

Forum: General Assembly 6

Issue: Protection of Persons in the Event of Disaster

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Introduction

Every year millions of people get affected by either natural disasters or man-made disasters. An area that goes through such events find that emergency situations can be quite stressful and traumatic time for those who get affected. This can lead to friends and families being divided and homes, livelihoods, and lives being lost. The aftermath of this event can leave people to experience a range of physical, psychological, emotional or behavioral reactions that can significantly impact their ability to cope with the situation. Trauma and grief could lead to families under great pressure and further lead to mental health impacts hence there can be an increase in drug use to reduce their stress.

Disasters are caused either naturally which includes hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, and tsunamis. It can also be due to accidental man-made events. Accidental man-made events could include toxic spills while toxic materials are being transported and an accident happens causing it to spread and putting people's lives at risk. Moreover, a disaster could also be caused due to deliberate man-made events such as the terrorist attack that occurred in Paris or the war currently going on in Syria and Yemen. These extreme events tend to result in having a negative impact on people such as injury/loss of life or destruction to their property such as homes. There are many forms of natural disasters and they tend to occur in particular parts of the world.

Every place has a certain type of disaster and there isn't a place that isn't safe from a disaster. It's practically impossible to avoid a disaster. However, it's definitely possible, by planning ahead with the involvement of the UN and State Management, to reduce the impact of a disaster that might affect a person's safety or their property. Many important precautions can be taken to solve this issue and it's important for people to be educated about all the obligatory actions needed. These could involve things such taking steps ahead of time to be prepared in case of any type of disaster or each individual having a certain way to be informed about a predictable disaster.

Definition of Key Terms

Disasters

series of events that has a negative impact on a human or their property such as loss of life or destruction to their property.

Natural disasters

a natural event that has a negative impact on a person life or their property such as floods, earthquakes, and tsunamis.

Floods

An overflow of large quantities of water from streams, rivers, lakes, oceans and monsoon rain over a dry land.

Famine

A deadly case where there isn't enough food for a great number of people in a certain area which results in illness or even death.

Earthquakes

The rapid shaking of the ground due to a sudden release of energy from the earth's crust causing great destruction.

Tsunamis/Tidal wave

series of ocean waves onto land, that can reach heights of over 100 feet, causing widespread destruction.

Man-made disasters

An event caused by an individual or a group of individual's actions accidentally or deliberately which has a negative impact on a human's life.

Terrorism

Use of violence in the pursuit of political aim especially against civilians.

Background Information

Natural Disaster

Natural disasters are extremely horrifying events which can be in a form of an earthquake, floods, tsunami, tornado or a hurricane. Such types of disasters are unfortunately impossible to avoid. However, people can plan ahead in time with the help of the United Nations and Member states sending officers to educate people about necessary actions to be taken to reduce the impact of any Natural Disaster.

Floods are the most common example that occurs in a lot of places due to spring rains, heavy thunderstorms, glaciers melting and winter snow thaws. However, disasters such as Hurricanes and Earthquakes are extremely deadly which have cost many people to lose their lives.

Floods

Floods can be fast or they can be really slow and tend to develop over days making it difficult for people to cope with. However, they are easier to predict. As a result, countries that often get floods try to reduce impact through floodplain management activities (where decisions are made that are aimed to reduce damage due to flood), constructing levees (prevention of water overflowing through building an embankment alongside the river), building high raised buildings and purchasing flood insurance to help reduce the how much structural damage is caused to a person's home. Floods increase the risk of diseases such as waterborne disease, typhoid fever, cholera and etc. This is because of all the sewage water mixing with the flooded water and then people being exposed to this. To avoid this, actions by the member of states should be taken such as investing in better sewage system to prevent sewer backup and spending more on flood defenses.

Hurricanes

Hurricane is a tropical storm which consists of winds blowing at high speed in a spiral shape with an eye in the middle which is calm with slow winds. The storm gets much stronger as it extends and can cause a lot of damage to the area it hits. If a hurricane is predicted, then people are instructed to evacuate as quickly as possible with the help of the local police to safe zones away from the areas that might be affected by the disaster. These days technologies have advanced which can help with predicting a hurricane and this can be used to get people to evacuate the area with as many personal belongings they can carry with them. Hurricanes tend to occur in the Pacific Ocean. Research has shown that most of the hurricanes are hit in the Atlantic Coast, the Gulf of Mexico and the Hawaiian islands since they are places between the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. To prevent a lot of damage to someone's property then houses in areas prone to hurricanes need to be built sturdy and made of strong materials to withstand strong winds. Also having occasional drills with families with the help of the member of states guiding individuals on what to do is a necessity to make sure everyone is ready and that they know how to respond to a hurricane.

