

How the Red Cross Society Empowers Humanitarian Assistance: Take the Example of Post-Earthquake Assistance in Turkey

Shiyu Luo^{1,a,*}

¹International Politics Department, University of International Relations, Beijing, China

a. luoshiyu@uir.edu.cn

**corresponding author*

Abstract: The international situation is unpredictable, wars, conflicts and natural disasters occur frequently, and humanitarian issues are highlighted in many places. As an important participant in humanitarian relief, the role of the Red Cross has become increasingly prominent. The core issue of this study is to explore how the Red Cross can improve to better enable global humanitarian assistance. This study mainly adopts the process tracking method to review the assistance process of the Red Cross in Turkey after the earthquake, compare other assistance with the Red Cross's assistance, and finally explore the direction of the Red Cross's improvement. This study puts forward three improvement directions for the Red Cross, strengthening cooperation, strengthening innovation, and enhancing transparency. This study based on Red Cross assistance in the Turkish earthquake can help the Red Cross in future global humanitarian assistance. Moreover, it can provide a new idea for future research on the Red Cross, that is, to pay attention to the process of improving aid while paying attention to the results of aid.

Keywords: humanitarian, red cross, aid, global governance

1. Introduction

The International Committee of the Red Cross was founded on October 29, 1863, by the Swiss Henry Dunant. The International Committee of the Red Cross is an impartial, neutral, and independent international organization. Its unique humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims in harsh environments and provide them with assistance [1]. Its responsibilities are mainly derived from the 1949 Geneva Conventions. The headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross is in Geneva, Switzerland, and it covers more than 100 countries around the world. Its funds mainly come from voluntary donations from governments, society, individuals, and national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies. The work of the International Committee of the Red Cross involves a wide range of fields. According to the official information of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the current work of the Red Cross involves nine aspects: responding to sexual violence, promoting compliance with the law, promoting international cooperation, ensuring economic security, conducting forensic operations, ensuring health care, conducting anti-mine operations, rebuilding family ties, and providing water and shelter. In different countries, the roles and activities of the Red Cross are different [2]. In peaceful countries and regions, the Red Cross

mainly provides basic medical services and assists the local health sector. In some war-torn countries and regions, the Red Cross usually takes the rescue of the wounded on the battlefield as an important goal. If there are refugees in the area concerned, the Red Cross is responsible for the rescue, evacuation, and resettlement of refugees. Nowadays, the international situation is unpredictable, wars, conflicts and natural disasters occur frequently, and humanitarian issues are highlighted in many places. Areas or countries that need humanitarian assistance often have problems such as large disaster areas and large numbers of people affected. Local governments or local non-governmental organizations often difficult to achieve comprehensive and effective humanitarian assistance in a short time due to the small number of personnel and tight funds [3]. Therefore, the participation of the International Committee of the Red Cross is particularly important in the process of humanitarian assistance.

At present, the research on the humanitarian assistance of the Red Cross mainly focuses on performance evaluation. Such performance evaluation is often based on the results of assistance and evaluates how much value the Red Cross's assistance has played. For example, how many people, materials, and funds the Red Cross has invested in aid areas, the use of donor funds by the Red Cross, and the improvement of local people's lives after humanitarian assistance by the Red Cross. In these aspects, the research of the researchers is more comprehensive, and the aid results of the Red Cross are objectively evaluated. However, few researchers have focused on the process of Red Cross humanitarian assistance in a specific event and evaluated the process of humanitarian assistance. Therefore, this study hopes to use the humanitarian assistance carried out by the Red Cross during the earthquake in Turkey as a case to study the advantages and disadvantages of the Red Cross in the process of humanitarian assistance, and then explore how the Red Cross can improve to better enable global humanitarian assistance.

This study mainly adopts the process tracking method. First, this study will review the assistance process of the Red Cross in Turkey after the earthquake and evaluate its results. Secondly, compare other aid with the aid of the Red Cross to study the advantages and disadvantages of the Red Cross aid. Finally, explore how the Red Cross should adjust its rescue methods to better serve global humanitarian assistance. This study based on Red Cross assistance in the Turkish earthquake can help the Red Cross to improve in future global humanitarian assistance. Moreover, it can provide a new idea for future research on the Red Cross, that is, to pay attention to the process of aid while paying attention to the results of aid.

