explained on the basis of one argument (Lumsdaine, 1993). In general, it is a combination of political,

¹ For an extensive elaboration of ‘equal moral standing’ see the section on the operationalization of the main variables.

economic and humanitarian factors that eventually determines the outcome of the decision-making process with regards to aid allocation.

Determinants of second phase aid allocation

Contrary to the first phase of aid allocation, the second phase aid allocation is concerned with the decision to allocate aid over time and which factors influence this decision. What became common practice during the 1990s is that foreign aid was closely linked to political reform and respect for basic human rights in the recipient countries (Carey, 2007). Loans and aid were granted to countries on the basis of conditionality. This entails that foreign aid is used as a tool to promote objectives that are set by the donor (Stokke, 1995). These conditions may be set in advance of providing aid (ex-ante conditionality) or conditions can be set in such a way that a country has to adopt reforms, so that it can make progress towards complying with the requirements set by the donor state (ex-post conditionality) (Stokke, 1995). The most frequently mentioned conditions are related to either economic reforms (first generation conditionality), which are centred on social and economic rights, or political reforms (second generation conditionality), which place more emphasis on civil and political rights (Stokke, 1995). A key element of conditionality is that when a recipient country proves unable to comply with the conditions, it faces the threat of termination or reduction of aid (Carey, 2007). Therefore, it is relevant to look at which conditions have been put forward for aid allocation over time. This section will thus discuss some of the possible conditions donor countries pose in order for recipient countries to maintain similar levels of aid.

Good governance

In the first place, one of the most frequently mentioned conditions for loans and aid is that countries should practice 'good governance'. This raises the question about what is meant by 'good governance'. According to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), good governance has eight major characteristics: "it is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law" (UNESCAP, 2018). Seen from the point of view of the World Bank good governance is related to economic institutions and public-sector management, in which transparency, accountability and regulatory reform are important elements (Gisselquist, 2012). On the contrary, organizations like the UN, the EC and the OECD put emphasis on aspects of political governance, like democratic governance (Gisselquist, 2012). Putting these elements together, it can be said that good governance relates to aspects of political, as well as economic governance, in which accountability, transparency and inclusiveness are important elements.

Alesina and Dollar (2000) have stated that aid allocation over time has been dependent on good policies, like democratization and openness. Evidence shows that since the end of the Cold War, developed

countries sought to push for the promotion of democracy and human rights in the Third World (Carey, 2007). Donor countries have put forward that foreign aid can be regarded as a means to achieve this. The main reason being that for aid to work, it needs to be channelled through well-functioning governing structures (Stokke, 1995). Therefore, the decision to allocate aid is closely related to the practice of good policies, like anti-corruption and openness. This leads to say that good governance has become an important objective within the debate about the purposes and allocation of aid. Furthermore, foreign aid is the main source of external finance for developing countries (Carey, 2007). As a result of this dependency, making the allocation of aid dependent upon political reform, provides an incentive for recipient countries to comply with the conditions put forward by the donor countries.

Human rights

There has been considerable debate about the role of human rights in the decision-making process of aid allocation. It has been argued that countries that violate human rights have received less aid than countries that respect civil liberties and political freedom (Berthelemy, 2006). However, there have also been scholars who stated that human rights violators have received more aid than countries that have been known for already protecting human rights (Meernik, Krueger, & Poe, 1998). A third group of scholars claimed that human rights do not play any role when countries decide on whom should be given aid (Carey, 2007). This shows that there is a substantial level of uncertainty about the extent to which human rights play a role in the decision-making process related to aid allocation.

Despite this uncertainty, different scholars have acknowledged that improving human rights does influence the decision of the distribution and maintenance of aid programs (see for example Carey, 2007; Stokke, 1995; and Neumayer, 2003). Furthermore, the promotion of human rights formed an integral part of the justification to provide aid (Stokke, 1995). The rationale was that through setting the condition of safeguarding human rights, countries would respect human rights within their policies so that the provision of aid would not be terminated. This would contribute to an improvement of the human rights situations in these countries. Carey (2007) confirms this by concluding that more attention was paid to countries that were able to improve their human rights records. A good example is the EC who provided more aid to countries that improved their human rights records over time (Carey, 2007). Therefore, it can be said that, even though human rights do not influence the decision to allocate aid, improvements in human rights records do have an influence on the decision to continue delivering aid.

Concluding remarks

Having discussed the relevant literature in the field of humanitarian aid, it is apparent that the majority of the research is centred around the drivers of aid allocation. Scholars have discussed that the decision to allocate and provide aid is influenced by multiple factors: political, economic and humanitarian.

Furthermore, a different strand of literature has focused on the significance of good governance and respect for human rights. What is evident is that these strands of literature have remained very general, focussing on the overall determinants of aid allocation. So far, no attention has been paid to the influence of conflicts on the decision to allocate aid. Rather, research has focussed on highlighting the general motivations to provide aid. In addition, most of the research was focussed on bilateral aid, building on case studies like Sweden, Japan and the United States. This leads to say that little research was devoted to determining the explanations for aid allocation from multilateral channels, such as the EU. Therefore, it is evident that there is a gap in the literature. What is lacking in the discussion is an in-depth analysis of why multilateral actors, in this thesis ECHO, decide to allocate funds to certain projects and regions. Therefore, this thesis is going to contribute to filling this gap, by exploring what the imperatives are for ECHO to provide humanitarian aid.

Theoretical Framework

The literature review has outlined the state-of-the-art in the field of humanitarian aid. In particular, the literature review discussed the determinants of aid allocation. It has become clear that several factors can influence the decision to allocate aid to a particular country. Despite the availability of many underlying explanations, this thesis will build forth on the humanitarian arguments put forward in the previous chapter. In essence, the humanitarian argument holds that aid is provided to those countries where people need it the most. The need-based argument forms an essential part of the argument made in this thesis. This chapter will establish a theoretical framework in which the humanitarian, need-based argument, is of central importance. Through using insights from normative theory, the framework will show the importance of norms and principles in decision-making processes. Having established the theoretical framework allows for the ability to establish the main hypotheses of this thesis and the underlying causal mechanisms.

Normative theory

All events in international relations contain an ethical dimension. For example, people argue about the justness of wars and conflicts and a diverse range of global issues call for states and international organizations to “have a moral responsibility to engage in preventive measures and remedial action” (Erskine, 2013, p. 36). Contemporary international politics is concerned with many questions: How do we have to treat refugees? When are we allowed to intervene in the domestic jurisdiction of a state? What are our duties to victims of natural disasters? (Frost, 1996). These questions all have a normative character, in the sense that they require us to make judgements about what ought to be done (Frost, 1996). In contrast to many international relations (IR) theories, normative theory explicitly addresses this ethical dimension. This does not imply that other theories of IR do not address ethics, however, they do not study it explicitly. This is what distinguishes normative theory from mainstream IR theories like realism, constructivism and liberalism.

Normative theory addresses questions like: “How can the values and moral principles that we invoke to respond to practical problems in world politics be explained and understood?” and “On what basis are ethical prescriptions made?” (Erskine, 2013, p. 37). In trying to answer these questions, normative theory aims to explore moral expectations, decisions, and dilemmas in international politics (Erskine, 2013). This shows that normative theory is not a prescriptive theory. It does not prescribe behaviour, but it elaborates on and tries to uncover the role of standards of behaviour, norms and values in politics. With respect to this thesis, it is important to mention that it is not the aim to convince the reader of the correct way in which humanitarian aid should be allocated. In contrast, this thesis uses insights from normative theory to show the role of norms in decision-making processes. Through adopting a normative

perspective, the thesis will try to explain the decision-making process of aid allocation, by which incorporating the role of norms can substantiate the main argument.

Norms in international politics

Of particular relevance is the focus of normative theory on (international) norms. “Norms matter in world politics” (Erskine, 2013, p. 46). Since the concept ‘norm’ has a central place in normative theory, and thus this thesis, it is useful to provide a description of what is meant by a ‘norm’. A norm is not something rigid, but rather hybrid, in the sense that it varies over time and is often context dependent (Björkdahl, 2002). This leads to say that there is not a common definition of a norm, but rather there are many definitions that converge and overlap with each other. For example, Axelrod (1986) has stated that a norm “exists in a given social setting to the extent that individuals usually act in a certain way and are often punished when seen not to be acting in this way” (Axelrod, 1986, p. 1097). In another way, norms have been described as “standards of behaviour defined in terms of rights and obligation” (Krasner, 1982, p. 186). These two examples show that ‘norm’ can be defined in multiple ways. As normative theory is the guiding theoretical perspective in this thesis, ‘norm’ will be defined accordingly. A normative perspective assumes that norms are “moral (normative) prescriptions stressing justice and rights through moral or ethical norms of behaviour” (Björkdahl, 2002, p. 14). Norms can be regulating, constituting or enabling actors and their environment (Björkdahl, 2002). In essence, there are two types of norms: regulative norms and constitutive norms. The former are norms that “prescribe, proscribe and order behaviour” (Björkdahl, 2002, p. 15). The latter are norms that “create new actors, interests or categories of actions” (Björkdahl, 2002, p. 16). In this thesis, the focus lays on regulative norms because this type of norms prescribes, proscribes and orders behaviour, which conforms to the idea that decision-makers are influenced, or regulated, by prevailing norms.

The idea that norms regulate and order the behaviour of decision-makers raises questions about how decision-makers actually come to adopt norms before they act upon them. Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) emphasize the role of norm entrepreneurs in the emergence, spread, and adoption of norms. They describe norm entrepreneurs as actors that promote norms by aiming to persuade others of the appropriateness of a norm (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). Therefore, norm adoption can occur when the persuasion of norm entrepreneurs is successful. Possible norm entrepreneurs are states or groups of states, supranational actors, like international organizations, and non-state actors, like non-governmental organizations (Tallberg *et al.*, 2017). Another way in which actors can come to adopt norms is through the influence of the international society on state behaviour. For example, governments often perceive their state to be a member of a broader society of states and seek to act in ways that are customary to that society or in ways that are in conformity with regional and worldwide norms (Lumsdaine, 1993). Consequently, it can be said that states care about how they are perceived by others and thus conform to practices in order to not be thought different (Lumsdaine, 1993). An example of this logic can be

provided by Finland and Ireland who started providing foreign aid “to feel that they were members of the peer group of nations they used in defining their own identity” (Lumsdaine, 1993, p. 25). This leads to say that Finland and Ireland perceived themselves to fall outside that peer group when they would not provide foreign aid, since the provision of aid to the poor was regarded as right and just in that peer group. Consequently, they adopted the norm that foreign aid provision was right and just and subsequently acted upon that norm.

The account of what norms entail and how decision-makers come to adopt norms leaves us wondering about what can be regarded as collectively shared norms at the international level. A useful insight here is Mervyn Frost’s (1996) account of settled norms in international politics. Frost (1996) regards a norm as settled “where it is generally recognized that any argument denying the norm requires special justification” (Frost, 1996, p. 105). This means that compliance with a norm is not necessary for that norm to be settled and highlighting instances where actors have violated a norm does not undermine the recognition of that norm as being settled (Frost, 1996). Rather, a norm is settled when there is a general understanding that it should be respected at all times. Examples of settled norms are the respect for the sovereignty of states, the non-intervention principle, the prohibition of targeting civilians in wars and conflicts, the duty to prevent and suppress genocide, and the need to respect human rights (Frost, 1996).

Cosmopolitanism

Now that I have determined what a norm is and how decision-makers come to adopt a norm, I can look at the role of norms within normative theory. Normative theory focuses on the causal role of standards of behaviour, norms and values. However, normative theory is not one theory but consists of multiple different, and sometimes opposing, approaches (Erskine, 2013). At the centre of the debate surrounding normative theory, is the distinction between cosmopolitanism and communitarianism. What both approaches have in common is that they both focus on the role of norms, principles, values and loyalties (Erskine, 2013). However, what distinguishes these two perspectives is that they look differently at the role of these aspects. Where communitarianism highlights that people first and foremost act in accordance with the prevailing norms and values within their communities, cosmopolitanism assumes that these loyalties to a community are not relevant, since all human beings have an equal standing (Erskine, 2013). Since the latter of these two approaches builds on the universal applicability of rights and norms, this theory is better suited to substantiate on the role of universal norms in the international political decision-making arena. Therefore, the cosmopolitan approach will be adopted in this thesis.

Cosmopolitanism focuses on the “moral significance of particular identities, membership, and shared practices – and where we stand in relation to them when we confront ethical dilemmas” (Erskine, 2013, p. 42). This means that cosmopolitanism is essentially concerned with the role of identities and values that come with these identities, and how this influences the way in which ethical dilemmas are

approached. Within cosmopolitanism, two different perspectives can be identified: political cosmopolitanism and ethical cosmopolitanism. The former proposes a system where political divisions and state borders are not relevant. Such a system can be described as a ‘world government’ (Erskine, 2013). On the other hand, ethical cosmopolitanism advocates a global “sphere of equal moral standing” (Erskine, 2013, p. 15). Since the latter perspective places more emphasis on the moral aspect of cosmopolitanism, it is this perspective that is central to the theoretical framework of this thesis.

In essence, proponents of ethical cosmopolitanism argue that neither family, friends and fellow citizens count for more than others. Each individual has an equal moral standing (Erskine, 2013). This implies that each individual should be able to enjoy the same rights as any other individual. Following this line of reasoning, each citizen of the world has a duty to all other citizens of the world to ensure that an equal moral standing can be achieved. In this sense, an equal moral standing of all human beings is regarded as desirable and can thus be seen as a central norm adopted by proponents of ethical cosmopolitanism. This implies that people who are in a situation in which they are unable to achieve equal moral standing should be supported by others. Consequently, supporting those people that are unable to achieve an equal moral standing should be indifferent of the political, cultural, national or religious backgrounds of those people, due to the universal applicability of an equal moral standing. Each human being has a right to an equal moral standing and should thus not be judged on the basis of its origins. Evidence that shows the contemporary relevance of this argument can be derived from the proclaimed universal applicability of the UDHR. The rights contained in the Declaration are universally applicable, thereby not discriminating on any ground and providing the opportunity to achieve an equal moral standing.

Another important aspect of ethical cosmopolitanism is ethical universalism, which posits that individuals should “stand apart from their loyalties and affiliations when engaging in moral reasoning” (Erskine, 2013, p. 47). This means that when making decisions, people do not take into account national, political, religious, and other characteristics. Each individual bears the same rights and thus their national, religious and ideational characteristics should not influence the decision-making process. Therefore, ethical universalism can be seen as an essential element of ethical cosmopolitanism.

Equal moral standing and the allocation of humanitarian aid

Building upon the elaboration of normative theory, and in particular ethical cosmopolitanism, it is possible to propose a way in which norms influence the decision-making process of humanitarian aid allocation. Normative theory posits that when making decisions, people are influenced by the prevailing norms, values and standards of behaviour (Erskine, 2013). Thus, this means that decision-making processes with regards to the allocation of humanitarian aid are also influenced by the prevailing norms, values and standards of behaviour of the international political arena. A good example that can substantiate this claim is put forward by Lumsdaine (1993). He states that countries’ and organizations’

behaviour tend to be influenced by the international society (Lumsdaine, 1993). They perceive themselves to be a member of an international society and seek to act in ways that are customary (Lumsdaine, 1993). In addition, they conform their behaviour to regional and worldwide norms because they care about how they are perceived by others (Lumsdaine, 1993).

According to proponents of ethical cosmopolitanism, all human beings have an equal moral standing, thereby assuming they have the same fundamental rights. This can be linked to the universal applicability of the UDHR. Building on the argument of Frost (1996), human rights can be regarded as settled norms. Nearly all states have signed the UDHR, which indicates the importance of human rights. Furthermore, since the 1990s violations of human rights have become regarded as a threat to international peace and security, (Weiss *et al.*, 2017) indicating that deviation from respecting human rights cannot easily be achieved. In principle, this means that states should respect fundamental human rights. Nevertheless, there are still many cases in which states do not respect these rights. For example, the chemical attacks against the population in Syria. Even though human rights violations are still part of contemporary politics, it does not mean that the norm to respect human rights is not settled. This can be derived from the fact that a settled norm presupposes that violations can occur but require very powerful justifications (Frost, 1996).

International developments

Recent decades have shown a shift in the responsibilities of the international community. Article 2(7) of the United Nations Charter states that “Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state”. This means that the UN and the international community should not intervene in the domestic jurisdiction of states and should respect the sovereignty of states at all times. However, non-intervention is subordinated to Chapter VII of the Charter (Weiss *et al.*, 2017) which deals with threats to and breaches of international peace and security. This means that when the UN Security Council declares a domestic situation to be a threat to international peace and security, non-intervention does no longer uphold, and the international community is allowed to intervene. What can be categorized as a threat to international peace and security is dependent upon world politics (Weiss *et al.*, 2017). What can be seen to be a threat at one time, does not necessarily have to be regarded as a threat at another time.

The past few years have shown the emergence of the linkage between human rights and international security (Weiss *et al.*, 2017). Human rights violations within a country are increasingly seen as a threat to international peace and security, the first time was when the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq repressed its population, thereby committing gross human rights violations (Weiss *et al.*, 2017). This indicates that the norm of the universal applicability of human rights has become increasingly important in the past three decades. Another indicator of the increasing importance of human rights within international

peace and security is the transformation of the responsibility to protect (R2P) into an international norm (Weiss *et al.*, 2017). The R2P means that when a government is unwilling or unable to protect its citizens, the international community may intervene into the internal affairs of that country and takeover the task of protection (UN General Assembly, 2005). This is in particular visible in the peacekeeping operations that have been deployed by the UN since 1999. These operations have increasingly paid attention to humanitarian values and the protection of populations has become an essential element in the mandate of peacekeeping operations. Examples of such operations include the missions in Kosovo, Sierra Leone and South Sudan (Weiss *et al.*, 2017). As the R2P has transformed into a customary international norm, it can also be seen as a settled norm, since the international community generally recognizes it and deviation from the principle cannot be easily justified (Weiss *et al.*, 2017). These developments highlight the increasing importance of humanitarian issues at the international level and support the claims that an increasing amount of humanitarian assistance is delivered in order to address deteriorating humanitarian situations.

Ethical cosmopolitanism and humanitarian aid

The linkage between human rights, the R2P and international peace and security, shows that it is important that the international community protects populations who cannot be protected by their governments. This relates to the argument of ethical cosmopolitanism that others should support people who cannot achieve an equal moral standing. Since the universal applicability of human rights can be regarded as an internationally settled norm, it is important that this norm is upheld. If populations are deprived of these rights, they have no equal standing. If the government of a particular state cannot do anything to undo this deprivation, then the international community should try to safeguard these rights.

Following the logic of ethical cosmopolitanism, the international community should be concerned with ensuring that an equal moral standing among all human beings worldwide can be achieved. There are multiple ways in which this can be achieved. One mechanism that can contribute to achieve an equal moral standing is the provision of humanitarian aid. The rationale behind this is that once decision-makers discuss where to allocate humanitarian aid, they will be focussed on those regions where people do not enjoy an equal moral standing. The absence of an equal moral standing in particular regions can be caused by government repression, conflicts and wars, which results into the fact that populations are deprived of their human rights and are unable to suffice in their basic needs. Humanitarian aid can contribute to the promotion of human rights (Fink & Redaelli, 2011) and to sufficing of basic needs. If this is successful, the human rights record of that country will improve and the people are able to suffice in their basic needs. This in turn can guarantee that the population of that country has the opportunity to achieve an equal moral standing. The provision of humanitarian aid to regions where people are deprived of their human rights and thus do not have an equal moral standing can contribute to improve the humanitarian situation. Altogether, this leads to say that decision-makers will be influenced by the norm

of the universal applicability of human rights and the idea that people should be able to suffice their basic human needs, as this is necessary to create an equal moral standing among all human beings.

In particular, it can be assumed that human rights violations and basic needs situations are worse in countries that experience conflicts or wars. The rationale behind this assumption is that when the government is unable to control violence, conflicts or wars within its country, it has lost the capacity to protect its citizens. Consequently, the population of that country is highly vulnerable to the negative consequences, which may be human rights deprivation and the inability to suffice in their basic needs. This leads to say that during conflicts and wars those people have no equal moral standing. A good example can be provided by the on-going civil war in Syria, where many citizens have become victims of the war. As a result of the civil war, and the use of chemical weapons against the population, the Syrian population is deprived of its human rights and are unable to suffice in its basic needs. Consequently, it can be said that the Syrian population has no equal moral standing to, for example, citizens of France and Germany. In the latter two countries, people can enjoy their human rights, while people in Syria are deprived of their human rights following the consequences of the war. To create equal moral standing, humanitarian aid can be provided. Therefore, it is expected that humanitarian aid is in particular provided to countries that experience conflicts and wars because the populations of these countries are to a greater extent deprived of their human rights and are unable to suffice their basic needs. Consequently, they have no equal moral standing to citizens of countries where conflicts and wars are absent. Therefore, I propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Humanitarian aid is provided to countries that experience conflicts and wars.

Looking more closely at the role of conflicts in the decision-making process of humanitarian aid allocation, it is expected that the level of intensity of a conflict influences aid allocation. When a conflict in a country is highly intense, I expect that such a country will receive more aid than countries where the intensity of a conflict is relatively low. The reasoning behind this is that the suffering in countries where conflicts are highly intense is greater than in countries where conflicts have a low intensity level. This leads to say that human rights conditions in countries with high-level intensity conflicts are worse than human rights situations in countries with low-level intensity conflicts. In addition, it is expected that the people in such countries have more difficulty with sufficing in their basic needs, such as food, shelter, education and healthcare. In turn, an equal moral standing for the populations of countries that experience highly intense conflicts is, thus, more difficult to achieve than in countries where conflicts are less intense. Therefore, it can be assumed that countries that are facing highly intense conflicts will receive more humanitarian aid. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): The likelihood of humanitarian aid allocation increases when conflicts have a high intensity level.

As a corollary, I expect the opposite to be true when conflicts are less intense. The relevant organization providing humanitarian aid is less susceptible to such situations than to situations where conflicts have a high level of intensity. Low intensity conflicts will, thus, be less susceptible to receiving humanitarian aid because the need for support to achieve an equal moral standing is lower than in countries where conflicts are highly intense.

The rise of nationalism and humanitarian aid allocation

Despite the compelling reason to assume that the idea to restore the equal moral standing of all human beings influence the decision-making process of aid allocation, the literature puts forward alternative explanations. One of the most convincing alternative explanations is that aid is allocated to regions which are of interest to the donor, which means that humanitarian aid would only be provided when it is beneficial for the donor. A realist perspective of IR can substantiate this argument.

Frost (1996) has highlighted the importance of settled norms in international politics, which can be applied to the decision-making process of aid allocation. Nevertheless, Frost (1996) also identifies some events in contemporary international politics that undermine the relevance of normative theory for explaining international phenomena. One such development is the re-emergence of nationalism. Nationalism can be defined as a system that promotes the interests of a particular nation. However, as the concept ‘nation’ is highly contested (Sutherland, 2012) in international politics literature, there is also confusion about what nationalism entails. In this thesis, nationalism refers to the actions that are aimed at promoting the interests of a certain nation. Examples of 21st century nationalism are Brexit and the USA presidential campaign of Donald Trump. In June 2016, the British people voted in favour of Great Britain leaving the EU. This is a good example that shows that the British population has come to prevail their national interests over the collective interests of the EU. The 2016 USA presidential campaign saw the emergence of a figure with no political experience, who puts the USA at the centre of the attention: Donald Trump. With slogans such as “Make America Great Again” and “America First” Trump exemplified 21st century nationalism. These examples show that states’ preferences have increasingly shifted away from a multilateral approach toward a more unilateral oriented approach, in which national interests prevail over collective interests.

