

Efforts Made by International Organizations in Facing Challenges to International Governance

--Regulating Armed Conflict by the United Nations and Regional Organizations

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Abstract: This paper will discuss the challenges that international organizations face in global governance. The contents will be divided into three parts. The first part will define global governance, and then explain the challenges that scholars believe will be faced in realizing global governance. The second part will introduce international organizations, divided into the United Nations and regional organizations, and will focus on the various organizations of the United Nations. Finally, the third part will analyze the Syrian civil war in combination with the previous part. The content of this article will focus on intervention in armed conflict.

Keywords: Global Governance, United Nations, Regional Institutions, Syrian Civil War

1. Introduction

Over the past fifty years, as globalization advances, countries have become increasingly dependent on one another to maintain successful economic and military operations. This necessitates the establishment of international interactions and cooperation, as it is no longer possible to exist in isolation. Due to the increasing complexity of the global economy, the rising significance of global environmental issues, and the expansion of global migration, to effectively manage the numerous challenges posed by globalization, global governance has become the focus of international affairs. Institutions were founded to create a fair and impartial platform for international issues. These International organizations play a key role in facilitating the coordination of interactions between nations. These organizations promote global understanding, cooperation, and the sharing of resources. They can help to ensure peaceful negotiations and economic stability. By providing a framework for countries to work together, these organizations help to create a more peaceful and prosperous world. However, the pursuit of continual improvement of global governance is not without its difficulties. The state, as an individual unit, is not ruled over by any higher institution and cannot be bound by any law, allowing it a degree of autonomy in decision-making and governance within its defined boundaries. This made achieving consensus among nations became a major hurdle, as is the enforcement of any agreement that is made. Additionally, the global power imbalance, which often favors the most powerful nations, creates an obstacle to the realization of any meaningful reform.

These challenges, among others, must be critically and proactively addressed for global governance to improve, fostering a more effective and inclusive framework that can effectively tackle pressing issues, enhance international cooperation, promote sustainable development, ensure social justice, mitigate conflicts, and navigate the complexities of our interconnected world.

2. Global Governance's Challenges

2.1. Define Global Governance

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), global governance refers to "the way in which global affairs are managed and regulated in order to address global challenges and ensure the well-being of people." [1]. Additionally, in book "Global Governance and the UN: An Unfinished Journey," authors Thomas G. Weiss and Rorden Wilkinson define global governance as "the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and cooperative action may be taken." [2]. These above definitions indicate global governance is characterized by the imperative of collective management and coordination of global affairs, as it recognizes that addressing complex and interdependent global challenges necessitates the involvement of a diverse range of actors, including governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society, and the private sector. By promoting cooperation and collaboration among these stakeholders, global governance endeavors to foster inclusive decision-making processes, establish shared norms and rules, and facilitate effective implementation mechanisms to tackle pressing issues such as climate change, poverty alleviation, conflict resolution, public health crises, and the safeguarding of human rights. Through its emphasis on inclusive and participatory approaches, global governance strives to ensure that the voices and interests of all relevant actors are considered, thereby creating a framework that can better address common challenges, promote sustainable development, and enhance the overall well-being of people worldwide.

Global governance requires a decentralized system of governance in which nation-states retain their own sovereignty and engage in various forms of cooperation and coordination through international organizations and agreements.

2.2. Challenges

Global governance encounters numerous challenges as it strives to address complex global issues. One challenge is the rising trend of nationalism and the erosion of multilateralism, which undermine collective decision-making and hinder global cooperation. Nationalism refers to a strong sense of identity, loyalty, or attachment to one's nation or country, often accompanied by a desire for self-determination, autonomy, and protection of national interests. The erosion of global order may refer to the challenges faced by international institutions, norms, and cooperative frameworks because of nationalist movements and policies. Nationalism can influence global governance by challenging the principles of multilateralism, international cooperation, and the pursuit of common global goals. It can lead to protectionist trade policies, barriers to international migration, and strained diplomatic relations [3].