Earthquakes

This is sudden shaking of the Earth which occurs in areas placed on plate boundaries such as Japan and is caused by shifting or breaking of rocks that are underneath the earth's surface. Earthquakes are measured using a Richter scale and depending on how high the magnitude is then the more damage it causes. Predicting earthquakes are quite difficult to predict but in case if there is an earthquake then people are usually trained really well to take the necessary actions for your own protection. For example in China where the area is prone to

having earthquakes are usually have drill consistently. Building roofs are usually built with light material so in case of an earthquake, they take cover under hard furniture for protection.

Man-made Disasters

Man-made disasters include things such as transportation accidents, structure failure, hazardous material spillage, mining accidents, explosions, terrorist attacks, war, and famine. Due to these being unpredictable, people are told to be prepared at all times in areas that are prone to such disaster and are instructed to take the proper actions in case of a man-made disaster.

Hazardous material spillage

These types of incidents are usually accidental chemical spills that can destroy the environment around and contaminate such areas and cause health issues for people in that area. Chemicals used in areas such as industries or medical research or for agricultural use need to be used with caution and properly to avoid anything that might cause injury. For chemicals or any other types of hazardous materials that get transported are usually moved around with as much protection as possible but there are still chances of spillage. however, if a spillage does occur then people nearby could be affected really badly by these chemicals and majority of the time this could lead to death. Moreover, if these chemicals end up over people's properties then it could permanently damage them and if not cleaned up straight away then these chemicals could quickly and easily be spread making it more dangerous.

Terrorism

Terrorism is using unlawful violence usually against civilians and is one of those events that can occur anywhere in the world. They tend to occur when a weaker person or group uses violence to fight against a powerful nation. This act is performed to disrupt lives and scare individuals and terrorism has known to result in a large number of deaths. In such a case people are usually told to a disaster plan ready with the necessary things such as a disaster kit, and a shelter nearby and if anything unusual occurring around your neighborhood then immediately inform the authorities. There have been many cases of biological attacks which use dangerous chemicals to harm individuals. There have also been many radiological attacks where a radiological material is released in public places and cause explosions and harm anyone around that area. If people witness such attacks then they are usually told to inform the authorities as quickly as possible so they can take actions to reduce the further impact of radiation in that area. However, if they do get exposed to radiation then an individual is told to react quickly and try to

move as far away as possible from the area affected and seek help because if they don't then it makes it difficult for the authorities to take action hence making the problem worse.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

The Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies

Red Cross and Red Crescent are made up from 190 national individual National Societies. These are dedicated to the fundamental principles of Humanity, Neutrality, Impartiality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity and Universality and are one of the worlds biggest relief organizations. When a disaster strikes an area then it's the local people who aren't affected by the disaster who take the first action to start rescuing and start a relief operation. After the disaster that's when the Red Cross/Crescent arrive to focus on aiding victims and to assist the communities to help them with necessities. Then the International Federation steps in and helps to recover from a disaster to help with the recovery with the help of Red Cross/Crescent.

International non-governmental agencies

This is run by volunteers from around the world that help fight poverty in developing countries and have an active role in helping with the recovery of an affected area due to a disaster and how to prepare for a disaster for the future. There is quite a few organization that fall in this category for example "CARE" help improve basic education and help to gain access to clean water and sanitation. They also send emergency aid to people who have survived any type of disaster and help them with their recovery. Another example of an organization is "Rehabilitation International" which is a really big global network that consists of many experts that empower people with disabilities and they provide these people with sustainable solutions for a healthier life in their society and help them plan what to do in case of a disaster.