Nationalism and humanitarian aid allocation

The increasing importance that is being attached to the promotion of national interests has an effect on international politics. The globalist trend of the past few decades has denoted “an increase in the speeds

and impact of cultural, technological, economic and financial flows” (Sutherland, 2012, p. 4). Recently, opponents of globalization have identified that globalization processes can dilute a nation’s culture and traditions (Sutherland, 2012). As a consequence, a shift away from multilateralism toward unilateralism can be identified. The increasing focus that is being put on unilateralism and national interests affects international practices. For example, a state will only pursue a certain policy if it is in conformity with the goals and interests of that state. In the period that multilateralism was dominant, a higher level of attention was paid to achieve collective objectives. However, with the re-emergence of nationalism, this is no longer the case, as the attention will shift toward national priorities.

The increasing importance of promoting national interests also has an effect on the decision-making process concerning the allocation of humanitarian aid. Nationalist interests in this sense refer to political or economic interests. When a donor emphasizes that the allocation of humanitarian aid only occurs when it is in line with its national interests, it is possible that those countries with the highest needs will not receive humanitarian aid. The aid policies of the USA and France during the Cold War are examples that highlight the importance of national interests. During the Cold War, the USA has provided foreign aid to those states that were of strategic interests to them (Schraeder, Hook, & Taylor, 1998). In the Cold War context, this entailed that the USA would only provide aid to states in order to contain the communist sphere of influence (Lumsdaine, 1993). This makes the provision of aid to, for example, Vietnam logical, as it was in the interest of the USA that Vietnam would not fall under communist spheres. Another example that shows the importance of national interests in allocating aid can be derived from the provision of aid by France. France has long followed a policy of *rayonnement* (spread), which was aimed at the diffusion of the French culture and language (Schraeder *et al.*, 1998). In conformity with this policy, a significant degree of French foreign aid was allocated to countries that were part of the former French colonial territory (Alesina & Dollar, 2000).

Policies on the provision of humanitarian aid that are in line with national interests can be explained on the basis of realism. In essence, realist theorists posit that the international arena is a self-help system, in which the survival of states depends on their capabilities and its alliances with other states (Lebow, 2013). In addition, proponents of realism believe in the “primacy of self-interest over moral principle, and regard considerations of justice as inappropriate, even dangerous foundations on which to base foreign policies” (Lebow, 2013, p. 65). Consequently, states and organizations will let self-interests prevail over morality in their foreign policies. With reference to humanitarian aid policies, this means that donors will only allocate aid to countries and regions of which the donor is convinced he can gain benefits. Therefore, it can be said that humanitarian aid policies should be centred around self-interest and not on moral principles such as justice, equality and humanitarian need. This is why proponents of realism have argued that aid policies are mainly motivated by strategic interests of states (Schraeder *et al.*, 1998). Consequently, aid should not be perceived of as being related to the benefits of the recipient

country, but merely to the possible benefits for the donor. This leads to assume that national interests can also serve as a determinant in the provision of humanitarian aid. The rationale is as follows. Decision-makers will decide to allocate humanitarian aid to those regions and countries where national interests are at stake and will avoid to provide humanitarian aid to countries where nothing can be gained. Therefore, the main alternative hypothesis of this research is as follows:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Humanitarian aid is provided when it is beneficial for the donor.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has laid down the theoretical framework that is underlying this thesis. Through describing the main assumptions and aspects of normative theory and in particular ethical cosmopolitanism, two main hypotheses and one alternative hypothesis have been established:

H1: Humanitarian aid is provided to countries that experience conflicts and wars.

H2: The likelihood of humanitarian aid allocation increases when conflicts have a high intensity level.

H3: Humanitarian aid is provided when it is beneficial for the donor.

These hypotheses will subsequently be tested in the analytical chapter. It is expected that the two main hypotheses, based on ethical cosmopolitanism, will prevail over the alternative hypothesis, that emphasizes the benefits for the donor. The next chapter will outline the research design and methodology that will guide the rest of this research.

Research Design and Methodology

Before being able to conduct the analysis, it is important to outline the research design and the methodological choices that have been made in this thesis. Therefore, this section will in the first place describe the research design that has been chosen. Secondly, it will operationalize the main concepts of this thesis: humanitarian aid, equal moral standing and conflict intensity. These concepts will be conceptualized and operationalized and it will be explained how the relevant data for these concepts is gathered. Thirdly, I will elaborate on the methodological choices made with reference to ECHO and the Middle East.

Research Design

Positivist logic

In general, this thesis aims to explain the decision-making process behind humanitarian aid allocation. In particular, it tries to uncover whether the intensity of a conflict influences the decision to allocate humanitarian aid or whether an alternative explanation is prevailing. Therefore, it can be said that this research project is partially explanatory as well as exploratory in character. To achieve the objective of this research, an empirical approach, also referred to as positivism, is adopted. The objective of positivist research is “to observe and explain behaviour, while also testing falsifiable hypotheses derived from observations of empirical facts” (Lamont, 2015, p. 19). The justification to use a positivist philosophy derives from the fact that positivist research aims to explain events, developments and behaviour of states in international politics. This conforms to the main objective of this thesis: to explain humanitarian aid allocation processes by ECHO. In addition, this thesis will adopt a deductive approach, which entails that I am concerned with developing hypotheses that can be derived from existing theories, after which I will set up a strategy to test the proposed hypotheses. In the previous chapter, the theoretical framework has established the following three hypotheses:

- H1: *Humanitarian aid is provided to countries that experience conflicts and wars.*
- H2: *The likelihood of humanitarian aid allocation increases when conflicts have a high intensity level.*
- H3: *Humanitarian aid is provided when it is beneficial for the donor.*

Cross-peak comparative research: most similar systems design I

To test the two main hypotheses, this research project will adopt a cross-peak and over-time comparative approach of a relatively small number of cases. I will look at how the allocation of humanitarian aid, per country, has varied over time. Subsequently, I will test whether the peaks in humanitarian aid

provision can be explained on the basis of the proposed hypotheses. In general, a cross-peak over-time comparative approach of a relatively small number of cases, falls within the scope of case study analysis. In this research, a case study is defined as “an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units” (Gerring, 2004, p. 342). Even though case studies of a small number of cases have a relatively weak external validity, the insights of the research can be used to understand a larger class of units. The aim of this thesis is to discover how humanitarian aid allocation to the Middle East by ECHO can be explained. Through applying case study analysis, it becomes possible to get an in-depth insight of what drives humanitarian aid allocation by ECHO. Therefore, it can be said that case study analysis is a suitable mechanism to test whether the proposed hypotheses are true.

In more detail, this thesis will compare a relatively small number of cases: Iraq, Palestine, Syria, Yemen, Iran, Jordan and Lebanon. In contrast to large-N designs, a research design with a small number of cases focuses on providing a rationale for the outcomes of particular cases, rather than approximating the average causal effects (Toshkov, 2016). This thesis tries to uncover whether there is a relation between conflict intensity and humanitarian aid allocation, through a comparison of the seven selected countries. Since comparative research is essentially concerned with questions like ‘what is the impact of X on Y?’, this research approach is adequate for this thesis. Subsequently, the adopted research design in this research project is a Most Similar Systems Design I (MSSD I).

The MSSD I focuses on one major hypothesized causal relationship and ensures that there is variation in the main explanatory variable, while other possibly relevant variables are to be remained constant (Toshkov, 2016). A MSSD I can be used for deductive theory testing. This research’s focus lays on discovering whether there is a causal relationship between conflict intensity and the allocation of humanitarian aid. The main explanatory variable, or the independent variable, in this case is conflict intensity. The outcome variable, or the dependent variable, is the allocation of humanitarian aid. For the hypotheses to be true, it can be said that a variation in the level of conflict intensity should lead to a variation in the amount of humanitarian aid allocated. To determine whether the proposed hypotheses are true, I will look at the amount of humanitarian aid that has been allocated by ECHO over time. So, for example, I will analyse the amount of humanitarian aid allocated to Yemen by ECHO over time. After that, I will look at in which year Yemen has received the highest amount of humanitarian aid. After I have established the relevant peak-year, I will test whether that peak has been caused by an increase in the level of conflict intensity. This way it becomes possible to determine whether a change in the level of conflict intensity has caused a change in the amount of humanitarian aid allocated.

The expectation is that when the level of conflict intensity increases, the amount of humanitarian aid will increase as well in the subsequent year(s). To ensure that the main explanatory variable is

responsible for the expected causal relationship, other possibly relevant variables have remained constant. In this research, another possible causally relevant variable is the impact of national interests, either politically or economically, on the process of humanitarian aid allocation. When testing the proposed hypotheses, it will become clear whether national interests have influenced the decision-making process of humanitarian aid allocation by ECHO. However, for now, it is assumed that national interests do not influence the decision-making process because ECHO claims to provide humanitarian aid on a need-basis only (ECHO, 2018a). This means that only countries where the humanitarian needs are the highest will receive humanitarian aid, independent of national interests. Table 1 provides a summary of the adopted research design.

Table 1: Most Similar Systems Design I – Own elaboration, based on (Toshkov, 2016).

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Iraq</i>	<i>Palestine</i>	<i>Syria</i>	<i>Yemen</i>	<i>Iran</i>	<i>Jordan</i>	<i>Lebanon</i>
Conflict Intensity	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Donor interest	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Humanitarian aid	?	?	?	?	?	?	?

Operationalization of the main variables

To test the proposed hypotheses, it is first necessary to operationalize the main variables. Operationalization of the main concepts is important because this will allow me to measure the main concepts. In this research there are three central concepts that require operationalization: humanitarian aid, conflict intensity and equal moral standing.

Humanitarian aid

All concepts generally belong to a larger class of concepts. This is also the case with humanitarian aid, as it belongs to the larger class of humanitarian action. Humanitarian action is difficult to define, as different authors, organizations and institutions have put forward different definitions over time. The difficulty of defining humanitarian action derives from the constant evolution and changes, and the many different opinions expressed by scholars and practitioners (European Universities on Professionalization on Humanitarian Action [EUPRHA], 2017). Nevertheless, it has become possible to establish a working definition: humanitarian action is action aimed at “protecting lives and dignity of vulnerable populations and communities affected by natural disasters and conflicts all over the globe” (EUPHRA, 2017, p. 7). Even though there is, likewise, considerable debate about the working definition of humanitarian aid, there is a shared understanding of the purpose of humanitarian aid: “to provide a needs-based emergency response aimed at preserving life, preventing and alleviating human suffering and maintaining human

dignity wherever the need arises if governments and local actors are overwhelmed, unable or unwilling to act” (Council of the European Union, 2008, p. 2).

Now that I have established the working definition of humanitarian aid, the concept can be operationalized. Humanitarian aid can consist of material or financial support. For the purposes of this thesis, when the term humanitarian aid is coined, only the financial dimension of humanitarian aid is meant. The reason for this is that the central organization of the analysis, ECHO, does not provide direct material or logistical support to the relevant countries. Rather, ECHO provides money to their partner organizations. The partner organizations use these funds to deliver humanitarian aid programs on the ground. Therefore, in this thesis humanitarian aid refers to financial means provided to sub-contracting entities that convert the money into humanitarian assistance programs. The main direct detector of humanitarian aid then is the amount of money allocated to a particular country and humanitarian aid will thus be measured accordingly.

In order to measure the amount of money that is being allocated by ECHO, the EDRIS database of ECHO will be used. To ensure transparency of humanitarian aid funding, the EC created EDRIS in 2004. EDRIS is a web-based information system that identifies humanitarian aid contributions. The database lists all annual contributions that are made by the Member States independently and by ECHO for the delivery of humanitarian aid to populations that are affected by the consequences of man-made or natural disasters worldwide (ECHO, 2018a). In the search area of the database, the researcher can indicate which donors, which country or region, and which financial years to focus on. For this thesis, I entered the following search entries. For the donor category, I only selected ECHO, since the focus of this thesis does not lay on contributions that are made by EU Member States independently. To establish the region, I entered the Middle East as a search criterion. I did not enter a financial year since I am focussing on humanitarian aid delivery to the Middle East by ECHO since its establishment. Through not selecting a financial year, all years that ECHO has provided humanitarian aid to the Middle East will become visible, which is from 1994 until 2018. Subsequently, I finalized my search by clicking on the search button, after which I selected the ‘Aid amount crosstab’ option. An overview of the amount of humanitarian aid that has been provided by ECHO to the different countries in the Middle East will appear. The overview of numeric data will be used as a guiding dataset throughout this thesis.

Conflict intensity

The second concept that requires operationalization is conflict intensity. This variable is the main explanatory variable, also known as the independent variable, and captures the main hypothesized causal factor. In order to look at what is meant by the intensity of a conflict, it is first necessary to break down the concept and look at what is meant by conflict.

According to International Humanitarian Law (IHL), conflict can be classified in two ways. In the first place, a conflict can refer to an international armed conflict, which can be defined as a conflict between nation states. Following Common Article 2 of the (third) Geneva Convention, on the treatment of prisoners of wars, it is stated that the convention applies to “all cases of declared war or other armed conflict which may arise between two or more of the High Contracting Parties, even if the state of war is not recognized by them”. According to this provision, an international armed conflict occurs when one or more parties to the Geneva Conventions have used armed force against another contracting state. This is independent from the motivations behind or the intensity of this confrontation (International Committee of the Red Cross [ICRC], 2008). Furthermore, it is not required that a formal declaration of war is expressed by (one of) the parties involved. Rather, the existence of an international armed conflict depends on what happens on the ground, which leads to say that it is based on factual conditions (ICRC, 2008).

Secondly, when the term conflict is coined, it can refer to non-international armed conflicts. Following Common Article 3 of the (third) Geneva Convention, non-international armed conflicts, are conflicts in which no international actors are involved, but which are occurring in the territory of one of the signatory parties. Conflicts that classify as non-international armed conflicts include those conflicts in which non-governmental armed groups are involved (ICRC, 2008). A conflict may then be either between non-governmental armed forces or between governmental and non-governmental forces. This raises questions about where the line between armed conflict and less serious forms of violence can be drawn. Two criteria are usually used in this regard. Firstly, the hostilities must reach a minimum level of intensity, which may be the case “when hostilities are of a collective character or when the government is obliged to use military force against insurgents” (ICRC, 2008), rather than merely police troops. A second requirement is that the non-governmental groups involved in the conflict must actually be regarded as parties to the conflict, meaning that they should possess organized armed forces.² For this research project, conflict can be interpreted in the broad sense, referring both to international armed conflict or non-international armed conflicts.

Now that ‘conflict’ has been conceptualized, it is possible to operationalize the concept. In order to measure the intensity of a conflict I will look at three different aspects. The first aspect is a direct indicator of the intensity of a conflict: the number of casualties. The data on the number of casualties can be derived from the databank of the World Bank Group. If you enter, on the databank webpage, the search entries battle-related deaths and the relevant countries, you will get a graphical depiction of the number of battle-related casualties. Subsequently, the graph can be transformed into a table if you click

² For a detailed analysis of this criteria, see ICTY, *The Prosecutor v. Fatmir Limaj, Judgment*, IT-03- 66-T, 30 November 2005, para. 135-170.

the 'DataBank' button which is positioned on the right of the graph. The information in this table will be used to establish the number of battle-related casualties for each country. Accordingly, an intensification of the conflict can, thus, be recognized when the number of casualties is on the rise. The only exception is Palestine since there is no data available for this country.

The second aspect of conflict intensity is the number of displaced persons. One of the main consequences of conflicts is that a lot of people get internally displaced. So, if the number of internally displaced persons has augmented, it can be said that the level of conflict intensity in that country has increased. The data for the number of displaced persons can be derived from the website of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). Their website offers the possibility to go to the 'Data & Research' tab, after which a map will be shown, which demonstrates the countries in which there are internally displaced persons. The relevant countries will be selected by clicking on those countries on the map, after which you will be directed to the relevant country page which will show a graph with the number of internally displaced persons. This information will be used to determine the number of internally displaced persons per country.

The final detector of conflict intensity is the attention that is paid to the conflict by the international community. It is expected that when conflict intensity is high, the international community will pay much attention to the issue, while it will pay less attention to low intensity conflicts. The reasoning is that in high level intensity conflicts it is expected that there are a high number of casualties and displaced persons, grave human rights violations, an inability to suffice basic needs, and a possible threat to peace and security in the region, which in turn can threaten international peace and security. The involvement of the international community will be measured in terms of the number of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. The reason for this is that the UN is the principal organization that addresses issues related to international peace and security. Subsequently, resolutions that are adopted by the General Assembly and Security Council are the main mechanisms in which international peace and security issues are addressed. Therefore, these resolutions will serve to indicate the amount of attention that is paid to the issues at hand. The resolutions can be found on the official websites of the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council. You can select different sessions and years to retrieve an overview of the adopted resolutions. After that, you can look through the resolutions in order to find the most relevant resolutions. It is important to mention that in addition to the resolutions on the different countries, there are multiple resolutions which fall under the subject 'Middle East'. These resolutions often contain information on the selected countries, and I will, thus, also look into these resolutions to see whether they contain relevant information. Furthermore, it is important to note that only the most relevant resolutions are included. In this sense, relevant resolutions are those resolutions that deal with the situation in the selected countries as a consequence of conflict, or resolutions that

concern issues that can be regarded as root causes of conflicts. An overview of the included resolutions can be found in Appendix 4.

Equal moral standing

The third concept that needs operationalization is equal moral standing, which is the proposed causal mechanism between the independent variable, conflict intensity, and the dependent variable, the allocation of humanitarian aid. Building on the theoretical framework, it is argued that all human beings have an equal moral standing (Erskine, 2013). However, this raises question about what ‘equal moral standing’ entails. The literature does not provide a clear answer to this question. Therefore, the working definition provided for here will consist of the definition of ‘moral standing’, supplemented by my own interpretation of what it means to have an equal moral standing. In general, moral standing can be defined as “the status of an entity by virtue of which it is deserving consideration in moral decision-making” (Madsen, 2015). Following ethical cosmopolitanism, it can be argued that each individual equally deserves consideration in moral decision-making. This implies that the well-being of an individual should be taken into account by others. This leads to say that when an individual human being has a moral standing, that individual should be taken into account by other individuals.

For the purposes of this research, an equal moral standing of all human beings entails that all human beings should be able to enjoy the fundamental human rights as laid down in the UDHR and are able to suffice in their basic needs, including housing, food, education and healthcare. The justification for relying on the UDHR for defining equal moral standing can be derived from its presumed universal applicability. This means that for the UDHR all human beings have the same rights, and thus have an equal moral standing. Therefore, this thesis regards the universal applicability of the fundamental human rights of the UDHR as a central aspect of an equal moral standing. In particular, it can be said that Articles 3, 14 and 25(1) are relevant. Article 3 deals with the right to life, Article 14 is concerned with the treatment of refugees and Article 25(1) states that individuals should be able to live according to an adequate standard of living that is beneficial for their well-being. When conflicts are occurring, it is often these rights that are violated. Therefore, it can be said that in order to enjoy an equal moral standing, these rights in particular should be respected. In addition, basic human needs also form an essential part of an equal moral standing. This is closely related to Article 25(1), which includes food security, housing and medical care. If these basic human needs are not sufficed, people cannot enjoy a standard of living that is adequate for their health and well-being, and hence do not have an equal moral standing.

In terms of measurement, I will look at whether violations of the universal human rights have occurred through the Humanitarian Implementation Plans (HIPs) that have been produced by ECHO. Since 2012, the EC adopts a ‘Worldwide Decision’ which concerns all humanitarian aid actions which the EC

anticipates to fund during the given period (ECHO, 2018c). In a narrower sense, the ‘Decision’ consists of different HIPs, which provide detailed information on the priorities identified for the country at hand (ECHO, 2018c). Through comparing the HIPs with the numeric data, it becomes possible to discover the underlying motivations of ECHO to provide humanitarian aid to the seven selected countries. In addition, the HIPs highlight the context and the most pressing humanitarian needs in a country. This often includes an implicit discussion of human right violations that are occurring and whether access to basic human needs is threatened. Therefore, to determine whether the selected articles of the UDHR are violated and whether people are unable to suffice their basic human needs, I will rely on the relevant HIPs, which can be accessed through the ‘financial decisions’ tab under the heading ‘Funding & Evaluations’ on the official website of ECHO.

Case selection

European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

The first central component of this research is ECHO. Ever since its establishment in 1992, ECHO has been prominent in providing services related to civil protection and humanitarian aid. For this thesis, the focus lays on humanitarian aid allocation by ECHO. ECHO provides humanitarian aid on a needs-basis, which means that aid is allocated to those regions that are affected by natural or man-made disasters and where humanitarian needs are subsequently extremely high. The main objectives of humanitarian aid provision by ECHO is to save and preserve life and to reduce suffering (ECHO, 2018a). Furthermore, in line with the four main principles of IHL, humanitarian aid provision by ECHO is human, neutral, impartial and independent (ECHO, 2018b).

The reason for choosing ECHO, and not a particular member state of the EU, as the main focus of this research, derives from the fact that the EU has gained an increasingly relevant role in the international (political) arena. The EU has become a relevant actor in the conclusion of deals, for example the EU was represented by Frederica Mogherini in the negotiations that led to the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, also known as the Iran Deal. Not only has the EU in general become a more global actor over the past few decades, the EC and the different DGs, have also gained prominence on the international stage (Hix & Høyland, 2011). With reference to relevant DG for this research, ECHO, it has become apparent that the EU, through ECHO, has become the world’s largest donor of humanitarian aid (Global Humanitarian Assistance, 2017). This tendency shows that the EU has become increasingly relevant in the international humanitarian field, which provides the justification for conducting research on this entity.

The Middle East

The Middle East has experienced increasing instability over the past few decades. On the one hand, there is a complex geo-political situation, with extreme tensions between countries like Iran and Iraq. On the other hand, multiple countries in the region have to cope with rising terrorist threats, with the main threat being posed by IS in Syria and Iraq. Altogether, the geo-political situation and the threat of extremely violent terrorism has made the region instable and vulnerable to conflicts and civil wars. Furthermore, long-lasting conflicts in countries such as Iraq and Syria have created lasting humanitarian crises, which resulted into the displacement of millions of people. The enduring instability and vulnerability in different countries in the Middle East and the resulting humanitarian crises show that the region is eligible for receiving humanitarian aid. The eligibility has been satisfied over the past few decades as the Middle East has become one of the regions that receives the highest amount of humanitarian aid worldwide (Global Humanitarian Assistance, 2017). Furthermore, the level of humanitarian aid that is allocated to the region is still increasing (Global Humanitarian Assistance, 2017). This shows that the Middle East is a highly relevant region when trying to explain what motivates donors to provide humanitarian aid. Moreover, since the Middle East is for many donors a strategic region, it is interesting to look at whether the humanitarian arguments – based upon the principles of IHL: neutrality, impartiality, humanity and independence – are prevailing, or whether arguments about national interests prevail. In short, the instability and vulnerability of the Middle East and the subsequent continuous increasing amount of humanitarian aid that is provided to the region provides the main justification for choosing the region as the main unit of analysis for this thesis.

In particular, the research project focuses on the following seven countries: Iraq, Palestine, Syria, Yemen, Iran, Jordan and Lebanon. Selecting seven cases rather than merely two or three allows for a better judgement about the underlying motivations of aid allocation. Moreover, I will look at the time period 1994-2018. The reason for choosing this time period is because 1994 has been the year ECHO started providing humanitarian aid to the Middle East and it has continued to do so up until this moment. This way it becomes possible to see whether explanations for providing aid have varied over time as well as across countries. Even though the parameters of this research have been set very carefully, the data shows that ECHO has also provided humanitarian aid to Israel and Oman. With reference to Israel, the decision to exclude the country from the analysis comes from the fact that Israel has only received humanitarian aid from ECHO until 2003. However, there were no reports and HIPs available for the humanitarian aid delivered in this period. In addition, to determine the level of conflict intensity, data is required from the World Bank Group and the IDMC. The data on the number of casualties and number of displaced persons only goes back as far as 2008. Therefore, it was impossible to determine the level of conflict intensity in Israel. These elements taken together have resulted into the decision to exclude Israel from the analysis. With respect to Oman, ECHO has provided humanitarian aid to the country

only once and the amount of aid provided was relatively low. Therefore, I decided to exclude this country from the data set as well.