Additionally, the lack of effective enforcement mechanisms and widespread compliance with international agreements further compounds the difficulties in achieving desired outcomes within global governance. While international agreements and treaties may be established to address pressing issues and promote cooperation, the actual implementation and enforcement of these agreements often face significant hurdles. Weak enforcement mechanisms, limited resources, varying levels of commitment among participating nations, and conflicting national interests can hinder the

full realization of agreed-upon goals and commitments. As a result, the gap between international obligations and actual implementation persists, impeding the effectiveness and impact of global governance initiatives in tackling shared challenges and fostering global cooperation. Overcoming these challenges requires strengthening enforcement mechanisms, promoting greater compliance through incentives and transparency, and enhancing international cooperation to ensure that commitments translate into tangible actions on the ground [4].

Another significant challenge within global governance arises from the prevailing power asymmetry among states, whereby dominant actors wield disproportionate influence, often sidelining the interests and concerns of smaller or less powerful nations [5]. The unequal distribution of economic resources, military capabilities, and geopolitical influence can create an imbalance in decision-making processes, agenda-setting, and policy outcomes at the global level [6,7]. Powerful states, whether through their economic leverage, diplomatic clout, or military might, can shape international norms, rules, and institutions to reflect their own preferences and priorities, potentially marginalizing the voices and needs of less influential actors. This power asymmetry can hinder the inclusivity and fairness of global governance, impede the representation of diverse perspectives, and limit the capacity of smaller nations to participate meaningfully in shaping global policies. Addressing this challenge requires efforts to promote greater equity, inclusivity, and democratization within global decision-making processes, ensuring that the interests and perspectives of all states, regardless of their power and size, are considered [8,9]. It also involves fostering mechanisms for dialogue, negotiation, and consensus-building that allow for a more balanced and representative global governance framework.

Furthermore, the rapid pace of technological advancements, such as cybersecurity threats and the ethical implications of emerging technologies, presents novel governance dilemmas that require global coordination [10]. Finally, global governance struggles to adequately address global crises like climate change, pandemics, and migration, which necessitate collective action and cooperation beyond traditional national boundaries [11]. Overcoming these challenges is essential for global governance to effectively address pressing global issues and promote a more inclusive and sustainable world.

3. International Institutions and Solutions

3.1. United Nations

The UN stands as a paramount global organization that serves as a forum for international cooperation and addresses the world's most pressing challenges. Established in the aftermath of World War II, the UN embodies the vision of fostering peace, promoting sustainable development, upholding human rights, and facilitating multilateral diplomacy. Comprising 193 member states, the UN operates under the principles and purposes enshrined in its founding document, the UN Charter. The organization provides a platform where countries come together, discuss mutual concerns, and collaborate on finding comprehensive and collective solutions [12].

3.1.1. The General Assembly

The General Assembly serves as a platform for member states to express their views on global issues, engaging in inclusive discussions on peace, security, development, human rights, and international law. Through annual sessions, leaders address the assembly, resolutions are adopted, and the UN's agenda is shaped. The General Assembly promotes multilateral cooperation, consensus-building, and international action to tackle global challenges, embodying principles of equality and diplomatic engagement within the UN framework.

3.1.2. Security Council

The United National Security Council consists of five permanent members, China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and ten non-permanent members selected within the members of the UN for a term of one or two years and not eligible for immediate re-election. Under the UN Charter, each member has one vote. The country part of the dispute should be abstained from voting. All members of the UN can participate in the settlement of disputes but without votes. The Security Council's primary responsibility is to maintain international peace and security. Chapters VI, VII, VIII, and XII of the Charter provide a more in-depth explanation of the Council's responsibilities. Chapter VI states that the Security Council shall investigate any potential threat to international peace, and any international conflict should first be settled by negotiation, investigation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, and judicial settlement, the state should first choose the peaceful means. Any dispute involving legal aspects should be referred to the International Court of Justice. Chapter VII states that the Council may determine whether similar breaches of the peace have occurred and take the actions listed above. The UN can take non-military action against the relevant countries, such measures may include the partial or total cessation of economic relations, rail, sea, air, postal, telegraph, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations. A decision by the UN on the use of military force shall be concluded between the Security Council and the Member States and approved by the signatory States in accordance with their respective constitutional procedures, and the Plans for the use of force shall be decided by the Security Council with the assistance of the Military Staff Committee. All Council decisions need to be carefully followed in the above chapters [13].