The United Nations and its Organizations

The UN is an intergovernmental organization. Together they are tasked to promote and secure international co-operation and maintain international order. The UN has many organizations to help aid the people affected in a disaster. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN is there to provide early warning of any upcoming food crisis and to help come with sustainable solutions. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) help with transferring people which are in need of migration services such as refugees. Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights(OHCHR) monitor the rights of the human and are there to give the government assistance and advice about the human rights issue. The World Health Organization (WHO) focus on reducing the loss of human life in a disaster and are there to monitor health trends and are there to provide solutions for an

emergency health issue. They also give advice on how to help yourselves in case no one is available through the help of online courses available everywhere.

United States of America

The United States Federal Government has a well known independent agency known as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). They are primarily responsible for administering civilian foreign aid and development assistance. One of their main sectors includes helping people that live in areas where there is a conflict or crisis taking place. In the past year alone they have provided emergency assistance to millions of people in 51 countries in response to 53 disasters and also have helped prevent conflict and mitigate the impact of unanticipated complex crises with targeted programs in five countries. They have been working on strengthening resilience to help people withstand crises instead of waiting and seeking for emergency assistance. USAID also provides life-saving humanitarian assistance to save lives of people suffering in areas where this is a problem. Moreover, they have also been providing emergency food assistance and actively been helping promote peaceful political transitions by strengthening civil society and respect for human rights, facilitating reconciliation, supporting effective democratic governance and fostering the resumption of basic economic activity.

Australia

The Australian government provides official development assistance to countries mainly in Australia's own region, the Asia–Pacific recently also in Africa through an organization called AusAID. Australia's region has been undergoing many external shocks which include natural disaster, conflicts, and economic shocks since it's extremely vulnerable to them and the impact that these shocks in the region have been getting much worse over time. Natural disaster has mainly affected Australia's region negatively due to climate changing drastically in recent years hence AusAID was created to help prevent lives and infrastructures being lost. Their contribution to disaster risk reduction through AusAID has been consistently exceeding the target of 1% of official development assistance showing their interest in helping aid victims of a disaster. AusAID has been providing aid by supporting investments in understanding disaster risk, including climatic risk and building back better in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction after disasters with the help of many different partner agencies to support partner countries.

Yemen

Recently, Yemen has been undergoing Famine and the UN has just reported that more than 14 million people, which is more than half the population, is not getting enough to eat. The civilian death rates have increased to 164% due to the increase in violence in just last few months and now is labeled as one of the world's hungriest countries leaving many people dead. Yemen imports 90% of their food

supplies however due to civil war going on in Yemen, the majority of the ports have been closed hence the increase of famine. Due to the lack of food supplies, the goods that are available in Yemen have gotten very expensive and it's making it difficult for many people to afford them. There are volunteers from the Mercy Corps community, walking from door to door in the northern hills of Yemen to help people in need of food to survive and other donation pages from around the world have been put up online for people to donate to all the victims of famine however it's been a challenge due to a great number of people seeking food.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
August 11 th , 2006	58 th session held to consider the 7 th report on the topic "A/CN.4/567"
2007	59 th session held
October 31 st , 2008	60 th session of international law held
October 30 th , 2009	61 st session held
October 29 th , 2010	62 nd session held
October 31 st , 2011	63 rd session held
November 2 nd , 2012	Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its sixty-fourth session, Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters Sixth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly.
November 5 th , 2013	Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its sixty-fifth session, Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters (Chapter VI of the Report) Sixth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly
October 29 th , 2014	Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its sixty-sixth session, Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters (Chapter V of the Report) Sixth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its sixty-seventh session, 30 December 2015 (**A/RES/70/236**)
- Effects of atomic radiation, 10 January 2008 (**A/RES/62/100**)

- Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its sixtieth session, 15 January 2009 **(A/RES/63/123)**
- Protection of persons in the event of disasters, 19 December 2016 **(A/RES/71/141)**
- Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its fifty-ninth session, 8 January 2008 **(A/RES/62/66)**

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

Solving this issue has been quite difficult to overcome, this is due to the fact that depending on how developed a country is then the benefits for the victims differ. The more developed a country the more benefit it gets and the more exposure it gets from the media hence more money raised for the affected area. However, if a country is not as developed then it gets very little aid compared to a well-developed country by the UN. An example of this could be when there was an outbreak of fighting in South Sudan in 2016. This fight put many innocent people lives at risk and up to 300 civilians died due to the fight. Where was the UN? They all left their post. Therefore, this caused the war to continue for longer. Such type of behavior has also been reported in other countries such as Haiti, Central African Republic, and Liberia showing that the UN does not take interest in less developed countries when they should take more interest in those areas. We have seen it throughout the years and this hasn't been changed till now.

