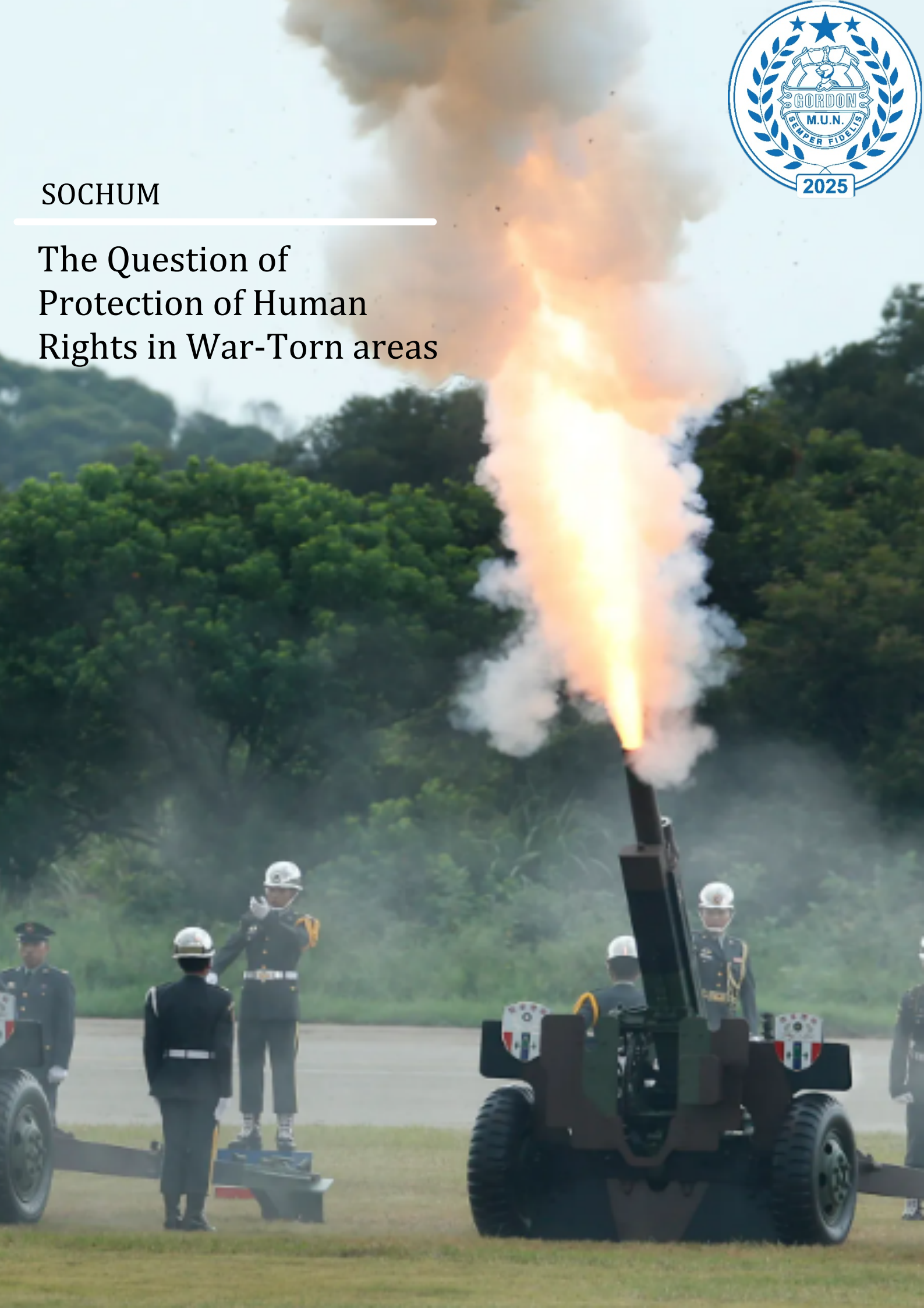




SOCHUM

The Question of Protection of Human Rights in War-Torn areas



Committee: SOCHUM

Topic: The Question of Protection of Human Rights in War-Torn Areas

Chair: Tia Job Monique Goate

Summary

Overview of the Topic

The protection of human rights in war-torn areas is a large global issue. Armed conflicts often lead to severe human rights violations. Civilians, particularly vulnerable groups like women, children and displaced people, face threats such as sexual violence, mass killings, lack of access to food and water and destruction of essential infrastructure. In many war-torn areas, human rights abuses happen due to the breakdown of law and order such as the targeting of civilians and the use of warfare tactics that disregard humanitarian principles.

International humanitarian law (IHL), such as the Geneva Conventions, seek to mitigate these impacts by setting legal standards for the processes in war. However, enforcement remains a problem. As non-state armed groups often ignore these regulations. The role of international organisations such as the UN, ICRC (the International Committee of the Red Cross), and NGOs (non-governmental organizations) are crucial in providing humanitarian aid, advocating for human rights and working towards conflict resolution.

