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DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

THE IMPACT OF GLOBAL CONFLICTS ON INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO THE HORN OF AFRICA SINCE 2022: A FOCUS ON ETHIOPIA

BY

DAWIT SOLOMON ESUBALEW

DECEMBER 2025

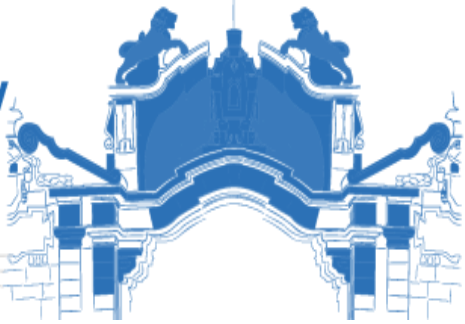
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A THESIS SUBMITTED TO

THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

PRESENTED FOR THE PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY

ADVISOR:

DR. BAYULIGNE ZEMEDEAGEGNEHU

DECEMBER 2025

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research thesis entitled "The Impact of Global Conflicts on International Assistance to the Horn of Africa Since 2022: A Focus on Ethiopia", submitted in the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Master of Arts degree in International Relations and Diplomacy, is the outcome of my own original work, and inquiry. The study was conducted under the supervisions of Bayuligne Zemedeagegnehu (PhD) and complies with the University's standards of originality, academic integrity and quality.

Dawit Solomon

Date: _____

Signature: _____

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the research thesis prepared by Dawit Solomon, entitled "The Impact of Global Conflicts on International Assistance to the Horn of Africa Since 2022: A Focus on Ethiopia", submitted in the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Master of Arts degree in International Relations and Diplomacy, complies with the regulations of the University, and meets the required academic standards of the originality and quality.

Advisor: Dr. Bayuligne Zemedeagegnehu

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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THESIS APPROVAL SHEET

Approved by the Board of Examiners

Advisor	**Signature**	**Date**
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External Examiner	**Signature**	**Date**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CBPF – Country-Based Pooled Fund

CBO – Community-Based Organization

CERF – Central Emergency Response Fund

CHS – Core Humanitarian Standard

CSB+ – Corn–Soy Blend Plus

CSO – Civil Society Organization

DRM – Disaster Risk Management

DRMC – Disaster Risk Management Commission (Ethiopia)

DRR – Disaster Risk Reduction

ECW – Education Cannot Wait

ETB – Ethiopian Birr

FTC – Farmer Training Center

FTS – Financial Tracking Service (OCHA)

GB – Grand Bargain (including Grand Bargain 2.0)

GERD – Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

GHD – Good Humanitarian Donorship

HNO – Humanitarian Needs Overview

HRP – Humanitarian Response Plan

IASC – Inter-Agency Standing Committee

IDP – Internally Displaced Person

ICRC - International Committee of the Red Cross

IGA – Income-Generating Activity

IGAD – Intergovernmental Authority on Development

INGO – International Non-Governmental Organization

NDRMC – National Disaster Risk Management Commission (Ethiopia)

NFI – Non-Food Item

OPT / oPt – Occupied Palestinian Territory

RRP - Regional Refugee Response Plan

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals

USDIA – (As referenced by respondents; unspecified U.S. donor program)

WASH – Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

ABSTRACT

This research thesis examines how the global conflicts, particularly the Russia–Ukraine war and the Israel–Palestine conflict, impact the geopolitics surrounding humanitarian aid, with a specific focus on Ethiopia. The objective of the study is to understand how these crises influence the distribution of international aid, donor policies, and the effectiveness of humanitarian efforts in a country facing various internal and regional challenges. By using a qualitative case study approach, the research combines insights from 30 key individuals, including community leaders, aid workers, government officials, and donor representatives, with secondary data from reports, policy documents, and humanitarian databases such as OCHA FTS, UNHCR, and WFP. The primary instrument of data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews and open-ended interview guides/checklists, while the secondary instruments of data collection included document analysis, discourse analysis, and comparative analysis. The findings reveal that global conflicts have notably altered the availability, nature, and regularity of aid reaching Ethiopia. Humanitarian assistance has increasingly shifted toward Europe and the Middle East, resulting in delays, funding shortages, and service gaps, particularly in food, health, and protection sectors. Donor decision-making is heavily influenced by geopolitical factors, often placing strategic and political interests ahead of humanitarian needs. Primary data further reveal community-level challenges such as exclusion errors, uneven aid distribution, and limited participation in decision-making processes. Comparative analysis shows that Ethiopia consistently receives a smaller share of requested humanitarian funds compared to Ukraine and the Israel–Gaza conflict, reflecting the effects of media visibility and donor prioritization. The study concludes that Ethiopia's humanitarian response remains constrained by shifting global priorities and limited national funding systems.

Keywords: Donor priorities, Aid effectiveness, Ethiopia, Geopolitics, Humanitarian aid, Israel–Gaza conflict, Russia–Ukraine conflict.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The Horn of Africa is the most volatile region in the world, mainly because of the combination of protracted conflicts, climate change impacts, food insecurity, and displacements. Ethiopia, as the most populous country in the Horn of Africa, faces a complex humanitarian problems that is deepened by the external and internal factors. Among the internal conflicts, the war in Tigray, the current conflict in the Amhara region, the recurrent inter-communal violences and politically related instabilities can be mentioned as causing displacements to millions of people, putting pressure on the country's capacity to provide important services to the people (Kebede, 2021).

The recurrent droughts and erratic rainfall, that is primarily caused by the climate change, have worsened the food insecurity, exposing millions of people to the food shortages, making them reliant on the international supports for their existence (FSIN and GNAFC, 2023). Sarkar and de Waal (2023) pointed out that Ethiopia's vulnerabilities to climate shocks, and conflict are tied to its socio-political reality, which complicates the efforts for the lasting resilience.

For many years, the international humanitarian aid has been critical to the country in alleviating the devastating impacts of the ongoing crises. The financing organizations have been providing food, shelter and other essential services to cover the needs of the people. These organizations were the United Nations (UN), the USAID, the European Union (EU) and other different non-governmental organizations (NGOs), among the others, that are vital to the survival of the people in need. Ethiopia's dependence on this assistance indicates that international cooperation plays an essential roles in meeting its humanitarian needs.

However, the shifting priorities that is mainly by the more visible global crises have negatively affected the humanitarian aid and the support to Ethiopia. The shifting attentions means a disruption of resource inflows to the country and this has jeopardized the effectiveness and sustainability of the aid programs in the country (WFP, 2023). The global conflicts, particularly the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war[1], and the Israel-Palestine situations, which have gained the

[1] In this study, the war in Ukraine is referred to as the Russia–Ukraine war; the long-standing Israel–Palestine conflict is used as the overarching term, with the Israel–Gaza war (2023–25) specified when discussing the current escalation; and Ethiopia's conflict dynamics encompass both earlier regime changes and the more recent ethnic and regional conflicts since 2018, particularly in Tigray, Amhara, and Oromia

global attentions, and the media coverages, have greatly changed how the humanitarian aid works around the world. The shifting attentions of the major donors, and countries have influenced the funding dynamics across the globe, putting a lot of pressure on the financing countries to prioritize their financial supports to the selected crises. The war in Ukraine, for instance, has created significant humanitarian needs in the Eastern Europe, forcing the Western countries to shift their financial supports to Ukraine.

The supports to Ukraine has surpassed the billions of dollars since the start of the Russian invasions in 2022, that is causing the budget reallocations from other crises, including those in Africa (OCHA, 2023). The trends of these changes in attentions has often resulted in the disruptions of the humanitarian funding to the crises that are not strategically relevant or visible regions to the Western donor countries, like the Horn of Africa, as compared to the Middle East and the Eastern Europe (Willitts-King and Spencer, 2021).

Another conflict that is ongoing, and has continued to dominate the donor agendas is the Israel-Palestine conflict, and the broader Middle East unrest. These situations have occupied the agendas of the Gulf states, the United States and the other stakeholders, leading them to heavily invest in the humanitarian supports, and the post-conflict reconstructions in the region.

This geographical priority (geopolitical focus) has left the region, like the Horn of Africa, at the risks of being overshadowed, with the reduced funding for its ongoing crises (Samaritan's Purse, 2023). The heightened competitions for the donor funding has the tendency to exclude the countries in the Horn of Africa, which are strategically less relevant or positioned to the geopolitical interests of the major donors or countries (Pankhurst, 2020).

In Ethiopia, this shift in the priorities and the donor funding has caused a serious of impacts to the vulnerable parts of the people. The reduced funding for the food aid and the emergency supports has worsened the hunger, and malnutritions among the vulnerable groups of the populations. The conditions of the food insecurity in the country have deteriorated due to the increasing global grain prices, that is partly caused by the Russia-Ukraine war. These have impacted millions of people who are mainly dependent on imported grain (WFP, 2023).

Scholar like Tadesse (2021) indicated that the food insecurity crisis is further exacerbated by the disruptions of trade, and economic challenges. Due to the shifting resources, the response

to new emergencies becomes harder for the international agencies, which leaves the humanitarian responses to the country's like Ethiopia exposed to delays and inefficiencies.

The shift in the donor priorities indicates how the geopolitical interests could play a crucial role in making the necessary decisions about where the aid should go. This enlightens that the humanitarian assistance is rarely free from the political influences, reflecting the strategic goals of the donor countries. For instance, the funding for Ukraine aligns with the political, and the security interests of the Western nations, while aid to the Middle East frequently reflects the regional partnerships, and the economies reliant on the oil. Ethiopia, which does not attract the same levels of strategic attentions, runs the risks of being overlooked in the global aid system, despite its urgent needs (OCHA, 2023). The geopolitical factors greatly affects the donor choices, with the aid is often being used more to promote the national interests than to meet the humanitarian needs (Donini, 2020).

In light of these challenges, regional organizations like the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), are working to raise the Horn of Africa's profile on the world stages. By pushing for better donor attentions, and to promote regional cooperations, IGAD and other similar groups are working to reduce the impacts of the global crises on Ethiopia, and its neighbors in the region. However, these efforts face obstacles due to the limited funding, and the political divisions within the region (FSIN and GNAFC, 2023). The regional rivalries, and a lack of unified strategies often hinders IGAD's work, which is making it hard for the organization to effectively counter the geopolitical forces that affect the global aid distributions (Dorsey, 2019).

To deal with the above challenges, which have been caused by the changing humanitarian funding dynamics, the international organizations, such as the UN and the larger NGOs, have made adjustments to their working modality/approaches. They have implemented measures that bring various donor funding together, and created the cross-sector initiatives that can help make the most of the available resources. However, these strategies are often do not fully address the deeper inequality in how the aid is distributed mainly due to the geopolitical influences (Samaritan's Purse, 2023). It is also further argued by Barnett (2011) that these strategies can be weakened by the power differences between the donors and those receiving the aid.

Understanding the geopolitics of the humanitarian aid is essential for Ethiopia's future resiliences. Hence, this research thesis looks into how the global conflicts affects where the aid money goes, focusing on the main reasons why the donors decide to give and how this impacts the urgent needs existing in Ethiopia. It also discusses whether Ethiopia's needs are taken seriously in the international talks, and how the country can attract more consistent supports from donors with different interests.

1.2. Problem statement

The Horn of Africa, particularly Ethiopia, is facing severe and ongoing humanitarian difficulties, including conflict, drought, food shortages, and displacements. Ethiopia continues to struggle with internal conflicts, climate-related challenges, and widespread poverty, making it heavily dependent on international aid to fulfill its humanitarian obligations. However, as resources and attentions shift towards more high-profile global issues, especially the Russia-Ukraine war and the long-standing Israel-Palestine conflicts, serious questions arise about the fairness of aid distributions and Ethiopia's ability to cope with its own crises. Understanding the geopolitical aspects of aid allocations in this framework is therefore crucial for assessing the long-term viability and effectiveness of the international supports in Ethiopia.

Aid to the Horn of Africa has significantly decreased when compared to the unprecedented flows directed to Ukraine and the Middle East. Before the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Ethiopia and its neighbors were receiving billions of dollars yearly, and Ethiopia alone received around US $3.1 billion in 2021 (OCHA, 2023). In contrast, Ukraine received over US $16.1 billion in 2022, far exceeding the combined US $8.5 billion for all Horn of Africa countries (WFP, 2023; OECD, 2023). The ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict also continues to command substantial donor support, mainly from Gulf states and Western nations. This shift has resulted in serious funding shortages, with WFP reporting a 30% deficit for food assistance across Ethiopia, Somalia, and South Sudan in 2023 (WFP, 2023), and UNHCR showing 40% gaps for refugee services in Djibouti, Eritrea, and Sudan (UNHCR, 2023; IOM, 2023).

Media plays a crucial role, as global coverage heavily prioritizes the Russia-Ukraine war and Israel-Palestine crises (Pantuliano, 2025; BBC, 2023). Meanwhile, the Horn of Africa receives limited attention, despite droughts labelled as the worst in 40 years placing over 20 million people on the edge of famine (FSIN and GNAFC, 2023; Samaritan's Purse, 2023). Low media visibility diverts donor interest and reduces global awareness, contributing to funding shortages

and delayed emergency responses. For example, the 2023 Sudan conflict response was slowed by resource constraints linked to competing global emergencies (OCHA, 2023).

Ethiopia and its neighbors therefore face growing risks of geopolitical marginalization, reducing their visibility and ability to advocate for fair resource distribution (Jakupec et al., 2024). Limited media coverage creates "crisis fatigue" (Pantuliano, 2025), weakening international urgency. These challenges highlight the need for the region to navigate a shifting geopolitical landscape while addressing humanitarian and development needs.

Existing studies have extensively documented the geopolitics of humanitarian aid, demonstrating how the donor states instrumentalize assistance to advance the foreign policy objectives, security interests, and geopolitical alliances (Barnett & Weiss, 2011; Donini, 2010; Willitts-King & Spencer, 2021; Tanner & Moro, 2016; de Waal, 2015). These studies convincingly illustrate that the humanitarian action rarely operates in a political vacuum and is frequently subordinated to the donor priorities. Nevertheless, the empirical focus of this literature remains heavily focused towards the high-profile crises in regions of strategic importance to the Western powers, notably Syria, Yemen, and the broader Middle East, while crises in less geopolitically central regions, such as the Horn of Africa, receive comparatively limited attention within the same analytical framework. The recent escalation of the two major conflicts, the Russia-Ukraine war, and the renewed Israel-Palestine crisis, has triggered the unprecedented surges in the humanitarian funding (OCHA, 2023; OECD, 2022–2023), yet scholarly analysis has largely examined these events in isolations, focusing on their direct consequences to the conflict areas or regions (Mearsheimer, 2022; Kagan, 2022; Quandt, 2005) rather than their spillover effects on the aid allocations to other countries or regions.

A critical gap therefore emerges: despite the evidence and aggregate funding data suggesting significant resource diversion away from the pre-existing crises, no study has systematically investigated how these concurrent high-salience conflicts collectively reshape the donor priorities, media visibility, and humanitarian aid flows to regions of marginal strategic interest. In the case of Ethiopia and the wider Horn of Africa, one of the world's largest and most complex humanitarian emergencies, compounded by the protracted conflict, climate shocks, and mass displacement, this redirection has coincided with the deepening funding shortfalls, yet the causal linkages remains underexplored. Existing works on African marginalization in the global decision-making (Pankhurst, 2020; Dorsey, 2019) identify the structural inequities but do not empirically connect them to the rapid, conflict-driven shifts in global aid system.