2. Red Cross Assistance in the Turkey Earthquake

According to the Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Agency (AFAD), at 4:17 local time on February 6, 2023, an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.7 on the Richter scale occurred in the Pazarcik district of Kahramanmaraş province [4]. In addition, at 13:24 on February 6, 2023, an earthquake measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale occurred in Pakistan. Dr. Hassan, director of the Seismological Research and Application Center at Izmir Kuz Aytiler University, said the earthquake occurred in an area where the stress balance of the underground fault accumulated for 500 years was broken, causing great damage. This is the second-largest earthquake in Turkey in the past 100 years. The Turkish Health Disaster Coordination Center (SAKOM) said that the provinces of Gaziantep, Sanliurfa, Diyarbakir, Adana, Adiyaman, Osmaniye, Hatay, Kilis, and Malatya were all affected by the earthquake. On February 27, 2023, a report released by the World Bank showed that two major earthquakes on February 6 caused direct losses of about \$ 34.2 billion to Turkey, equivalent to 4 % of Turkey's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2021. On March 6, 2023, the Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Agency reported that 13,753 aftershocks have been recorded so far [5]. Interior Minister Soylu said that up to now, 45,968 people in Turkey were killed in the earthquake,

more than 200,000 buildings collapsed or were severely damaged in the earthquake, and millions of people were homeless.

Low temperature, traffic disruption, and complex terrain have exacerbated the difficulty of rescue after the earthquake in Turkey. The earthquake occurred in the winter of Turkey, and the minimum temperature in the earthquake area was mostly below zero degrees Celsius. The snowfall continued after the earthquake, and there was no weakening trend in the short term. The rescue team must wear heavy clothes to enter the affected area. In addition, the local traffic was hit hard. The earthquake area itself is in the mountainous area, the terrain is very complex, and some roads are cracked and damaged in the earthquake. After the earthquake, affected by panic, many survivors were trying to leave the earthquake area, which also led to traffic jams on some roads that were temporarily accessible after the earthquake. The Hatay airport in southern Hatay province was severely damaged. The airport was damaged by the earthquake, which was not enough to take off and land large aircraft, and was abandoned after the earthquake. Traffic problems make it impossible for relief supplies to reach the affected area in a short time. At the same time, many local infrastructures have been damaged to varying degrees. Clean water sources were cut off in some areas of Gaziantep. The Internet in major cities in southern Turkey was still able to connect after the earthquake, but there were problems with power supply and communication in the affected provinces. All kinds of situations not only increase the survival difficulty of survivors but also bring great difficulties to rescue. Rescuers should not only rescue the affected people but also start to restore the survival resources.

Turkey is equipped with a relatively good urban search and rescue force. Ten hours after the earthquake, about 1100 rescue teams have been put into relief activities in Turkey. But the demand for search and rescue and humanitarian support remains enormous. At present, international officials and civil rescue forces have responded quickly to provide support for Turkey's disaster relief. According to the information of the Turkish Emergency Disaster and Management Agency on February 8, 2023, more than 2600 rescuers from 65 countries and regions have been sent to the disaster area to assist Turkey in disaster relief. The United Nations emergency rescue system has also been launched, a disaster assessment coordination working group has been dispatched, and large and medium-sized rescue teams have confirmed to go to Turkey. Despite the rapid response of global forces, the severely damaged transport infrastructure in Turkey has hindered the timely arrival of international rescue forces. Several large airports in southeastern Turkey have been damaged to varying degrees: Hatay airport, the most severely damaged in the southern part of the disaster area, has been completely grounded; the Gaziantep and Marash airports in the center of the disaster area can still operate, but they have been closed to civil aviation after the earthquake, and only humanitarian rescue flights are allowed to land. The Adana airport in the western part of the disaster area was fully loaded from the morning of February 7, and the plane could not land. The rescue flights of the Netherlands, Russia, and other countries had to divert to other landing places.