Despite efforts from these international organisations, the situation remains dreadful in many regions such as Syria, Yemen, Sudan and Ukraine, where civilians continue to suffer under the ongoing conflicts. The international governments must strengthen its commitment to protecting human rights in these areas through better enforcement mechanisms, diplomatic solutions and increased humanitarian aid.

Origins of the Topic

The issue of human rights in war-torn areas has existed for a very long time. Conflicts throughout history have resulted in widespread suffering and cruelty. However, the recognition of human rights protections in armed conflict gained importance in the 20th century with the use of the Geneva Conventions in 1949 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. These legal bodies aimed to protect civilians.

With the establishment of the United Nations in 1945, global efforts have been made to address the human rights violations in conflict zones. Organizations such as the UNHRC (UN Human Rights Council) and the International ICC (Criminal Court) have since been made to investigate war crimes, hold perpetrators accountable and promote justice. However, enforcing these laws is still difficult due to political interests, lack of co-operation from warring parties and challenges in providing aid to conflict zones.

Importance of the Topic

The protection of human rights in war-torn areas is important for various reasons:

- Humanitarian Impact: millions of people are deeply affected by war-related human rights abuses which can lead to displacement, starvation, disease and psychological trauma.

- **Global Security and Stability:** unaddressed human rights abuses in war zones can contribute to regional instability, refugee crises and the spread of extremist ideologies.
- **Moral Obligation:** the global community has an ethical duty to prevent atrocities such as war crimes, genocide and ethnic cleansing.
- **Long-Term Peacebuilding:** addressing human rights violations during conflicts help to lay the foundations for post-war appeasement and sustainable peace.

Who the Topic Affects

The issue of human rights in war-torn areas affects multiple groups, such as:

- **Civilians:** the primary victims of war who face death, injury and loss of basic rights.
- **Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs):** forced to flee from their homes, they often face difficult living conditions and lack legal protections.
- **Women and Children:** these groups are often targeted with sexual violence, child soldier recruitment and other forms of exploitation.
- **Humanitarian Workers:** aid workers often risk their lives to provide assistance but are sometimes targeted in conflict zones.
- **Governments and the International Community:** war-related human rights violations strain diplomatic relations, impact international law enforcement and can lead to economic and security hardships.

Previous Attempts to Address the Issue

Several efforts have been made to protect human rights in war-torn areas, including the use of international frameworks, UN and International Organisations and Humanitarian Aid and Advocacy. International Legal Frameworks such as the Geneva Conventions establish laws for war. This includes the protection for civilians and prisoners. The UN and International Organisations created the peacekeeping of missions, where forces are deployed in order to protect civilians and stabilize war-torn areas. Furthermore the ICRC provides humanitarian aid and promotes adherence to international humanitarian law. Lastly, the Humanitarian Aid and Advocacy work to document war crimes, provide medical assistance and advocate for the rights of victims. However, Despite these efforts to amend human rights in war-torn areas, there are many challenges. These include the lack of government enforcement, geopolitical conflicts and the non-co-operation of certain states and arms groups.

Definition of Key Terms

- **Human Rights-** fundamental rights and freedoms that every individual is entitled to, regardless of nationality, race or background.
- **War-Torn Areas-** regions affected by armed conflict, leading to destruction, displacement and human rights violations.
- **International Humanitarian Law (IHL)** - a set of legal rules that regulate armed conflict, protecting civilians and combatants who are no longer participating in hostilities.
- **Geneva Conventions (1949)** - a series of international treaties establishing humanitarian protections for people affected by war.
- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948)** - a foundational UN document that outlines basic human rights everyone is entitled to.
- **Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)** - people forced to flee their homes due to conflict but remain within their country's borders.
- **United Nations (UN)** - an international organization focused on maintaining peace, security and human rights worldwide.
- **United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)** - a UN body responsible for promoting and protecting human rights globally.
- **International Criminal Court (ICC)** - a court established by the Rome Statute (1998) to prosecute individuals for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.

- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) - a humanitarian organization that provides aid in war zones and promotes compliance with international humanitarian law.
- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) - independent organizations, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, that advocate for human rights and provide humanitarian aid.
- War Crimes - serious violations of the laws of war, including targeting civilians, torture, and using prohibited weapons.

Major Countries / Organisations Involved

There are many countries involved in this issue, these include:

- Syria- ongoing civil war with widespread human rights violations
- Yemen- a major humanitarian crisis due to war between the government (backed by Saudi Arabia) and Houthi rebels
- Ukraine- the Russia-Ukraine war has resulted in mass displacement, war crimes allegations and destruction of civilian infrastructure
- Sudan- recent conflicts, including the Darfur crisis and ongoing civil war, has led to genocide, displacement and severe human rights abuses
- Afghanistan- Taliban rule and ongoing instability have led to violations of women's rights, civilian casualties and suppression of freedoms
- Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)- ongoing conflicts involving armed groups resulting in mass killings, sexual violence and displacement
- Myanmar- military crackdowns, particularly against the Rohingya population, have led to accusations of ethnic cleansing and widespread human rights abuses