Consequently, the specific mechanisms through which media attention, crisis salience, and donor political alignment interact to produce unequal humanitarian outcomes remain inadequately theorized and evidenced.

This study addresses the identified gap by taking Ethiopia as a strategic case to examine the indirect, second-order effects of major global conflicts on humanitarian funding in geopolitically peripheral regions. By comparing donor behavior and financing patterns before and after the Russia-Ukraine war and the escalation of the Israel-Palestine conflict, the research assesses whether funding increases for these high-visibility crises correspond with reductions or stagnation in funding for Ethiopia and the wider Horn of Africa. The study also examines how global media attention and political salience shape these shifts. It investigates whether crises with stronger geopolitical relevance or more intensive media coverage receive more predictable and sustained support, while crises like Ethiopia's, despite affecting tens of millions, remain chronically underfunded.

In doing so, the study extends the foundational work on the geopolitics of humanitarianism (Barnett & Weiss, 2011; Donini, 2010; de Waal, 2015; Willitts-King & Spencer, 2021) to an understudied regional contexts and offers a timely contributions to the ongoing debates about the sustainability and equity of the global humanitarian system. By linking the macro-level geopolitical shifts with the micro-level funding outcomes, it generates new evidence on why certain crises attract sustained international supports while others, despite comparable or greater objective need, are progressively overlooked, ultimately advancing a more comprehensive understanding of the structural inequality in contemporary humanitarian action.

1.3. Objective of the study

1.3.1. General objective

The general objective of this study is to analyze how the global conflicts, such as the Russia-Ukraine and the Israel-Gaza conflict shape the geopolitics of humanitarian aid with a focus on understanding their impacts on aid distributions, donor policies and the effectiveness of Ethiopia's humanitarian response.

1.3.2. Specific objectives

This study specifically aims:

1. To examine the impact of the Russia-Ukraine and the Israel-Gaza conflict on humanitarian aid distribution in Ethiopia.

2. To analyze the role of geopolitical interests in influencing donor policies.

3. To assess the implications of changing aid priorities for Ethiopia's humanitarian response.

1.4. Research questions

The following research questions were formulated based on the specific objectives outlined above:

1. How have the Russia-Ukraine war and the Middle East conflict influenced international aid allocation to Ethiopia?
2. How do geopolitical considerations shape the aid distribution policies of major donors?
3. How do shifts in donor priorities affect the effectiveness of humanitarian interventions in Ethiopia?

1.5. Methodology and Methods of Data Collection

1.5.1. The Study/Research Area

Ethiopia, is located in the Horn of Africa region, which is historically a hotspot for both the humanitarian efforts and the geopolitical rivalry. The country borders Eritrea in the north, Djibouti to the northeast, Somalia to the east and Kenya to the south and the South Sudan to the west, and Sudan to the northwest. Ethiopia has a populations of over 120 million (World Bank, 2023), making it the second most populous country in the continent, and rich with diverse culture, ethnicity, and language.

The humanitarian landscape of the country is shaped by the complicated interplays of the natural disasters, and the human-made crises. The persistent of droughts, the unpredictable rainfall, and the effects of climate change has intensified the food insecurity, whereas the internal conflicts, particularly the recent war in the Tigray regional state, along with the unrest in the regions of Amhara and Oromia, have resulted in the significant displacements. In the early 2024, the report shows that over 20 million of people in Ethiopia are in need of the

humanitarian support mainly due to the above challenges, with over 4.5 million people are being internally displaced (OCHA, 2024).

The geographical locations of Ethiopia has made it a key player in the geopolitical landscape of the Horn of Africa region. As the country is landlocked, it has fully depended on access to ports through the neighboring Djibouti, Sudan, and, to a lesser extent, Somalia for its trade and the humanitarian logistics. This reliance on other country's shows that Ethiopia's sensitivity to the regional political dynamics and the stability of the infrastructures. The country's relationships with the neighboring countries are influenced by the longstanding challenges such as the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) contention with the Egypt and Sudan, the border demarcation conflicts with Sudan, and a negotiations regarding the maritime access with Djibouti and Eritrea.

When we look from the humanitarian standpoints, Ethiopia serves as both the destinations for aid and a transit for the international assistances in the Horn of Africa. The country is the essential partners of the different multilateral, and bilateral donors, including, the US foreign aid, the European Union (EU), the World Food Program (WFP), and the UNHCR, which are the main ones among others. Nevertheless, the global aid landscapes are profoundly affected by the external geopolitical events, mainly due to the Russia–Ukraine war and the Israel–Gaza conflicts, which have caused the shifts to the global funding patterns and the donor focus.

The crises in the Horn of Africa are interconnected across countries and this indicate that any developments in Ethiopia have the implications for the broader region. For instance, any of the instabilities that occurs in Ethiopia frequently impacts the bordering neighboring countries such as Sudan, South Sudan, and Somalia, affecting the refugees movements, the regional trades, and cross-border aid logistics. In the same way, any aid flows coming to Ethiopia are not only determined in isolations but is influenced by how the donor governments balances the competing priorities in the other global hotspots. Given the humanitarian requirements, the strategic positions and the political environments, Ethiopia is the exemplary case study to examine the intersections of the global conflicts, the geopolitical considerations, and humanitarian assistances distribution. The country’s situations reflects both the vulnerabilities of for being aid-dependent states in Global South, and the strategic calculations that donors makes when any global crises competes for the limited resources.

1.5.2. Research methodology

This research thesis has employed a qualitative research methodology. This helps to explore the geopolitics of the humanitarian aid in Ethiopia, mainly giving a specific focus on how the global conflicts (the Russia–Ukraine war and the Israel–Palestine conflicts) has shaped the donor priorities and their aid allocations. A qualitative research methodology is the appropriate for understanding the complex socio-political dynamics and stakeholder perspectives (Creswell, 2014). In this study, Ethiopia is examined as the case study, which enabling an in-depth explorations of local humanitarian challenges while situating those challenges within the broader global trends. Yin (2018) emphasizes that the case studies are particularly suitable for examining contemporary phenomenas in their real-life contexts, making this approaches relevant for investigating the interplays between geopolitics and humanitarian aid.

1.5.3. Sources of Data

Both primary and secondary data sources were used to ensure comprehensive coverage of the research topic.

1.5.3.1. Primary Sources of Data

Primary data were collected from key informants involved in or receiving humanitarian assistance in Ethiopia using interviews and structured qualitative tools.

1.5.3.2. Secondary Sources of Data

Secondary data were derived from official documents, scholarly publications, media platforms, and humanitarian databases relevant to aid governance and geopolitics.

1.5.4. Instruments of Data Collection

This study employed multiple qualitative data collection instruments to generate robust and reliable evidence. The instruments are described below:

1.5.4.1. Semi-structured interviews

The interviews has provided a detailed insights into the experiences, and perspectives of the key informants, which includes the aid workers, the government officials, the donor representatives, and the community leaders. Kvale & Brinkmann (2015) has emphasized that the semi-structured interviews gives the flexibility for the follow-up questions while also maintaining the focus on the research objectives.

1.5.4.2. A structured interviews using open-ended interview guide/checklist

For the participants with limited availability, such as government officials, donor representatives, and the aid workers, a structured open-ended interview guide/checklist was used to obtain their inputs. This tool contained a structured, broad, and reflective prompt that allowed the participants to share qualitative insights in their own words. It served as a cost-effective and time-efficient data collection method while ensuring depth and diversity of perspectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Fink, 2013). This method involves a rigorous, fixed set of questions asked in the exact same order for every participant, without deviation or spontaneous follow-up questions.

1.5.4.3. Document analysis

The reports and policy documents from major donors were referred from the like of the European Union, and the international organizations such as UNHCR, WFP, and OCHA. The other key sources includes the policy frameworks from Ethiopian government bodies like the NDRMC. The research following the approach outlined by Bowen (2009), the analysis concentrated on funding trends, the policy shifts, and evaluation reports to uncover patterns and identify gaps. Finally, academic and scholarly publications that are pertaining to the geopolitics of humanitarian aid and the effects of global conflicts were also referred.

1.5.4.4. Discourse analysis

The media coverages and the political discourse related to the humanitarian responses in Ethiopia, Ukraine, and the Middle East are also consulted. Media coverage and political rhetoric concerning the Ethiopia's humanitarian situation were analyzed using the discourse analysis techniques (Fairclough, 2003). This examined the framing of Ethiopia's crises in global versus regional narratives, and compared them with Ukraine and the Middle East (especially Israel-Gaza) coverage.

1.5.4.5. Comparative analysis

Comparative analysis assessed aid flows and donor behavior toward Ethiopia, Ukraine, and the Middle East based on data from OCHA's Financial Tracking Service (FTS) and donor publications. This method enabled the identification of disparities, and competition for the global humanitarian resources (Hanlon, 2020).

1.5.5. Sampling Technique and Size

1.5.5.1. Sampling Technique

The researcher has used the purposive sampling technique to select the research participants, who were directly relevant to the study's objectives, in alignment with the guidance from

Palinkas et al. (2015). Participants were chosen based on their involvement in, or experience with, humanitarian aid allocation in Ethiopia. This included key community leaders from six conflict, and drought-affected regions, Afar, Amhara, Gambella, Oromia, Somali, and Tigray, who offered the firsthand perspectives from the affected communities. Aid workers from both international, and local NGOs were also included, contributing the valuable insights into the operational realities of delivering assistance to the populations in need. In addition, the government officials, experts or staff from the Ethiopia's federal and regional Disaster Risk Management Commissions (DRMCs), as well as other sector offices engaged in the disaster risk management working groups, provided the policy and coordination viewpoints. Finally, the donor representatives working within the bilateral and multilateral agencies participated by sharing the perspectives on how the humanitarian funding decisions are made, and prioritized.

1.5.5.2. Sample Size

For this research, the data were collected from the total of 30 participants, selected purposively to ensure adequate coverage of the perspectives and to reach data saturation. The study engaged a diverse group of stakeholders, including 10 community leaders and representatives who contributed critical grassroots perspectives. Additionally, 10 aid workers from a range of local and international NGOs provided practical humanitarian insights based on their operational experience. Four donor representatives also participated, offering strategic viewpoints on funding priorities and resource allocation. Moreover, 6 government officials and technical staff from various sector offices, including both federal and regional Disaster Risk Management Commissions (DRMCs), shared institutional and policy-related expertise essential to understanding the governance context.

1.5.6. Method of Data Analysis

In this research thesis, the thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), was used to identify and interpret patterns across the qualitative data. The process of data analysis involves, reviewing all the interview notes/transcripts, the coding of interviews transcripts and questionnaire responses, by developing the necessary themes (e.g., shifts in the donor priorities, media influence), and by interpreting these in relation to the research questions.

1.5.7. Rationale for Methodology

The researcher has followed the multi-methods approaches mainly to enable a comprehensive, and the nuanced analysis of the research problems by integrating the complementary qualitative techniques. The document analysis establishes the contextual foundations by systematic examination of the relevant reports, policy documents, and media sources, that helped to frame the broader environment of the humanitarian aid in Ethiopia (Bowen, 2009). The interviews and structured open-ended guides/checklist provides a critical insights into the stakeholder perspectives, capturing the firsthand accounts from the practitioners, the policymakers/experts, and beneficiaries. These approaches has allowed to collect rich, detailed data that reflecting the subjective experiences, that is essential for exploring the complex humanitarian and the policy dynamics (Gill et al., 2008).

The discourse analysis also was necessary, and used to examine the common languages and the narratives within the policy texts, and the media coverages, to help reveal the underlying assumptions, the ideological positions and the framing of the aid interventions, providing insights into how language shapes perceptions, priorities and decision-making in the humanitarian aid. Discourse analysis is a qualitative research method used to study language, communication and texts in order to understand how the meaning is constructed, conveyed and interpreted. It focuses not just on what is being said, but how it is said, why it is said that way, and what underlying assumptions or power dynamics it reflects. This method were useful mainly to clearly understand the ways the global conflicts are constructed in the public discourses, and how those constructions really influences the aid decisions (Gee, 2014). Finally, the research follows the comparative analysis mainly to assess the positions where Ethiopia is situated within the global aid allocations patterns, by enabling the identification of the similarities and differences in the donor behavior across the contexts. This research method supported the broader understanding of the structural influences on the humanitarian aid distributions, enhancing the external validity of the findings (Hantrais, 2009). These methods all together, gives a triangulated, and layered understanding of how the global conflicts impacts the humanitarian aid distributions, the donor policies and the Ethiopia's national humanitarian responses.

1.6. Significance/Rationale of the Research

This study holds strong significance because it sheds light on the growing yet overlooked issues in the global humanitarian landscapes: the unequal distributions of aid driven by the geopolitics rather than the human need. At a time when Ethiopia, and the wider Horn of Africa are

experiencing some of the world's most severe, and complex crises, marked by the armed conflicts, recurrent drought and mass displacements, donors attention and resources appear increasingly diverted towards the high-profile conflicts such as the Russia–Ukraine war, and the Israel–Palestine crisis.

By generating the empirical evidence on the humanitarian funding trends before and after these major geopolitical events, the research thesis moves beyond the assumptions or subjective claims, and provides a measurable assessment of how global priorities shift. This enables a clearer understanding of whether regions with the lower geopolitical salience, like Ethiopia, are becoming further marginalized in the international response systems.

Academically, this research thesis enriches the existing literatures on the politicization of humanitarian aid by expanding its regional focus to the Horn of Africa, an area underrepresented in the current scholarship despite its intensifying vulnerabilities. It bridges the gap between the global power dynamics, and localized humanitarian consequences, offering a more holistic, and equitable lens for studying the contemporary aid allocations.

In practical terms, the findings aim to support more just, and needs-based aid policies. By highlighting the risks of crisis invisibility, and resource diversion, the study advocates for the strategies that ensures sustained, fair, and accountable support to Ethiopia and similarly affected countries/regions, regardless of their geopolitical visibility. Ultimately, the research aspires to inform the decision-makers, donors and the humanitarian actors so that no crisis is neglected simply because others dominate the global agenda.

1.7. Scope of the Research

This research focuses on Ethiopia, as a case study, to examine and study the broader dynamics of the humanitarian aid allocations within the Horn of Africa. The research explores how the global conflicts, mainly the Russia-Ukraine war and the Israel-Palestine conflicts, influences the aid flows to Ethiopia. The study tries to give a critical insights by concentrating on Ethiopia about the geopolitical and structural factors that shape the international humanitarian assistance in the Horn of Africa region shouldering chronic crises.

The strategic significance of Ethiopia's within the Horn of Africa and its substantial dependence on the external aid make it an ideal case for investigating the relationship between global and regional influences on humanitarian assistance. Ethiopia faces a range of the

challenges, including a protracted internal conflicts, recurrent droughts, flooding, and acute food insecurity (OCHA, 2023). While this research emphasizes the Ethiopia's unique contexts, it tries to put these challenges within the broader regional landscapes, while drawing a comparisons with a neighboring countries such as Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan that share similar vulnerabilities.

This research also examines the role of the international media and the political narratives framing Ethiopia's humanitarian needs. The media coverage plays a crucial role in shaping public and donor perceptions to prioritize crises with the greater visibility over those that are less important (Carpenter, 2012). Based on the media analysis, the study aims to research the position of Ethiopia in the hierarchy of the global humanitarian aid and seeks to identify the strategies to enhance its visibility, and attract sustained support.