In the previous years, there have been a countless number of hurricanes and in 2017 alone there were 4 major hurricanes one of which was Hurricane Harvey. this devastating event left 63 innocent lives to be lost and caused a total of \$150-200 billion of damage in Texas and Florida which was more than Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Sandy. After such a horrific event, non-governmental organizations, Government and many strangers got together in the affected areas to save as many lives as possible and to aid the victims of one of the most fatal disaster. Just before the storm struck, the Federal Emergency Management System (FEMA) had pre-positioned supplies and personnel in the state. They were prepared to join the Texas Division of Emergency Management, local agencies, nonprofit and faith-based organizations and the private sector in responding to the devastation caused by the storm. President Donald Trump had immediately issued a major disaster declaration which allowed federal agencies to assign personnel to support the State of Texas in response and recovery. in just a couple of days the number of FEMA employees, other federal agencies, and the National Guard deployed topped 31,000, to focus on helping Texans respond to Hurricane Harvey.

Moreover, Terrorist attacks are one of the most unpredictable and the most life-threatening disaster and have shown to steadily worsen over time. November 13th, 2015 at least 130 were killed and over 400 were hospitalized in a terrorist attack in Paris. This consisted of individuals from ISIS armed

with explosives and guns and had targeted 6 locations across Paris. This had left the whole Nation traumatized and 3 days after the attack a new law was established in the Parliament. The law had stated to allow the authorities to strip the citizenship of French-born terrorists and provisions making it easier to deport suspected terrorists. 10 days after the attack, France had deployed 38 aircraft carrying out bombing raids against ISIS. Due to the incident that occurred, security guards were then drafted into majority of the public building and now holding security checks is a must in shopping malls, museums, and any big events. Now schools have been having staged mock attacks to educate them about precautions that are needed to be taken in case a terrorist attack happens again.

Possible Solutions

As stated previously, it is impossible to avoid any type of disaster and that every state gets affected by a disaster whether it's a natural disaster or a man-made disaster. However, it is possible to reduce the impact of the disaster to save more people from being injured or losing their lives just in case another disaster occurs in the future. Firstly every state should take a risk assessment to get an overview of all the dangers and look at the disaster trends which can be useful for future predictions. Without having a risk assessment in your area, it makes it difficult to overcome the catastrophic event that may occur. After having a risk assessments conducted, officers or volunteers should go around and collect information about past disasters from the public. This would be to get a better understanding and note down how in the past these matters have been managed and how effective the methods were. By taking such actions, the state can further understand on how to give everyone in different areas a warning as quickly as possible for evacuation safely. After collating all the necessary information then action should be taken such as having early warning system installed everywhere in case of an emergency. Moreover, for instance if an LEDC is finding it difficult to take the actions mentioned above, by having the UN to constantly monitor all the countries and how they managed disasters in the past. Then a better solutions could be to have the United Nations collate information of past disasters from more economically developed countries on all the different methods used by the MEDC to protect as many people as possible and reduce the impact of the disaster. After conducting this research, the UN could have officers deployed in LEDCs to educate the member of states about prevention methods and ways to protect their people so they can work on spreading the information across the country to educate citizens.

As a disaster strikes in any area, the UN officers should be ready and have troops sent to the area affected for any victims affected by the disaster and be there to offer any other help such as providing food, and other necessities for everyone. There could also be a donation page immediately set up by the UN, since it's a worldwide organization, for people to raise as much money as possible for the affected areas and 100% of the money raised should be for the victims and not to be misused. Other organizations such as "All Hands" could have majority of their donations that are made by over 35,000 volunteers to be donated to heavily disaster struck areas. Furthermore, its common for homes to be

destroyed in a natural disaster leaving many people homeless and causing a great distress specially for families. With the help of organizations that mainly focus on providing shelters for example “ShelterBox”, they could help provide emergency shelters for example sturdy tents for families or individuals that might potentially have lost their homes and provide other necessary tools such as solar lights, blankets, clean water, mosquito nets and family meals until they are able to start rebuilding their homes.

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