Since the earthquake, Kızılay (Turkish Red Crescent Society) has provided significant humanitarian assistance to victims and teams working in the area. While the Red Cross and the Federation of Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) gave full support to the work carried out in the region, several high-level representatives visited Turkey and expressed strong support for the earthquake-stricken areas [6]. As of March 24, 2023, local Red Crescent Societies and Red Cross chapters have provided approximately 1.77 million nutritional support and about 177 million meals. The Turkish Red Crescent sent more than 92,000 tents to the earthquake zone and opened 11 social markets to make food and consumer goods more accessible to citizens [7]. In addition, the Red Cross also provides assistance from mobile medical units for disaster victims who cannot reach hospitals and provides psychotherapy services for more than 80,000 people to help disaster victims overcome the trauma caused by the earthquake. Meanwhile, the Red Cross has provided shopping cards to 140,000 victims of the disaster, worth a total of 70 million Turkish carats. In terms of improving life, the Red

Cross has helped disaster survivors in 71 provinces, distributing 3.7 million aid items, including clothing, blankets, kitchen equipment, bedding, dry food, sanitary products, cleaning supplies, food parcels, and sanitary products. In general, the Red Crescent Society and the Red Cross played an irreplaceable role in the post-earthquake rescue.

3. Strengths and Limits of the Red Cross in Earthquake Assistance in Turkey

The Red Cross can absorb rescue resources more widely. The Red Cross appealed to thousands of volunteers and rescue workers around the world in a short time after the earthquake in Turkey, asking them to go to the disaster area to participate in the rescue work [8]. These volunteers include doctors, nurses, dietitians, psychologists, and other professionals, as well as other personnel with relevant skills and experience. In addition, the Red Cross also mobilized many relief supplies, including tents, blankets, food, water, and medicine. The Turkish Red Crescent said it had delivered 92,606 tents to the Turkish Emergency Disaster and Management Agency from the first moment of the earthquake. This resource supply speed is beyond the reach of other institutions. After the earthquake, the Red Cross used various media channels, including social media, press conferences, and official websites, to release rescue information and appeal for donations to the public to obtain more support and resources. For citizens of most other countries, donating to the Red Cross authorities is the quickest way to help [9]. Therefore, the Red Cross can raise a lot of resources in a short time.

The Red Cross has been more open and transparent in post-earthquake relief. The Red Cross has opened official websites and social media accounts to release information about rescue work to the public. This information includes the purchase and distribution of relief supplies, the progress of volunteer recruitment and training, the progress of rescue operations, and the use of related donations and expenditures. When distributing relief supplies, the Red Cross often sets detailed plans and standards to ensure equitable distribution and maximum utilization of resources. At the same time, the Red Cross also actively accepts supervision and review from all parties and improves and optimizes according to the results of supervision. For example, after the earthquake in Turkey, the Red Cross established an independent committee to evaluate its rescue operations and publicly released an evaluation report. In addition, the Red Cross has received scrutiny from international organizations and the media and has provided public explanations and feedback on its rescue operations.

The Red Cross team is more professional, and the rescue is more efficient. The Red Cross rescuers received professional training, including first aid, disaster management, psychological support, and so on. This training ensures that the Red Cross rescuers have the necessary skills and knowledge to provide professional rescue services in various situations [10]. The Red Cross follows strict standards and procedures to ensure the quality and efficiency of rescue work. For example, when providing medical assistance, the Red Cross follows international health norms and standards to ensure the quality and safety of medical services.

Although the Red Cross has shown its professional and efficient ability in rescue work, there are still some disadvantages.

The local people may have no understanding and doubt about the Red Cross rescue. The staff of the Red Cross often come from different countries, which will bring a sense of distrust to the rescued. In most cases, the rescued people prefer to be treated by domestic doctors who are familiar with them, rather than foreign doctors. In addition, during the Turkish earthquake rescue, the Red Cross Society's information on the rescue process was not made public enough, resulting in a lack of local public understanding of the progress and results of its rescue efforts. Whether it is Turkey's local Red Cross official website or the International Red Cross official website, several overview reports are not enough to show the details of the rescue.