1.8. Limitations of the Research

While this research aims to provide an in-depth look on the geopolitics of the humanitarian aid, it has come with several acknowledged limitations. The first major factor identified as a limitation is its reliance on the secondary data, that are drawn from the reliable sources like international organization reports and databases. Even though these sources gives an insightful information about the global aid trends, and the donor priorities, those data did not fully captures the complex decision-making processes that exists behind aid distribution. To address this, the research compared information from multiple reputable databases and reports to minimize bias and ensure balanced interpretation. Critics like Bowen (2009) emphasized that the secondary data can introduce biases, that is only reflecting the perspectives of the original authors, more than, the realities on the ground.

The second challenge lies at the limitations to accessing the sensitive donor decision-making processes. The government entities are not transparent to disclose their strategic considerations guiding their funding decisions, which also limits the study's ability to thoroughly analyse the geopolitical negotiations that really influences the aid flows. To deal with this, publicly available government and donor policy documents were reviewed to partially uncover strategic priorities shaping aid allocation. Hanlon (2020) emphasizes that lack of transparency complicates the critical assessments of the alignment between the aid policies and the actual needs of recipients.

Thirdly, the case study of Ethiopia can only provide a specific insights into the aid dynamics in the Horn of Africa. Its findings may not be practical to other regions with different political and cultural contexts. To reduce this limitation, the study linked Ethiopia's findings with broader academic literature to show how similar geopolitical influences appear in other aid-recipient contexts.

As a fourth limitation, the media narratives surrounding Ethiopia's humanitarian crises varied widely, that could further introduces biases into the analysis. To manage potential media bias, the media narratives were cross-checked with alternative sources, including international organizations' reports and databases.

Finally, the rapid changes in the global conflicts may constrain the study conclusions since the research is compounded by its temporal scope, as ongoing developments would necessitate continual reassessment of aid patterns. To mitigate this, the study emphasizes the findings within the specific timeframe and highlights the need for future updates as situations evolve.

1.9. Organization of the Study

The thesis is organized into six chapters, whereby the first chapter deals with the introduction, statements of the problem, research objectives, research questions, methodology of the study, ethical considerations, the significance of the study, the scope and limitations of the study, and the organization of the thesis. The second part contains a review of related literature about an overview of humanitarianism, geopolitics, and conflict change, the theoretical framework of geopolitical theory of aid and dependency theory, an empirical review of geopolitics of Humanitarian Aid, the impact of global conflicts on humanitarian aid, and humanitarian challenges.

The historical evolution of humanitarian aid in the Horn of Africa is presented along with international humanitarianism in Chapter Three. The fourth and fifth chapter deals with the results and discussion, which contains the impact of global conflicts on humanitarian aid allocation (Ukraine, Gaza/OPT, and Ethiopia comparison), geopolitical considerations and donor priorities, effectiveness of humanitarian interventions in Ethiopia, comparative analysis of funding trends (2021–2025), cross-cutting themes and emerging patterns; a synthesizes common findings across respondent groups. Then the conclusions and recommendations of the study are presented in the sixth chapter.

CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Conceptual perspectives

2.1.1. Humanitarianism

The term humanitarianism is broadly defined as the efforts to alleviate the suffering, protect human dignity, and save lives during crises, whether those crises are triggered by the armed conflicts, the natural disasters, or the structural social vulnerabilities. Barnett (2011), identifies two of the distinct but interrelated forms of humanitarianism: the emergency humanitarianism, which provides immediate relief in the times of crisis and the alchemical humanitarianism, that aims at fostering the long-term social transformations. Combined these approaches reveals that the humanitarian efforts go beyond the mere short-term support and strives for the long-term justice and stability.

Humanitarian action really comes down to the four core principles: humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence. These are not just catchwords; they shape everything people do in this field. Neutrality means you do not take sides in a conflict. Impartiality is about helping people based only on their needs, without picking favorites. Independence keeps humanitarian decisions free from political meddling. These ideas are not new. Back in 1965, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement spelled them out at their big conference in Vienna. The United Nations backed them up years later in Resolution 46/182. More recently, the Core Humanitarian Standard (from the CHS Alliance in 2014) doubled down on these same principles, calling them essential for ethical, accountable, and effective aid. Without them, humanitarian work just doesn't work.

Even though these principles are central to the humanitarian actions the applications are proves to be complex. Donini (2010) emphasizes that the humanitarian ideals are sometimes be compromised by the political interests of the powerful donor nations, with the aid occasionally are used as the tool for political leverages instead of being driven by the genuine humanity. Barnett and Weiss (2011) talk about this too, they say that the political meddling like this eats away at the neutrality and fairness that make people trust humanitarian work in the first place. Take Ethiopia, for example, international aid are often comes with the conditions, shaped by

what external power wants. When that happens, it's a lot tougher for aid groups to truly help the people who need it most.

2.1.2. Geopolitics

The term geopolitics is broadly refers to the ways in which the geography, politics, and economics shapes the strategies, and relationships of the states on the global stages. Foundational thinkers such as Mackinder (1904) and Spykman (1942) emphasized that the centrality of the geography in the world politics, by arguing that the control over the key regions could determine the global dominances. While these early theories underlined the territorial controls, the contemporary understandings of geopolitics have the expanded view by including the economic interdependences, the soft power and the influences of the international institutions in shaping the global interactions (Flint, 2017).

In the fields of the humanitarian aid, the geopolitics provides the critical framework for the understanding of how the assistance is used not only to address the crises but also to advance the state interests. The donor governments is often deploy aid as the tools of the influence, shaping the alliances and projecting the power in the strategically important regions. Tanner and Moro (2016) further noted that the humanitarian assistances is frequently directed towards the areas of geopolitical significance, that are zones of conflicts, military importances or resource wealths. This dynamic demonstrates how the aid is rarely neutral to bias, instead serving the dual purposes: that is alleviating sufferings while contributing to furthering the political and security agendas of the donor states.

2.1.3. Conflict

The terminology conflict is defined as a clash of interests or beliefs, that creates the senses of disharmony between the peoples or groups. This clashes can stems from the competitions for resources, the differing ideologies, or the imbalances of power. Kriesberg and Dayton (2012) stated that there are two sides to conflicts: constructive and destructive. Constructive conflicts can actually drives the social changes and spark the new ideas, while the destructive conflicts tends to leads into the violence and chaos.

This days, majority of the conflicts we are seeing is influenced by the complex global powers dynamics. When we look at the Russia-Ukraine war, for instance, it's not just about the lands; it reflects a deeper struggles for the power and influences. Mearsheimer (2022) suggested that

this conflicts highlights the Russia's aim to regain its footing in the Eastern Europe, while the West is trying to push back against the expansions. Kagan (2022) provide a different perspectives, viewing the war in Ukraine as an ideological battles where Russia sees itself as the defender of its sovereignty against the Western encroachments, while the Ukraine strives to embrace the democratic principles and institutions.

The Israel-Gaza conflict presents another examples, that is deeply entwined with a history of grievances, the territorial issues and the religious identities. This conflict has implications that go far beyond the region, that is affecting the international relations and stability (Quandt, 2005). Each of these conflicts tells the complex stories, shaped by the hopes, fears and the ambitions of the peoples involved.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frameworks of this research are grounded in three interrelated perspectives: the Realist Theory of International Relations, followed by the Geopolitical Theory of Aid and the Dependency Theory. Realism provides a broad conceptual foundation in the international relations by emphasizing that states operate in an anarchic international system where their actions are primarily guided by the pursuit of national interests, security, and power. States are assumed to prioritize the strategic objectives, protect their sovereignty and maximize their influence in global affairs, often placing the political and security considerations above the moral or humanitarian concerns (Morgenthau, 1948; Waltz, 1979). In the context of the humanitarian aid, realism helps explain why the donor countries' funding decisions frequently reflect their own geopolitical priorities, security concerns and alliance interests, rather than being guided solely by the humanitarian needs of the recipients. This realist foundation is essential for understanding donor behavior at the systemic and state levels; however, realism on its own is not sufficient to fully capture the complex dynamics of humanitarian aid allocation, as it does not directly address how aid is operationalized as a policy tool nor how sustained aid dependence affects recipient countries internally. This conceptual foundation is particularly relevant for this study, as it allows for the examination of how the global conflicts such as the Russia-Ukraine war, and the Israel-Palestine crises shape the distribution of the humanitarian aid to Ethiopia, and the Horn of Africa region, highlighting the interplay between the state interests, and aid allocation. The Geopolitical Theory of Aid and the Dependency Theory therefore become necessary complements to realism, as they extend the analysis beyond state motivations to examine how humanitarian assistance is strategically used and how

long-term reliance on external aid influences domestic policy autonomy, institutional resilience and development outcomes in Ethiopia. The inclusion of realism, therefore, complements the more specific analytical focus provided by the Geopolitical Theory of Aid and the Dependency Theory, offering a coherent theoretical lens to connect the international political dynamics with the operational impacts on the humanitarian effectiveness in Ethiopia.

2.2.1. Geopolitical Theory of Aid

The geopolitical theory of aid suggests that the humanitarian assistances is often not just about helping the others. Many countries often use the aid as a tools to achieve their own political goals and agenda. This ideas shows that the aid has two main/core purposes: first, it aims to help peoples in need, while also supporting the political, economic and security interests of the donors countries. Researchers Barnett and Weiss (2011) noted that, how the aid is given is often depends on what is important to the donors, with the moneys being directed to the places they see as the strategically valuable.

During the Russian-Ukraine war, for instances, the Western countries have prioritized the aid for the Ukraine as part of their larger plan to counter Russia and keep Europe stable. Mearsheimer (2022) pointed out that, this aid is part of the broader political strategies, where helping another country is linked to the national security. In the same way, the conflicts between Israel and Palestine, continues to receive higher attentions and fundings, that is mainly influenced by the historical ties and the need for the regional stability (Quandt, 2005).

When we look at the crises in Ethiopia, we can see the difficulties facing the country to get attentions, and aid on the global stages. Despite being in the key locations in the Horn of Africa, the crises in Ethiopia is often do not get the same level of attentions or supports as those in the Ukraine or the Middle East. This highlights the unfairness in how the aid is being distributed, as decisions is often based on the political interests rather than just the needs of the peoples who are suffering.

2.2.2. Dependency Theory

The dependency theory, conversely, used to help examine how the Ethiopia's reliance on the international aid affect its ability to make its own decisions about the politics and the economy. Scholars like Frank (1967) invented this idea, and argues that depending too much on the help from outside countries can stop a country from fully developing. It can also create an unequal

relationships between the donor countries, and those receiving the aid. In this way, being dependent on the aid can makes it harder for Ethiopia to be self-sufficient, and left vulnerable to the rules set by the donor countries.

Ethiopia's strong needs for the humanitarian aid to deal with the ongoing crises shows these challenges as a hurdles. Aid is the most essential for helping the country to cope with issues like the conflict, drought and displacements. However, it can also raises a concerns about whether Ethiopia can really take care of itself for its own challenges. de Waal (2015) pointed out that in many times, the policies pushed by the donor's shapes what Ethiopia can do, that makes it harder for a government to create its own development plans. This problems gets worse when the focus of the global donor's shifts, such as, when more aid goes to the Ukraine and the Middle East, leaving Ethiopia with the fewer resources to handle its own humanitarian challenges.

Additionally, the dependency theory criticize the short-term focus of the humanitarian aid, that often looks at the immediate needs instead of helping to build the long-term solutions. This focus is especially important for Ethiopia where ongoing problems requires changes that help the country grows stronger, and be more resilient. The theory also suggests that instead of only relying on the outside aid, Ethiopia should work on building its own resources, and must become more independent economically.

2.2.3. Synthesis and relevance

The Realist theory, the Geopolitical Theory of Aid, and the Dependency Theory together create a comprehensive framework to understand how the global conflicts influence the Ethiopia's humanitarian situations. The Realist theory provides the foundational perspective, explaining that states act primarily in their national interests, and pursue power and security in an anarchic international system. Building on this, the Geopolitical Theory of Aid shows how the donor countries allocate the humanitarian resources in ways that reflects these strategic, and political priorities, highlighting the external factors that determine where aid flows. Meanwhile, the Dependency Theory focuses on how the Ethiopia's reliance on the foreign aid affects its internal decision-making, development capacity and ability to manage crises independently.

By using these theories together, this research thesis identifies the main reasons behind the allocation of aid to Ethiopia, the influence of the global political interests and the structural vulnerabilities that are created by the aid dependency. This framework situates the Ethiopia's

humanitarian challenges within the broader global trends, offering insights for fairer, more strategic and sustainable aid practices that balance the donor priorities with the country's needs.

2.3. Review of Empirical Studies

2.3.1. Geopolitics of Humanitarian Aid: Overview of Theories and Key Debates

The allocations of the humanitarian aid has become increasingly influenced by the global political interests alongside the traditional humanitarian values. Even though aid is supposed to be distributed based on the needs, many experts argue that the donors often choose to support the areas that aligns with their own strategic, economic or political goals. For instance, scholars like Barnett and Weiss (2011) emphasized that the way humanitarian aid is distributed is affected by the global power dynamics, that is often overshadowing the commitment to the fairness. In the same, Betts and Collier (2017) pointed out that the priorities of the donors are shaped by the geopolitical situations, leading to the imbalanced aid distributions, and neglect of the regions that are not seen as strategically important.

In the currently ongoing Russia-Ukraine wars, many countries, mainly in the Western countries (like the United States, and the European Union), have channeled a substantial resource into Ukraine. This supports is not just about the immediate humanitarian needs; it also serves as the broader goals in countering the Russia's influences. Mearsheimer (2022) stated out that in this case, the aid acts not just as a way to assist the people but also as the tool for achieving the political goals, illustrating how the major global conflicts can shape where the aid goes.

In the same manner, the Israel-Palestine conflicts shows how the political factors can affect the aid distributions. The countries in the Gulf areas often provides help to the Palestine because of the shared cultural, and political interests. On the other hand, the western nations tends to support Israel which shows that how aid decisions are often tied to the political alliances. This idea is reinforced by the Smith and Donini (2020), who noted out that the humanitarian efforts in the Middle East region are frequently linked to the political relationships.

In the Horn of Africa region, including in Ethiopia, the effects resulted from these geopolitical interests are much more visible or noticeable. Even though Ethiopia is a significant country in the region, it is now prevalent to be overlooked when the crises occur because the country does not have the same level of political importance as the Ukraine or the Middle East in the eyes of the major donors. This lack of a focus can be a troubling, as it is often means that the aid is

not distributed equally or fairly (Betts & Collier, 2017). As Jakupec *et al.,* (2024) argued that the needs of the regions like the Horn of Africa are undervalued by the international priorities.

The countries such as Sudan, and Somalia face an ongoing challenges with the conflicts, displacement of peoples, and the hunger crises. The aid they receive is often seen more as the moral duty rather than the political necessity. For instance, Somalia depends on the international supports during the times of droughts and violences from the groups like al-Shabaab, but this struggles often goes unnoticed by the medias, and the donors. In the same manner, Sudan's recent conflict has failed to capture the global attentions when it is compared to other issues (de Waal, 2015). This unevenness in the support highlights the structural problems in how the aid is allocated, as is it noted by Tanner and Moro (2016), who argued that fundings are tends to focus more on the political importance than on the actual humanitarian needs.