What can be derived from the data is that the amount of aid allocated to the seven different countries varies significantly over time and across countries. To account for these differences, process tracing can yield useful insights. In essence, process tracing means that evidence from a case is used to make inferences about causal explanations of that case (Toshkov, 2016). The defining feature of process tracing is the focus on causal mechanisms. One typical direction in which process tracing flows is the investigation of actors' motivations (Toshkov, 2016). As process tracing is suited to investigate actors' motivation, this method is particularly relevant to this research because I seek to discover the motivations behind ECHO's humanitarian aid allocation to the Middle East. This leads to say that process tracing is an extremely suitable method that can be used to determine the causal relationship between the main explanatory variable, conflict intensity, and the outcome variable, humanitarian aid allocation.

Concluding Remarks

To sum up, this chapter has been devoted to establishing the research design, to operationalizing the main variables – humanitarian aid, conflict intensity and equal moral stand – and to justifying the methodological choices made in this research. Through adopting a positivist logic and through the application of a MSSD I and process tracing, this thesis will try to uncover the underlying motivations for humanitarian aid allocation by ECHO to the seven selected countries in the Middle East: Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestinian Occupied Territory, Syrian Arab Republic, and Yemen.

EU Humanitarian Aid

In this chapter, a descriptive overview of EU humanitarian aid will be provided. As the EU has become a relevant international donor of humanitarian aid worldwide, it is useful to look into the general characteristics of EU humanitarian aid provision. The literature review discussed some of the main determinants of humanitarian aid allocation, but this section will pay attention to the general humanitarian aid allocation trends within the EU and subsequently to the trends with regards to the seven selected countries: Iraq, Palestine, Syria, Yemen, Iran, Jordan and Lebanon. This chapter thus serves as a descriptive introductory section into EU humanitarian aid, which lays the foundation for the analytical chapter that will follow.

Humanitarian aid and the EU

The past few years have shown that the EU has become a relevant actor at the international level. The increased relevance of the EU internationally is not only because the EU is among the biggest economic markets of the world, but also because of its presence at international conferences and summits and because of the conduction of multilateral agreements with third parties (Hix & Høyland, 2011). Another indicator is the special status the EU has obtained in the UN in 1974, namely the enhanced observer status (UN General Assembly, 1974). These examples are just some out of the many dimensions in which the EU has become relevant internationally. With reference to the central subject of this research, it is apparent that also in the humanitarian area, the EU has played a central role. The EU, collectively and through Member States' bilateral donations, is one of the most important donors of humanitarian aid worldwide (Dany, 2015). The EU provided approximately \$2,343 million to humanitarian aid programs in 2017 (Global Humanitarian Assistance, 2017). Since the establishment of ECHO in 1992, the EU has fulfilled a more prominent role in the humanitarian sector. However, this tendency raises questions about what the motivations are to deliver humanitarian aid and for what objectives the allocation of humanitarian aid is used.

In general, the objective of EU humanitarian aid is to provide needs-based emergency response, of which the aim is to preserve life, prevent and alleviate human suffering and maintain human dignity (Council of the European Union, 1996). This type of aid is to be provided when governments and local actors of a country are overwhelmed, unable or unwilling to act (European Council, 2008). To achieve these objectives, EU humanitarian aid consists of multiple types of aid, among which are assistance, relief and protection operations in humanitarian crises or their immediate aftermath. The delivery of EU humanitarian aid is guided by the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, a document that was signed in December 2007 by the Council of the EU, the European Parliament and the EC. The Consensus was based upon UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182, which states that “emergence response shall be provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence”

(UN General Assembly, 1991, p. 1). Humanity implies that human suffering must be addressed whenever and wherever it is found. Particular attention should be paid to the most vulnerable people. Neutrality entails that humanitarian aid must not favour any side in an armed conflict or dispute. This implies that when both sides of a conflict are suffering, humanitarian aid should be provided to both sides, rather than to one side. Thirdly, complying with impartiality means that the decision to deliver humanitarian aid should be guided solely on the basis of need, without making distinctions of any kind. The final principle, independence, entails that the objectives of providing humanitarian aid should never be related to political, economic, military, or other objectives (ECHO, 2018b). These four principles are specific to humanitarian aid, which makes it distinct from other types of aid.

When the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force in 2009, humanitarian aid became an EU external policy in its own right. Article 214 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union contains the explicit recognition that the granting of “assistance and relief and protection for people in third countries who are victims of natural and man-made disasters, in order to meet humanitarian needs resulting from these different situations” is a distinct policy of the EU’s external action program (Orbie, Elsuwege, & Bossuyt, 2014). However, the origins and consequences of humanitarian crises are often closely connected to other policy areas. For example, the roots of a civil war can be found in the inability of a country to achieve socioeconomic development, which can lead to dissatisfaction among the population (Weiss *et al.*, 2017), who will in turn riot against the government. This leads to say that one of the main challenges for the EU is to ensure that it is coherent “in its response to crisis situations between different policies involved, while safeguarding that coherence with these other external policies does not come at the expense of humanitarian aid policy’s independence” (Orbie, Elsuwege, & Bossuyt, 2014, p. 159). It is in particular the independent nature of humanitarian aid that has frequently been debated over the past few decades.

In the first place, it has been argued that the EU used the provision of humanitarian aid as a means to gain importance at the international level. One strand of literature within this argument states that the establishment of ECHO in 1992 and the subsequent increase in the provision of humanitarian aid, should be seen in light of the post-Cold War context (Versluys, 2008). According to Versluys (2008), the end of the Cold War opened ‘a window of opportunity’ for the EU to take on a more prominent international role in the humanitarian sector. This window of opportunity arose as a result of the vacuum that was left in the Middle East and Africa after the fall of the Soviet Union. The EU used this opportunity to portray itself as a good-hearted international actor that concerned itself about human suffering. The provision of humanitarian aid for relief purposes was a good way to illustrate this good-heartedness and provides proof for the compliance with the central values that underlie the Union (Versluys, 2008). This line of reasoning is supported by Smith (2006), who argues that humanitarian aid delivery contributes to the image of the EU as a strong international actor. However, Smith goes a step further by stating that this

can enhance the European integration project (Smith, 2006). This means that investments in humanitarian aid can contribute to an increasing level of loyalty among European citizens towards European integration.

In addition, it has been argued that humanitarian aid has been used as a tool to achieve foreign policy objectives. In theory, humanitarian assistance should be guided by the principles of humanity, independence, neutrality and impartiality (MacFarlane & Weiss, 2000). These principles are embodied in IHL (ICRC, 1949) and in the legal framework of the EU (European Council, 2008). The reality, however, is rather different. The mandate of DG ECHO requires that the provision of humanitarian is to not be swayed by political or foreign policy interests, but there is no mechanism that stops ECHO to prevent humanitarian aid from becoming a foreign policy instrument, if the need arises (Khaliq, 2008). For example, a particularly relevant element which blurs the distinction between humanitarian action and non-humanitarian action has been the establishment of the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM). Whereas humanitarian aid delivered by ECHO aims at alleviating suffering, the RRM aims to provide resources for urgent operations of crisis management and conflict prevention. As is apparent, the distinction between providing aid to alleviate suffering and providing resources for urgent operations of crisis management and conflict is blurred. It is difficult to say when resources or aid fall under the RRM and when under humanitarian aid. This is an important challenge, because the RRM has to be interpreted in the context of the Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP), whereas humanitarian aid delivery by ECHO should in no way be connected to foreign policy objectives (Khaliq, 2008). The blurring line between the RRM and humanitarian aid provision by ECHO might lead to a situation in which the neutrality and impartiality of ECHO's humanitarian aid provision is threatened (Khaliq, 2008).

Next to becoming an international relevant actor and achieving foreign policy objectives, scholars have identified that the EU uses humanitarian aid as a tool to achieve political objectives and to promote human rights. The provision of humanitarian aid in conflict situations has always been an activity with a political character (Macrae & Leader, 2000). This is partly due to the changing nature of contemporary conflicts. Where traditional conflicts were designed to secure a military victory, contemporary conflicts aim at disempowering the opposition and denying the identity and economic viability of the opposing party (Macrae & Leader, 2000). The change in the nature of conflicts has led to a 'politicization' of conflicts and subsequently of the provision of humanitarian aid (Macrae & Leader, 2000).

Two examples can support this claim. In the first place, the Kosovo crisis illustrates how DG ECHO can reflect more general political objectives of the EU. In 1999, 43% of ECHO's total budget, which was €813 million, was allocated to Europe (Khaliq, 2008). In turn, 55% of the expenditure on Europe went to the Kosovo crisis. Even though malnourishment was not a significant problem in Kosovo at that time, ECHO sent funds to the region to purchase fresh fruit, vegetables, Marc bars, Turkish delight and

cakes (Khaliq, 2008). Furthermore, ECHO intended to deliver two kilograms of food per person in refugee camps in Kosovo. However, the reality was that twelve kilograms per person was being delivered. It was the first time that the provision of food aid was not based on need, but on supply (Khaliq, 2008). The underlying reason for this was that they attempted to show the population that an alliance with the EU was beneficial. This violates the obligations states have under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as this document states that “food should never be used as an instrument of political and economic pressure” (UN General Assembly, 1966).

Secondly, the way in which ECHO approached the crisis in Afghanistan can also be used to show that the EU humanitarian aid delivery is related to political objectives. A comparison between humanitarian responses before and after 9/11, suggests that humanitarian action remains dependent on geopolitical contexts (Macrae & Harmer, 2003). Before the United States intervened in Afghanistan in the aftermath of 9/11, the amount of international humanitarian aid provided to Afghanistan was way below the needs. However, once the United States invaded Afghanistan the amount of aid sent by donors, among which ECHO, increased eighteen-fold (Khaliq, 2008). It is argued that the level of aid granted by the EU was related to support the United States in their attempt to overthrow the Taliban regime (Khaliq, 2008).

Nevertheless, even though political objectives have seemed to play a role in the early years of humanitarian aid provision by ECHO, the main driver of ECHO aid allocation derives from the humanitarian imperative. ECHO essentially provides aid to countries on a needs-basis, which means that it provides aid to countries where the suffering is most severe. Contemporary patterns of ECHO humanitarian aid allocation substantiate this statement. For example, when looking at the allocation of humanitarian aid to the Middle East, it becomes clear that ECHO has provided funding for humanitarian assistance aimed at alleviating the suffering of the populations of different countries (see for example ECHO, 2003; ECHO, 2013; ECHO, 2017a).

EU humanitarian aid to the Middle East

Now that I have discussed some general features of EU humanitarian aid provision and the debate surrounding the independence of EU humanitarian aid, I can look at how humanitarian aid to the Middle East has developed over time and across countries. As already mentioned, the Middle East region faces several challenges, ranging from the complex geopolitical situation to rising terrorist threats. These different challenges led to growing instabilities over the past decades. Consequently, the Middle East can be regarded as a highly vulnerable region. Looking at the available data on humanitarian aid to the Middle East, it becomes clear that the amount of aid provided to this region has increased significantly over the past few years (Global Humanitarian Assistance, 2017). Not only at the international level has humanitarian aid provision to the Middle East increased, also at the European level the amount of aid provided to the region has augmented severely. Where the total amount of aid provided to the Middle

East in 2000 was approximately €37 million, the amount of aid allocated in 2018 was about €324 million (ECHO: EDRIS, 2018). It should be noted that there has been significant variation in the amount of humanitarian aid that has been provided to the Middle East, but what is clear is that the total amount of aid allocated has increased significantly the past two decades. Following the case selection of this research, the following sub-sections will discuss in more detail aid allocation to the seven selected countries: Iraq, Palestine, Syria, Yemen, Iran, Jordan and Lebanon.

Iraq

Iraq is a country that has been ravaged by conflict, sanctions and human suffering for decades now (ECHO, 2018e). Even though human suffering has been present for decades, currently the country is facing one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world. As a result of the latest war between the Islamic State (IS) and the Iraqi government, approximately five million people were forced to flee their homes and about eleven million people are in need of humanitarian aid (ECHO, 2018e). Following the crisis, the main challenges are closely tied to the protection of people and to a lack of access to basic services, such as drinking water, education, and healthcare (ECHO, 2018e). Similar to the situation in Iran, the high number of displaced persons who do not have access to basic services are not able to suffice their basic human needs.

The EU is a leading donor in the humanitarian response in Iraq, supporting all civilians in need. In total, the EC has provided about €835 million in humanitarian support to Iraq (ECHO: EDRIS, 2018). Approximately 40% of the total allocation of humanitarian aid has been provided in the period since 2015, following the conflict between the Iraqi government and IS (ECHO: EDRIS, 2018). The focus of EU humanitarian assistance lays on protection, food security, healthcare, shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene. In addition, the EU has reinforced its partnerships with aid groups that are specialized in the protection of vulnerable groups and in the healthcare sector (ECHO, 2018e). These partnerships should contribute to the ability to deliver assistance for people who are suffering from long-lasting impacts of the still on-going conflict (ECHO, 2018e).

Palestine

The country that is facing the longest on-going crisis of the seven selected countries is Palestine. The Palestine-Israeli conflict already lasts for 50 years and there is no prospect that it will end anytime soon. Consequently, the on-going crisis has caused a deteriorating humanitarian situation, especially in the Palestinian occupied territories: The West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem and Area C – an area that accounts for approximately 60% of the West Bank where Israel remains in control over security planning and building settlements (ECHO, 2018h). The bulk of the problems consist of the restriction on movement of people and goods, land seizure by the Israelis, settler violence resulting from the Israeli settlements, and a denial of access to basic services (ECHO, 2018h). In total, over two million

Palestinians are in need of humanitarian assistance (ECHO, 2018h). This accounts for nearly 50% of the population (4.8 million). In Gaza, these problems are reinforced by the intra-Palestinian divide between Fatah and Hamas that has resulted in a continual deterioration of the humanitarian situation and the Israeli land, air and sea blockade (ECHO, 2018h). Consequently, nearly 80% of Gaza's population is in need of humanitarian assistance. The main problem in Gaza is that due to high levels of poverty and unemployment, the majority of the people cannot buy the necessary basic services, such as food. In the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Area C the main challenge is to gain access to water, food, health, education and other basic services. The limited access to these basic needs are caused by the restrictions and obstacles posed by the Israeli government. In addition, Israel is deliberately obstructing the delivery of humanitarian aid to Palestine, which makes the chances for improving the current situation relatively low (Gostoli, 2017). The estimation is that since 2001 approximately €65 million of EU humanitarian aid to Palestinian territories has been "squandered" (Euro-Med Monitor, 2016, p. 5) by Israel.

In total, the Palestinian Occupied Territories have received over €650 million from ECHO (ECHO: EDRIS, 2018). The allocated humanitarian aid is provided to programmes that are designed to address poverty and the deteriorating living conditions of populations that are affected by the Israeli land, air and sea blockade (ECHO, 2018h). These programs, in turn, are centred around shelter assistance, the delivery of healthcare, water and sanitation, increasing the level of disaster preparedness, activities aimed at protecting vulnerable populations, and providing assistance to securing food supplies for the Palestinian population (ECHO, 2018h).

Syria

One of the most severe crises that is currently on-going in the world, is the Syrian crisis, which already enters its seventh year. The conflict in Syria is highly complex due to the different aspects that are influencing the situation. On the one hand, there is the rivalry between internal parties, notably the Syrian government of Bashar al-Assad and the different rebel groups. On the other hand, there is an important external dimension that reinforces the conflict, namely the strive to rule out IS (Weiss *et al.*, 2017). Since the start of the crisis in 2011, more than 400.000 Syrians have lost their lives, over one million Syrian have been injured, and over 13 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance (ECHO, 2018i). Civilians continue to be the primary victims who are affected by the effects of the conflict, with children and young people making up more than half of the 6.1 million displaced persons (ECHO, 2018i). The delivery of humanitarian assistance is complicated further by the fact that 2.5 million Syrian live in hard-to-reach areas and almost half a million live in besieged areas (ECHO, 2018i). In addition, the continued fighting and on-going violations of IHL, make it also increasingly difficult to deliver the humanitarian assistance programs, as the protection and safety of aid workers is at stake. Similar to the other cases, the Syrian people are in need of basic services, such as food security, water and sanitation, healthcare and education (ECHO, 2018i).

ECHO has allocated about €1.4 billion in humanitarian aid since the start of the conflict, which accounts for approximately 96% of the total amount of humanitarian aid that has been allocated to Syria (ECHO: EDRIS, 2018). The EU, its Member States, and thus ECHO are leading donors of international humanitarian aid to people that are severely affected by the Syrian war (ECHO, 2018i). Inside Syria, almost 50% of the EU's humanitarian assistance support is devoted to urgent life-saving and emergency operations (ECHO, 2018i). The other half is mainly delivered in order to provide safe drinking water, sanitation, hygiene, food security, and child protection activities (ECHO, 2018i).

Yemen

Even though the longest conflict is on-going is Palestine and Syria currently receives the highest amount of humanitarian aid, Yemen remains the world's largest humanitarian crisis (ECHO, 2018j). Following a war between forces that are loyal to the internationally-recognized government and those forces that are allied to the Houthi rebel movement, about 80% of the population requires humanitarian assistance or protection (ECHO, 2018j). The effects of the war are reinforced by the suffering from the largest outbreak of cholera that has been recorded in modern history (ECHO, 2018j). This leads to say that the tragedy in Yemen can be classified as a "triple man-made tragedy": an armed conflict, a looming famine and the world's largest cholera outbreak (ECHO, 2018j). Even though the humanitarian needs are extremely high and such a high percentage of the population is in need of humanitarian assistance or protection, the crisis remains a neglected crisis, financially as well as politically. The greatest needs for the population are caused by the inability of the government to deliver basic services to those people in need. These services include healthcare, food security, supply of safe water and electricity and the provision of a social safety net (ECHO, 2018j).

ECHO has allocated around €235 million in humanitarian assistance since the start of the conflict in 2015, which accounts for almost 60% of the total amount of humanitarian aid provided to Yemen between 1994 and 2018 (ECHO: EDRIS, 2018). The main objective of humanitarian aid to Yemen is to provide life-saving assistance, to support feeding centres, healthcare and food security programs (ECHO, 2018j). It is expected that when a ceasefire will not be established and a political solution is not on the table, the humanitarian situation will deteriorate even further, which can eventually result into a famine (ECHO, 2018j). Even though the humanitarian needs of the population of Yemen are rising, humanitarian actors have difficulties with meeting those needs. The EU firmly believes that a solution should be found in the corner of respecting IHL, not through military action (ECHO, 2018j). Subsequently, if the warring parties do not agree on a cessation of hostilities, the humanitarian situation is expected to worsen even more.

Iran

The main driver of humanitarian aid provision to Iran has been the refugee influx from Afghanistan (ECHO, 2018d). The conflict in Afghanistan has lasted for approximately four decades, which has resulted into massive displacement of Afghans across the surrounding regions. Iran has already received around three million Afghan refugees (ECHO, 2018d). Among the three million refugees are merely one million documented (ECHO, 2018d), which means that they have a right to protection and are eligible for assistance. However, this means that about two million refugees are unregistered and therefore have no formal legal status and thus no access to assistance and a right to protection. It is in particular this last group of refugees that are considered to be the main problem. Nearly 800.000 of these two million undocumented refugees are considered to be extremely vulnerable (ECHO, 2018d). The lack of a legal status makes them ineligible to access basic services, such as health and education, and jobs. The inability to access basic services makes them unable to satisfy their basic human needs.

Since 1997 the EU has funded multiple humanitarian programs targeted at Afghan refugees in Iran. In total, Iran has received about €65 million euros in humanitarian support (ECHO: EDRIS, 2018). Of the total amount of humanitarian aid provided, nearly 70% went to humanitarian support for Afghan refugees (ECHO, 2018d). Humanitarian aid is channelled through three NGOs and two UN agencies that support the Iranian Bureau for Alien and Foreign Immigration Affairs (BAFIA). The NGO's and UN Agencies provide packages of assistance to the most vulnerable refugees (ECHO, 2018d). The humanitarian assistance packages that are provided to Afghan refugees are centred around the provision of cash, protection, shelter, water and sanitation, food security, and the provision of basic education and health services.

Jordan

Just as with Iran, Jordan has received humanitarian aid in order to support assistance to incoming refugees. The refugees are in particular originating from Syria and Iraq, following the conflicts in both countries. Since the start of the Syrian civil war, Jordan has taken in around 655.000 Syrian refugees, of which the majority lives in cities, while only a minority lives in the refugee camps (ECHO, 2018f). The influx of refugees from both Iraq and Syria has put significant pressure on Jordan's resources and economy. In addition, a UN report has shown that more than 90% of the documented Syrian refugees are living below the Jordanian poverty line, which makes them dependent on humanitarian assistance in order to meet their basic needs (ECHO, 2018f).

Since the start of the Syrian civil war, the EU has provided about €1.2 billion to Jordan. However, this was not only humanitarian aid. In total, the EU has funded about €211 million for humanitarian assistance in Jordan (ECHO: EDRIS, 2018). The humanitarian aid was mainly provided to ensure health services, food security and basic needs assistance (ECHO, 2018f). In addition, the EU has supported the

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and partner organizations in the Jordanian government's efforts to regulate the legal status of refugees that were undocumented (ECHO, 2018f). Another important development in the Jordan-EU relations is the mutual commitments that were adopted at the London Conference in 2016 and the Brussels Conference in 2017, which aimed at improving the living conditions and sufficing the basic needs of Syrian refugees in Jordan (ECHO, 2018f).

Lebanon

The country that was hit the hardest by the consequences of the Syrian civil war is Lebanon. Since the start of the conflict in Syria, Lebanon has taken in approximately 1.5 million Syrian refugees (ECHO, 2018g). The number of refugees equals 30% per cent of the original Lebanese population. This implies that the influx of refugees from Syria creates a great burden on the Lebanese state. The main challenges that Lebanon is currently facing are the strain on the economy and infrastructure, the housing for incoming Syrian refugees, the lack of proper documentation of refugees, due to restrictions refugees have trouble with accessing basic services, and violence along the Syrian-Lebanon border make it increasingly difficult for humanitarian assistance programs to actually deliver the humanitarian aid (ECHO, 2018g). The strain on the economy results from the increasing competition for jobs and resources, which fuels the tensions between Lebanese communities and Syrian refugees. Housing for Syrian refugees is also problematic because the Lebanese government banned the construction of formal refugee camps for Syrian refugees (ECHO, 2018g). This leads to a situation in which refugees are forced to live in shelter places like garages or warehouses. In turn, the lack of documentation leads to the fact that Syrian refugees are restricted in their free movement and in the access to basic services (such as food security, healthcare, education, etc.) (ECHO, 2018g). Finally, the on-going violence along the Lebanon-Syrian border makes the delivery of humanitarian assistance very challenging, thereby increasing the difficulties for the Syrian refugees in the country.

Since 2012, ECHO has provided around €221 million in humanitarian aid to Lebanon (ECHO: EDRIS, 2018). The total amount of humanitarian aid that has been allocated to Lebanon is about €343 million (ECHO: EDRIS, 2018). This shows that nearly 65% of the total humanitarian aid for Lebanon has been received since 2012, since the start of the Syrian war. The main objective of the humanitarian aid provided is to support those refugees that are facing "dire levels of poverty and who are living on the margins of society" (ECHO, 2018g). In addition, ECHO provides cash assistance so that people can suffice their basic needs and can enjoy health care, shelter, water and sanitation. Another element that is of central importance here is the EU RRM, which enables the EU and its partners to rapidly respond to sudden crises that are affecting refugees and host communities (ECHO, 2018g). This mechanism has also been important in Lebanon, so that the effects of sudden crises on Syrian refugees would be minimized.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has provided an understanding of the humanitarian aid allocation process of ECHO. It has shown that humanitarian aid delivery has not always been merely motivated by the humanitarian needs-based argument, but that political incentives have also played a role. In particular, this chapter has provided an insight into the situation in the seven selected countries – Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Yemen – and the subsequent trends in humanitarian aid allocation to these countries. What has become evident is that these seven different countries all face humanitarian challenges, in particular with reference to satisfying the basic needs of the populations and refugees. This chapter served as a descriptive stepping stone towards the subsequent chapter, in which the humanitarian aid allocation process will be analysed.