At the same time, the rescue process of the Red Cross sometimes affects the rescue rhythm and plan of the rescued country. After the earthquake in Turkey, the local government and civil organizations quickly carried out rescues, and many international organizations including the Red Cross entered Turkey at the same time. There are some problems in the coordination of the Red Cross with other rescue organizations and local governments, resulting in poor efficiency and effectiveness of rescue work. Moreover, in general, even if there are some problems with international organizations, it is not convenient for States to publicly point out or criticize them. This makes the rescue work exist some confusion.

4. The Upgrading Path of the Red Cross under the Purpose of Global Governance

To better serve global governance, the Red Cross should take the following measures to adjust the way of rescue.

Strengthen cooperation with the main body involved in the rescue. First, the Red Cross can strengthen cooperation with the government, such as cooperation with local governments and emergency rescue departments. Through cooperation, the Red Cross can better understand the local rescue needs and conditions and improve the pertinence and adaptability of rescue work. Secondly, the Red Cross can strengthen cooperation with other rescue organizations, such as local civil rescue organizations, volunteer associations, etc. Through cooperation, the Red Cross can coordinate with these organizations, allocate their respective responsible areas and personnel, avoid duplication and waste of rescue resources, and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of rescue work. In addition, as an authoritative international organization, the Red Cross can establish information-sharing and coordination mechanisms. For example, through the establishment of information-sharing platforms, meetings, and seminars. Through information sharing and coordination, the subjects involved in rescue can better understand the rescue needs and situations of all parties and improve the coordination of rescue work.

Strengthen technological innovation in rescue. At present, with the rapid development of science and technology, many advanced technologies can be applied to the rescue. The Red Cross should take the initiative to promote technological innovation and provide new methods and new ideas for the subjects involved in the rescue. The Red Cross can use the Internet of Things technology to achieve the tracking and management of relief supplies. For example, in the transportation of relief supplies, the Internet of Things can be used to monitor the transportation of supplies and parameters such as temperature and humidity to ensure the safety and quality of supplies. The Red Cross can use virtual reality technology to improve the training and response capabilities of rescuers. For example, in a simulated disaster scenario, virtual reality can be used to train rescuers' coping abilities and psychological quality.

Further, strengthen transparency and improve accountability. At present, the Red Cross has publicized its rescue effect report to improve the fairness and credibility of its rescue work. In the future, the Red Cross should continue to improve process supervision and disclose the extent of its rescue work in real-time. It includes the dynamic display of information on the source, distribution, and use of relief supplies, and the deployment and work of rescue personnel. Through the disclosure of rescue information, the Red Cross can improve the transparency and fairness of its rescue work and enhance public trust and support. In addition, the Red Cross can establish an accountability mechanism to supervise and evaluate its rescue work. For example, the Red Cross can establish a complaint and reporting mechanism to accept complaints and reports from the public, governments, and international organizations on its rescue work, and handle and respond promptly.

5. Conclusions

By reviewing the role of the Red Cross in Turkey's earthquake rescue, the article summarizes the advantages of the Red Cross in rescue. In the rescue, the Red Cross can more widely absorb rescue resources, more open and transparent aid, and send a more professional and more efficient rescue team. Although the Red Cross has shown many advantages over other subjects in rescue work, there are still some disadvantages. The lack of information makes the local people not understand and doubt the Red Cross rescue. The Red Cross rescue process sometimes affects the rescue rhythm and plan of the rescued country. Therefore, the Red Cross should take some measures to adjust the way of rescue to better serve global governance. At present, the Red Cross can take the following three ways to improve its rescue methods: strengthening cooperation with the subjects involved in rescue, strengthening technological innovation in rescue, strengthening transparency, and improving accountability. In general, this article through the detailed analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of the Red Cross rescue, for the Red Cross rescue pointed out the direction of improvement. However, there are still some deficiencies in the research of this article. Each natural disaster has its uniqueness. Through the analysis of the typical case of the Turkish earthquake, it is concluded that there are still some limitations in the advantages and disadvantages of the Red Cross rescue. Therefore, more typical cases can be analyzed in the follow-up study to make more comprehensive suggestions for the development of the Red Cross.

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