In contrast, the currently ongoing Russia–Ukraine war has received a lot of fundings because it significantly affects the security of Europe, and serves the political interests of the Western countries (OCHA, 2023; Mearsheimer, 2022). Similarly, the Israel-Palestine conflicts continues to attract the global attentions due to its complex history, and the regional importance (Barnett & Weiss, 2011; Quandt, 2005). This conflict has began over a century ago, and the creations of Israel in 1948 led many Palestinians to be displaced, an event that is known as the Nakba (Pappé, 2006). Since that time, many wars, protests, and failed peace efforts have widened the divides between the Israelis and Palestinians, while the international mediation efforts has not yet produced a lasting solutions (Smith, 2010). This ongoing conflicts shows how the historical, and political factors shapes the aid allocations, drawing more attentions to the strategic regions while often leaving the critical areas or locations like the Horn of Africa underfunded and neglected (de Waal, 2015).

2.3.2. Impact of Global Conflicts on Humanitarian Aid

2.3.2.1. Why Global Conflicts Matter for Distant Crises

In today's interconnected world, the conflicts happening in one of the areas can affect the countries in a different locations. This is especially true for regions like the Horn of Africa, where Ethiopia relies a lot on the international aid, and the imported foods. The Russia-Ukraine war, that started in February 2022, and the ongoing tensions in the Israel-Gaza conflicts are the clear examples of how the wars far away can changes the humanitarian situations in Africa.

The effects happens in three main ways. First, the global conflicts can disrupts the supply of important goods like foods, fuels, and fertilizers. Second, the countries that provides aid is often shift their money, and attentions towards the crises that seem more geopolitically urgent to them, like the ones in Ukraine or Gaza, which means the lesser supports for the countries like Ethiopia. Third, what the media shows, and the public opinion greatly influences how the donors acts: the emergencies that get a lot of news coverages usually receives more aid, while the ongoing or less visible crises often get overlooked. These factors have made Ethiopia especially vulnerable, as it deals not only with its own conflicts, and displacements but also with the global effects of wars (FAO *et al.,* 2022; OCHA, 2024; WFP, 2023).

2.3.2.2. Supply Chain Shocks: Food and Fertilizer Dependencies

The heavy reliance of Ethiopia on the imported wheats, vegetable oils, and fertilizers has left the country vulnerable to the impacts of the Russia-Ukraine war. Before the war started, the Ukraine and Russia were the main suppliers of wheats, and fertilizers in the global markets. However, when the conflicts broke out, the shipping routes in the Black Sea faced the major disruptions, leading to a steep increases in the grain prices. By 2022, food prices had soared to the unprecedented levels, as noted by the FAO *et al.* (2022) and IFPRI (2023).

For the majority of the people in Ethiopia, this has translated into the skyrocketing wheat costs, which fueled the widespread food inflations. Reports showed that from 2022 to 2023, the prices of wheat rose sharply, and in some regions, the prices for fertilizers has even doubled. This has created a tough situations for the small-holder farmers who were already struggling to afford the fertilizers, that is essential for planting their crops (USDA FAS, 2022; Addis Standard, 2022; Clingendael, 2024). To make the matters worse, the areas already affected by the conflicts in Ethiopia faced even the greater logistical challenges, that has made it more difficult for the farmers to access the supplies they most needs.

In order to address these challenges, the United Nations and Turkey had facilitated the Black Sea Grain Initiatives, which had temporarily allowed some of the Ukrainian grains to reach the global markets during the 2022 and 2023. While this initiatives provided a brief reliefs, an ongoing interruptions still meant that Ethiopia faced the supply shortages and a fluctuating prices (UN, 2023; IFPRI, 2023). In response, the government of Ethiopia tried to increase the local wheat productions, and were made adjustments to tariffs, but this measures unfortunately

weren't enough to protect vulnerable households from the rising costs, and the ongoing struggles to access sufficient nutrition (Clingendael, 2024; USDA FAS, 2024).

2.3.2.3. Donor Reallocation and Geopolitical Priorities

The way donors resources are being redirected is the major growing concern. In 2022, Ukraine has received over $16.1 billion in the full package of aid (i.e., humanitarian aid, development assistance, economic support, and costs for hosting Ukrainian refugees) for the crises they face, that is far more than what was sent to the Horn of Africa (OECD, 2023). The Western governments has focused more on the Ukraine not just for the humanitarian reasons but also to strengthen their stances against the Russia (SIPRI, 2024).

At the same time, the Israel-Gaza conflicts also has received the large pledges. The Gulf countries like the Qatar's and Saudi Arabia's has contributed significantly, that is being motivated by the religious, and the regional ties (Berti, 2015). The U.S. and European nations also directed their aid support to Gaza as part of their bigger plans for the Middle East region (Quandt, 2005). As a result, the vast amount of funding flowed towards the Eastern Europe, and the Middle East, leaving little for Africa, that is grappling with its long-standing crises.

When we look at the impacts for Ethiopia, it has been painfully evident as different facts indicates. The Ethiopia Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) has been severely underfunded for the year 2023–2024 period, with the OCHA reporting the gaps of hundreds of millions of dollars as compared to the previous years (OCHA, 2024). The World Food Program (WFP) had to halt the food distributions for the millions of peoples due to the lack of funds, and the vital nutritions, and health programs were reduced, particularly in the areas suffering from the displacements and conflicts (WFP Ethiopia, 2023; OCHA, 2023). The situations is very dire, and the peoples in Ethiopia are paying the heavy prices for the reallocation of the global aid.

2.3.2.4. Media Visibility and the Politics of Attention

The media coverage is very important in influencing how the donors respond to the crises. The war in Ukraine received an extensive global attentions for months, that helped to create a lot of public sympathy, and a political support for actions. Similarly, the humanitarian crisis in Gaza has also attracted significant media focuses, leading to the quick fundraising efforts, and a large donations (The Guardian, 2023; UNRWA, 2023). In contrasts, the crises in Ethiopia, and the Horn of Africa get much less international media attentions.

The experts on the field says this differences in the visibility creates a hierarchy of sufferings. Carpenter (2012) pointed out that the donors funding is often influenced by the "CNN effect," where the crises that have a strong images, and are well-covered by the media gets much more attentions. The historical examples supports this idea: during the Syrian refugee crisis, Europe had provided a lot of aid to Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan, partly to address the migration issues. Meanwhile, the African crises that has similar or even greater severity, like those in Sudan or South Sudan, received less supports (Betts, 2009).

2.3.2.5. Operational Consequences in Ethiopia

The problems with the shortages of funding and supplies have placed a seriously impacts on the efforts to help the people in Ethiopia. According to the World Food Program (WFP), many families has received less foods than they needed, the food deliveries took longer than expected, and the cash assistance was only provided in the places where the local markets were able to sell products (WFP Ethiopia, 2023). The health, and nutrition programs, that is usually get supports from the organizations like USAID and the EU, had to be cut backs. This is a worrying signs because it means that peoples in the already vulnerable communities are now at the greater risks of not getting enough nutritious foods.

In regions like Tigray, Amhara, and Oromia, the ongoing political issues and violence made it even harder to get aid to those who need it most. There were delays due to the excessive paperworks, the rumors about the aid not reaching the peoples it was meant for, and the strict checks imposed by the donors, all of these slowed down the delivery of assistances. This meant that during the most critical times many communities members were left out without the important supports they desperately needed (The Reporter, 2024; Addis Standard, 2022; OCHA, 2024).

At the household level, many of the families are facing a crisis due to the rising food, and fuel prices, less humanitarian aid and the challenges to their livelihoods. The reports from varies sources have shown that the families are having to make a tough choices, like selling their belongings, eating less food or pulling their childrens out of schools just to cope with the situations (JRC, 2023; IFPRI, 2023). The assessments of the food security reveals that things are getting worse, especially in the areas affected by conflicts, where people struggles to get access to the markets, and the resources they need for farming (IPC, 2023; FAO et al., 2022). When we look at the bigger pictures, the reliance on the aid from the outside sources has made

Ethiopia vulnerable. When any donor priorities shift towards a more high-profile crises, the countries like Ethiopia suffers quickly because the aid they depend on can declines suddenly. This shows how fragile is this reliance on the humanitarian assistance truly is (de Waal, 2015; Frank, 1967).

The situations in Ukraine and Gaza shows the unequal distributions of the humanitarian aid. Its clearly indicates how factors like the supply issues, the political interests of the donor countries, and the media coverages can create a gaps in how the aid is shared globally. For Ethiopia, this means that even as the needs for the aid has increased due to the ongoing conflicts, droughts and displacements, the supports from the international sources has been reduced or delayed. This kind of situations shows how critical it is to adopt a better approaches to the humanitarian fundings, one that focuses on helping those who are the most in need, rather than being influenced by the political interests or the media attentions (Carpenter, 2012; The New Humanitarian, 2023).

2.3.3. Humanitarian Challenges in Ethiopia: Trends in Donor Engagement

Currently, Ethiopia is facing a lot of the difficulties due to the ongoing conflicts, droughts, and the widespread displacement of the peoples. The country is heavily reliant on the international aid to address the challenges mentioned above, and the donor supports has been crucial to ease some of the hardships. For example, in 2021, Ethiopia had received about $3.1 billion in the humanitarian assistance, that made it one of the largest recipients of the aid in the world (OCHA, 2023). However, this amounts has not been enough to cover the increasing needs of its populations as the crises are keep getting worse (OCHA, 2023; WFP, 2023).

The major issues is the conflicts in the Tigray region that had started in November 2020. By mid-2022, over 5.2 million peoples in Tigray were in the great need of help, with many others are fleeing their homes to seek the safety elsewhere (UNOCHA, 2022). The food situations has even become alarming with experts also warning that many areas could face the famine-like conditions (IPC, 2021). Additionally, another conflicts in the Amhara region had began in August 2022, causing additional displacements, and affecting the livelihoods of the thousands peoples due to the political, and territorial disagreements (HRW, 2023; International Crisis Group, 2022). Even though these situations are severe the world has not paid enough attentions or provided enough fundings as compared to the more prominent conflicts like the war in Ukraine or the situation in the Gaza. This shows a troubling trends where the donors focus

more on the geopolitical issues rather than the urgent humanitarian needs in a places like Ethiopia (FAO, 2023; de Waal, 2021).

The climate change has also made the matters worse in Ethiopia. The ongoing droughts in areas like Oromia, Somali, and Afar have affected the lives of farmers, and the livestock herders, leading to one of the worst food shortages in the recent years. At the end of 2023, over 23 million of peoples in the Horn of Africa region were dealing with the severe hungers, and around 10 millions of those people were in Ethiopia alone (WFP, 2023). At the same time, the heavy rains caused a devastating floods, affecting around 1.5 million of peoples across the different regions (WFP, 2024). These floods have destroyed the homes, farmlands and roads, making it increasingly harder for the communities to rebuild, and cope with their everyday lives (FAO et al., 2022; WFP, 2024). However, the fundings for the efforts to build resilience against the climate change has not kept the pace, as the donors are often prioritizes more visible crises like those in the Ukraine and Gaza (WFP, 2023; OCHA, 2023).

As many experts emphasized that depending too much on the external aid can weaken the country's ability to govern itself, and make peoples less motivated to build the strong local systems (de Waal, 2015; Lavers, 2019). Critics also argued that the recurring humanitarian emergencies shows a cycle of the dependency, where an aid becomes the substitutes for the important changes needed in the governance and the community supports. To address these problems, Ethiopia should develop the long-term plans that meet the immediate needs while also encouraging the local ownership, and reducing dependency on the aid (Pape, 2020; de Waal, 2021).

CHAPTER THREE

THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF HUMANITARIAN AID IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

3.1. Introduction

Humanitarian aid in the Horn of Africa has transformed over the years along with the broader evolutions of the international humanitarianism. The region, that includes Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan, has faced a significant challenges such as droughts, the prolonged conflicts, fragile governance and the widespread displacements, making it one of the most aid-dependent areas in the world for over 50 years (AU, 2019; UN OCHA, 2022). The strategic geography of the Horn, that situates near the Red Sea and the Gulf

of Aden, has made the aid flows highly influenced by the superpower rivalries and the global events, including the recent conflicts like the war in Ukraine and the crisis in Gaza.

This research thesis aims to examine how such kind of global conflicts shape the geopolitics of the humanitarian aid, particularly in terms of the distributions, the donor policies, and the effectiveness of the response efforts in Ethiopia. To lay the groundwork for this research analysis, this chapter contains a sections that describes the global evolution of the humanitarian aid and another that examines the humanitarian aid in the Horn of Africa, focusing on the two distinct periods: the Cold War and the post–Cold War era. This shows how the current challenges in obtaining an adequate and impartial humanitarian assistance in the region stem from the longstanding political dynamics, the donor priorities and the resource competition.

3.2. Global Evolution of Humanitarian Aid

The foundations of the modern humanitarianism are traced to the Henry Dunant's experiences at the Battle of Solferino in the northern Italy in 1859, fought during the Second Italian War of Independence between the Franco-Sardinian and the Austrian forces. The battle one of the largest in the Europe's history since the Napoleonic Wars, left tens of thousands of the soldiers dead or gravely wounded without the medical supports. Deeply unsettled by this sufferings, Dunant has advocated for the establishments of a neutral and impartial organizations to provide the care irrespective of affiliation (Forsythe, 2005). His vision has emphasized the neutrality, not taking sides in hostilities and humanity, alleviating humans sufferings wherever it occurs. This normative shifts has materialized in the creations of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in 1863, and inspired the Geneva Conventions (1949), that codified the humanitarian principles in the international law (ICRC, 2010). These principles remains the ethical foundations of the humanitarian aid.

Humanitarianism becames institutionalized in the 1950s, particularly after the World War II. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA, 1943) had played the key role in coordinating the massive post-wars recovery efforts, marking the first large-scale multilateral relief agency. Then, in 1950, the establishments of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has reflected an ongoing international commitments to protecting the refugees. These institutions has transformed humanitarianism from the occasional charitable acts into more structured international systems (Barnett, 2011).

The Biafra famine (1967–70) in Nigeria had marked another major turning points. The Nigerian government had used starvations as the weapons of war against the secessionists regions of

Biafra, cutting off the humanitarian aid routes, and causing a widespread hungers. The images of the starving childrens in the international medias has triggered the unprecedented charity campaigns, but the crisis has also revealed how the governments could deliberately manipulates famines (Keen, 1994). In response, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) was established in 1971. Its principle of témoignage (bearing witnesses) has asserted that the humanitarian aid workers could not stay silent in the face of the atrocities. This has challenged the Red Cross's strict neutrality, and signaled the new era where the humanitarian efforts were both operational, and political (Brauman, 1996). Simultaneously, the groups like Oxfam has expanded from the famine relief into the advocacy, urging the donors to tackle the root causes of poverty, and inequality (Barnett & Weiss, 2011).

In the same way, the famines that occurred in Ethiopia also had profoundly influenced the global humanitarianism. Under the Emperor Haile Selassie, the 1973 famine in Wollo was downplayed to protect the monarchy's images. The state had delayed, and restricted the relief supports, that results in an estimated 200,000 deaths (Gill, 2010). The disasters weakened the emperor's legitimacy, and has contributed to his overthrow from power in 1974. After a decade, under the *Derg* regime[2], the 1984–85 famines has proved even more devastating, by killing over a million of peoples. The regime has turned the food aid into the weapon of war, blocking aid deliveries to the rebel-held areas in Tigray and Eritrea, and forcing the mass resettlements to erode the supports for insurgents (de Waal, 1997). The global television coverages, and the Live Aid campaigns has raised more than $125 million, yet the large portions of the aid were diverted or misused, showing how the humanitarian relief could be manipulated by the governments, and distorted by the wider geopolitical agendas (Keen, 1994).