3.1.3. The International Court of Justice

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the principal judicial organ of the UN. It is a global court established to settle legal disputes between states and to provide advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by UN organs and specialized agencies. The ICJ consists of 15 judges who are elected by the UN General Assembly and the Security Council for nine-year terms. The judges represent a range of legal systems and regions to ensure a diverse composition. The court operates based on the principles of international law, including treaties, customary law, and general principles of justice recognized by nations. The main function of the International Court is to adjudicate disputes between states. In addition to dispute settlement, the ICJ also provides advisory opinions. UN organs and specialized agencies may seek the court's legal advice on questions related to international law. These opinions are non-binding but carry significant weight and serve as authoritative interpretations of international legal principles. The court contributes to the development and application of international law, while also serving as a forum for countries to resolve their legal disagreements through a peaceful and impartial process.

3.2. Regional Institutions

Different from the UN, Regional organizations work to promote cooperation, peace, and stability within their respective regions. These organizations, ex. African Union, European Union, Arab League, and Organization of American States serve as platforms for member states to address shared challenges, advance common interests, and strengthen regional integration. They provide forums for diplomatic engagement, dialogue, and consensus-building, facilitating the development of regional norms, rules, and mechanisms for cooperation. Regional organizations often engage in conflict prevention and resolution efforts, peacekeeping operations, economic cooperation, and coordination on various regional issues. By fostering mutual understanding, trust, and collaboration among

member states, regional organizations contribute to the overall effectiveness of international law and enhance state compliance with legal rules within their regions.

4. Syrian Civil War

The conflict in Syria, which began in 2011, has resulted in immense human suffering, regional destabilization, and a significant humanitarian crisis. The conflict involves multiple actors, including the Syrian government, rebel groups, extremist organizations, and foreign powers. Various national interests have complicated efforts to find a peaceful resolution. Countries such as Russia, Iran, and Turkey have been involved in the conflict to protect their strategic interests, support proxy groups, or counter perceived threats. These competing national interests have created disagreements and hindered effective global governance responses.

The United Nations Security Council has actively participated in addressing the multifaceted Syrian civil war since its outbreak in 2011. The Security Council has been seized with the situation in Syria and has taken several measures to address the conflict. It has issued numerous resolutions, including Resolution 2139, which called for an immediate end to the violence, the lifting of sieges, and unhindered humanitarian access to all areas. The Council has also established the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) through Resolution 2235 to investigate the use of chemical weapons in Syria and attribute responsibility for such. Additionally, the Security Council has advocated for political solutions to the conflict. Resolution 2254 endorsed the UN-led Geneva process, supporting negotiations between the Syrian government and opposition groups with the aim of achieving a political transition. The Council has also emphasized the need for humanitarian assistance and the protection of civilians in Syria, regularly calling for respect for international humanitarian law and urging all parties to facilitate humanitarian access and the delivery of aid. However, the Security Council's engagement in the Syrian civil war has faced challenges due to divisions among its member states, particularly among the five permanent members. Differing geopolitical interests, competing regional alliances, and disagreements over the Syrian government's legitimacy have hindered the Council's ability to take decisive actions and achieve a comprehensive resolution to the conflict [14].