Analysis

In this chapter, I will conduct the analysis on the relation between conflict intensity and humanitarian aid allocation. I will analyse whether the proposed hypotheses, and in particular H2 on the impact of conflict intensity on aid allocation, can be upheld. The chapter will start with an analysis of the overall situation in the Middle East. The analysis will allow me to discover what motivates the overall patterns of humanitarian aid allocation to the Middle East whether these patterns are country-specific or whether commonalities can be detected. After the Middle East as a region has been discussed, I will continue with the analysis on a country-by-country basis. A case analysis of each country separately will allow me to conclude whether the level of conflict intensity has affected the amount of humanitarian aid provided to that country. The analysis of the cases is divided into two sections: one section contains the analysis of countries that experience conflicts and the other section will analyse the countries that do not experience conflicts themselves but are affected by conflicts occurring in neighbouring countries. Subsequently, I will try to discover whether the peaks – a sudden increase in the amount of humanitarian aid provided – are caused by an increase in the level of conflict intensity.

To do so, the numeric data on the amount of humanitarian aid will be compared with qualitative data. Detailed reports of humanitarian aid allocation, the HIPs and ECHO's annual reports will provide an insight into the motivations of ECHO to allocate humanitarian aid. Moreover, the situation in the seven selected cases will be subjected to research. In this sense, I will look at the level on conflict intensity with respect to three aspects: the number of casualties, the number of displaced persons and the number of UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. These three aspects will allow me to determine whether the conflict intensity has increased, decreased or remained stable over time. Subsequently, I will be able to look at whether a change in the level of conflict intensity has resulted into a change in the amount of humanitarian aid allocated.

Humanitarian Aid to the Middle East

Already early after the establishment of ECHO in 1992, the DG started to provide humanitarian aid to the Middle East. Figure 1 illustrates an overview of the total amount of humanitarian aid that has been provided to the Middle East between 1994 and 2018. What can be derived from the graph is that ECHO has increased its provision of humanitarian aid to the region substantially over the last two decades. Whereas the total amount of humanitarian aid provided in 1994 was merely €28,5 million, this number rose to approximately €402 million in 2018, with a new high in 2016 when the amount of humanitarian aid provided to the Middle East was about €680 million (ECHO, EDRIS, 2018).

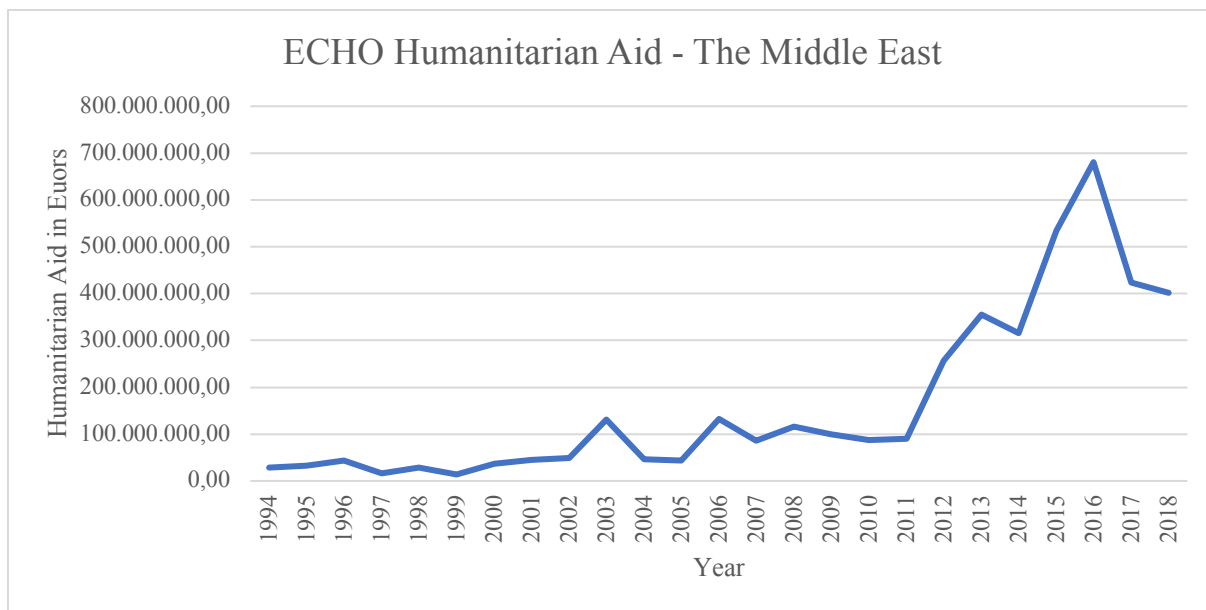


Figure 1: ECHO humanitarian aid to the Middle East between 1994 and 2018 – Source: ECHO, EDRIS (2018).³

What is striking is that in particular since 2011, the amount of humanitarian aid provided to Middle East has increased substantially. It can be assumed that this is caused by the start of the Arab Spring in 2011. An increasing number of countries in Northern Africa and the Middle East got involved in violent uprisings which sometimes escalated in conflicts or even civil wars. In addition, the region is caught in-between complex geo-political relations and rising terrorist threats, which has resulted into growing instabilities (ECHO, 2018k). Hence, it can be stated that a pattern can be discovered, in the sense that the Arab Spring affected multiple countries in the Middle East, which eventually resulted into an increase in the amount of humanitarian aid allocated to the region. This figure, however, does not say anything about the distribution of aid allocation within the Middle East. Such a figure would be useful in order to gain an insight into where humanitarian aid in the Middle East was actually allocated.

Figure 2 illustrates the evolution of humanitarian aid allocation by ECHO to the seven selected countries in the Middle East. This figure does not incorporate the amounts of humanitarian aid provided to Israel and Oman for the reasons mentioned in the methodological chapter. The graph shows that there is considerable variation in the amount of aid that has been provided across countries and over time. What appears from the graph is that indeed since 2011 most of the countries have received an increasing amount of humanitarian aid from ECHO. In addition, the Syrian civil war has resulted into the fact that increasing amounts of funding in humanitarian support have been provided to Syria and countries that are directly affected by the consequences of the Syrian war, namely Jordan and Lebanon. This leads to say that some general patterns can be identified.

³ For an overview of the statistics with the absolute numbers on humanitarian aid to the Middle East, see Appendix 1.

Even though all countries have received a substantial higher amount of humanitarian aid from 2011 onwards, the most severe increase in the amount of humanitarian aid provided can be envisioned in Syria. Furthermore, the graph shows that Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon have reached new highs in aid allocation, but in different years. This leads to assume that, even though in general an increase in the amount of funding for humanitarian assistance can be detected, the humanitarian aid allocation per country is self-contained. This means that events like the Arab Spring and the Syrian civil war have probably influenced humanitarian aid allocation patterns to the Middle East, but that the provision of aid remained dependent upon country-specific situations. In order to gain an insight into the humanitarian aid allocation process of ECHO, it is useful to look at what determined the increase in aid allocation by ECHO per selected country. The following sections will, therefore, be dedicated to that.

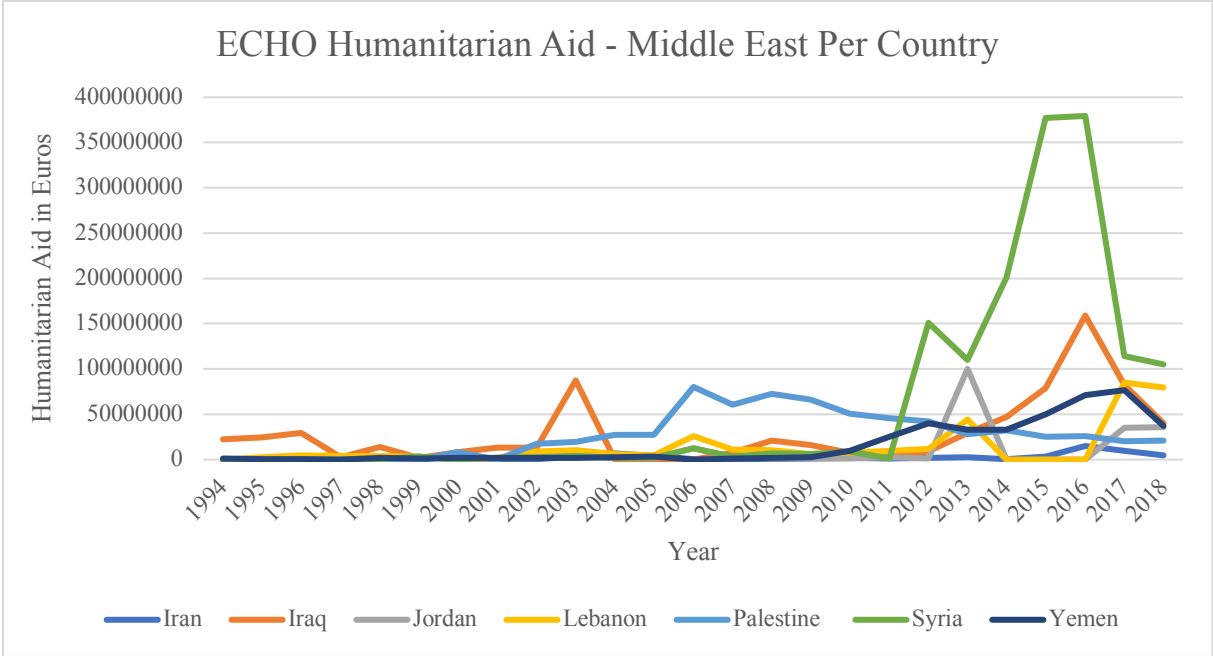


Figure 2: ECHO humanitarian aid to the Middle East per country between 1994 to 2018 – Source: ECHO, EDRIS (2018).⁴

Humanitarian aid allocation: conflict experiencing countries

Iraq

Since 1994, Iraq has been receiving a steady amount of humanitarian aid. From 1994 until 2018, Iraq has received a total of nearly €720 million in humanitarian support (ECHO, EDRIS, 2018). Thereby it is the second largest receiving country in the Middle East. Iraq has been experiencing conflicts, sanctions and humanitarian suffering for decades (ECHO, 2018e). As a result of the war between IS and Iraq, the

⁴ For an overview of the statistics with the absolute numbers on humanitarian aid allocation per country, see Appendices 2 and 3.

country is currently facing one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world (ECHO, 2018e). Figure 3 illustrates the evolution of humanitarian aid allocation to Iraq. The graph shows that Iraq has received a relatively high amount of humanitarian aid over time. However, there are two years that stand out: 2003 and 2016. In 2003, ECHO has provided approximately €88 million. In 2016, Iraq received about €159 million in humanitarian support (ECHO, EDRIS, 2018).

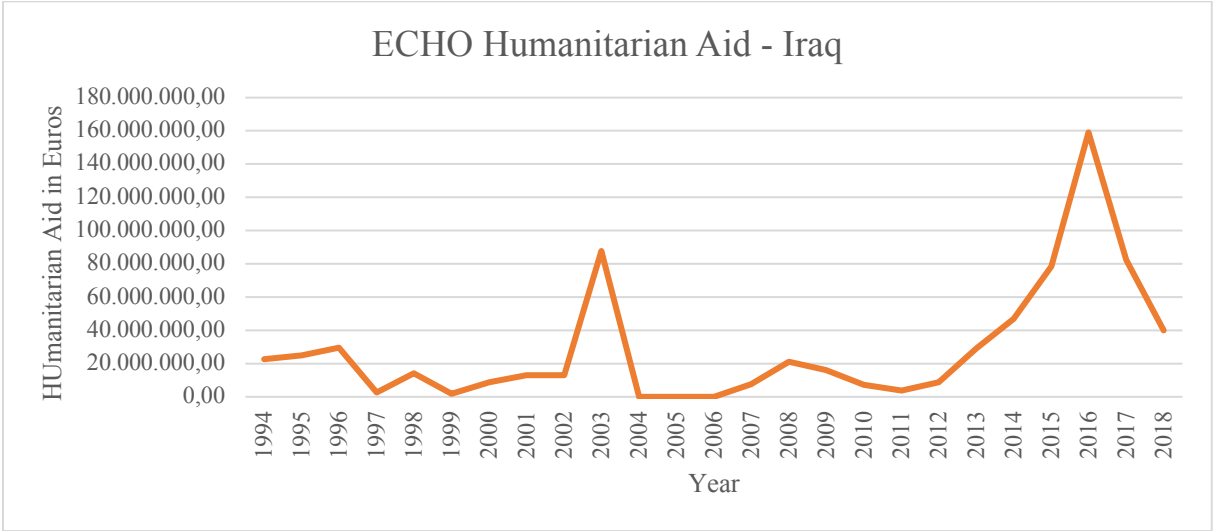


Figure 3: ECHO humanitarian aid to Iraq between 1994 and 2018 – Source: ECHO, EDRIS (2018).

Even though 2003 and 2016 are both peak-years in the humanitarian aid provision to Iraq, the analysis will focus only on 2016. The reason for this is that an extensive analysis on the level of conflict intensity in Iraq in 2003 is difficult, due to the limited availability of data. Therefore, it is nearly impossible to determine the level of conflict intensity in Iraq in 2003. However, it remains useful to look at the financing decision that guides the humanitarian aid allocation decision to Iraq in 2003. What can be derived from the relevant HIP is that humanitarian aid was provided to Iraq as a result of the precarious humanitarian situation that was reinforced by the Iraq war that started in March 2003 (ECHO, 2003). Consequently, it can be assumed that humanitarian aid was provided in order to address the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Iraq.

Nevertheless, I cannot state with any certainty that an intensification of the conflict and war in Iraq has resulted into the increasing amount of humanitarian aid allocated in 2003. This is the result of the inability to determine the level of conflict intensity in Iraq, due to fact that data is not available for the number of casualties and the number of displaced persons for the relevant period. This means that I can also not determine the impact of conflict intensity on humanitarian aid allocation. Therefore, peak-year 2003 will be excluded from the analysis.

The detailed report on humanitarian aid allocation to Iraq in 2016 shows that the relevant financing decision is the HIP Iraq Crisis. This document provides the context and most pressing humanitarian needs in Iraq, which serves as the foundation on which ECHO has provided funding for humanitarian assistance. The objectives of ECHO humanitarian aid are focused on the consequences of the on-going conflict in Iraq between government forces and armed opposition groups, like IS (ECHO, 2016b). The HIP stresses that after decades of conflict “vulnerable Iraqis struggle to survive a complex, fast-changing crisis” (ECHO, 2016b, p. 5) of which the humanitarian consequences are often overshadowed by political and military priorities. The objectives of the funding provided by ECHO are related to protection, water and sanitation, shelter, health and food security (ECHO, 2016b). What is clear is that the allocation of humanitarian aid is motivated by the consequences of the conflict for the Iraqi civilians. Consequently, it can be assumed that a change in the level of conflict intensity has triggered an increase in the amount of humanitarian aid provided in 2016. Therefore, it is necessary to analyse whether a change in the level of conflict intensity has occurred.

Conflict intensity in Iraq

To determine whether the conflict in Iraq has increased in its intensity, three indicators should be analysed. In the first place, for an increase in the level of intensity of the conflict, the number of casualties should have augmented. Table 2 shows that the number of casualties has increased after 2013. While the number of casualties in 2013 was about 1900, this number augmented to 9000 casualties in 2016 (The World Bank Group, 2018), which is a rise of approximately 379%. Even though the number decreases again after 2014, it remains relatively high. Therefore, it can be said that this indicates a rise in the level of conflict intensity in Iraq.

Secondly, the intensity of a conflict depends on the number of displaced persons. The HIP on the Iraq Crisis mentions that “mass waves of internal displacement have made the Iraq crisis one of the most rapidly unfolding humanitarian crises worldwide” (ECHO, 2016b). The number of displaced persons was already high in 2013, with 2.1 million people being internally displaced. However, this number rose in subsequent years, reaching its peak in 2015 with about 3.3 million people being internally displaced (IDMC, 2018a). This is an increase of about 50%. Therefore, it can be said that with reference to the number of displaced persons, the conflict in Iraq has intensified.

The final indicator of the level of conflict intensity is the number of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. Table 2 shows that the number of relevant resolutions has not changed between 2013 and 2016. This implies that the international community is not actively involved in the Iraq crisis. Nevertheless, when looking at the content of the resolutions some significant changes can be noticed. Resolution 2110 (UN Security Council, 2013b) merely emphasizes the urgency to address humanitarian issues in Iraq and stresses the need to provide access to humanitarian assistance. In contrast, Resolution

2299 (UN Security Council, 2016b) is increasingly concerned with the effects of the deteriorating security situation caused by the presence of IS forces in Iraq. The 2016 Resolution strongly emphasizes the urgency of addressing the humanitarian challenges confronting the Iraqi people and expresses strong concerns about the continuing human rights violations and abuses committed against children and women. In addition, the resolutions adopted in 2014 and 2015 acknowledge the increasing number of internally displaced persons. This shows that even though the number of resolutions has not changed between 2013 and 2016, the content of the adopted resolutions has changed significantly, taking into account the deteriorating conditions in Iraq. This shows that the international community did acknowledge the changing situation in Iraq. Therefore, it can be said that an intensification of conflict can also be identified within this aspect. Taken these three indicators together, it can be concluded that the level of intensity of the conflict in Iraq has increased.

Table 2: Absolute and index numbers on the aspects of conflict intensity: Iraq 2013-2016 – Sources: The World Bank Group, (2018); Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, (2018a); United Nations, (2018b).

	Casualties	Casualties Index	Displaced Persons	Displaced Persons Index	SC Resolutions	SC Resolutions Index
2013	1.882	100	2.100.000	100	1	100
2014	12.149	645,5	3.276.000	156,0	1	100
2015	10.138	538,7	3.290.000	156,7	1	100
2016	9.016	479,1	3.035.000	144,5	1	100

Concluding remarks on Iraq

What can be derived from the analysis above, is that conflict intensity did increase in the years leading up to the humanitarian aid provision in 2016. An evolution of the provision of humanitarian aid and the level of conflict intensity in Iraq between 2013 and 2016 is graphically depicted in figure 4. The graph illustrates that following a rise in the level of conflict intensity, which is caused by the rise in the number of casualties, the amount of humanitarian aid also increased. Therefore, it can be said that the increasing level of conflict intensity has triggered a rise in the amount of humanitarian aid allocated to Iraq in 2016. The rationale is as follows. The adopted resolutions and the HIP Iraq Crisis highlight the grave humanitarian conditions and the deterioration of these conditions in the years leading up to 2016. In addition, all parties to the conflict were guilty of disrespecting IHL and human rights law (HRL) (ECHO, 2016b), thereby reducing the safety and security of civilians. Following the intensification of the conflict, Iraqi civilians were no longer able to meet their basic needs and were deprived of their human rights. In particular, Articles 3 and 25(1) of the UDHR were violated. Article 3 is concerned with the right to life, which has been violated as a result of civilian casualties. Article 25(1) states that each individual has the right to a standard of living which is adequate for that person’s health and well-being,

including food, clothing, housing and medical care. The Iraqis were deprived of this right since access to food was limited and many people were displaced and had no adequate housing (ECHO, 2016b). The violation of the fundamental human rights and the inability to suffice in basic needs, means that the Iraqi people had no equal moral standing. Since ECHO provided humanitarian aid that was aimed at protecting the population and meeting the basic needs of vulnerable and displaced persons (ECHO, 2016b), it can be said that achieving an equal moral standing formed an essential part of the motivation of ECHO to allocate humanitarian aid to Iraq in 2016.

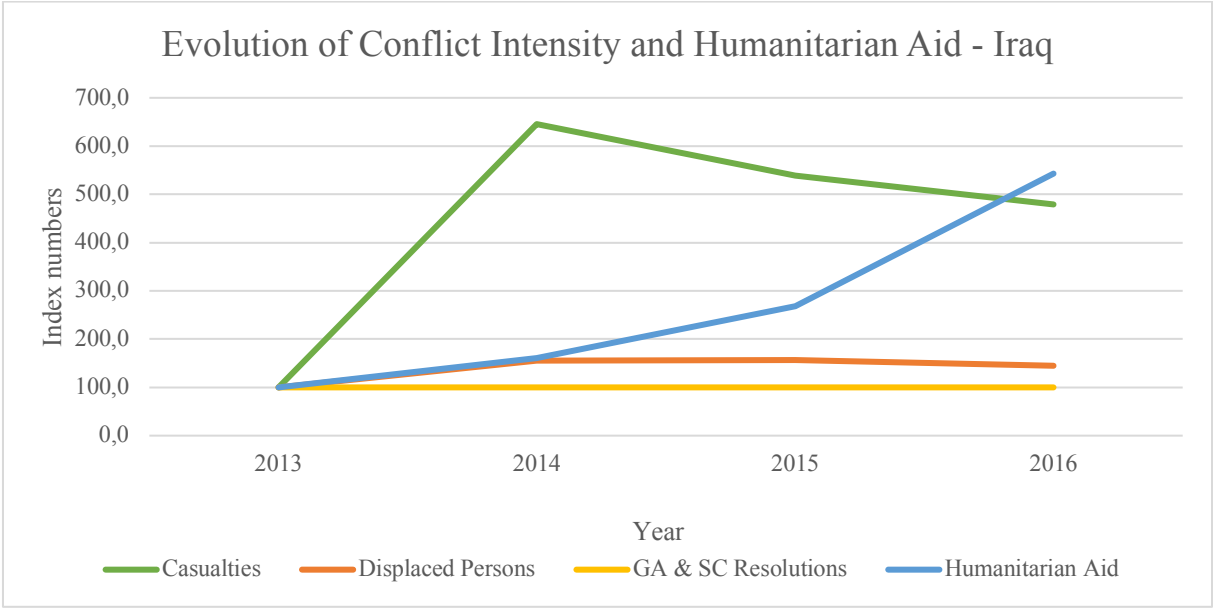


Figure 4: The evolution of conflict intensity in and humanitarian aid to Iraq between 2013 and 2016.

Following the analysis, the conclusion with reference to Iraq is as follows. H1, which states that humanitarian aid is provided to countries that experience conflicts and wars, can be confirmed, as Iraq has been experiencing conflict for decades now (ECHO, 2018e). With reference to the H2, which states that the likelihood of the allocation of humanitarian aid increases when conflicts have a high intensity level, is also confirmed. When the intensity of the conflict in Iraq increased, the amount of humanitarian aid that was allocated also increased. Therefore, I state that the rise in conflict intensity triggered a rise in the amount of humanitarian aid provided. The mediating variable accounting for this increase is equal moral standing, as ECHO humanitarian aid to Iraq aimed at guaranteeing protection for and sufficing the basic needs of the most vulnerable persons (ECHO, 2016b), which are central elements of equal moral standing.

The emphasis on addressing the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Iraq highlights the importance of the goal to achieve and restore equal moral standing. This shows that ethical cosmopolitanism is a suitable theory to explain humanitarian aid allocation to Iraq. The reason for this is that ethical cosmopolitanism stresses the importance that all human beings should have an equal moral standing,

independent of their nationality, religion, or other aspects. The provision of ECHO humanitarian aid to Iraq does not distinguish on any basis and is aimed at improving the humanitarian situation in the country, including human rights and basic needs. This is in line with the central aspects of ethical cosmopolitanism. In addition, the pre-eminence of the humanitarian imperative in aid allocation to Iraq supports the claim that when humanitarian needs are high, self-interests are barely taken into account. This leads to say that H3, which emphasizes the prevalence of the interests of the donor can be disconfirmed. This conforms to the statement that is made by Lumsdaine (1993), in which he argues that it is difficult to understand that national interests play a role in aid allocation processes over which states individually have no control. This is the case with EU humanitarian aid allocation processes, as ECHO determines the location of the funding, rather than the different member states of the EU individually. This, thus, leads to assume that national interests have not played a role in determining ECHO aid allocation.