By the 1990s, humanitarianism had confronted the challenges of "complex emergencies", where wars, displacements and famines had overlapped. The Rwandan genocide in 1994, where the refugee camps were militarized by the genocidaires, exposed how the poorly managed aid could unintentionally fuel, and prolong violences (Barnett, 2011). To address such a risks, the humanitarian community had launched the Sphere Standard Project in 1997, by establishing the minimum standards for the food, water, health, and shelter supports. These

[2] The Derg (Amharic term for "committee") was the Marxist–Leninist military junta that governed Ethiopia from 1974 to 1991 following the overthrow of the Emperor Haile Selassie. The regime led by the Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, that pursued the radical socialist reforms, including the land nationalisations and collectivisations, while consolidating the power through the repressive campaigns such as the Red Terror. Its authoritarian policies and counterinsurgency strategies had contributed to the widespread human rights abuses, the economic decline and the recurring humanitarian crises (Keller, 1991; Marcus, 2002).

guidelines had helped to professionalize the humanitarian practices, and introduced a strong accountability mechanisms, aiming to ensure the relief efforts supports the survival without being exploited for the political or military ends (Macrae & Zwi, 1994).

As described above, the global evolutions of the humanitarian aid thus highlights the recurring tensions: while rooted in the Dunant's humanitarian principles, it has continually been shaped by the politics, the donor agendas and the visibility of crises. These patterns are clearly reflected in the Horn of Africa, where the humanitarian assistances has long been intertwined with the shifting geopolitical interests from the Cold War through the post–Cold War era.

3.3. Defining the Horn of Africa: A geopolitical and Humanitarian Complex

Defining the Horn of Africa region has long been debated across the disciplines. In its narrowest geographical senses, the region includes Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia, the states that forming the horn-shaped peninsula of the northeast Africa (Markakis, 1998). From the wider geopolitical, and the humanitarian perspectives, however, the region also adds Sudan and South Sudan, as their conflicts generates the cross-border displacements, the resource competitions and regional security spillovers, that directly affects the core Horn (Cliffe, 1999). The institutions such as the African Union (AU) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) frequently uses the broader "Greater Horn of Africa" framings, recognizing that the six states that is Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan, constitutes the region's humanitarian and geopolitical core (AU, 2019; UN OCHA, 2022).

This research thesis adopts this extended definitions of the Horn of Africa because it reflects what Buzan and Wæver (2003) described as the regional security complexes, where the crises in one of the country cannot be understood in isolations from its neighbors. The humanitarian crises, and the aid flows are deeply interlinked, shaped not only by the internal dynamics but also by the broader geopolitical forces. This perspectives is critical to examine how the global conflicts, such as the Ukraine and Gaza, influences the donor priorities, and the humanitarian responses in Ethiopia.

3.4. Humanitarian aid in the Horn of Africa in the Cold War Period

During the Cold War period (1947–1991), the Horn of Africa region was at the centeral stages of the intense rivalry between the United States, and the Soviet Unions. The region's strategic locations along the Red Sea, and the Gulf of Aden, crucial for the Middle Eastern oil, and the

international shipping routes, made it an area of fierce competitions. Both the military and humanitarian aid turned into the tools of influences, as the superpowers offered the supports to secure the loyal allies (Laitin & Samatar, 1987).

In Ethiopia, the two famines had starkly illustrated how the regimes can misuse the aid for the political gains. The first famine that occurred in 1973 under the Emperor Haile Selassie, revealed the monarchy that seemed unconcerned with the sufferings of its peoples. Relief was delayed, preserving the regime's images, that resulting in many unnecessary deaths. This neglect had damaged the emperor's reputations, and fueled the 1974 revolutions (Gill, 2010). After the emperor was dethroned, the *Derg* regime had allied with the Soviet Union, a key socialist ally to the regime. The second famine had occurred from 1984-85 amid the insurgencies in Tigray and Eritrea, that is causing over one million of deaths. The regime has manipulated the aid for the counterinsurgency, blocking the access to the rebel-held areas, and forcibly relocating the populations to weaken rebels (de Waal, 1997). The international donors that are aware of this situations has often chose to maintain the influences over confronting the regime's actions due to the Cold War geopolitics (Keen, 1994).

In Somalia, the aid flows reflected the changing alliances in their relations with the superpowers. At first, Somalia had allied with the Soviet Union but after the 1977 Ogaden War, the country had turned their face to the U.S. for supports. The United States then provided a lot of economic, and food aid, making Somalia one of the biggest recipients of the U.S. assistance in Africa in the 1980s (Samatar, 1992). This aid had helped to keep the Barre government in power, even as the country's institutions were became weaker.

In Sudan, the Second Civil War (1983 to 2005) had created the massive humanitarian needs. In 1989, the Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) was created to address this crises. It was a significant efforts where the United Nations had worked with both the Sudanese government, and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) to give aid to the peoples in need, even in the areas affected by the fightings (Minear & Weiss, 1995). While OLS had helped to save millions of lives, it had also raised an important questions about the right things to do. By making the deals with the armed groups, the humanitarian aid organizations had risked giving the supports to the fighters, that could lead to the longer conflicts, and hurt their goals of staying neutral (Keen, 1994).

Therefore, the above analysis indicates that in the Cold War period, the humanitarian aid in the Horn was highly politicized. These patterns of aid politicization's indicates how aid and the

global politics are often connected, the dynamics that still affects Ethiopia today, mainly with the ongoing conflicts like those in the Ukraine and Gaza.

3.5. Humanitarian Aid in the Horn of Africa in the Post–Cold War Period

The post–Cold War periods (1991–present) brought a significant changes to the humanitarian landscapes in the Horn of Africa region. After the Soviet Union had collapsed, the local governments lost the support from the superpowers, that is exposing their weaknesses like their fragile institutions, the authoritarian politics, the ethnic divisions, and the economies sensitive to the climate change. This has resulted in the states collapse, the complex emergencies and the ongoing humanitarian dependency (Cliffe, 1999; Macrae & Zwi, 1994).

The complex emergencies has becames the main humanitarian issues, where the civil wars, displacements and the famine were often intertwined. The humanitarian aid has evolved beyond just providing the food; it also included the peacekeepings, and the governance reforms. This has made it challenging to uphold the principles of neutrality and impartiality in the humanitarian works (Barnett, 2011; de Waal, 1997).

Somalia: the Somalia situations since 1991 shows the long state collapse and the ongoing humanitarian crises. After the downfall of Siad Barre in 1991, the country was divided into the areas controlled by the different clans, and militias. The UN's peace missions tried to provide the aid and stability (1992–95), but the 1993 Black Hawk Down incidents, where 18 U.S. soldiers were killed, showed the risks of an armed aid efforts, and this has led to the U.S. and UN withdrawals from the country. This left the humanitarian groups to work in the unsafe conditions, that is creating a long-term reliance on the aid (Menkhaus, 2007; Menkhaus, 2010). Since that time, Somalia has remained dependent on the aid. Droughts and conflicts have caused the repeated famines, with the severe famine occurred in 2011, that is worsened by the fighting with al-Shabaab, killing over 250,000 peoples (Maxwell & Majid, 2016). Other crises in the year 2017 and 2022 has also needed the major humanitarian efforts. The ongoing insecurities, access issues caused by the armed groups, and the effects of the climate change have led to the continuous needs, with the aid being provided by the international NGOs, the UN agencies, and the local partners (OCHA Somalia, 2022; UNHCR, 2021).

Sudan: After the Cold War period, Sudan has faced the long civil wars, and significant humanitarian challenges. The second north-south civil wars (between 1983–2005) had caused a crises for millions of peoples. The UN's Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS, 1989–2005) had managed to deliver aid across the conflict lines with the agreements of both the Khartoum

government, and the SPLM rebels (Minear & Weiss, 1995). Though it had saved many lives, the OLS raised the concerns about the neutrality, as negotiations risks legitimizing the armed groups, and fostering the reliance on aid (Minear & Weiss, 1995; Keen, 1994). The Darfur crisis (occurred between 2003-2005) had led to over 2 million displaced peoples, and had complicated the humanitarian efforts due to the access problems, and the violence against the aid workers (Prunier, 2005; OCHA Darfur reports, 2004–2007). These challenges had created the long-term aid dependency, and hindered the recovery in parts of Sudan.

South Sudan: The youngest country in the world has gained its independence in 2011, bringing the hope for peace. However, the optimism has quickly gave way to the renewed conflicts, with the civil war erupting in December 2013, and displacing millions of peoples. By 2019, over 7.5 million people, a two-thirds of the populations, needed the humanitarian aid. The famine risks, including the famine conditions which was declared in 2017, showed the country's vulnerability to crises (OCHA, 2019). The country with little infrastructure, and the collapsing markets becames highly dependent on the aid, which was often used by the political elites for their political gains (Johnson, 2016; World Bank, 2018). Therefore, the South Sudan's short existences as an independent nations has been defined by the humanitarian crises, with the widespread displacements, and the ongoing requests for an aid to support its peoples (OCHA, 2019; Johnson, 2016; World Bank, 2018).

Ethiopia: Ethiopia's journey since the year 1991 begans with the fall of the *Derg* regime, and the rise of the EPRDF, bringing the political, and the economic reforms that opened up the new development opportunities to the country (Clapham, 2002). However, the country had faced vulnerabilities to the climate shocks, and the ongoing conflicts. The border war with Eritrea (between 1998–2000) caused a significant displacements, and the humanitarian needs (Lyons, 2009). In response, the government had launched the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) in 2005, that is aimed at moving from the emergency relief to a sustainable social protections (Gill, 2010). Despite these efforts, the severe droughts, and the conflicts, especially the Tigray crisis (2020–2022) have undermined the progresses, leading to the increased humanitarian needs, and the challenges in aid distributions (FAO/IPC analyses; ICG, 2022). The Ethiopia's experience shows the struggles between building the long-term resilience, and addressing the immediate, and politically influenced crises.

Eritrea: The Eritrean government has followed the self-reliance policy since gaining independence in the year 1993. This has limited the international humanitarian aid, and

restricted the NGO activities to maintain controls (ICG, 2010; Bereketeab, 2013). The border war with Ethiopia between 1998 to 2000 had caused a humanitarian crisis with the mass displacements, and the food shortages, temporarily increasing the needs for aid. However, the government had still restricts the external humanitarian efforts, that is resulting in one of the most closed aid environments in the region. Much of the assistance to the country is closely monitored or coordinated through the limited partnerships (Lyons, 2009; ICG, 2010). This situations shows how the government policies can influences both the needs of the populations, and the way aid is delivered.

Djibouti: Djibouti in the region is the relatively stable, and the less prone country to crises. Its small populations and the steady political situations, along with the income from the foreign military bases (i.e., the U.S., France, China, and others), help prevents the major internal conflicts (Bereketeab, 2013; World Bank, 2023). Instead of relying heavily on the aid, Djibouti serves as the vital logistics, and the transit hubs for the regional humanitarian operations for Somalia, Yemen and parts of Ethiopia, offering the warehouses, ports and air transports for reliefs operations in the region. Its main challenges are the economic, and environmental, such as the urban poverty and the water issues, rather than civil war or the government collapses (World Bank, 2023; OCHA, 2022).

3.5.1. 2020s and Global Funding Competition

In the 2020s, the crises in the Horn of Africa has became more linked with the global issues. The war between the Russia and Ukraine had affected the worldwide supply of grains and fertilizers, that is causing more food insecurity in Ethiopia, Sudan and Somalia (FAO et al., 2022). At the same time, the funds from donors were being directed towards Ukraine, and the Middle East conflict. For Ethiopia's 2024 Humanitarian Response Plan, only 31% of the needed funds were secured (US$1.016 billion out of US$3.236 billion), while the Ukraine crises has received over 79% of its funding and US$2.8 billion was raised for the Gaza's Flash Appeal (OCHA, 2024). This difference shows what Hanlon (2020) called a "competition for resources," where crises in Africa receive less attentions and fundings, while those that are more politically important can get more attentions from the donors.

This research thesis therefore looks closely at these issues in the empirical chapters, that is by examining how the conflicts in the Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Gaza affects how the aid is distributed to Ethiopia, the change donor priorities and impact the effectiveness of the humanitarian efforts.

CHAPTER FOUR

IMPACT OF GLOBAL CONFLICTS ON HUMANITARIAN AID DISTRIBUTION IN ETHIOPIA

4.1. Introduction

This chapter of the research thesis examines the ways in which the global conflicts, particularly the Russia–Ukraine war, and the Israel–Gaza conflicts, have influenced the geopolitics of the humanitarian aid in Ethiopia. It investigates how the geopolitical crises have affected the aid distributions, the donor policies and the overall distributions of the humanitarian responses.

The research has drawn the qualitative data that is gathered from the 30 participants, that includes ten aid workers from both the local, and the international NGOs, four donor representatives, six government officials/staff/experts, and ten community leaders from selected research target regions (i.e., Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Tigray, Gambella, and Somali regions). The primary data is complemented by the data from the secondary sources, that includes the reports from the OCHA, WFP, UNHCR, donor documents and the various news articles that covers the period from 2021 to 2025.

This chapter is shaped around the three key research questions and the specific objectives. Each of the sections provides (a) the qualitative evidence along with the representative quotes from the research participants, (b) the supporting statistics and the findings from the document analysis, and (c) an interpretive discussions that connects the empirical findings to the existing literatures on the humanitarian geopolitics. This approach is chosen to highlight not only the shifting dynamics of the humanitarian aid within the complex global contexts, but also illuminates the perspectives, and the experiences of those deeply involved in the response efforts in Ethiopia.

4.2. The Effect of the Russia–Ukraine War and the Israel–Palestine conflict on Aid Distribution in Ethiopia

4.2.1. Shifts in Donor Funding Levels

The research finding shows that there was a strong and consistent sentiments across the 30 respondents about the impact of the Russia–Ukraine war, and the Israel–Gaza conflicts on the humanitarian efforts. Many of the key informants/respondents has expressed their concern that these high-profile crises have significantly shifted the focuses, and the fundings away from

Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. The donors, aid workers from the local and international NGOs, the government officials/experts/staff, and the community leaders have shared a common narratives: the resources have quickly been redirected to the more visible emergencies, leaving less available for the ongoing African crises. This has led to the competitive environments among the implementing partners who are competing for the limited supports. The donor representatives, and aid workers have described the unmistakable "shifting of pots," highlighting the urgency and the need for attention to the challenges facing this region. According to the key informants from the international donor organization:

> *There was a marked shift towards the urgent humanitarian needs in Ukraine and Gaza. This diverted donors attentions and the resources means we had to cut the programs and lay off staff. Previously, our projects in Tigray and Afar received the multi-year commitments; now we face the stop-and-go fundings (Fisseha Kebede, July 24, 2025).*

A community leader described the local consequences in plain terms:

> *Before the current global crises, we used to get the wheat and oil regularly; now we receive less, often maize or sorghum, and the distributions are every two or three months. The community prefers the wheat because it stores longer and it is culturally more accepted (Gebreegziabher Wuelo, Tigray region, Hawzien town, April 09, 2025).*

A senior INGO respondent summarized the operational shocks:

> *Fundraising has changed overnight; the public sympathy and the money went to Europe and the Middle East; the competitions for the limited funds increased and the low-visibility crises like ours suffered. The nutrition programs and the cash interventions were postponed, leaving a huge gaps (Tiemar Alemayehu, May 22, 2025).*

The comparative funding data from the OCHA's Financial Tracking Services (FTS) shows the scales of the reallocations, and the funding differentials across the crises:

Ukraine: the OCHA/FTS records indicates that the multi-billion-dollars humanitarian funding flows to Ukraine from 2022 onwards. In 2022, the Flash Appeals/the request for the humanitarian responses required US$4.29 billion, and received US$3.79 billion (i.e., 88%). In 2023, the requirements for the response plan were around the US$3.9 billion, with the US$2.93 billion (i.e., 76%) is being funded. For 2024, the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) required

the US$3.1 billion, and it had already mobilized the US$2.43 billion (i.e., 78%). This trends of funding reflects the consistent high donor prioritizations, and the large-scale pledges in the responses to the conflicts (OCHA FTS, 2022–2024).

