

# Humanitarian Intervention: A Pretext to Serve Self Interest

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INFOGRAPHICS

## Humanitarian Intervention: A Pretext to Serve Self Interest

Posted by *Harun Yahya* / November 16, 2014

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Harun Yahya in this thought-provoking article analyze scenarios where powerful states use humanitarian interventions as a pretext to protect their own interests.



Events in Syria and Iraq due to the terror organization ISIL have once more raised the question of humanitarian intervention, the most controversial question in international relations.

International law is based upon respect for national sovereignty, and there can be no interference in states' internal affairs: Humanitarian intervention is an exception to this principle of international law. The concept of humanitarian intervention represents the use of force by one or more countries against another country to prevent wide-scale human rights abuses.

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International law is based upon respect for national sovereignty, and there can be no interference in states' internal affairs: Humanitarian intervention is an exception to this principle of international law. The concept of humanitarian intervention represents the use of force by one or more countries against another country to prevent wide-scale human rights abuses.

Although the concept of humanitarian intervention appears to be very clear and well intentioned, it also involves a number of rather controversial elements, which can be set out as follows:

### **Is humanitarian intervention a means by which nations can conceal their self-interested attitudes?**

The most controversial factor causing humanitarian intervention to become controversial is uncertainty and doubt over the circumstances warranting intervention. All countries today follow policies intended to further their own interests; this raises a question mark right from the start over some countries' interventions based on humanitarian pretexts.

The intervention in Libya was obviously not solely intended to free Libyans from oppression by the late Muammar Gaddafi. Behind the concept of humanitarian intervention also lay other motives, such as obtaining a share of Libya's oil revenues or being able to participate in tenders in the post-Gaddafi period.

### **Do double standards apply in humanitarian intervention?**

Looking at the period before and after the Arab Spring in particular, we see several severe crises when humanitarian intervention was ruled out, and not even considered as an option. The reasons for this may be countries that might have been able to intervene regarding an intervention as not necessary as the situation was not a threat to their national interests, or fearing being unable to secure benefits such as oil or mineral resources after such intervention or the media and public-opinion shapers not thinking very highly of such interventions. This makes the concept of humanitarian intervention controversial in political and ethical terms.

The coalition forces that intervened against Gaddafi in Libya did so on humanitarian grounds. However, those same countries are turning a blind eye to the oppression by the Assad regime, even though it is a far grimmer situation there.

The USA invaded Iraq on the pretext of the existence of weapons of mass destruction. When it emerged that no such weapons existed in Iraq, it came up with new pretexts, such as freeing Iraq from the tyranny of Saddam Hussein and building a democratic administration. Yet many more people have to date died under the occupation than under Saddam's regime, and tortures far worse than those in Saddam's time were inflicted at Abu Gharib prison. Far from being a country governed by democratic means, Iraq is now suffering even worse turmoil, conflict and a very real threat of division.

On the other hand, while completely justified humanitarian interventions were carried out in Kosovo and Bosnia, the Turkish operation aimed at rescuing the Turkish Cypriots, carried out under very similar circumstances, was treated as an invasion and is regrettably still regarded as such by many.

The PKK terror organization has killed more than 30,000 people in Turkey, and has burned down and destroyed a good many homes and work places. Yet for a long time Western countries have ignored Turkish demands for intervention against the PKK,

and have even criticized Turkey's attitude toward the PKK terrorists. Turkey has been the focal point of a great deal of pressure from the Western world in recent months for not intervening in the fighting between the PKK-PYD and ISIL in the Syrian town of Kobane.

Turkey has even been threatened with expulsion from NATO for not becoming involved in the conflict militarily. The German Foreign Affairs Minister stated that a ground operation in Kobane was essential, but that they would not be taking part, since young Germans were too precious; immediately after that statement the same minister then said that Turkish and Arab troops should intervene. All these examples show that things other than pure good intentions lie behind humanitarian interventions, as well as the existence of a double standard in international relations.

### **Other questions and problems concerning humanitarian intervention**

In addition to problems regarding the content of the concept of humanitarian intervention, there are also technical problems. What stage do violations have to reach for there to be an intervention? What countries should intervene, and how? How is the intervention to be legitimized? When will it come to an end? How will the costs of the intervention be met? Examples taking place all over the world show that these questions all have different answers in different circumstances.

Regardless of whether it is justified, humanitarian intervention also carries the danger of not itself being humanitarian. Although the interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan were said to have been based on humanitarian concerns, hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians died because of those interventions and millions more were displaced.

Even worse times likely await civilians in Syria and Iraq today during the current intervention that has been initiated against ISIL. Air strikes lead to civilian deaths and are not having the expected effect on ISIL. Everyone also knows that a ground operation will simply increase civilian casualties.

### **There is a more humanitarian method than intervention**

Instead of arguing about the need for humanitarian intervention and the methods involved, the security of all nations can be established using other means.

First of all, countries must prevent their citizens from being brought up devoid of all moral sensitivities, humane feelings, compassion, love, affection and empathy. Members of all faiths must be taught – from an early age – that killing people, forcing them from their homelands and robbing and torturing them is not only wrong, but morally indefensible.

In a world where people are taught that they can live in peace and love regardless of all their differences, there will be no more need to use force to rescue people or question the sincerity of interventions. The conditions requiring interventions will have been obviated right from the outset and humanitarian interventions will become merely a curiosity of history.

Adnan Oktar's piece on Arabian Gazette:

<http://www.arabiangazette.com/humanitarian-interventions-pretext-20141116/>

<https://www.harunyahya.info/en/articles/humanitarian-intervention-a-pretext-to-serve-self-interest>