Palestine

Palestine is, out of the selected countries, the one with the longest on-going crisis. The conflict already lasts for 50 years and it is not expected that a solution will be found in the near future (ECHO, 2018h). The on-going crisis has resulted into a deteriorating humanitarian situation, in particular in the Palestinian occupied territories: The West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem and Area C (ECHO, 2018h). The estimated number of people in need of humanitarian assistance is about two million (ECHO, 2018h), which is about 50% of the Palestinian population. To cope with the humanitarian challenges, ECHO has allocated approximately €670 million in humanitarian support since 2000 (ECHO, EDRIS, 2018). Figure 5 demonstrates the development of humanitarian aid allocation to Palestine. What the graph shows is that since the start of aid allocation in 2000, Palestine has received a relatively substantial amount of aid. Nevertheless, between 2006 and 2008 ECHO has provided a higher amount of humanitarian aid than in the other years, approximately €213 million in total between 2006 and 2008 (ECHO, EDRIS, 2018). After 2008, the amount of allocated aid has decreased, but also remained significant, with no amounts lower than €20 million (ECHO, EDRIS, 2018).

Usually, the analysis will try to provide an insight into the motivations behind peaks in the amount of humanitarian aid allocated. In the case of Palestine, this peak occurred between 2006 and 2008. However, due to the limited availability of data with respect to the aspects of conflict intensity, it is impossible to determine the level of conflict intensity in this period. Nevertheless, it is useful to look into the relevant implementation plans of ECHO to get an idea of the motivations behind the increase in the provision of humanitarian aid to Palestine since 2006. The HIP of 2006 highlights that humanitarian aid is provided for the most vulnerable populations that are affected by the aggravating crisis in the West Bank and Gaza. This crisis refers to a fiscal crisis which started in 2006 when the Israelis stopped transferring tax revenues to the Palestinian Authorities, who were consequently unable

to pay the salaries of over 150.000 employees (ECHO, 2006c). As a result, these people were unable to support their families in meeting the basic needs, resulting into a deterioration of the humanitarian situation. In addition, tensions were reinforced by violence between Israelis and Palestinians, which led to an increase in the number of casualties and destroyed Palestinian infrastructure, leading to more insecure living conditions (ECHO, 2007). This shows that conflict and violence did play a role in the allocation of humanitarian aid between 2006 and 2008. However, it remains difficult to analyse whether conflict intensity determined the aid allocation process to Palestine between 2006 and 2008, as there is little data available with respect to the aspects of conflict intensity for the period 2006-2008.

Figure 5 shows that since 2009, the amount of humanitarian aid provided to Palestine has decreased. This creates a possibility to see whether there is a relation between the decreasing amount of humanitarian aid and a possible decrease in the level of conflict intensity. In particular, I will look at the decrease between 2010 and 2014, as that was the period humanitarian aid to Palestine decreased most rapidly.

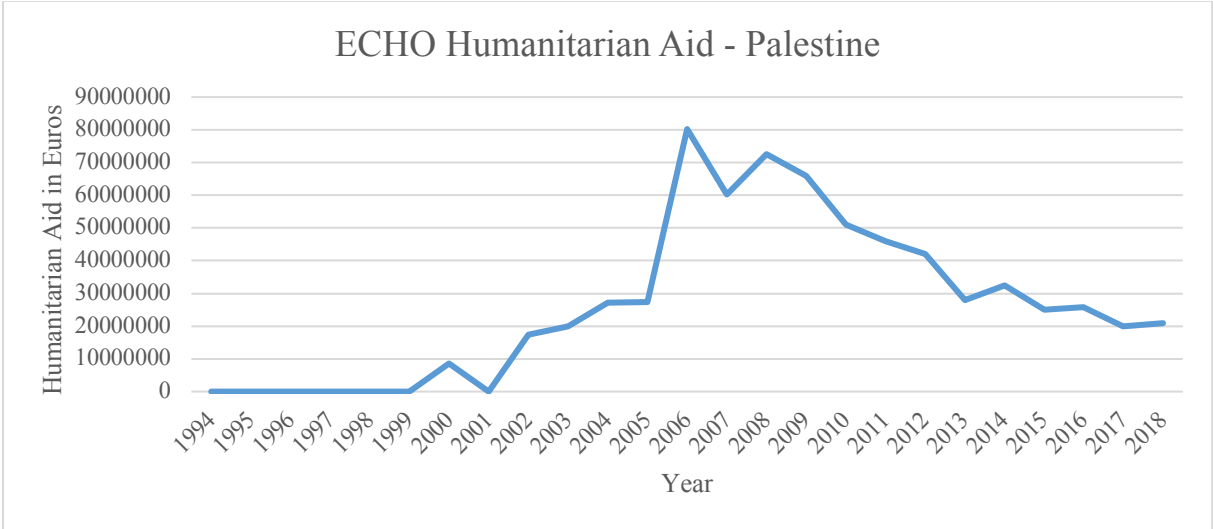


Figure 5: ECHO humanitarian aid to Palestine between 1994 and 2018 – Source: ECHO, EDRIS (2018).

Conflict intensity in Palestine

Determining the level of conflict intensity in Palestine is a difficult task. There is little data available, and therefore it should be noted that it is not possible to exactly determine the level of conflict intensity. In this thesis, three aspects are central: the number of casualties, the number of displaced persons and the number of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. Table 3 shows an overview of the available data in absolute and index numbers. With reference to the first aspect, the World Bank Group dataset does not provide statistics on the number of battle-related deaths. Therefore, this aspect is excluded from the analysis. Secondly, the data on the number of internally displaced persons demonstrates that this number has remained relatively stable between 2010 and 2014. The only

exception is 2014, in which the number of internally displaced persons doubled to approximately 275.000 (IDMC, 2018b). This would support a possible claim that the level of conflict intensity increased.

With reference to adopted resolutions, it should be said that only the General Assembly has adopted resolutions on Palestine in this period. What appears from table 3 is that the number of adopted resolutions has remained stable over time, thereby indicating that the severity of the conflict has not altered. A more in-depth analysis of the adopted resolutions shows that the content of the resolutions has not changed significantly as well. Between 2010 and 2014, most of the General Assembly resolutions are concerned with the permanent sovereignty of Palestine and the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people. Additionally, resolutions have been adopted on the Israeli practices affecting human rights of the Palestinians. This latter type of resolution has addressed the concerns of the General Assembly regarding grave human rights violations committed by the Israelis. However, already in 2010 deep and grave concerns were expressed about the human rights situation (UN General Assembly, 2010) and this did not change when looking at the content of the similar adopted resolution in 2014 (UN General Assembly, 2014). Therefore, it can be said that the content of the adopted resolutions has remained similar between 2010 and 2014, indicating that no intensification of the conflict has taken place.

Taking these elements together, it can be assumed that the level of conflict intensity has remained relatively stable between 2010 and 2014. However, it should be noted that this cannot be stated with certainty, as the data on the number of casualties is lacking, which is regarded as one of the central aspects of conflict intensity. Therefore, the conclusions might have been different when there would have been data available for the number of casualties between 2010 and 2014.

Table 3: Absolute and index numbers on the aspects of conflict intensity: Palestine 2010-2014 – Sources: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, (2018b); United Nations, (2018a).

	Casualties	Casualties Index	Displaced Persons	Displaced Persons Index	GA Resolutions	GA Resolutions Index
2010	n.d.a. ⁵	n.a. ⁶	160.000	100	9	100
2011	n.d.a.	n.a.	160.000	100	9	100
2012	n.d.a.	n.a.	145.000	90,6	9	100
2013	n.d.a.	n.a.	146.000	91,3	9	100
2014	n.d.a.	n.a.	275.000	171,9	9	100

⁵ No data available (n.d.a.)

⁶ Not applicable (n.a.)

Concluding remarks on Palestine

The level of humanitarian aid that Palestine has received over time is relatively high. The main objective of the aid provided was to address poverty and the deteriorating living conditions of the population (ECHO, 2018h). The funding is, in turn, provided to programs that are focussed on shelter assistance, the delivery of healthcare, activities to protect vulnerable populations and providing assistance to secure food supplies (ECHO, 2018h). This shows that humanitarian aid allocated to Palestine aims to provide assistance to the Palestinian populations that are affected by the on-going conflict in the country. Therefore, it can be said that H1 is confirmed, as Palestine is a country that experiences conflict and subsequently has received humanitarian aid to address the effects of the conflict.

The above conducted analysis demonstrates that the level of conflict intensity has remained relatively stable between 2010 and 2014. Only 2014 shows an increase in the number of displaced persons, which would indicate a slight intensification of the conflict. I expected that an increase in the level of conflict intensity would lead to an increase in the amount of humanitarian aid provided. As a corollary, I expected that the opposite would also be true, which means that a decrease in the level of conflict intensity would result into a decrease in the amount of humanitarian aid provided. As figure 5 demonstrated, the amount of humanitarian aid allocated to Palestine decreased between 2010 and 2014, while the level of conflict intensity remained relatively stable.

Figure 6 illustrates the evolution of the level of conflict intensity and the amount of humanitarian aid in index numbers. The graph substantiates the finding that humanitarian aid provision decreased, while the level of conflict intensity remained relatively stable. Therefore, with reference to Palestine, H2 cannot be confirmed. Nevertheless, the HIPs show that ECHO maintained relatively high levels of humanitarian aid provision to Palestine in order to address the deteriorating humanitarian situation. This leads to assume that, even though the amounts have decreased, aid is delivered at the benefit of the Palestinian population and not because it is in the interest of ECHO. Therefore, it can be said that H3 is not confirmed in this case. A plausible explanation, then, for the decrease in the amount of humanitarian aid provided to the Palestinian Occupied Territories can be the Israeli obstruction of the delivery of EU-humanitarian assistance through the instalment of a blockade by sea, land and air (Gostoli, 2017). Consequently, EU-humanitarian aid was not able to reach its targets. Subsequently, it can be argued that if it is known beforehand that aid will not reach its targets, there is no use in providing a high amount of humanitarian aid.

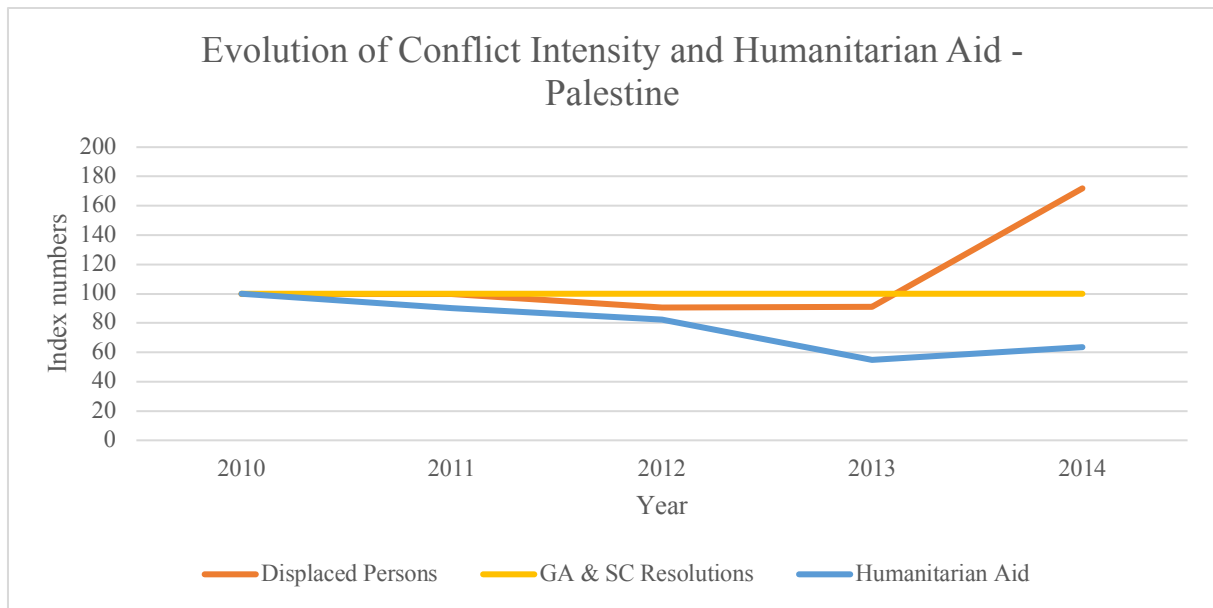


Figure 6: The evolution of conflict intensity in and humanitarian aid to Palestine between 2010 and 2014.

Syrian Arab Republic

Out of the selected cases, Syria has received the highest amount of humanitarian aid from ECHO. Since 1998 the country has received nearly €1.5 billion for humanitarian support (ECHO, EDRIS, 2018). The majority of the humanitarian aid, about 96%, has been provided between 2012 and 2018. Figure 7 shows the development of humanitarian aid allocation to Syria between 1994 and 2018. The graph illustrates that the peak-years of humanitarian aid provision are between 2012 and 2018. In particular, Syria has received extremely high amounts of humanitarian aid in 2015 and 2016. Therefore, the analysis will focus on the level of conflict intensity in the years leading up to 2015 and 2016.

The detailed reports on humanitarian aid allocation to Syria in 2015 and 2016 shows that the relevant HIPs in this case are the HIP Syria Crisis (2015) and HIP Syria Regional Crisis (2016). Both HIPs stress that the situation in Syria has been deteriorating the past few years, leaving 12.2 million Syrians in need of humanitarian assistance (ECHO, 2016c). In addition, the HIPs highlight that there are no prospects for a solution to the conflict in the near future. Rather, the expectation is that “violence and instability will continue to prevail” (ECHO, 2015, p. 7). Of particular concern are the denial of access to humanitarian assistance, the attacks on civilians and the targeting of civilian infrastructure. In addition, grave violations of HRL and IHL by all parties to the conflict belong to the order of the day (ECHO, 2015). Through providing funding for humanitarian support, ECHO aims to try to achieve protection for civilians, provide healthcare, secure access to food, improve water and sanitation facilities, and provide shelter. Hence, ECHO provides humanitarian aid to address the effects of the Syrian war. Therefore, it is interesting to look at whether the increase in humanitarian aid provided in 2015 and 2016 has been caused by an increase in the level of conflict intensity.

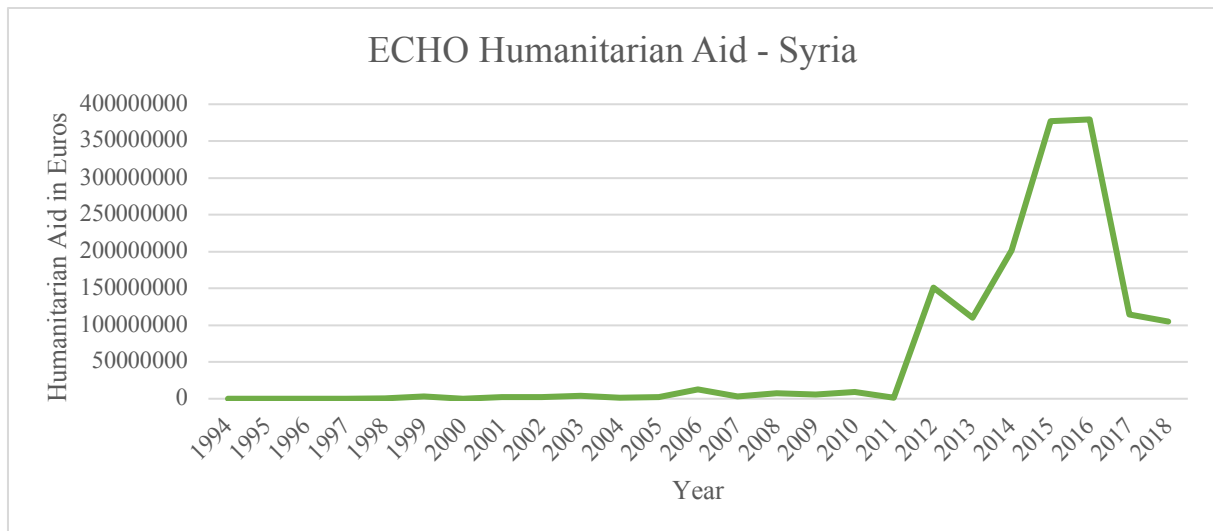


Figure 7: Amount of humanitarian aid allocated in Euros to Syria between 1994 and 2018 – Source: ECHO, EDRIS (2018).

Conflict intensity in Syria

The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance has grown tremendously since the start of the Syrian conflict (ECHO, 2015 & ECHO, 2016c). This leads to assume that the conflict has increased in its intensity. To verify this assumption, the three central aspects of conflict intensity should be analysed. In the first place, it is evident that the number of casualties has increased between 2011 and 2016, as indicated by table 4. Between 2011 and 2016 the number of casualties rose with approximately 4491%, increasing from 965 casualties in 2011 to more than 44.000 casualties in 2016 (The World Bank Group, 2018). The highest number of casualties was measured in 2013, when almost 70.000 people died (The World Bank Group, 2018). Secondly, the number of displaced persons also increased significantly, from 600.000 in 2011 to 6.3 million in 2016, with a peak in 2014 when 7.6 million people were displaced (IDMC, 2018c). This is an increase of about 900%, which suggests that an intensification of the conflict has occurred.

Turning to the final element of conflict intensity, the number of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, it can be said that since the start of the conflict in 2011 both UN institutions have paid substantial attention to Syria. In particular, in 2012 and 2016 a high number of resolutions were adopted, indicating the importance of the Syrian crisis internationally. These numbers show that the internationally community was highly concerned about the Syrian conflict and its effects. Looking in more detail at the adopted resolutions, it becomes clear that not only the number of adopted resolutions has changed, but also the content of the resolutions has altered substantially. In 2012, the UN mainly expressed its concern about the practices of the armed forces in Syria (UN Security Council, 2012b) and the violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement (UN Security Council, 2012a). In 2014 grave concerns were mainly expressed about the escalated levels of violence and the deteriorating

humanitarian situation (UN Security Council, 2014a). Additionally, the UN condemned the use of heavy weapons and the intense fighting (UN Security Council, 2014b). This shows that not only in numbers, but also content-wise the UN has become more concerned about the situation in Syria, which supports the claim that the conflict has intensified.

Taken these three aspects together, it can be said that the intensity of the Syrian conflict has increased between 2011 and 2016. The rapid increase in the number of casualties and displaced persons, and the substantial attention paid to the issue at the international level substantiates this claim.

Table 4: Absolute and index numbers on the number of casualties, displaced persons and General Assembly and Security Council Resolutions: Syria 2011-2016 – Sources: The World Bank Group (2018), Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, (2018c); United Nations, (2018ab).

	Casualties	Casualties Index	Displaced Persons	Displaced Persons Index	GA & SC Resolutions	GA & SC Resolutions Index
2011	965	100	600.000	100	1	100
2012	38.500	3.989,6	3.000.000	500	7	700
2013	69.086	7.159,2	6.500.000	1.083,3	5	500
2014	57.529	5.961,6	7.600.000	1.266,7	6	400
2015	46.643	4.833,5	6.600.000	1.100,0	5	500
2016	44.303	4.591,0	6.326.000	1.054,3	9	900

Concluding remarks on Syria

The analysis shows that the conflict in Syria has intensified between 2011 and 2016. After the start of the conflict, the number of casualties and displaced persons rose quickly. Consequently, ECHO started providing an increasing amount of humanitarian aid, which reached its peaks in 2015 and 2016. This leads to say that the augmented level of conflict intensity has caused a rise in the amount of humanitarian aid allocated to Syria in 2015 and 2016. The underlying motivations can be explained as follows. During the conflict, the different parties to the conflict were guilty of violating IHL and HRL (ECHO, 2016c). The high number of civilian casualties and attacks targeted at Syrian civilians indicates a violation of Article 3 of the UDHR, which posits that each individual has the right to life. Additionally, some of the direct consequences of the conflict were economic contraction, high unemployment rates, and rising prices. Due to the limited access to food and the inability to pay for healthcare, Syrians were unable to suffice their basic needs and achieve a standard of living adequate for their well-being and health.

Furthermore, the attacks on Syrian cities destroyed complete neighbourhoods, leaving many without housing or shelter. These effects directly contradict Article 25(1) of the UDHR, which states that each

individual has the right to a standard of living adequate for its well-being and health. This includes housing, medical care and food. The Syrian people were deprived of these rights. The violation of human rights and the inability to suffice in basic needs means that the Syrian people had no equal moral standing. ECHO’s humanitarian aid was provided with the objective to protect the Syrian people and to support them in meeting their basic needs (ECHO, 2015 & ECHO, 2016c). Therefore, it can be said that achieving an equal moral standing formed a central part of the motivation of ECHO to allocate humanitarian aid to Syria.

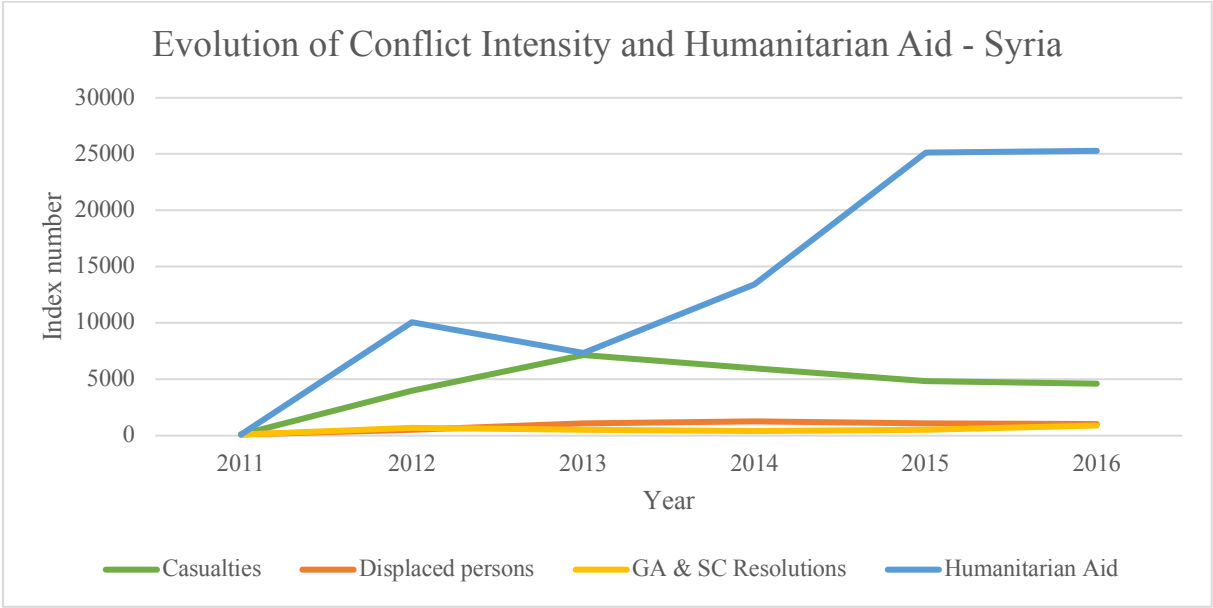


Figure 8: The evolution of conflict intensity in and humanitarian aid to Syria between 2011 and 2016.