The Occupied Palestinian Territory (Gaza/West Bank): The 2023–2024 appeals for the Gaza and the OPT had received a rapid, and sizeable donors commitments. In 2023, the funding was reported at about the US$1.8 billion, reflecting one of the large influx following the escalations in the areas. In 2024, the HRP required the US$3.42 billion, out of which the US$2.83 billion (i.e., 83%) was already received, that is among the highest coverage rates across the globe (OCHA FTS, 2023–2024).

Ethiopia: In contrast, the Ethiopia's HRP for the year 2023–2024 set out similarly the highest requirements but received the much lower coverages. For 2023, the appeal has asked for billions but it has remained significantly underfunded below the necessary requirements/amount. In 2024, the HRP required the US$3.24 billion, yet only US$1.01 billion (i.e., 31%) had been received, with the critical sectors like agriculture, and the camp managements funded below the 20%. The Ethiopia's humanitarian response has been severely disadvantaged as compared to the Ukraine and Gaza response plans, as the global conflicts, and the donor priorities have redirected the resources away from the protracted crises in the Horn of Africa (OCHA FTS, Ethiopia HRP 2023–2024).

This analysis of the empirical data highlights a troubling issues in the humanitarian funding context. While the appeals for Ukraine and Gaza received a quick, and substantial supports, Ethiopia's appeals for the billions in needs remains largely uncovered. The reports from the WFP, and other UN agencies indicates a serious consequences: that cuts the food rations, program suspensions and the limited supports for the vulnerable populations in Ethiopia from 2023 to 2025 (WFP 2024–2025 updates; Reuters and AP coverage on 2025 funding shortfalls). The WFP has warned that without the sufficient funding, treatments for malnutrition, and the food assistance may be stopped (WFP, 2025; Reuters, 2025).

The qualitative testimonials from the key informants/respondents and the data from OCHA/WFP shows a pattern where the donor governments shift their focus to the new geopolitical crises. This leads to the limited amount of money available for the humanitarian assistance. When one crisis receives the funding, it often means less money for the other crises elsewhere. The crises labelled as high-profile attracts more media attentions, and the political

supports, while the ongoing crises in less visible areas, like the one in Ethiopia, struggles to secure the consistent funding allocations. This results in the funding instability, unaddressed needs and the reduced operations in the country, reflecting the earlier findings on the humanitarian prioritizations (e.g., de Waal, 2023; OCHA analyses).

4.2.2. Delays and Disruptions in Aid Delivery

The key informants/respondents have stated that there are numerous operational disruptions related to aid delivery due to the funding reallocations, and the global supply shocks. Aid workers, the community leaders, and the government officials/experts/staff mentioned the delays in procurements, interrupted supply chains for the delivery of assistances, and the cancellations of ongoing contracts. The government respondent stated that:

> *Some shipments were delayed in Djibouti port because the donor transfers were paused; there were months when the food arrived late or in smaller quantities. We had to ration supplies, prioritize the pregnant women and children, and leave the other vulnerable groups at risks (Dawit Weyesa, July 15, 2025).*

A Community leader has given vivid accounts of the effects on the households:

> *We waited for months; the rations that used to come every month now arrives after two or three months. Childrens are getting weaker. We also see the humanitarian staff layoffs. For example, the wheat that came every months now comes once every two months, and the quantity is reduced by half (Gatluak Pal, Gambella region, Nuer Zone, Lare Woreda, Kutoch Kebele, May 26, 2025).*

The WFP has been facing a significant operational challenges as they navigate the funding shortfalls, and the rising procurement costs throughout the 2024–2025. In 2025, they warned that the malnutrition treatments for hundreds of thousands could abruptly stop without the additional financial supports from the donors (WFP report, 2025; Reuters, 2025). Th two main factors that have contributed to these disruptions are:

Global commodity price spikes and the supply chain shocks: The ongoing Russia–Ukraine war has severely affected the global wheat markets, leading to the soaring prices and limiting the availability of subsidized grain for the humanitarian needs. The WFP and other agencies have faced a rising costs, and shortages between the year 2022 and 2024 (World Bank, 2023).

Volatility in funding: Major donor has frozen the funding or shifts in priorities (notably highlighted in 2024–2025) have led to the delays in the funding flows and the procurement cycles, disrupting disbursements, and the distribution on the ground (news coverage and OCHA monitoring). For instance, in 2025, the media outlets reported the halts in some of the bilateral funding streams, worsening the funding pipeline risks that leads to the disruptions of programs in Ethiopia (The Guardian, 2025; AP, 2024).

These delays and disruptions have the devastating effects on the households; unpredictability of funding hampers the planning (like school feeding programs or the monthly nutrition supports), escalates the food insecurity, and drives the families to adopt to the harmful coping strategies. When donors tighten the financial flows or shift priorities for the political reasons, the humanitarian agencies, that are already stretched thin due to huge needs and funding shortage scale back their operations or limit their reach. These challenging realities were reflected by many respondents' experiences, and aligned with the program-level reports and the WFP briefings.

4.2.3. Sectoral Impacts (Food, Health, WASH, Education)

The research findings shows that the food aid, nutritions and health were the sectors most affected by the funding crises. The most critical areas like education, WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene), and livelihoods, faced the delays or were deprioritized. Sectoral cluster data for Ethiopia in the year 2022 indicates that the food security received only 31% of the funding, while the education sector received a mere 12% (OCHA 2022 HRP Mid-Year Review). This funding gaps had a severe impacts on the overall humanitarian responses.

The key informants from the government, and an aid workers at NGOs repeatedly named the food assistance, nutrition and health as the most affected sectors. The community leaders has also emphasized the loss of the necessary complementary services. A representative account from the community leader:

> *Food may come, but the non-food items, hygiene, medicine and shelter supports are missing. We survive on food rations but lacks water, sanitation and medicines (Seyid Tegegne, Amhara region, Debre Birhan, Tebassie sub city, IDP camp, April 23, 2025).*

Several other community leaders noted that there a substitutions of the imported wheat with the locally procured maize or sorghum, a change experienced to them as the lower quality or culturally less appropriate seeds are being distributed:

> *They gave us maize instead of wheat; people are saying the food is not the same, and the oil quality seems poor (Mebrahatu Gidey, Tigray, Hintalo district, April 13, 2025).*

The document analysis from the OCHA's HRP 2024 sector tables reveals the concerning funding shortfalls in the critical areas. Notably, the sectors like agriculture, camp coordinations and certain protection activities received only minimal funding, with the coverage as low as 3% to 7% in the year 2024 HRP summary snapshot. Additionally, the nutrition programs are facing a significant gaps (OCHA FTS, Ethiopia HRP 2024).

In 2024-2025, the WFP has publicly announced the cuts to rations and a reduction of the nutrition treatment programs due to these funding issues (WFP, 2025). The reports from the Reuters and the AP highlighted the program suspensions, and rations cuts in 2025, with the WFP warning that 650,000 malnourished women, and children could lose essential treatments, and up to 3.6 million of people may be affected if funding does not improves (Reuters, 2025; AP, 2025).

The impacts across the sectors vary in different aspects. The food security and nutrition are particularly vulnerable to the price and procurement shocks, especially since the emergency rations are often sourced internationally, that is highly vulnerable to a supply chain disruptions. In contrast, the education, and long-term recovery programs tends to be the first areas to face the cuts when donors reallocate funds. This situations has significantly contributed to the widening gap in the life-saving services, particularly in the nutrition and health sectors, while significantly undermining the medium-term recovery and resilience efforts in the education and livelihoods.

4.3. Geopolitical Considerations in Donor Aid Allocation

4.3.1. Political and Strategic Priorities of Major Donors

The donor representatives and aid workers have offered their honest insights by saying the geopolitical factors and the domestic politics heavily influence how the donors respond. One donor representative explained:

Donors responds to the crises in ways that reflects their political priorities, and their domestic political pressures; the high-visibility conflicts mobilizes the large public supports and parliamentary approvals (Katrin-Maria, July 26, 2025).

One aid worker observed how the shifts in the donor country's foreign policy stance rapidly altered the funding windows:

Pre-Ukraine war, our portfolio included the long-term governance and development supports; after the war started, the emergency buckets expanded, and the development pots have reduced (Endeshaw Mulatu, July 15, 2025).

The academic and other institutional report findings reveal the evolving relationships between the humanitarian funding and the foreign policy (de Waal, 2023). The reports from the OCHA FTS and donor policy documents highlights the significant shifts in funding towards Ukraine and Gaza from 2022 to 2024, that is consistent with the observations from the qualitative sources of data. For example, the urgent response to the Ukraine crisis has prompted a substantial pledges soon after the escalations in 2022 (OCHA FTS, country pages).

The donor decisions are being shaped by the combinations of factors: these are mainly due the domestic politics (including taxpayer sentiments and the parliamentary oversight), the geopolitical alliances, strategic interests (like the security and migration controls), and the media attentions. These elements determines which crises receives swift funding, and which are sidelined. The empirical evidences is consistent with the broader studies on the political economy of humanitarian aid.

4.3.2. Influence of Global Alliances and Diplomatic Relations

The government respondents have emphasized the diplomatic dimensions: where the bilateral relationships are strong or geopolitically important, the aid flows are more robust. Conversely, where the relations are tense, the aid can decrease or be conditioned:

We see that some donors reduced the humanitarian engagement when the political tensions rose; we must negotiate beyond the emergency needs. Ethiopia's strategic location in the Horn and the diplomatic relationships affect how the funds are approved (Dr. Mehari Alebachew, July 04, 2025).

The recent discussions in the policy literatures and the donor statements indicate that some donors have adjusted their programming, considering strategic priorities like migration managements, and the regional stability (European Commission, 2022). Donor reports also reveals a readiness to allocate funds based on the perceived geopolitical advantages or the domestic political backings (European Commission, 2022; Fitzgerald, 2020). The humanitarian funding trends highlights these dynamics, with the OCHA's FTS showing the significant allocations that aligns with the political and strategic goals of the donor countries (OCHA, 2025).

For Ethiopia, this means that the geopolitical factors in the donor nations can either bolster or undermine the humanitarian aid, influenced by the wider diplomatic assessments. This reality raises the pressing concerns about the impartiality and predictability of the aid distributions.

4.3.3. Humanitarian Principles vs Political Interests

The research respondents stated that the humanitarian principles, such as the neutrality, and the impartiality are the ideals we strive/wish for, but they noted that the real-world politics frequently overpowers or overlooks these values. The aid workers shared their experiences about the institutional tools designed to protect impartiality, like the codes of conducts, and the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS). Yet, they openly admitted that these protections are often fall short when faced with the pressures of the geopolitical influences.

> *We try to apply impartial targetings, but when the donor pots close and other crises get all the attentions, impartiality is undermined by the resource scarcity. Local communities feel neglected despite the clear vulnerability data (Fitsum Astatkie, June 19, 2025).*

The discourse analysis of the media and donor reports revealed the noticeable struggles between claims of neutrality, and the reality of funding linked to the geopolitical events (OCHA, 2025). The clash between the humanitarian ideals/principles and the political agendas is not the new issues; however, the severity of the competing global crises from 2022 to 2025 heightened these dilemmas, making them more impactful for a nation like Ethiopia, where the needs were both extensive and chronic.

CHAPTER FIVE
EFFECTIVENESS OF HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION IN ETHIOPIA

5.1. Program Continuity & Operational Effectiveness

The program continuity was widely reported as the main issue being undermined by the funding volatility. The aid workers and government staff described the mid-cycle suspension of projects, the contract terminations of implementing partners, and staff layoffs:

> *We had to cut targets, postpone activities, and re-prioritize only the life-saving services. The development and resilience work are suspended (Kumela Hirpa, June 03, 2025).*

A community leader has emphasized on the human toll as follows:

> *They close projects mid-year; the people dependent on these services now face gaps in medicine and foods. (Shewaye Tefera, Amhara region, Debre Birhan, Tebassie sub city, Weynshet IDP camp, April 23, 2025).*

Community members in the remote areas of Afar, Somali, and Oromia regions are feeling increasingly left out, facing the service gaps and inclusion errors. While some adaptations strategies, like localizations and cash-based responses have provided some relief to the gaps, they cannot fully address the larger issue of uncertain funding.

The WFP and other UN agencies noted a reduction in their outreach activities in their different operational locations in Ethiopia. Their coverage figures for the year 2024-2025 reveals a decrease in the number of people receiving the assistance and a reduction in the nutrition treatments programs due to the funding shortages. In early 2025, the WFP warned that without securing funds, they might have to stop treatments for the hundreds of thousands of people in need (WFP, 2025; Reuters, 2025).

The inconsistency in the programs undermines the effectiveness of the humanitarian aid, ruining the progress and creating the cycles of dependency that lacks stability without the guaranteed, long-term funding. This short-term focus ultimately weakens the humanitarian efforts to improve the conditions of the vulnerable people.

5.2. Regional Disparities in Aid Distribution

The community leaders/representatives, and the local government experts highlighted the inequalities: saying some regions were overlooked or faced with inconsistent supplies,

especially the remote areas and those with the limited media exposures. Representative accounts from the community leader/representative are as follows:

> *Some woredas receive less because they are remote; partner presence has reduced, and the transportation costs are high (Abdu Wolli, Afar, Asayita town, June 30, 2025).*

The dashboards from the OCHA's Ethiopia HRP and the partner reports highlight uneven coverage across the different regions and sectors. The cluster funding coverage tables below indicate that some areas and sectors are underfunded compared to their actual needs (OCHA, 2024a; OCHA FTS, 2024; UNICEF, 2024).