The Syrian civil war is a manifestation of various factors, including political repression, socio-economic grievances, sectarian tensions, and regional power dynamics. The initial protests were driven by demands for greater political freedom, economic opportunities, and an end to government corruption. However, the government's brutal crackdown on dissent, combined with its failure to address underlying grievances, led to the militarization of the opposition and the fragmentation of the conflict into multiple fronts. The conflict was highly complex, involving a wide array of actors with differing objectives and interests. On one side, there is the Syrian government, backed by allies such as Russia and Iran. On the other side, there are various opposition groups, ranging from secular and moderate factions to Islamist and jihadist organizations. Additionally, regional and international powers, including the United States, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, have provided support to different factions, further fueling the conflict and exacerbating regional rivalries. Efforts to resolve the Syrian civil war have faced numerous obstacles. Power imbalances have played a role in the Syrian conflict. Powerful nations such as Russia and the United States have exerted significant influence through military interventions, alliances, and diplomatic maneuvers. The power dynamics between these nations and their differing approaches have complicated efforts to find a negotiated settlement. Meanwhile, smaller or less influential nations have struggled to have their voices heard and their interests adequately represented in international discussions and decision-making processes. The complexity of the conflict in Syria, with its interconnected regional dynamics and involvement of multiple actors, has further hindered effective global governance responses. The conflict has spilled over into neighboring countries, exacerbating tensions and creating a humanitarian crisis with millions of displaced persons and refugees. The existing global governance framework, comprising

international organizations such as the United Nations and regional bodies like the Arab League, has faced challenges in coordinating efforts and finding a comprehensive and sustainable solution. Furthermore, the lack of trust among the involved parties has impeded cooperation and hindered progress toward a resolution. Historical conflicts, geopolitical rivalries, and differing ideologies have contributed to a lack of trust and limited the prospects for meaningful dialogue and reconciliation. Trust-building measures have been crucial in overcoming these obstacles and facilitating productive negotiations. The Syrian conflict also highlights the resource constraints faced by global governance institutions. The United Nations and humanitarian organizations have struggled to secure adequate funding and resources to address the vast humanitarian needs arising from the conflict. Limited resources have hampered the provision of essential services, aid delivery, and stabilization efforts [15].

Addressing the Syrian conflict requires coordinated international action, involving both regional and global actors, to find a peaceful resolution, alleviate human suffering, and support the reconstruction of the country. Overcoming the obstacles of competing national interests, power imbalances, complexity, and lack of trust is essential for effective global governance responses in such complex security-related cases.

5. Conclusion

This paper provides a comprehensive examination of the challenges faced by international organizations in the realm of global governance. The first part of the paper defined global governance and illuminated the anticipated hurdles in its realization. The second part delves into the role of international organizations, emphasizing the significance of the United Nations and regional bodies in the global governance framework. By exploring the functions and structures of these organizations, a deeper understanding emerges regarding their roles in promoting international cooperation, resolving conflicts, advancing sustainable development, and safeguarding human rights. The analysis of the Syrian civil war in conjunction with the previous sections, sheds light on the complexities of armed conflict intervention and highlights the intricate role international organizations play in such scenarios. The case study underscores the challenges faced in achieving consensus among member states, the constraints of enforcement mechanisms, and the delicate balance between sovereignty and intervention. It underscores the need for international organizations to navigate sensitive political dynamics while seeking to protect civilian populations, uphold humanitarian principles, and restore peace. Collectively, the examination of these aspects underscores that international organizations confront multifaceted challenges in their pursuit of effective global governance. These challenges range from political divisions and power imbalances to logistical and operational limitations. Nevertheless, these obstacles reinforce the need for continuous efforts to strengthen international cooperation, enhance the capacity of organizations, and foster a collective approach to address global crises.

Despite the complexities and constraints faced, international organizations remain indispensable actors in advancing the principles of peace, security, and justice on the global stage. They serve as forums for dialogue, platforms for diplomatic engagement, and catalysts for collaboration among nations. By acknowledging and addressing the challenges, international organizations can adapt, innovate, and evolve to better respond to the changing dynamics of the global landscape and fulfill their critical role in promoting effective global governance.

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