Relying on the conducted analysis, the conclusion with regards to Syria is as follows. Syria has experienced high levels of conflict for the past seven years. Since the start of the conflict, Syria has received high levels of humanitarian aid from ECHO. This leads to say that H1, which states that humanitarian aid is provided to countries that experience conflicts and wars, is confirmed. With regards to H2, which states that the likelihood of humanitarian aid allocation increases when the level of intensity of a conflict is high, it can be said that in the case of Syria this hypothesis is also confirmed. Figure 8 shows the evolution of conflict intensity and humanitarian aid in index numbers. The graph demonstrates that in particular the rise in the number of casualties has been severe between 2011 and 2016. Even though the number of displaced persons increased with approximately 900% and the number of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions with nearly 800%, as indicated in table 4, the rise in the number of casualties was more severe, with the highest increase in 2013 of nearly 7.100%. Therefore, it can be said that the rise in the number of casualties had the strongest impact on the rise in the level of conflict intensity. Subsequently, it can be assumed that the increased level of conflict intensity has caused a rise in the amount of humanitarian aid provided to Syria. Therefore, I conclude that H2 is also confirmed.

The causal mechanism accounting for the increase is, as expected, equal moral standing. The aims of humanitarian aid provided by ECHO were centred around protecting the Syrian people and supporting them to meet their basic needs. This would contribute to an improvement of the humanitarian situation. This, again, shows the importance of the norm to achieve an equal moral standing among all human beings in practices of humanitarian aid allocation. Therefore, it can be stated that ethical cosmopolitanism is useful in explaining ECHO humanitarian aid allocation to Syria. Additionally, the HIPs have documented that the goal of the funding for humanitarian assistance was to address the most pressing needs of the Syrian population. This leads to assume that there was no role to play for the interests of ECHO in allocating humanitarian aid to Syria. Moreover, the HIPs do not mention anything which would point into the direction of the influence of self-interests. Therefore, it can be concluded that H3 is disconfirmed.

Yemen

One of the world's largest humanitarian crises, which is currently occurring in Yemen, is a "triple-man-made tragedy": an armed conflict, a looming famine and an outbreak of cholera (ECHO, 2018j). It is estimated that about 80% of Yemen's population requires humanitarian assistance (ECHO, 2018j). Over the years, Yemen has received nearly €400 million in humanitarian support (ECHO, EDRIS, 2018). Figure 9 shows a graphical overview of the amount of humanitarian aid provided to Yemen between 1994 and 2018. What can be derived from the graph is that since 2010, Yemen has received an increasing amount of humanitarian aid from ECHO, which accounts for nearly 95% of the total amount of aid provided. While Yemen received about €2.5 million in 2009, this number rose to €71.3 million in 2016 (ECHO, EDRIS, 2018). In particular, Yemen has received high levels of funding in 2016 and 2017. Therefore, the analysis will try to discover whether a change in the level of conflict intensity has caused the rise in the provision of humanitarian aid in 2016 and 2017.

When looking at the detailed reports of the ECHO EDRIS database, it becomes clear that the relevant HIPs are HIP Yemen (2016) and HIP Yemen (2017). Both HIPs mention that Yemen is the poorest country in the Middle East and one of the poorest countries in the world. In 2015, a Saudi-led military intervention has resulted into the emergence of a country-wide conflict (ECHO, 2017b). The emergence of the conflict has aggravated the humanitarian needs (ECHO, 2017b). So far, diplomatic efforts have failed to achieve a settlement that will end hostilities. It is estimated that about 21.2 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance (ECHO, 2017b). In particular, people who are internally displaced have been affected because they are dependent on host communities and humanitarian aid for access to protection, shelter, water and sanitation (ECHO, 2017b). In addition, there are concerns about violations of IHL and HRL as the conflict continues (ECHO, 2016d). Following the deteriorating situation, ECHO increased the amount of humanitarian aid provided. Therefore, it is interesting to look at whether the level of conflict intensity has caused a rise in the amount of aid provided by ECHO in 2016 and 2017.

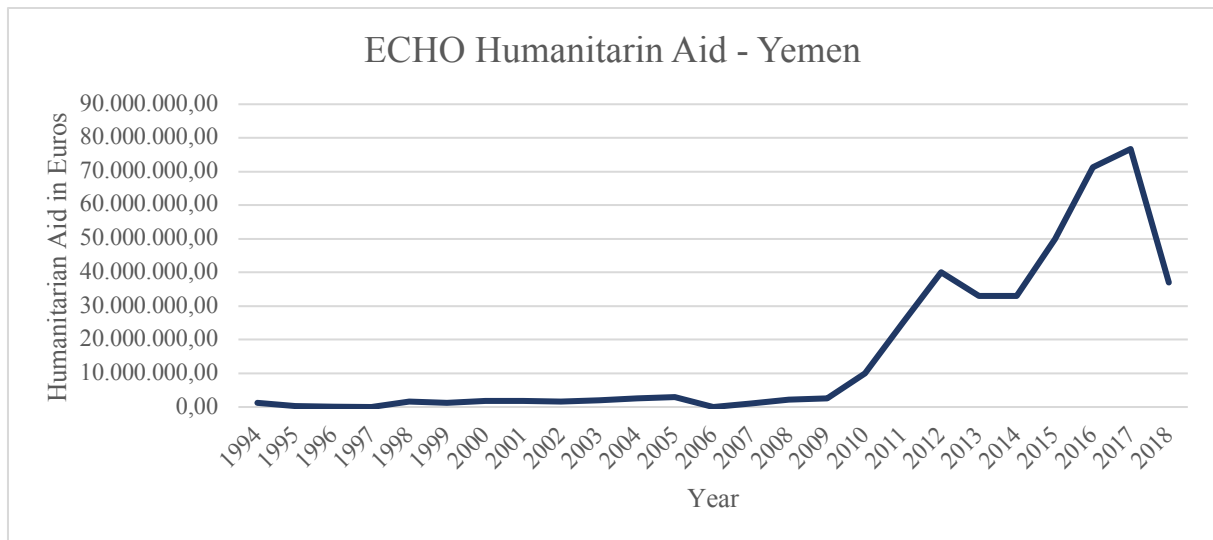


Figure 9: ECHO humanitarian aid to Yemen between 1994 and 2018 – Source: ECHO, EDRIS (2018).

Conflict intensity in Yemen

To determine whether conflict intensity affected the amount of humanitarian aid provided to Yemen in 2016 and 2017, the three central aspects of conflict intensity should again be analysed. Firstly, with reference to the number of casualties, table 5 shows that this number has increased between 2013 and 2016, but not as significantly as, for example, in Syria. Nevertheless, an increase can be identified, and thus it can be assumed that the conflict intensified. Secondly, following the start of the conflict in 2015, ECHO identified that many people got internally displaced (ECHO, 2017b). This claim can be supported with statistics from IDMC. The number of displaced persons has increased from 376.000 in 2013 to 2.5 million in 2015 (IDMC, 2018d). This substantiates the claim that the conflict has intensified.

Turning to the final aspect of conflict intensity, the involvement of the international community, it can be derived from the HIPs that the UN has acted as a mediator in the conflict, aiming to bring an end to hostilities (ECHO, 2016d). With reference to the resolution, only the Security Council has adopted resolutions on Yemen in the period 2013-2017. When the conflict reached its highpoint in 2015, in terms of casualties and displaced persons, the UN Security Council paid much attention to the situation in Yemen, with adopting three resolutions in 2015. As compared to previous years, in 2015 the Security Council seriously expressed its concerns about the aggravating situation in Yemen. In particular, the Security Council expressed its concerns about the on-going political, security, economic and humanitarian challenges in Yemen (UN Security Council, 2015a). These challenges include in particular the on-going violence and the misuse of weapons. Additionally, the Security Council expressed grave concerns about the ability of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula to benefit from the deteriorating situation in Yemen (UN Security Council, 2015b). Furthermore, the Security Council determined the situation in Yemen as a threat to international peace and security (UN Security Council, 2015a). These

aspects highlight that the international community has been highly concerned about the situation in Yemen, which supports the claim of an intensification of the conflict between 2013 and 2017.

Based upon the three central aspects of conflict intensity, I conclude that in the years leading up to 2016 and 2017, and in particular in 2015, the level of conflict intensity in Yemen has substantially increased.

Table 5: Absolute and index numbers on the aspects of conflict intensity: Yemen 2013-2017 – Sources: The World Bank Group (2018), Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, (2018d); United Nations, (2018ab).

	Casualties	Casualties Index	Displaced Persons	Displaced Persons Index	SC Resolutions	SC Resolutions Index
2013	582	100	307.000	100	0	n.a. ⁷
2014	1.660	285,2	334.000	108,8	1	100
2015	6.700	1151,2	2.175.000	708,5	3	300
2016	2.426	416,8	1.974.000	643,0	1	100
2017	n.d.a. ⁸	n.a. ⁹	2.014.000	656,0	0	0

Concluding remarks on Yemen

Yemen has received an increasing amount of humanitarian aid from ECHO since 2010. It can be assumed that this is caused by the deteriorating humanitarian situation. The root causes of the “triple-man-made tragedy” are political instability, conflict, poor economic performance and underdevelopment (ECHO, 2016d). However, it has not been until 2016 and 2017 that Yemen has received exceptional levels of funding for humanitarian support. I argue that this has been the result of the intensification of the conflict. An increasing number of casualties and the rise in the number of displaced persons have led to an aggravation of the humanitarian situation. In addition, as highlighted in the HIPs, the parties to the conflict have committed human rights violations. In particular, through the instalment of a blockade, it has become nearly impossible to import commercial goods, among which food is the most important one. Consequently, the Yemeni population is not able to suffice their basic human needs and a famine is looming. This violates Article 25(1) of the UDHR, which stresses the right that people should be able to live in such a standard adequate for their well-being and health. Over 50% of the Yemeni population is regarded to be food insecure and nearly three million people were forced to flee their homes (ECHO, 2017b). This shows that human rights are being violated. Subsequently, ECHO has provided increasing levels of humanitarian aid in order to support the Yemeni population.

⁷ Not applicable (n.a.)
⁸ No data available (n.d.a.)
⁹ Not applicable (n.a.)

Again, this shows the importance that is attached to the goal of achieving an equal moral standing for all human beings.

The conclusion with respect to the analysis on Yemen are as follows. Yemen has been experiencing heavy conflict only since 2015, which shows that humanitarian aid is not solely provided in order to cope with the effects from conflict. This leads to say that H1 is partially confirmed. On the one hand Yemen did receive an increasing amount of humanitarian aid to address the effects of the conflict. On the other hand, it has also received humanitarian aid for different purposes already before the conflict emerged in 2015. An example is the funding provided for humanitarian assistance to deal with the looming famine. With reference to H2, it can be concluded that this hypothesis is confirmed. Once the conflict in Yemen escalated in 2015, the number of casualties, displaced persons and Security Council resolutions rose significantly, which indicates an intensification of conflict. This can also be seen in figure 10, which displays the evolution of conflict intensity and humanitarian aid allocation in Yemen. What the graph shows is that when the conflict reached its highpoint in 2015, ECHO increased the amount of humanitarian aid provided in subsequent years. In particular, the rise in the number of casualties and displaced persons has been substantial. This leads to assume that these two aspects have the strongest effect on humanitarian aid allocation. In sum, I argue that the rise in the amount of humanitarian aid allocated to Yemen is triggered by the rise in the level of conflict intensity.

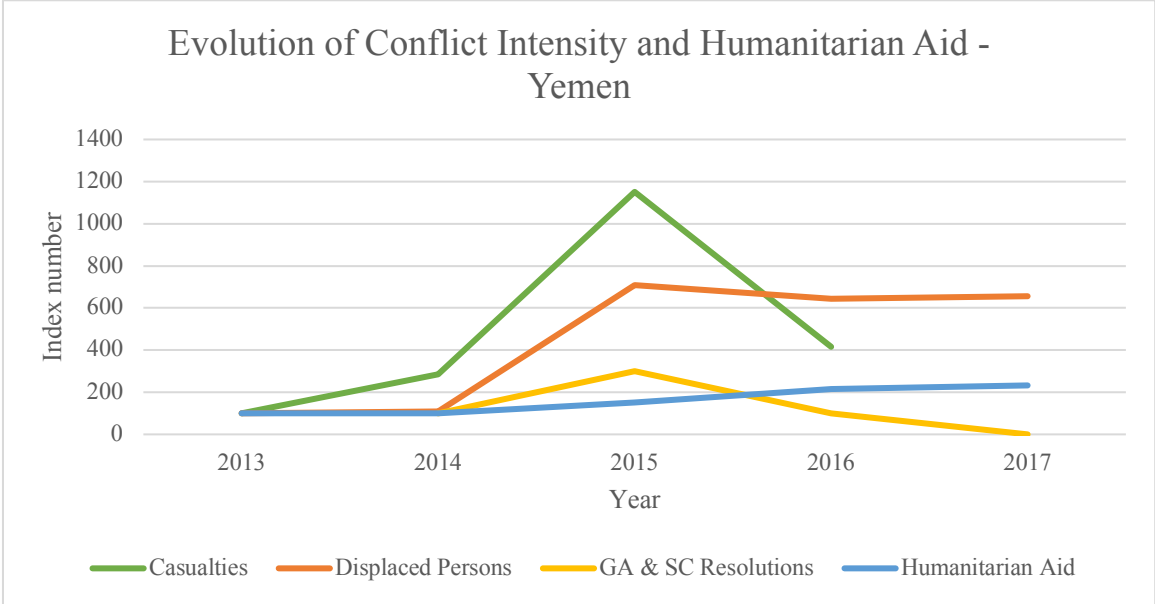


Figure 10: The evolution of conflict intensity in and humanitarian aid to Yemen between 2013 and 2017.

The causal mechanism responsible for the transfer of the effect of conflict intensity on humanitarian aid allocation is equal moral standing. As a result of the conflict, an increasing number of people were deprived of the right to have an adequate standard of living, especially with regards to housing and food security. In addition, an increasing number of Yemenis were unable to suffice their primary needs.

Subsequently, ECHO provided humanitarian assistance with the objective to increase access to food. Taking these objectives together, it can be said that ECHO aimed at contributing to restore the equal moral standing of the Yemenis. Restoring the equal moral standing of the Yemenis is in conformity with ethical cosmopolitanism, which in turn shows that this theory is also suitable in explaining humanitarian aid allocation patterns to Yemen. Additionally, the emphasis that is put on addressing the humanitarian needs of the population of Yemen shows that alleviating suffering of these people was the primary objective of the provision of humanitarian aid. Therefore, it can be assumed that the humanitarian imperative prevailed and that the interests of the donor did not play a role in allocating funding for humanitarian assistance to Yemen. The relevant HIPs support this claim, as no evidence can be found that shows that humanitarian aid is allocated to Yemen as a result of the interests of ECHO. Rather, humanitarian aid is provided to address the most pressing humanitarian needs of the Yemenis. This leads to say that H3 is rejected.

Humanitarian aid allocation: non-conflict experiencing countries

Iran

Iran has received humanitarian aid from ECHO since 1997. Over the years, it has received a total of €65,2 million (ECHO, EDRIS, 2018). Figure 11 demonstrates the amount of humanitarian aid that has been allocated to Iran between 1994 and 2018. The graph shows that there is considerable variation in the amount of funding provided over time. In general, the country has received a substantial amount of humanitarian aid, but there are two years that stand out. In 2004, Iran received €6.2 million in humanitarian support. The relevant HIP shows that the rationale behind the aid provision was “to respond to the continuous humanitarian needs of the people affected by the earthquake” (ECHO, 2004, p. 6). This shows that that the humanitarian aid provision to Iran in 2004 was not related to a conflict, but rather to a natural disaster. Hence, the analysis will not include 2004 into the analysis. Even though 2004 was already distinct in terms of the amount of humanitarian aid provided, a new high was reached in 2016, when ECHO provided nearly €15 million in humanitarian aid. Therefore, it is interesting to look at what caused the increase in the amount of aid allocated to Iran in 2016.

Looking at the detailed report published in the ECHO EDRIS database, it becomes visible that the relevant HIP is the HIP Afghanistan and Pakistan 2016. Even though the subject mainly covers Afghanistan and Pakistan, this HIP also includes the Afghan refugees residing in Iran. The HIP shows that Iran has received nearly €15 million, out of the total of €72.5 million allocated to three countries collectively (ECHO, 2016a). In 2016, Iran has received a total of €15 million (ECHO, EDRIS, 2018), which means that all humanitarian aid provided to Iran in 2016 was allocated in order to deal with the Afghan refugees residing in Iran. What the HIP furthermore shows is that the amount of aid has been modified several times, due to the fact that “the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan is less

conducive to largescale returns” (ECHO, 2016a, p. 2). This leads to assume that due to a possible increase in the level of conflict intensity in Afghanistan, the number of residing Afghan refugees in Iran remains increasing. Therefore, it is necessary to look at whether the level of intensity of the conflict in Afghanistan has actually changed and thus triggered the increase in the amount of humanitarian aid that has been allocated to Iran in 2016.

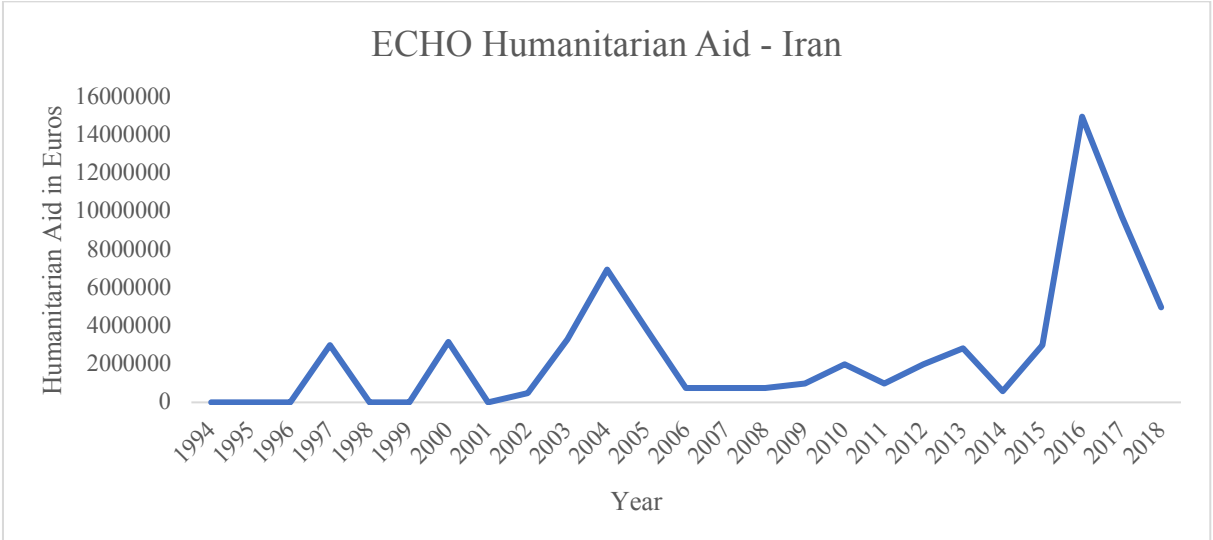


Figure 11: ECHO humanitarian aid to Iran between 1994 and 2018 – Source: ECHO, EDRIS (2018).

Conflict intensity in Afghanistan

To establish whether the conflict intensity in Afghanistan has increased, three elements should be taken into account: the number of casualties, the number of displaced persons and the number of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. Table 6 provides an overview of the absolute and index numbers of casualties, displaced persons and General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. The table shows that the number of casualties has increased significantly since 2013. Whereas the number of casualties centred around 8.000 in 2013, this number rose to almost 18.000 in 2016 (The World Bank Group, 2018), which is an increase of about 125%. This indicates an intensification of the conflict. Secondly, with reference to the number of displaced persons, it can be said that the number has more than doubled in 2016 as compared to the number in 2013. Especially since 2014, the number of displaced persons in Afghanistan has increased substantially. This is another piece of evidence that supports the claim that the level of intensity of the conflict in Afghanistan has risen.

Finally, the number of adopted UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions has not changed significantly between 2013 and 2016. Even though there have been no significant changes in the number of adopted resolutions, it is possible that the international community has changed its stance toward the situation in Afghanistan. Therefore, it is useful to look at the content of the resolutions. What appears is that the content has also not changed significantly. Already in 2013, the UN expressed serious concern

about (1) the “harmful consequences of violent and terrorist activities by the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other violent and extremist groups” (UN Security Council, 2013a, p. 5), (2) the high number of civilians casualties and (3) the attacks against humanitarian and development workers (UN Security Council, 2013a). These concerns continued to be addressed in the resolutions adopted in 2014, 2015 and 2016. The only change in the content of the resolutions can be identified in Security Council Resolution 2274. This resolution expresses similar concerns as in the previous resolutions. Nevertheless, there is a distinguishing element, as this resolution denotes “the record number of civilian casualties” (UN Security Council, 2016a, p. 5) and expresses grave concerns “about the increase in the number of internally displaced persons in and refugees from Afghanistan” (UN Security Council, 2016a, p. 19). Therefore, it can be said that, even though the UN acknowledged that the security situation in Afghanistan was already alarming in 2013, the UN identified an aggravating situation in 2016, with a record number of casualties and a rise in the number of displaced persons and refugees.

Table 6: Absolute and index numbers on the aspects of conflict intensity: Afghanistan 2013-2016 – Sources: The World Bank Group (2018), Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, (2018e); United Nations, (2018ab).

	Casualties	Casualties Index	Displaced Persons	Displaced Persons Index	GA & SC Resolutions	GA & SC Resolutions Index
2013	8.056	100	631.000	100	3	100
2014	12.285	152,5	805.409	127,6	3	100
2015	17.273	214,4	1.174.306	186,1	2	66,7
2016	17.980	223,2	1.552.707	246,1	2	66,7

In sum, what can be concluded from the analysis is that the level of conflict intensity in Afghanistan between 2013 and 2016 did increase. The rise in the number of casualties, the increasing number of displaced persons, and the increasing concerns of the internationally community, as expressed in the adopted resolutions, substantiate this argument. As highlighted in UN Security Council Resolution 2274, the number of displaced persons and refugees increased substantially. This leads to assume that Iran has received a high number of Afghan refugees. As the situation in Afghanistan was not conducive to returns, an increasing burden was put on Iran, for which Iran subsequently received humanitarian aid.

Concluding remarks on Iran

Conflict intensity did trigger an increase in the amount of aid provided to Iran, but not due to a deterioration of the equal moral standing of Iranian citizens. Rather, the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan was not conducive to the return of the Afghan refugees. This has led to an increasing burden for Iran to meet the most pressing needs of Afghan refugees (Human Rights Watch [HRW], 2013). HRW has published a report in 2013 on the treatment of Afghan refugees in Iran. The report states that

already since 2007, Iran has failed to comply with international law, and in particular Article 14 of the UDHR, not allowing newly Afghan refugees to apply for asylum (HRW, 2013). Consequently, since Afghan refugees are not able to officially seek asylum, they cannot access basic needs and official (legal) protection (ECHO, 2018d), which violates Article 25(1) of the UDHR. Even though Iran has become more open to the protection of unregistered Afghan refugees in the past few years, still many of the refugees require humanitarian assistance. This implies that equal moral standing does play a role in the decision to allocate humanitarian aid, because Afghan refugees have been deprived of their right to seek asylum and are unable to access basic needs like housing and food, leaving them without an adequate standard of living.