Table 5.1. The Ethiopia HRP 2024 sector funding coverage

Cluster/sector	Requirements (US$ million)	Funded (US$ million)	Coverage (%)	Sources
Agriculture	322.5	36.2	11.2%	OCHA FTS, HRP 2024 summary
Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM)	28.3	4.1	14.4%	OCHA FTS, HRP 2024 summary
Health	187.0	37.0	19.8%	Health Cluster dashboard (Dec 2024)
HRP Overall	3,235.8	1,010.9	31.2%	OCHA FTS, HRP 2024 plan

Table 5.2. The regions with the documented coverage gaps

Region	Sector(s) with documented gaps	Sources
Afar	Nutrition (high Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) prevalence), WASH/Health access	UNICEF SitRep Jan–Jun 2024
Amhara	Nutrition; Education (school damage/closure)	UNICEF SitRep Jan–Jun 2024; Education Cluster (Apr 2024)
Oromia	Nutrition; Health services access	UNICEF SitRep Jan–Jun 2024
Tigray	Nutrition; Education (school damage/closure)	UNICEF SitRep Jan–Jun 2024; Education Cluster (Apr 2024)
Somali	Food security/livelihoods; WASH	OCHA Priority Gaps (Jun 2024)
Central, Sidama, South, Southwest	Health system capacity/HR shortages	WHO PHSA (Apr 2024)

These patterns of regional disparities underscore the structural inequities in the humanitarian aid delivery, where remote and less-visible areas consistently receive the lower levels of support despite the high levels of need. The combination of the logistical constraints, such as difficult terrains, and the higher transportation costs, with strategic decisions by the donors and implementing partners, contributes to the uneven coverage. This inequity not only limits the access to the essential services like nutrition, health, and education for vulnerable populations but also reinforces the existing social and geographic marginalizations. Consequently, the data highlights the necessity for the context-sensitive allocation mechanisms that prioritize the underserved regions, strengthen the local capacities, and ensure more equitable distribution of resources across all the affected areas.

5.3. Adaptation Strategies by Humanitarian Actors

In response to the ongoing crises, humanitarian actors have adopted several adaptive strategies to effectively meet the needs of affected communities. One key approach is localization, which involves scaling up partnerships with national and local NGOs as well as community-based organizations to sustain a consistent presence and reduce operational costs. Additionally, resource pooling and coordination are employed, allowing organizations to submit joint appeals for funding, share logistics, and engage in pooled procurements to maximize efficiency. When funding is scarce, prioritization becomes essential, with humanitarian organizations focusing first on the most critical emergencies and life-saving interventions before addressing longer-term or less severe needs.

A representative quotes from the research respondent (the aid workers') below shows the reflections about the strategies they follow to deal with the funding shortfalls. They said that:

> *We expanded local partnerships, and supported the CSO capacity so that they could continue distributions when the international funding slowed down or reduced (Sisay Dejene, June 05, 2025).*

> *We turned to cash, where the markets functions, to preserve the dignity and support the local economies (Merkeza Takele, May 22, 2025).*

The donor and UN guidance documents along with the cluster reports reveals the importance of localization, and cash programming as the flexible responses to challenges. The data from those referred documents shows a growing reliance on the cash-based transfers where the

market conditions allow (CALP Network, 2023; UNICEF Ethiopia, 2023; OCHA Cash Task Force, 2024). These adaptation strategies contributes to the resilience within the humanitarian systems, but they necessitates investments in the local capacity and consistent funding approaches. While these approaches are beneficial, such measures fall short of completely addressing the significant financing gaps.

5.4. Comparative analysis: Ethiopia, Ukraine, and Middle East aid flows

5.4.1. Funding trends and competition for resources

The research analyzed the comparative data from the OCHA FTS. This comparative data analysis reveals that Ethiopia is chronically underfunded as compared to Ukraine and Gaza.

Ukraine: Following the escalations in February 2022, Ukraine saw a significant surge in the humanitarian aid. In 2022, the country and regional appeals collected over US $6 billion, that covering more than 80% of the requirements. This higher donor mobilizations continued in the year 2023–2024, that is making Ukraine one of the largest recipients of the global humanitarian aid. As of early 2024, around 15.5 million people in Ukraine have urgently needed assistance, that is including those who are internally displaced persons and those in the conflict-affected areas (OCHA FTS, 2024a; Reuters, 2023).

Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) or Gaza/West Bank: The emergency flash appeals in the late 2023 and throughout 2024 secured a rapid funding. The OCHA FTS snapshots reveals that over 60–70% of the flash appeal requirements were met within months, that is reflecting the strong donor responsiveness to the crisis. As of January 2024, approximately 2.2 million peoples in Gaza were in need of the humanitarian assistance, of whom 1.1 million were at the IPC Phase 4 (emergency food insecurity) and 577,000 were facing the IPC Phase 5 (catastrophic hunger) (OCHA FTS, 2024b; The Guardian, 2023).

Ethiopia: In contrast, the Ethiopia's HRP requirements in the year 2023–2024 also reached the multi-billions of US dollars (approximately US $3.2 billion in 2024). Yet, the coverage lagged significantly behind the Ukraine and Gaza support, with only about 30-35% of requirements are covered. The cluster-level funding percentages were alarmingly low, e.g., Agriculture (11%), and the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (14%) in 2024, leaving millions of the vulnerable people. As of 2023, around 29.7 million people in Ethiopia were in the desperate

need of aid, affected by the conflict, drought and displacement (OCHA FTS, 2024c; WFP, 2025; Reuters, 2025).

Table 5.3. The comparative funding coverage table for the years 2022 - 2024

Country / Appeal	2022 Funding (US$ bn)	Coverage %	2023 Funding (US$ bn)	Coverage %	2024 Funding (US$ bn)	Coverage %	Population in Need
Ukraine (HRP + RRP)	6.4	83%	4.4	70%	3.6	65%	15.5 million
OPT (Gaza/West Bank)	0.8	55%	1.2	68%	1.5	72%	2.2 million
Ethiopia (HRP)	1.8	47%	1.6	39%	1.0	31%	29.7 million

Sources: OCHA Financial Tracking Service (FTS), country HRP and flash appeal pages, 2022–2024 snapshots.

The comparative patterns shown above in the table reveal how the donor interest can fluctuate based on the visibility and the geopolitical factors. The political crises that captures the media attentions often see a surge in the funding, while the ongoing, and complicated emergencies in the Horn of Africa receives the chronic underfunding. The UN has drawn attentions to the dire situations in Sudan, where nearly 11 million peoples need the humanitarian help due to the food shortages, displacements and lack of basic services. Sadly, the deepening internal conflicts has led to the severe funding shortfalls, with only 23% of the US$4.16 billion global humanitarian response plan funded, that is resulting in the diminished life-saving aid efforts (UN OCHA, 2024; Borger, 2024, The Guardian, 2024). This competitions for scarce humanitarian resources has created a noticeable reallocation effects that is impacting Ethiopia and the broader Horn of Africa region.

5.4.2. Media Visibility and Public Opinion Influence

There is a strong and consistent agreement among respondents that the media visibility directly correlates with the donor attentions. For instance, a senior INGO policy lead states that:

> *When pictures of a crisis circulate widely, politicians find it easier to approve large sums…when the crisis is less visible, it's harder to make the case for funding (Zelalem Ayichew, July 09, 2025).*

Conversely, the findings from the discourse analyses and news patterns clearly reveals a focused, high-intensity coverage on the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, in stark contrast to Ethiopia's ongoing crises, which received the episodic attentions (OCHA, 2024; Reuters Institute, 2022; Columbia University, 2023). Between the year 2022 to 2024, the global media narratives and the humanitarian funding trend reflects a significant disparities, particularly regarding the situations in Ukraine, Gaza, and Ethiopia.

5.4.2.1. Ukraine and Gaza: Sustained, High-Intensity Coverage

The war in Ukraine, that is ignited by Russia's invasion in February 2022 has received an extensive international media attentions. The Western international outlets, like the BBC, Sky News and Reuters, provided a continuous, high-intensity coverages, often framing Ukraine through the lens of sovereignty, resistance and the humanitarian urgency. The discourse analyses made to different reportings shows that these outlets employed the linguistic choices, and framing techniques that highlighted the Russia's aggression and emphasized the Ukrainian resiliences. For example, BBC frequently adopted a cautious but authoritative languages (a confident/reliable way of reporting used to make the audiences believe that the information is accurate, well-sourced and trustworthy), emphasizing the official statements, and the international law, while Al Jazeera English used a more active, that is a thematic framing that contextualized the conflict within the global power struggles, and amplified civilian sufferings (Reuters Institute, 2022; Lund University, 2024). This sustained level of visibility translated into the heightened international solidarity, and the mobilization of humanitarian supports, that reflected in the highest multi-billion-dollar funding pledges made through the UN appeals for Ukraine in 2022–2024 (OCHA FTS, 2024).

Similarly, the Israel-Gaza conflicts, that is particularly the escalation in October 2023, has drown an extensive reporting by the international broadcasters such as Al Jazeera English, BBC World News and the Sky News. However, the Western media outlets has faced criticism for the polarized framing of the conflict. Studies from different sources made by the research shows that BBC and other Western media networks often framed the Israeli actions as the defensive and legitimate, while the Palestinian sufferings was reported in a way that removes the individual identity or the emotional connections focusing only on the abstract facts, statistics or generalizations rather than the personal or human details, used passive languages, and minimal historical contexts (Omairi, 2025; Columbia University, 2023; Al Jazeera, 2023). This unequal visibility, framing, or empathy has influenced the international audiences, and

indirectly, the humanitarian policy: where the donor governments responded rapidly with the large-scale pledges to support the Israel and Gaza relief through the politically aligned channels, while the structural funding gaps persisted in the African crises like Ethiopia (NRC, 2024; OCHA, 2024a).

5.4.2.2. Ethiopia: Episodic Attention and Funding Gaps

In contrast, Ethiopia's humanitarian crises, that includes the Tigray conflict, the subsequent conflicts in different regional states, displacements and the food insecurity, has received an episodic international media attentions that is brief, irregular bursts of the global media coverage of a crisis, that is often triggered by the dramatic events, rather than the continuous, sustained reporting. While certain events, such as the acute episodes of violence, triggers temporary spikes in the coverages, sustained global media attentions remains limited. This episodic/events based attentions often lacked the continuity that is necessary to maintain the international awareness and mobilize a sustained humanitarian supports (OCHA, 2024).

When we look at the Humanitarian funding trends for Ethiopia, it has faced a significant inconsistencies. The 2024 Humanitarian Response Plan aimed to assist around 15 million people, requiring the US $3.24 billion in the funding. Yet, by November 2024, only 31% of that amount has been received, that is creating a troubling funding gaps. The access issues to some of the locations and a reduced presence of the aid partners further complicated the delivery of aid (OCHA, 2024a; UNFPA Ethiopia, 2024).

The above described trends highlights the complex, and detailed connections between media coverages and the humanitarian response. The continuous media attentions is often linked to the increased international supports, underscoring the vital role of unbiased, and persistent reportings in rallying the global assistance for the humanitarian crises (OCHA, 2024; Reuters Institute, 2022).

The media visibility helps encourage the donors to act. This means that if the advocacy stories are stronger, and more people around the world knows about the underfunded crises, it could change where the fundings should go. However, the final decisions still depend on the politics, and the government priorities in the donor countries, irrespective of the set aid principles.

5.4.3. Lessons for Equitable Aid Allocations

The research findings of the comparative analysis of Ethiopia, Ukraine and the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) from the year 2021 to 2025 reveals an important insights to ensure a fair humanitarian aid distributions.

First, the findings highlights the critical needs for dedicated funding streams for the long-standing crises. In Ethiopia, the funding consistently fells below the 40% coverages across its Humanitarian Response Plans, whereas Ukraine has achieved over 75% coverages shortly after its 2022 appeals (OCHA FTS, 2023; AP, 2023). The qualitative finding from the respondents have confirmed that, Ethiopia's aid profile was often “overshadowed” by the more sudden, media-covered crises, that is leading to the unpredictable funding allocations. This conclusion reinforces the arguments made by the policy analysts for a guaranteed allocation mechanisms to protect the protracted crises from being sidelined during the global emergencies (Development Initiatives, 2023; OCHA, 2024).

Second, the findings emphasized the importance of establishing the regional advocacy platforms to address the influences of the geopolitics on the donor preferences. While the countries like Ukraine and Gaza benefited from the robust political lobbying in Europe and the North America, Ethiopia did not have similar diplomatic supports. The key stakeholders argues for the more active roles for the regional organizations like the African Union (AU), and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in voicing the African humanitarian priorities at the global forums (AU, 2022). The evidence from the AU statements on the drought response illustrates that the collective regional advocacy has successfully mobilized some pledges, though it is often on a smaller scale as compared to the donor responses seen for Ukraine (AU, 2022; de Waal, 2023).

Third, the assessment also highlights the pressing needs for the increased investment in the local humanitarian capacity. The research informants from the regional NGOs in Afar and Somali regions pointed out the vulnerabilities of the international supply chains to the global price shocks and the logistical challenges, that is exemplified by the surge in the food import costs following the blockade of the Black Sea grain exports (World Bank, 2023). The strategies such as making the necessary procurements at the local levels, prioritizing the cash-based transfers and the community-led programming were identified as a more resilient approaches suggested in Ethiopia. This aligns well with the global humanitarian reform agendas in advocating for the direct funding to the local actors, that received less than 2% of the international humanitarian assistance in the year 2022 (UNHCR, 2023; OCHA, 2024).

Collectively, these lessons reveals a systemic weaknesses within the global humanitarian frameworks. A heavy reliance on the geopolitics and the visibility rather than the needs-based allocations has limited the African representations in the global aid governance, and insufficient financing for the local emergency responders. Addressing these challenges requires both the structural reforms in the donor practices (such as multi-year, predictable, ring-fenced funding/funding allocated for a specific purposes), and an enhanced African regional leaderships to bring the overlooked crises to the forefront of the international agendas.

5.5. Emerging Themes from The Stakeholder Perspectives (Cross-Cutting/Synthesis)

The research assessments have identified the following cross-cutting themes by making the triangulations of the qualitative data collected from the primary respondents, and the funding/operational evidences:

Aid dependency versus resilience: The community leaders has voiced their concerns over the long-term dependency, by advocating for programs focused on the livelihoods, irrigation and income generations to complement the humanitarian relief. Likewise, the government officials stressed on the importance of linking the humanitarian responses with the development interventions.

Localization and accountability: the key stakeholders across the various groups emphasized the need to empower the local actors, enhance the community involvement in targeting aid receipts, and monitoring, and to establish a clear allocations criteria to minimize favoritism, and the errors in inclusions/exclusions.

Operational fragility to deliver aid: Even though there is funding, the logistical issues such as transport challenges and fuel shortages along with the bureaucratic delays, hinders the timely delivery of aid to remote areas, particularly in regions like Afar, Somali, and Gambella.

Visibility-driven funding bias: the media attentions and the geopolitical importance often twists the donor funding, leading to the rapid allocations to the high-profile crises while the protracted, low-visibility crises/situations that are being faced in Ethiopia, remains chronically underfunded.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Conclusions

This research thesis examined how global conflicts, particularly the Russia-Ukraine war, and the Israel-Gaza/Palestine crisis, have reshaped the donor priorities and influenced Ethiopia's humanitarian responses, by drawing on 30 primary qualitative interviews with the donor representatives, aid workers, government officials, and community leaders, alongside the secondary data on the international humanitarian financing trends. The analysis reveals that the high-profile crises such as Ukraine and Gaza consistently attracts substantial funding, with Ukraine receiving between USD 3–6 billion annually from 2022 to 2024, and coverage rates exceeding 70–80%. In a stark contrast, Ethiopia's Humanitarian Response Plan experienced a significant decline in the funding coverage, dropping from 62% in 2021 to below 35% by 2024. This imbalance illustrates a widening divide between the crises that capture the global attention, and those that remain chronically underfunded. Donor representatives and aid workers noted that many budgets are reallocated towards politically visible crises, which directly affects the continuity and scope of the humanitarian programs in Ethiopia, leading to the staff layoffs, mid-cycle suspension of projects, and reductions in the emergency interventions. These findings reflect a broader trend of politicization in aid allocations, where the global power dynamics increasingly shape the humanitarian flows, often overshadowing the principles of universality, impartiality, and needs-based programming.