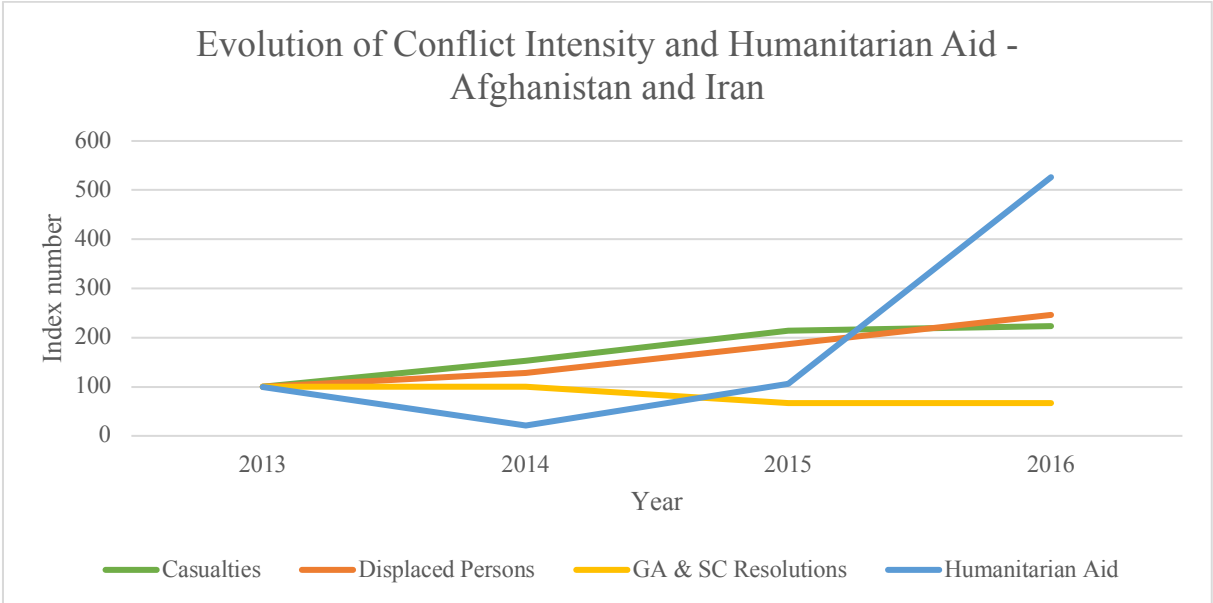


Figure 12: The evolution of conflict intensity in Afghanistan and humanitarian aid allocation to Iran between 2013 and 2016.

Consequently, it can be said that conflict intensity has triggered humanitarian aid allocation to Iran. The driving force behind the aid allocation has been to achieve an equal moral standing for Afghan refugees residing in Iran. To meet the needs of Afghan refugees, and thus to provide them an equal moral standing, humanitarian aid was provided to Iran. Iran does not experience conflict, which leads to conclude that H1 is disconfirmed. As the analysis shows, humanitarian aid is also provided to countries that are affected by conflicts in neighbouring countries, for example through the influx of refugees. Additionally, in 2004 Iran received a substantial amount of humanitarian aid in order to cope with the effects of an earthquake.

With reference to H2, it can be said that this hypothesis is confirmed. Figure 12 shows the evolution of conflict intensity in Afghanistan and humanitarian aid allocation in Iran. The graph illustrates that when the conflict in Afghanistan intensified, the amount of humanitarian aid provided to Iran increased. The

rationale behind this is that when the conflict intensity in Afghanistan increased, the situation in Afghanistan was not conducive of the return of Afghan refugees. This means that an increasing burden was put on Iran. This led to a worsening of the humanitarian situation for Afghan refugees. To address the deteriorating humanitarian conditions, ECHO increased the amount of humanitarian aid provided to Iran. Therefore, H2 is confirmed, but through a spill-over effect of the consequences of the conflict in Afghanistan.

In addition, it can be said that due to the emphasis on the objectives to address the most pressing humanitarian needs and to subsequently restore the equal moral standing of Afghan refugees in Iran, the humanitarian argument again prevailed over other explanations. This means that ethical cosmopolitanism is also suitable in explaining humanitarian aid provision patterns to Iran. Furthermore, there are no signals in the HIPs that would lead to say that the interests of ECHO have influenced the aid allocation process. Therefore, I conclude that H3, which focuses on the interests of the donor, is disconfirmed. In the case of aid allocation to Iran, the humanitarian imperative clearly prevailed.

Jordan and Lebanon

Jordan and Lebanon are countries that have experienced the greatest effect of the Syrian war. Over the past decade, both countries have received humanitarian aid to cope with the influx of Syrian refugees. Therefore, these countries will be dealt with at once. Jordan has received humanitarian aid from ECHO since 1997. In total ECHO has provided nearly €212 million (ECHO, EDRIS, 2018). ECHO has provided funding for humanitarian assistance to Lebanon since 1995. In total, Lebanon has received approximately €343 million. Figure 13 shows the development of humanitarian aid allocation to Jordan and Lebanon.

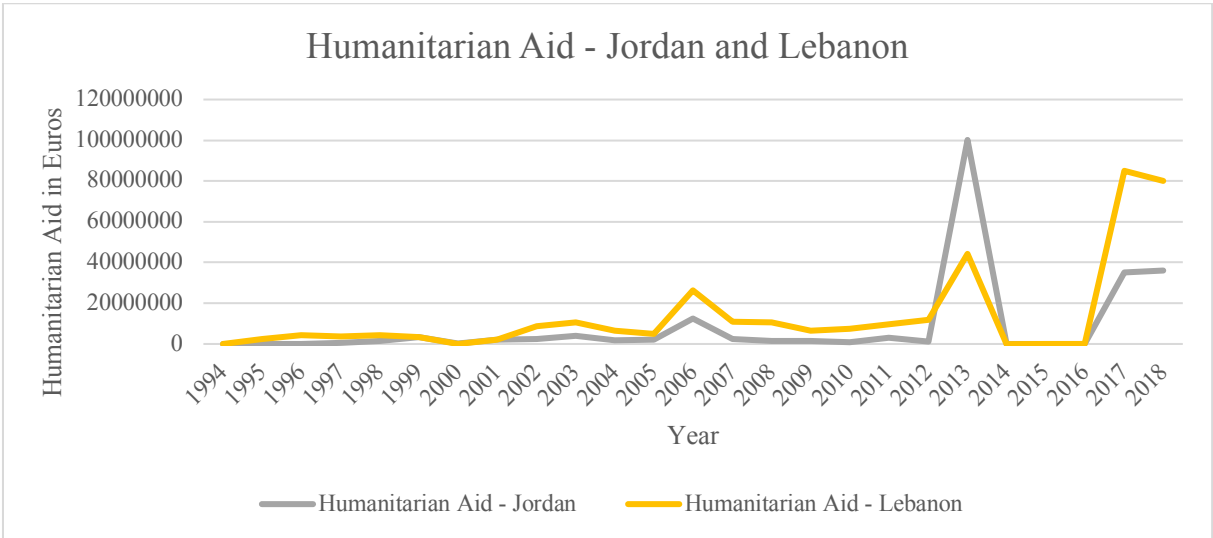


Figure 13: ECHO humanitarian aid to Jordan and Lebanon between 1994 and 2018 – Source: ECHO, EDRIS (2018).

What can be derived from the graph is that Jordan and Lebanon have been experiencing similar peak-years: 2006, 2013, 2017 and 2018. The focus of the analysis for both countries will lay on the period between 2013 and 2018. This means that 2006 will be excluded. The underlying reason is that there is no data available with respect to the number of casualties and displaced persons. This way I am not able to assess the level of conflict intensity and to discover whether a change in the conflict intensity level has caused an increase in the amount of humanitarian aid provided in 2006. Nevertheless, since the increase in humanitarian aid provided in 2006 is quite substantial, it is useful to spill some words on this. The relevant HIPs for that year are ‘Emergency humanitarian aid for the population of Lebanon affected by the conflict’ (ECHO, 2006a) and ‘Emergency humanitarian aid for the populations affected by the conflict in Lebanon’ (ECHO, 2006b). This indicates that, in 2006, Lebanon and Jordan have received humanitarian aid in order to deal with the effects of the conflict in Lebanon. When looking more closely at the HIP, it becomes apparent that humanitarian aid is provided following the continuous Israeli attacks on Lebanon, which left many people internally displaced and unable to access basic needs (ECHO, 2006b). Consequently, ECHO humanitarian aid was aimed “to save and preserve the life of the populations affected by the conflict in Lebanon” (ECHO, 2006b, p. 5). Nevertheless, determining the exact level of conflict remains difficult due to the limited availability of data. Therefore, I will continue with the analysis of the period 2013-2018.

What can be derived from the detailed reports on the humanitarian aid provision to Jordan and Lebanon in 2013, 2017 and 2018, is that the relevant financing decisions are: HIP Syria Crisis (2013) and HIP Syria Regional Crisis (2017, 2018). The 2013 HIP stresses that violent uprisings in March 2011 have evolved into a civil war with severe humanitarian consequences in Syria as well as in neighbouring countries, such as Lebanon and Jordan. The UN has estimated that already in 2013 nearly 7 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance, which accounts for one-third of the Syrian population (ECHO, 2013). In addition, the intensification of fighting, a deterioration of economies and the disruption of basic services have forced entire communities to flee their villages. Consequently, the focus of humanitarian aid provided to Jordan and Lebanon in 2013 centred around providing healthcare, food security, water and sanitation, shelter and protection to Syrian refugees (ECHO, 2013).

The HIP on the Syria Regional Crisis highlights that the living conditions of refugee populations have deteriorated (ECHO, 2017a). Currently, the refugee flow from Syria represents the largest refugee flow worldwide. Lebanon accounts for the highest number of refugees per capita, as it hosts approximately 1.03 million Syrian refugees (ECHO, 2017a). Second on the list is Jordan, in which more than half a million Syrian refugees reside. The increasing number of refugees residing in these countries has put a burden on these states. The hostilities between refugees and host communities resulting from competition over limited services and scarce resources reinforce these tensions (ECHO, 2017a). Of particular concern are the growing number of Syrian refugees that are illegally residing in Lebanon and

Jordan. As they are unregistered, these refugees have difficulties with accessing basic services and needs. The conflict in Syria has resulted into an increasing influx of refugees in Jordan and Lebanon. Therefore, it is interesting to analyse whether the conflict intensity in Syria has changed between 2011 and 2017 and whether this had caused the increase in the amount of aid provided to Jordan and Lebanon.

Conflict intensity in Syria

Since the start of the Syrian conflict in 2011, the conflict has reportedly intensified (ECHO, 2013). To determine whether this claim is true, the three indicators should again be analysed. Firstly, table 7 shows that the number of battle-related casualties has increased between 2011 and 2016. In 2011 nearly 1000 people died following the violence. This number reached its peak in 2013, when 69.086 people became victims of the Syrian war (The World Bank Group, 2018). This indicates that the conflict has increased in its intensity between 2011 and 2016. Secondly, the table also demonstrates the rise in the number of displaced persons. Where this number centred around 600.000 people in 2011, it increased to 6.5 million in 2013, with a new high reached in 2014 when 7.6 million people were internally displaced (IDMC, 2018c). Even though the numbers of casualties and displaced persons decreased between 2014 and 2016, they remained significant.

Turning to the final aspect, the number of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, it can be said that Syria has received more attention from the international community since 2011. Table 7 demonstrates that between 2011 and 2017 a relatively high number of resolutions have been adopted, which indicates that the international community was increasingly concerned about the situation in Syria. As the within-case analysis on Syria, the international community increasingly expressed its concerns about the security and humanitarian situation in the country. Remarkable is that, even though there have been diverging interests between the members of the Security Council, and in particular between the five permanent members, it was nevertheless possible to adopt Security Council resolution on Syria. This shows that overall, Syria has received a substantial amount of attention internationally. Furthermore, the increase in the number of adopted resolutions and the changing content provide evidence for the intensification of the conflict after its start in 2011.

In sum, the assessment of the three central aspects of conflict intensity leads to conclude that the intensity of the conflict in Syria has increased. Neighbouring countries, like Jordan and Lebanon, increasingly experienced the effects consequently. In particular, these countries have been affected through the influx of refugees. In order to deal with the incoming flow of refugees, Jordan and Lebanon have received increasing amounts of humanitarian aid.

Table 7: Absolute and index numbers on the aspects of conflict intensity: Syria 2011-2016 – Sources: The World Bank Group, (2018); Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, (2018c); United Nations, (2018ab).

	Casualties	Casualties Index	Displaced Persons	Displaced Persons Index	GA & SC Resolutions	GA & SC Resolutions Index
2011	965	100	600.000	100	1	100
2012	38.500	3.989,6	3.000.000	500	7	700
2013	69.086	7.159,2	6.500.000	1.083,3	5	500
2014	57.529	5.961,6	7.600.000	1.266,7	6	400
2015	46.643	4.833,5	6.600.000	1.100,0	5	500
2016	44.303	4.591,0	6.326.000	1.054,3	9	900
2017	n.d.a. ¹⁰	n.a. ¹¹	6.784.000	1130,7	1	100

Concluding remarks on Jordan and Lebanon

The analysis on the conflict intensity in Syria shows that the level of conflict intensity has increased between 2011 and 2017. The intensification of the conflict in Syria has resulted into a refugee flow to neighbouring countries, which created a burden on states like Jordan and Lebanon. Both countries appeared unable to satisfy the basic needs and to protect the human rights of the Syrian refugees. Of particular concern was the growing trend of practices similar to *refoulement* [suppression] of Syrian asylum seekers and refugees (ECHO, 2017a), which entails that Syrian refugees were forcefully send back to their home country in which they face prosecution (Amnesty International, 2018). Such practices are prohibited under HRL (UN General Assembly, 1948). In addition, Syrian refugees were deprived of their right to a standard of living adequate for their well-being and health, which is a violation of Article 25(1) of the UDHR. To support Jordan and Lebanon with the incoming flow of Syrian refugees, ECHO has increased its humanitarian support. The purposes were to fulfil basic needs, including food security, healthcare, and shelter of Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon and to ensure protection of unregistered Syrian refugees. This leads to say that the aid provided by ECHO creates a possibility for Syrian refugees to achieve an equal moral standing. Hence, it can be said that the increasing level of conflict intensity in Syria has resulted into an increase in the amount of humanitarian aid provided to Jordan and Lebanon.

The conclusion with reference to Lebanon and Jordan is as follows. Both case analyses provide evidence that humanitarian aid is not only allocated to countries that experience conflicts and wars. Rather, between 2011 and 2018 Jordan and Lebanon have received humanitarian aid as a result of the effects of the Syrian war. Therefore, I conclude that H1 is disconfirmed. With reference to H2, it can be said that

¹⁰ No data available (n.d.a.)

¹¹ Not applicable (n.a.)

the increase in the level of conflict intensity in Syria triggered an increase in the amount of humanitarian aid provided to Jordan and Lebanon. Figure 14 shows the evolution of conflict intensity in Syria and humanitarian aid allocation in Jordan and Lebanon. The graph shows that when the conflict in Syria intensified in 2013, the amount of humanitarian aid allocated to Jordan and Lebanon increased accordingly.

However, the graph also demonstrates that that the increase in humanitarian aid to Jordan in 2013 has been more severe than the increase in humanitarian aid to Lebanon. An explanation might be that Jordan has received a higher number of Syrian refugees than Lebanon. However, statistics of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees show that the total number of Syrian refugees residing in Jordan in December 2013 is about 430.000, while the number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon is about 300.000 (UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 2013). This means that per refugee Jordan has received approximately €231,6 in 2013, while Lebanon merely received about €147 per refugee. This is a significant difference which cannot be explained on the basis of the HIP Syria and ECHO’s annual report, as the documents do not indicate the reasons behind the diverging amounts of humanitarian aid provided to Jordan and Lebanon.

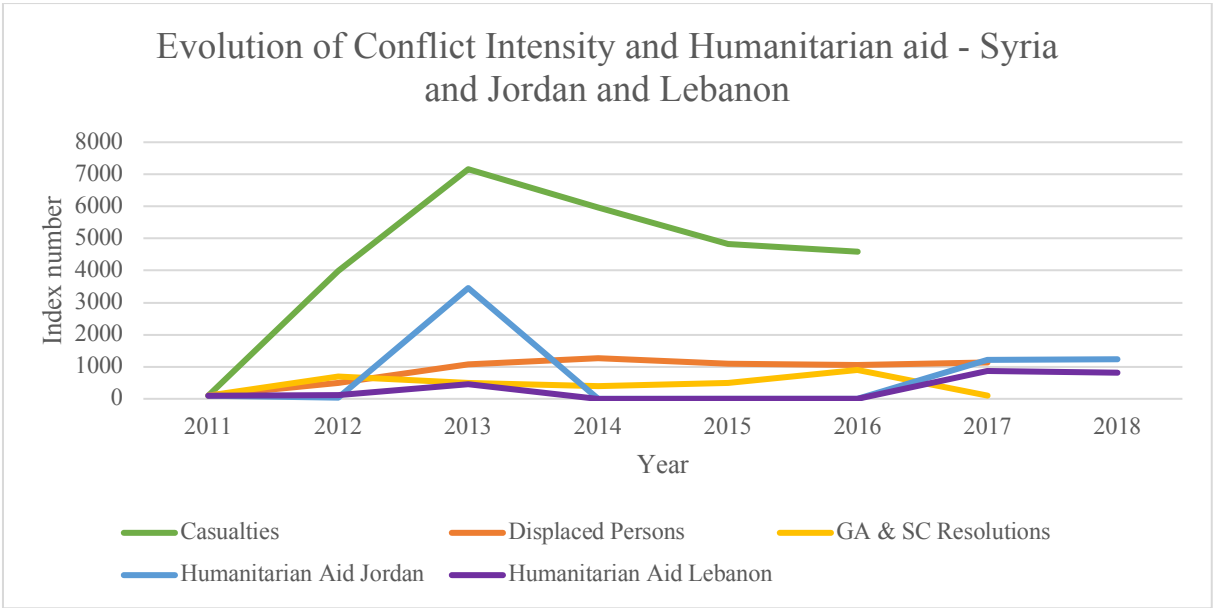


Figure 14: The evolution of conflict intensity in Syria and humanitarian aid allocation to Jordan and Lebanon between 2011 and 2018.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the increasing intensity of the conflict in Syria has caused an increase in the amount of humanitarian aid provided. The causal mechanism that accounts for the transfer of the effect of conflict intensity on humanitarian aid allocation is equal moral standing. The inability of Syrian refugees to foresee in their basic needs and the practices of *refoulement* show that the Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon were deprived of their human rights. ECHO provided humanitarian aid to Jordan

and Lebanon with the aims of ensuring protection and trying to fulfil the basic needs of Syrian refugees. This contributed to restoring the equal moral standing of the Syrian refugees, which shows the relevance of ethical cosmopolitanism in explaining humanitarian aid allocation to Jordan and Lebanon. In addition, what can be derived from the analysis is that the allocation of funding for humanitarian assistance to Jordan and Lebanon was primarily motivated by addressing the most pressing humanitarian needs. This leads to say that, again, the humanitarian imperative prevailed over other imperatives, and that there is thus no evidence that supports the alternative explanation, the impact of the interest of the donor on humanitarian aid provision.

Concluding remarks

This chapter has been devoted to conducting the analysis of this thesis. I looked at whether the level of conflict intensity affected the amount of humanitarian aid allocation by ECHO. In particular, I have analysed seven cases in which I have subjected the peaks in humanitarian aid allocation to research. I looked at whether a change in the level of conflict intensity could be identified and subsequently could explain the change in the amount of humanitarian aid that has been allocated. After that, I tried to uncover whether equal moral standing has played a role as the mediating factor between conflict intensity and humanitarian aid allocation. The following chapter will discuss the results of the analysis, its implications and will provide options for future research.

Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter will be devoted to discussing the results of the analysis conducted in the previous chapter. Subsequently, I will provide an answer to the research question of this thesis: *What determines the allocation of humanitarian aid to the Middle East by ECHO?* After the results have been discussed, I will continue with highlighting the implications of the outcomes and the limitations of the research. As a final aspect, I will provide options for future research.

Discussion of the results

Results of hypothesis 1

H1 states that humanitarian aid is provided to countries that experience conflicts and wars. The analysis has shown that H1 is both confirmed as well as disconfirmed on the basis of the seven selected cases. The confirmation derives from the studies on Iraq, Palestine, Syria and Yemen. Where Iraq and Palestine have been experiencing conflict and war for over decades now, Syria and Yemen have only been experiencing conflict and war for a relatively short period of time (seven and three years respectively). The ECHO EDRIS database shows that these four countries have received an increasing amount of humanitarian aid during the period these countries have been experiencing conflict. Therefore, on the basis of these four countries, H1 can be confirmed.

Nevertheless, the other three cases provide evidence that leads to disconfirm H1. Iran, Jordan and Lebanon are countries that are currently not experiencing conflicts and wars themselves. Rather, these countries are affected by conflicts and wars that are on-going in neighbouring countries. In particular, these countries were affected by the massive influx of refugees. Whereas Iran has been receiving a high number of Afghan refugees, Jordan and Lebanon have received the highest number of Syrian refugees that fled the conflict and violence in their home country. This shows that the increases in humanitarian aid provided to these countries are not caused by the experience of conflict within their countries, but rather through the spill-over effect of conflicts in neighbouring countries. Additionally, humanitarian aid provided to Yemen before 2015, was generally motivated by addressing the humanitarian situation in the country, which was not the result of an on-going conflict, but rather of political instability and underdevelopment.

Therefore, with respect to H1, I conclude that the hypothesis is partially confirmed, as humanitarian aid is provided to countries that experience conflicts, but also to countries that are affected by conflicts in the neighbourhood.

Results of hypothesis 2

H2 states that the likelihood of the provision of humanitarian aid increases when the level of conflict intensity in a country is high. High conflict intensity can be recognized by a high number of casualties, a high number of displaced persons and a relatively high number of adopted UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. The expectation was that an increase in the amount of humanitarian aid provided to a country would be caused by an increase in the level of conflict intensity. The causal mechanism that was expected to account for the transfer of this effect was the norm to achieve an equal moral standing. According to proponents of ethical cosmopolitanism, all human beings have an equal moral standing. As defined in this thesis, this would mean that all human beings should be able to enjoy their fundamental human rights and be able to suffice their basic needs. When this is not the case, then actors would act accordingly, providing support where necessary.

What can be derived from the analysis of this thesis is that ECHO has essentially provided funding for humanitarian assistance to countries where the humanitarian needs were most pressing. The analysis on Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Iran, Jordan and Lebanon has demonstrated that once an increase in the level of conflict intensity occurred, humanitarian needs would also increase, upon which ECHO provided increasing amounts of money for humanitarian support in the subsequent years. The most remarkable case that demonstrates this trend is Syria. Since the start of the conflict in 2011, the number of casualties and internally displaced persons in Syria rose dramatically. Consequently, ECHO has provided increasing amounts of humanitarian aid to Syria from 2012 onwards.

In addition, the analysis has shown that the causal mechanism between conflict intensity and humanitarian aid allocation was to restore equal moral standing. When conflicts intensified, an increasing number of people were deprived of their fundamental human rights. For example, the case on Iraq has shown that once the conflict intensified, an increasing number of people were deprived of the right to life and the right to an adequate standard of living, in which they were unable to suffice their basic human needs like shelter, food and healthcare. Humanitarian aid allocated essentially focussed on providing protection and improving the standards of living for the most vulnerable people. Through the provision of aid – which was aimed to contribute to food security, shelter and the provision of healthcare services – the deprived people had a better chance to enjoy their fundamental human rights and suffice in their basic needs. This pattern can also be discovered in the humanitarian aid allocation to Syria, Yemen, Iran, Jordan and Lebanon. Therefore, it can be said that attempting to restore the equal moral standing of all human beings played an essential role in the ECHO humanitarian aid allocation process. This leads me to conclude that, in general, H2 can be confirmed on the basis of the analysis conducted in this thesis.

However, some nuances are necessary. Firstly, countries like Iran, Jordan and Lebanon have mainly received humanitarian aid in order to cope with the effects of conflicts and wars in neighbouring countries. In this sense, the relation between the intensification of a conflict in a neighbouring country and the subsequent increase in humanitarian aid has an extra link in the chain. This extra link is the increasing flow of refugees that emerged as a result of the on-going conflict in neighbouring countries. For example, once the conflict in Syria intensified, a massive flow of refugees entered Jordan and Lebanon. Consequently, the increasing number of refugees created a burden on Jordan and Lebanon. The inability of these countries to adequately deal with the incoming flux of refugees and provide them the necessary services, has led to a situation in which Syrian refugees were deprived of their fundamental human rights and were unable to suffice in their basic needs. Hence, ECHO has allocated an increasing amount of aid to partner organizations that provided humanitarian assistance to refugees in Jordan and Lebanon. A similar pattern can be discovered in the case analysis on Iran. This leads to say that the causal chain between conflict intensity and humanitarian aid allocation to countries affected by conflicts in the region includes an additional link, namely the influx of refugees that results from the intensification of conflict.