The research thesis further demonstrates that donor behavior is heavily influenced by geopolitical considerations, and foreign policy alignments. While donor agencies often reaffirm their commitments to the humanitarian principles, actual funding decisions frequently reflect the national strategic priorities, challenging the Good Humanitarian Donorship principles of impartial, predictable, and needs-driven allocations. Ethiopia's structural dependence on the external funding renders its humanitarian system particularly vulnerable to the global political shocks, creating operational disruptions and eroding the strategic policy coherence as well as the institutional resilience. Reduced donor support has tangible and far-reaching effects on the delivery of humanitarian services, causing frequent interruptions in the food aid, health services, and protection programs, particularly in the drought and conflict-affected regions such as Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Somali, Gambella, and Tigray. Community leaders highlighted that as donor attention shifts abroad, local crises are deprioritized, leaving affected populations more vulnerable. The government is often forced to redirect the

development budgets towards the emergency relief, undermining the longer-term resilience efforts, slowing the economic recovery, and creating the dependency cycles that weaken the effectiveness of the humanitarian programs.

Despite these structural challenges, humanitarian actors in Ethiopia have developed a series of coping, and adaptation mechanisms to sustain the program delivery. NGOs and aid agencies have expanded the local partnerships, scaled up community-based and cash-based interventions, and implemented the accountability and feedback systems to improve efficiency and reach. These strategies help maintain the service continuity, especially in the remote and underserved areas. However, the research indicates that localization, the transfer of decision-making powers and resources to the local and national actors, remains largely rhetorical. While the Grand Bargain, launched at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, committed signatories to provide 25% of the global humanitarian funding directly to the local responders, Ethiopia's actual share remains below 10%. This highlights the persistent barriers, including donor compliance procedures, administrative hurdles, and limited trust in the local implementation capacity. Strengthening the local institutions, investing in the national and community-level capacities, and ensuring a more predictable and equitable funding allocations are therefore central to improving the effectiveness and sustainability of the humanitarian responses.

The findings of this study underscore the critical interplay between the global geopolitical priorities, media visibility and the domestic political pressures in shaping the aid allocations. Ethiopia's humanitarian system operates under the chronic underfunding despite the acute needs, while the high-visibility crises in Ukraine and Gaza attracts the large-scale, rapid funding due to the donor political interests, and sustained media attention. These patterns create the disparities in the humanitarian service delivery, perpetuate the regional inequalities within Ethiopia, and highlight the vulnerability of the aid-dependent populations to shifts in global attentions. Strengthening the national contingency planning, enhancing the data-driven advocacy, supporting the localization, and promoting the multi-year, predictable donor funding are essential strategies for mitigating these challenges, and ensuring that the humanitarian responses in Ethiopia are both effective and resilient over the long term. The study emphasizes that without the deliberate policy interventions to address these systemic challenges, Ethiopia's humanitarian operations will continue to face interruptions, resource constraints, and a widening gap between critical needs and available assistance.

6.2. Recommendations

The research thesis has proposed the following recommendations that are actionable measures for the Ethiopian government, the NGOs/CSOs, and the donors/international agencies.

6.2.1. To the Ethiopian government

Strengthening domestic humanitarian financing: Enhance the national humanitarian financing reserves to reduce the reliance on the unpredictable donor funding cycles. Therefore, establishing a domestic Humanitarian Contingency Fund could help maintain the program continuity during the global funding shocks.

Integrating humanitarian and development agendas: Integrate the humanitarian planning with the national development strategies, that is operationalizing the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus. This would ensure that crisis responses simultaneously builds the resilience, supports the livelihoods, and strengthens the local governance.

Expanding civic space and partnerships: Expand the civic spaces and the partnerships with the NGOs and CSOs. A more enabling environments for the civil society organizations will enhance the outreach, accountability and service coverages in the underserved regions.

Investing in data and digital systems: Invest in the robust data systems such as the early warnings, vulnerability mappings and the digital beneficiary tracking. The reliable, real-time data strengthens the negotiation power with donors, and supports transparent, and evidence-based advocacy for equitable funding.

6.2.2. To NGOs and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

Diversifying funding streams: Diversify the funding sources beyond the traditional bilateral donors by partnering with the private foundations, the diaspora philanthropy/funding, and the South-South cooperation networks. Diversification of funding sources reduces the dependency and fosters innovations in the program delivery.

Community accountability and participation: Institutionalize the community accountability mechanisms, including the complaint handling mechanisms, the public feedback sessions and participatory monitoring to strengthen trust, responsiveness, and the program quality.

Scaling resilience-building programming: Scale up the resilience-building interventions such as the climate-smart agriculture, natural resource management practices, livelihood diversifications, and local savings groups, that reduce the long-term aid dependency, and promote self-reliance.

Strengthening joint advocacy: Coordinate the advocacy strategies with the government, and the local communities to amplify Ethiopia's humanitarian voices in the global policy spaces. The unified advocacy, that is based on the evidence, and national priorities can help rebalance the donor attentions and ensure the fairer funding allocations.

6.2.3. To donors and international agencies

Ensuring predictable and multi-year financing: Commit to the multi-year, predictable funding to reduce volatility in Ethiopia's humanitarian responses. The predictable funding help the NGOs and government agencies to plan interventions more effectively, to maintain program continuity, and reduce the vulnerability of the aid-dependent communities.

Supporting pooled and contingency financing mechanisms: Strengthen the pooled and contingency financing mechanisms (e.g., UN-managed Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), and Ethiopia's Humanitarian Response Fund (HRF)) to ensure the rapid response to address the sudden shocks, such as droughts, internal displacements or the global crises affecting the aid flows. This mechanisms would reduce the delays in aid delivery and ensure the rapid response during emergencies.

Balancing geopolitics with needs-based allocations: Balance the geopolitical imperatives with the needs-based allocations by the adopting transparent funding formulas that accounts for the crisis severity and vulnerability.

Advancing localization commitments: Support the localization agendas by earmarking at least 25% of the funding for the local NGOs, as recommended by the Grand Bargain commitments. This will strengthen the capacity of the local actors, increase the speed and appropriateness of the aid delivery, and improve the community engagements.

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APPENDIX-1

List of Key Informants

Respondent Category	Respondents name	Position / Role	Affiliation / Organization	Region / Location	Interview Date (2025)
Aid Workers (n = 10)	Esubalew Semu	Camp Manager	International Rescue Committee (IRC)	Semera, Afar	May 19, 2025
	Merkeza Takele	Humanitarian Coordinator	Danish Refugee Council (DRC)	Addis Ababa	May 22, 2025
	Tiemar Alemayehu	Program Coordinator	Oxfam GB	Addis Ababa	May 22, 2025
	Dawit Woldelibanos	Director, Planning and Coordination Department	Relief Society of Tigray (REST)	Mekelle, Tigray	May 16, 2025
	Endeshaw Mulatu	Program Coordinator	Lutheran World Federation (LWF) – Ethiopia Office	Addis Ababa	July 15, 2025
	Kidist Alemayehu	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL)	Medical Teams International (MTI)	Addis Ababa	June 05, 2025
	Fitsum Astatkie	Head of Humanitarian Operations	Save the Children International	Addis Ababa	June 19, 2025
	Gebreselassie Atsbaha	Deputy Department Head and Humanitarian Lead	Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC)	Addis Ababa	May 30, 2025
	Kumela Hirpa	Program Manager	Partnership for Pastoralists Development Association, PAPDA	Addis Ababa	June 03, 2025
	Sisay Dejene	Executive Director	Ethiopian Humanitarian National CSOs Forum/EHNCF/	Addis Ababa	June 05, 2025

Community Leaders / Representatives (n = 10)	Ahmed Mohammed	Woreda DRM office head	Somali Region	Somali Region, Liban Zone Guradamole woreda, Harodibe town	April 07, 2025
	Abdu Wolli	Community Leader/Rep.	Afar region	Afar region, Asayita/Bridaba 1/Asayita town	May 27, 2025
	Fatuma Sawen	Women's Representative	Oromia region	Oromia region, Borena zone, Teltele woreda, Elkune Kebele	May 24, 2025
	Seyid Tegegne	Main Camp Committee at Weynshet IDP Camp	Amhara region	Amhara region, Debre Birhan Regio-polytan, Tebassie sub city	April 23, 2025
	Gebreegziabher Wuelo Gezahgn	Urban Hawzien IDP committee chairperson	Tigray region	Tigray region, Eastern zone, Hawzien woreda, Hawzien city administration	April 09, 2025
	Rashid Ali Ibrahim	Community leader	Somali region	Somali region, Liban Zone, Goro Bekaksa district	April 08, 2025
	Mebrahatu Gidey	Local Elder	Tigray region	Tigray region, Southeast Zone, Hintalo	April 13, 2025

				Woreda, Adigudem	
	Fekede Atomsa	Community Leader	Oromia region	Oromia region, West Wallaga zone, Begi 2, Begi town	June 03, 2025
	Gatluak Pal	Community Leader	Gambella region	Gambella region, Nuer Zone, Lare Woreda, Kutoch Kebele	May 26, 2025
	Shewaye Tefera	IDP Women's Group Head at Weynshet IDP Camp	Amhara region	Amhara region, Debre Birhan Regio-polytan, Tebassie sub city	April 23, 2025
Donor Representatives (n = 4)	Fisseha Kebede	Programme Coordinator	Christian Aid	Addis Ababa	July 24, 2025
	Julien, Katrin-Maria	Regional Director – East and Horn of Africa	Diakonia KatastophenHilfe (DKH)	Nairobi, Kenya	July 26, 2025
	Mustafa Kemal	Senior Project Associate	International Organization for Migration (IOM)	Addis Ababa	July 23, 2025
	Zelalem Ayichew	Humanitarian Program Manager	Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)	Addis Ababa	July 09, 2025
Government Officials / Experts / Staff (n = 6)	Birhanu Zewdu	Early Warning and Emergency Response Director	Amhara Region Disaster Risk Management Commission (DRMC)	Bahirdar city	July 07, 2025
	Dawit Weyesa	DRM Expert	Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission (EDRMC)	Addis Ababa	July 15, 2025
	Dr. Mehari Alebachew	Senior Researcher and Centre Director	Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)	Addis Ababa	July 04, 2025

	Abraham Mengistu	Project Management, Partnership & Resource Mobilization Team Leader	Ministry of Education (MoE)	Addis Ababa	July 08, 2025
	Tsegaye Alemu	Environmental Impact and Climate Change Desk Head	Ministry of Irrigation and Lowlands		July 08, 2025
	Amare Fenta	Expert (EIA expert)	Ministry of Water and Energy		July 07, 2025

APPENDIX-2

Interview Guideline/Checklist

The interview guide/checklist is structured to align with the research objectives, research questions and significance of the study. Separate sets of interview guides are developed for each target groups: **Aid Workers**, **Government Officials**, **Donor Representatives**, and **Community Leaders**.

Interview Guide/checklist

Addis Ababa University

School of Graduate Studies

Department of Political Science and International Relations

Purpose of the Interview

Dear Respondent,

The purpose of this interview is to collect data for the academic research on the geopolitics of humanitarian aid, specifically how the global conflicts such as the Russia-Ukraine war and the Middle East conflict, influence the international assistance in the Horn of Africa, focusing on Ethiopia.

The findings of this study will contribute the valuable insights for the policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders involved in the humanitarian aid, enabling better understanding and decision-making regarding the aid allocation and its impacts.

Your responses will remain strictly confidential, and your identity will not be disclosed unless you provide an explicit consent. Participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time. We kindly request your genuine responses to ensure the success of this research. Thank you for your cooperation.

Key Informant Information

- **Name of Respondent (optional): _____**

- **Organization/Ministry/Office/*Kebele* Name: _____**
- **Position:_____**
- **City/Region/Zone/*Woreda*: _____**
- **Place of Interview: _____**
- **Date: _____**
- **Name and Signature of Enumerator: _____**

For Aid Workers

1. **Impact of Global Conflicts on Aid Distribution**
    - How have global conflicts like the Russia-Ukraine war and the Israel-Palestine conflict influenced the availability of humanitarian aid for Ethiopia and to the broader Horn of Africa?
    - Have you noticed a shift in funding priorities among donors due to these conflicts? Can you provide examples?
2. **Geopolitical Considerations in Aid Allocation**
    - In your experience, how do geopolitical interests influence the distribution of aid to Ethiopia and to the broader Horn of Africa?
    - Do you think aid decisions are driven more by humanitarian needs or donor priorities?
3. **Effectiveness of Humanitarian Interventions**
    - How have changes in donor priorities affected the implementation of humanitarian programs in Ethiopia?
    - What challenges have you encountered in securing adequate resources for ongoing and new interventions?
4. **Policy Recommendations**
    - What mechanisms do you think should be introduced to ensure equitable aid distribution to Ethiopia amidst global conflicts?

For Government Officials

1. **Impact of Global Conflicts on Aid Allocation**
    - How have the Russia-Ukraine war and Middle East conflict affected international aid flows to Ethiopia?
    - Have there been notable reductions in funding or delays in receiving aid due to these global crises? Can you provide example and explain its impact in the delivery of aid to vulnerable people in Ethiopia.
2. **Geopolitical Interests in Donor Policies**
    - How do you perceive the role of donor nations' geopolitical interests in shaping their aid policies toward Ethiopia?
    - Have you observed any shifts in donor focus or engagement since the onset of these conflicts? If yes, do you think aid decisions are driven more by humanitarian needs or donor priorities?
3. **Effectiveness of Humanitarian Response**
    - How has the government adapted to reduced or reallocated aid in addressing Ethiopia's humanitarian crises?
    - What partnerships have been most effective in mitigating the impact of these global conflicts on Ethiopia's aid landscape?
4. **Policy Suggestions**
    - What strategies can be adopted at the government level to advocate for increased and equitable aid allocation to Ethiopia?

For Donor Representatives

1. **Global Conflicts and Aid Prioritization**
    - How have global crises like the Russia-Ukraine war and the Israel-Palestine conflict influenced your organization's funding priorities?

- What factors are considered when reallocating aid from one region to another?

2. **Geopolitical Factors in Aid Policies**
    - To what extent do geopolitical considerations shape your organization's humanitarian aid policies?
    - How do you balance geopolitical interests with the principles of impartiality and neutrality in aid distribution?
3. **Impact on Ethiopia**
    - How have changes in donor priorities affected Ethiopia's ability to address its humanitarian needs?
    - What mechanisms do you use to ensure aid reaches marginalized and underserved populations in Ethiopia and to the broader Horn of Africa?
4. **Future Approaches**
    - What adjustments to donor strategies could improve the equity and sustainability of aid distribution in Ethiopia and to the broader Horn of Africa?

For Community Leaders

1. **Perceptions of Aid Distribution**
    - How have global conflicts, such as the Russia-Ukraine war, impacted the availability of humanitarian aid in your community?
    - Have you observed changes in the type or frequency of aid delivered to your region?
2. **Challenges in Aid Delivery**
    - What challenges do you face in accessing aid for your community?
    - Do you feel that aid distribution reflects the community's needs?
3. **Effectiveness of Interventions**
    - How effective have humanitarian interventions been in addressing the primary needs of your community?

- What gaps exist in the current aid delivery system?

4. **Recommendations**
    - What changes would you propose to ensure fair and consistent aid distribution in your region?
    - How can local voices be better incorporated into decisions about aid allocation?