A second nuance that should be made concerns the results of the analysis on Palestine. It was expected that since an increase in conflict intensity would result into an increase in the amount of humanitarian aid allocated, the opposite would also be true. This means that once a decrease in the level of conflict intensity occurred, the amount of humanitarian aid provided should decrease accordingly. However, as the analysis on Palestine has shown, the level of conflict intensity has remained relatively stable between 2008 and 2013, and increased slightly in 2014, while the amount of humanitarian aid provided to decreased. This thus shows that the corollary of H2 cannot be proven.

Summary of the results and the research question

The discussion above has shown that, in general, the two main hypotheses can be upheld. With reference to H1 it can be stated that this hypothesis is confirmed in four out of the seven cases, but that an additional element should be added. The analysis demonstrated that humanitarian aid is provided to countries that experience conflicts (Iraq, Palestine, Syria and Yemen), but also to countries that are directly affected by the consequences of conflicts in neighbouring countries (Iran, Jordan and Lebanon). Furthermore, the analyses on Iran and Yemen has shown that humanitarian aid was also provided for different purposes, namely to address the effects of an earthquake (Iran) and a looming famine (Yemen). This indicates that humanitarian aid is not only provided as a result of on-going conflicts. Therefore, it can be concluded that H1 is accepted for 57,1% (four out of the seven cases).

With respect to H2, it can be stated that this hypothesis is accepted. In six out of the seven cases, the analysis has demonstrated that an increase in the level of conflict intensity has led to an increase in the

amount of humanitarian aid allocated. Only Palestine provides an exception to the positive relation between the two variables. This leads to conclude that H2 is accepted for 85,7% (six out of the seven cases).

Turning to the alternative explanation of humanitarian aid allocation, H3, I have found no evidence that that supports the claim that humanitarian aid is provided when it is beneficial for the donor, in this case ECHO. All the relevant HIPs highlighted the need for humanitarian assistance that arose as a result of the conflicts in a country or the spill-over effects of conflicts to neighbouring countries. This shows that the interests of the donor did not play a role in allocating humanitarian aid to the selected countries. Therefore, it can be said that H3 is disconfirmed in its entirety. Table 8 summarizes the main findings of this research.

Table 8: Summary of the results.

Hypothesis	Description	Conclusion
<i>H1</i>	Humanitarian aid is provided to countries that experience conflicts and wars	Partially accepted: 57,1%
<i>H2</i>	The likelihood of the allocation of humanitarian aid increases when the level of conflict is high	Accepted: 85,7%
<i>H3</i>	Humanitarian aid is provided when it is beneficial for the donor	Rejected: 100%

Through testing the hypotheses, this study has provided an insight into what determines humanitarian aid allocation. What can be derived from the analysis of the seven cases is that there is substantial support for the humanitarian argument. In all cases, the humanitarian imperative prevailed over other imperatives. This means that, in all cases, ECHO has provided humanitarian aid on a needs-basis rather than based upon alternative motivations. The fact that ECHO has emphasized the humanitarian rationale within the process of aid allocation, indicates the importance that is attached to respecting fundamental human rights and the sufficing of basic needs. Through focussing on these elements when providing humanitarian aid, the importance of achieving an equal moral standing for all human beings is highlighted, which shows that ethical cosmopolitanism is a highly suitable theory for explaining ECHO humanitarian aid allocation processes.

In sum, this leads to conclude that the allocation of humanitarian aid by ECHO is influenced by the intensity level of conflicts. When conflicts intensify, it is apparent that an increasing amount of humanitarian aid is provided following the inability to achieve an equal moral standing as a result of the

deprivation of human rights and the limited access to basic human needs. These situations have created an increasing need for humanitarian assistance. Therefore, as an answer to the research question of this thesis, it can be stated that conflict intensity determines humanitarian aid allocation by ECHO, through the causal mechanism of complying with the norm of an equal moral standing for all human beings. Linking this back to ethical cosmopolitanism, which emphasizes the norm of equal moral standing, it can be said that this theory is, thus, highly relevant in explaining humanitarian aid allocation patterns.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that it is in no way the intention to assume that conflicts, and in particular the level of conflict intensity, are the sole determinants of humanitarian aid allocation. For example, ECHO is also known for providing humanitarian aid to countries of which the population has been affected by the consequences of natural disasters. The analysis has shown that an increase in humanitarian aid allocation to Iran in 2004 was motivated by addressing the effects of an earthquake. This leads to say that conflict intensity should not be regarded as the sole or main determinant of humanitarian aid allocation by ECHO, but as one of the important determinants of the provision of humanitarian aid.

Implications

Academic implications

The results of this study have provided a high level of support for the humanitarian argument underlying humanitarian aid allocation. Different scholars (Lumsdaine, 1993 & Schraeder *et al.*, 1998) have emphasized the suitability of the humanitarian imperative underlining humanitarian aid allocation. This imperative entails that humanitarian aid is provided to countries where humanitarian needs are the highest (Schraeder *et al.*, 1998). In light of this study, this means that humanitarian aid is allocated to countries of which the population is deprived of their human rights and cannot suffice their basic human needs. The analysis of the seven cases has shown that ECHO has provided funding for humanitarian assistance to countries in the Middle East in which the populations were deprived of their human rights and were unable to suffice their basic needs. This has been the result of the increasing need for humanitarian assistance – following the intensification of conflict – and the goal to restore equal moral standing. Hence, this research provides substantial support for the humanitarian argument of providing humanitarian aid.

Following the conducted analysis, it can be said that ECHO humanitarian aid provision is motivated by the goal to alleviate the suffering of people affected by conflict. In addition, it has become visible that once a conflict intensifies, an increasing amount of humanitarian aid is provided. This, again, shows that there is a high level of support for the humanitarian argument. In the first place, Fink and Redaelli (2011) have argued that the goal of humanitarian aid is to alleviate the suffering of people in emergency

situations without discriminating on any basis. This research has clearly shown that alleviating the suffering of people affected by conflicts is one of the main objectives of ECHO humanitarian aid. Secondly, Drury, Olsen and Belle (2005) have put forward that aid is given to countries of which the populations suffer the most. The analysis has demonstrated that countries like Iraq and Syria have received increasing amounts of humanitarian aid in order to alleviate the suffering of the people. It is apparent that countries like Iraq and Syria have been experiencing grave humanitarian conditions and high levels of suffering, which makes humanitarian aid provision to these countries logical, which in turn supports the argument of Drury, Olsen and Belle (2005).

In sum, from the results of this study it can be concluded that conflict intensity and humanitarian aid allocation stand in a positive relation with each other. The analysis demonstrated that conflict intensity has a significant effect on the allocation of humanitarian aid. Once a conflict intensified, ECHO has provided an increasing amount of funding for humanitarian assistance in subsequent year(s), due to increasing humanitarian needs. Therefore, it can be said that this study provides additional evidence that the humanitarian argument of aid allocation is prevalent in contemporary practices of aid allocation. Moreover, this study has filled a gap by looking in more detail at what specifically motivates an actor to provide humanitarian aid. Rather than focussing on more encompassing determinants, such as political or economic objectives, this research has focused on a particular aspect: the level of conflict intensity. Even though this research supports the broader humanitarian argument, new insights have become visible, as conflict intensity has appeared to be of significant relevance in the aid allocation process. This means that future studies on the determinants of humanitarian aid allocation should take into account the effect of conflict intensity on the allocation of humanitarian aid.

Societal implications

Next to the academic implications, the outcome of this research also has societal implications. Firstly, it was evident that ECHO humanitarian aid allocation has increased over time. In general, the motivation behind the increases in the amount of humanitarian aid provided was to alleviate the suffering of people affected by conflicts and wars. This research has shown that an increase in the level of conflict intensity has resulted into an increase in the amount of humanitarian aid provided. In addition, this research demonstrated that an intensification of conflict led to a deterioration of humanitarian conditions. The deteriorating humanitarian situation in turn motivated ECHO to provide increasing amounts of humanitarian aid and sometimes even tremendously high amounts of humanitarian aid. This leads to say that the increasing amounts of humanitarian aid provided were necessary in order to address the effects of conflict intensification. Thus, it can be said that this research provides a foundation upon which the increasing spending of humanitarian aid can be justified. This in turn can increase the legitimacy of ECHO's actions among European citizens. As highlighted in the Special Eurobarometer 453 Report of 2017, EU citizens attach importance to assisting and supporting people that are affected by conflicts and

wars (European Commission, 2017). Even though European citizens declared providing humanitarian aid as important, this research has provided an additional justification for providing increasing amounts of humanitarian aid when conflict intensity increases. This can in turn contribute to the EU citizens' perception that ECHO's actions are rightful.

In the second place, this research has shown that conflict intensity leads to deteriorating humanitarian conditions. An increasing deprivation of human rights and the inability to suffice basic needs are some of the consequences of rising levels of conflict intensity. To address the effects of conflict intensification, ECHO has allocated higher amounts of humanitarian aid. However, preventing a worsening of the humanitarian situation is better than addressing a deterioration of humanitarian conditions. As this research has demonstrated, increasing levels of conflict intensity cause a deteriorating humanitarian situation. Therefore, to prevent a deterioration of humanitarian conditions, an increase in the level of conflict intensity should be avoided. Containing the level of conflict intensity can be achieved through, for example, increasing diplomatic pressure, which can be done through, for example, threatening with military action, imposing economic sanctions or installing no-fly zones.

Limitations of the research

Generalizability of the main findings

The main finding of this research is that conflict intensity influences the allocation of humanitarian aid by ECHO. When the level of conflict intensity increases, the amount of humanitarian aid increases as well. This leads to conclude that conflict intensity has a significant effect on ECHO humanitarian aid allocation. The likely generalizability of this argument, however, is relatively narrow. The reason is that ECHO provides humanitarian aid on behalf of the EU, which is an entity that consists of multiple states. This leads to assume that national interests of individual member states do not play a substantial role. However, processes of bilateral aid allocation are rather different. It is difficult to argue that all humanitarian aid donors are motivated by the same determinants that drive ECHO humanitarian aid allocation. It is possible that processes of bilateral humanitarian aid provision occur on different grounds. For example, political objectives, economic objectives or strategic interests may be of influence.

Nevertheless, the insights of this research can still be useful. I expect that the provision of humanitarian aid on behalf of multilateral entities, such as for example the UN, is more likely to be in accordance with the findings of this research. The UN is an organization that is known for its objectives to address poverty and threats to international peace and security. Recently, human rights and humanitarian issues have become closely related to international peace and security (Weiss *et al.*, 2017). Hence, it can be assumed that the inability of people to suffice their basic human needs and an increase in the severity of

human rights violations will lead the UN agencies to increase the amount of humanitarian assistance provided. In this sense, national interests, which can be either political, economic or strategic, are less important. Therefore, I expect that the generalizability of the findings of this research is limited to entities that provide humanitarian aid and assistance independently of individual states. Even though there is a possibility that the results of this research can be generalized on different multilateral entities, this cannot be stated with certainty. This would require further research.

On a different, but related, note, the external validity of the analytical insights can be dubious. It cannot be stated with certainty that conflict intensity is a determinant of all humanitarian aid allocated by ECHO. It is possible that humanitarian aid provision to other regions is the result of different events, such as natural disasters. However, what is clear is that the underlying rationale of humanitarian aid provision by ECHO emphasizes the needs-based aid allocation (ECHO, 2018a), which is in line with the humanitarian argument. As this rationale underlies all aid provision by ECHO, it is expected that studies of ECHO aid allocation to regions other than the Middle East will also show the prevalence of the humanitarian argument. Therefore, it can be said that the insights from this research, which show substantial support for the humanitarian imperative, can be useful in saying something about the general motivations behind ECHO humanitarian aid allocation.

Threats to causal inference

Firstly, the analysis consisted of a relatively small number of cases, namely seven. This results into a situation that is susceptible to measurement errors, because the research does not rely on the ‘law of large numbers’. Consequently, it can be said that even though H1 is partially upheld and H2 is confirmed in a majority of the cases, it is possible that when a different region or different countries are selected, the studies will yield different results.

In addition, comparative analyses are, in general, weak in distinguishing association from causation and they cannot easily address issues like multiple causation and reversed causality (Toshkov, 2016). However, in this research, this threat to causal inference is addressed through adopting process tracing as the research method. Through the adoption of process tracing, I have tried to trace a particular sequence. In particular, I have tried to trace the pathway from conflict intensity toward humanitarian aid allocation. I focused on whether a change in the level of conflict intensity could explain the increase in the amount of humanitarian aid provided. In the analysis, it has become clear that an increase in the level of conflict intensity had an effect on the amount of humanitarian aid allocated. The causal mechanism accounting for this effect was the goal to achieve an equal moral standing for all human beings, with an emphasis on respecting human rights and sufficing basic human needs. Therefore, it can be stated with some certainty that, in this research, the independent variable has actually led to the dependent variable (X-Y) and not the other way around (Y-X).

Recommendations for future research

This research has tried to fill a gap in the already existing literature on humanitarian aid. Through looking at humanitarian aid allocation by ECHO to the Middle East and focussing on the relation between conflict intensity and the provision of humanitarian aid, a new research dimension has been added to the field. Nevertheless, there are still other gaps that can be filled and improvements that can be made with reference to the conclusions of this research. In the first place, as this research has focussed on humanitarian aid provision by ECHO, other donors, such as the ICRC or particular states, have been excluded from the analysis. Therefore, future research can address this issue by looking at whether the hypotheses can be upheld for other donors as well. Secondly, this research has taken the Middle East as the focus region, but humanitarian aid is also provided to other regions in the world, for example Latin-America and Asia. Future research can take the other regions as a central focus, thereby filling the gap that is left in this research. These two future research propositions would in turn contribute to the external validity of the claims made in this research. Through addressing this by conducting future research, it will become possible to see whether the proposed hypotheses can also be upheld in cases outside the scope of this research or whether other determinants are more prominent.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Overview of Humanitarian Aid Allocation to the Middle East (1994-2018)

Year	Amount of Humanitarian Aid in Euros
1994	€28.435.000,00
1995	€32.869.833,33
1996	€43.114.000,00
1997	€16.808.836,36
1998	€28.220.000,00
1999	€13.859.999,99
2000	€37.426.666,66
2001	€44.720.000,00
2002	€48.840.000,00
2003	€130.938.761,00
2004	€46.865.000,00
2005	€43.395.666,67
2006	€132.250.000,00
2007	€86.100.188,00
2008	€115.642.900,00
2009	€99.500.000,00
2010	€88.000.000,00
2011	€89.791.103,00
2012	€257.192.706,00
2013	€354.550.431,40
2014	€315.235.020,00
2015	€533.650.000,00
2016	€680.599.606,11
2017	€423.350.000,00
2018	€402.000.000,00

Appendix 2: Humanitarian Aid Allocation in Euros to the Middle East (Iran, Iraq, Jordan & Lebanon)

	Iran	Iraq	Jordan	Lebanon
Year				
1994	0,00	22.515.000,00	0,00	0,00
1995	0,00	24.873.500,00	0,00	2.446.333,33
1996	0,00	29.564.000,00	0,00	4.400.000,00
1997	3.000.000,00	2.750.000,00	600.000,00	3.754.418,18
1998	0,00	14.000.000,00	1.500.000,00	4.300.000,00
1999	0,00	2.000.000,00	3.223.333,33	3.223.333,33
2000	3.166.666,66	8.600.000,00	100.000,00	0,00
2001	0,00	12.875.000,00	2.002.500,00	2.002.500,00
2002	500.000,00	13.000.000,00	2.375.000,00	8.625.000,00
2003	3.300.000,00	87.638.761,00	3.890.000,00	10.470.000,00
2004	6.985.000,00	0,00	1.900.000,00	6.470.000,00
2005	3.819.666,67	0,00	2.069.000,00	5.069.000,00
2006	750.000,00	0,00	12.500.000,00	26.270.000,00
2007	750.000,00	7.800.000,00	2.500.000,00	10.800.000,00
2008	750.000,00	21.050.000,00	1.545.000,00	10.465.392,00
2009	1.000.000,00	16.000.000,00	1.452.000,00	6.400.000,00
2010	2.000.000,00	7.393.000,00	1.000.000,00	7.400.000,00
2011	1.000.000,00	3.600.000,00	2.900.000,00	9.791.103,00
2012	2.000.000,00	8.855.000,00	1.200.000,00	12.000.000,00
2013	2.850.000,00	29.300.000,00	100.166.758,40	44.200.000,00
2014	600.000,00	47.000.000,00	0,00	62.454,00
2015	3.000.000,00	78.650.000,00	0,00	0,00
2016	14.999.606,11	159.100.000,00	0,00	0,00
2017	9.750.000,00	82.500.000,00	35.000.000,00	85.000.000,00
2018	5.000.000,00	40.000.000,00	36.000.000,00	80.000.000,00
Total	€ 65.220.939,44	€ 834.939.261,00	€ 211.923.591,73	€ 343.149.533,84

Appendix 3: Humanitarian Aid Allocation in Euros to the Middle East (Palestine, Syria & Yemen)

	Palestine	Syria	Yemen
Year			
1994	0,00	0,00	1.220.000,00
1995	0,00	0,00	200.000,00
1996	0,00	0,00	150.000,00
1997	0,00	0,00	0,00
1998	0,00	600.000,00	1.570.000,00
1999	0,00	3.223.333,33	1.300.000,00
2000	8.500.000,00	0,00	1.740.000,00
2001	0,00	2.002.500,00	1.885.000,00
2002	17.375.000,00	2.375.000,00	1.590.000,00
2003	19.890.000,00	3.750.000,00	2.000.000,00
2004	27.230.000,00	1.750.000,00	2.530.000,00
2005	27.369.000,00	2.069.000,00	3.000.000,00
2006	80.230.000,00	12.500.000,00	0,00
2007	60.260.188,00	3.000.000,00	990.000,00
2008	72.627.508,00	7.105.000,00	2.100.000,00
2009	66.000.000,00	6.148.000,00	2.500.000,00
2010	51.000.000,00	9.207.000,00	10.000.000,00
2011	46.000.000,00	1.500.000,00	25.000.000,00
2012	42.059.863,00	151.077.853,00	40.000.000,00
2013	27.988.567,00	110.045.106,00	33.000.000,00
2014	32.372.566,00	201.000.000,00	33.000.000,00
2015	25.000.000,00	377.000.000,00	50.000.000,00
2016	25.800.000,00	379.400.000,00	71.300.000,00
2017	20.000.000,00	114.400.000,00	76.700.000,00
2018	21.000.000,00	105.000.000,00	37.000.000,00
Total	€ 670.702.692,00	€ 1.493.152.792,33	€ 398.775.000,00

Appendix 4: List of UN General Assembly and Security Council Resolutions

This appendix shows a list of the UN General Assembly and Security Council Resolutions that have been taken included in the analysis. As mentioned in the research design and methodological chapter, I only included the most relevant resolutions per country. To ensure the replicability of the research results, I have created the following list.

Resolutions Iraq:

- Security Council Resolution 2110 (2013)
- Security Council Resolution 2169 (2014)
- Security Council Resolution 2233 (2015)
- Security Council Resolution 2299 (2016)

Resolutions Palestine:

- General Assembly Resolution 65/16 (2010)
- General Assembly Resolution 65/98 (2010)
- General Assembly Resolution 65/102 (2010)
- General Assembly Resolution 65/103 (2010)
- General Assembly Resolution 65/104 (2010)
- General Assembly Resolution 65/105 (2010)
- General Assembly Resolution 65/134 (2010)
- General Assembly Resolution 65/179 (2010)
- General Assembly Resolution 65/202 (2010)
- General Assembly Resolution 66/17 (2011)
- General Assembly Resolution 66/72 (2011)
- General Assembly Resolution 66/76 (2011)
- General Assembly Resolution 66/77 (2011)
- General Assembly Resolution 66/78 (2011)
- General Assembly Resolution 66/79 (2011)
- General Assembly Resolution 66/118 (2011)
- General Assembly Resolution 66/146 (2011)
- General Assembly Resolution 66/225 (2011)
- General Assembly Resolution 67/23 (2012)
- General Assembly Resolution 67/86 (2012)
- General Assembly Resolution 67/114 (2012)
- General Assembly Resolution 67/118 (2012)
- General Assembly Resolution 67/119 (2012)
- General Assembly Resolution 67/120 (2012)
- General Assembly Resolution 67/121 (2012)
- General Assembly Resolution 67/158 (2012)
- General Assembly Resolution 67/229 (2012)
- General Assembly Resolution 68/15 (2013)
- General Assembly Resolution 68/76 (2013)
- General Assembly Resolution 68/80 (2013)
- General Assembly Resolution 68/81 (2013)
- General Assembly Resolution 68/82 (2013)
- General Assembly Resolution 68/83 (2013)
- General Assembly Resolution 68/100 (2013)
- General Assembly Resolution 68/154 (2013)
- General Assembly Resolution 68/235 (2013)
- General Assembly Resolution 69/23 (2014)
- General Assembly Resolution 69/86 (2014)
- General Assembly Resolution 69/90 (2014)
- General Assembly Resolution 69/91 (2014)
- General Assembly Resolution 69/92 (2014)
- General Assembly Resolution 69/93 (2014)
- General Assembly Resolution 69/165 (2014)
- General Assembly Resolution 69/241 (2014)
- General Assembly Resolution 69/242 (2014)

Resolutions Syria:

- General Assembly Resolution 66/176 (2011) - Security Council Resolution 2042 (2012)
- General Assembly Resolution 66/253A (2012) - Security Council Resolution 2043 (2012)
- General Assembly Resolution 66/253B (2012) - Security Council Resolution 2052 (2012)
- General Assembly Resolution 67/183 (2012) - Security Council Resolution 2084 (2012)
- General Assembly Resolution 67/262 (2013) - Security Council Resolution 2108 (2013)
- General Assembly Resolution 68/182 (2013) - Security Council Resolution 2118 (2013)
- General Assembly Resolution 69/189 (2014) - Security Council Resolution 2131 (2013)
- General Assembly Resolution 70/234 (2015) - Security Council Resolution 2139 (2014)
- General Assembly Resolution 71/130 (2016) - Security Council Resolution 2163 (2014)
- General Assembly Resolution 71/203 (2016) - Security Council Resolution 2165 (2014)
- General Assembly Resolution 71/248 (2016) - Security Council Resolution 2191 (2014)
- General Assembly Resolution 72/191 (2017) - Security Council Resolution 2192 (2014)
- Security Council Resolution 2209 (2015)
- Security Council Resolution 2235 (2015)
- Security Council Resolution 2254 (2015)
- Security Council Resolution 2258 (2015)
- Security Council Resolution 2268 (2016)
- Security Council Resolution 2314 (2016)
- Security Council Resolution 2319 (2016)
- Security Council Resolution 2328 (2016)
- Security Council Resolution 2332 (2016)
- Security Council Resolution 2336 (2016)

Resolutions Yemen:

- Security Council Resolution 2140 (2014) - Security Council Resolution 2216 (2015)
- Security Council Resolution 2201 (2015) - Security Council Resolution 2266 (2016)
- Security Council Resolution 2204 (2015)

Resolutions Afghanistan:

- General Assembly Resolution 68/11 (2013) - Security Council Resolution 2096 (2013)
- General Assembly Resolution 69/18 (2014) - Security Council Resolution 2120 (2013)
- General Assembly Resolution 70/77 (2015) - Security Council Resolution 2145 (2014)
- General Assembly Resolution 71/9 (2016) - Security Council Resolution 2189 (2014)
- Security Council Resolution 2210 (2015)
- Security Council Resolution 2274 (2016)