

The rise of the emerging powers and donors: enhanced multilateralism in humanitarian action? The case of Turkey

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Abstract: This paper reflects on how geopolitical challenges apply to the humanitarian landscape; and have the potential to alter the foundations of the institutionalized humanitarian system. The emerging powers have become the focus of attention of international analysts for the potential they have in reshaping world affairs. Similarly, new actors have appeared in the humanitarian scene: the so-called emerging donors. This study analyzes through the case study of Turkey how countries with a two-fold identity, like emerging powers and donors, interact with the UN multilateral humanitarian system. The premise behind is that the emerging powers and donors the potential to influence and change the way humanitarian action is carried out.

Keywords: Humanitarian action; donors; Turkey; emerging donors; emerging powers; UN humanitarian system; humanitarianism; humanitarian; clusters.

Resumen: Este trabajo plantea cómo los desafíos geopolíticos aplican a la acción humanitaria; y cómo estos retos tienen el potencial de alterar las bases del sistema humanitario institucionalizado. Las potencias emergentes se han convertido en el foco de atención de los analistas internacionales debido el potencial que tienen de remodelar los asuntos mundiales. Del mismo modo, nuevos actores han aparecido en la escena humanitaria, los llamados donantes emergentes. Este estudio analiza a través del estudio de caso de Turquía como los países con una identidad doble, como potencias y donantes emergentes, interactúan con el sistema humanitario multilateral de las Naciones Unidas. La premisa subyacente es que las potencias y donantes emergentes tienen el potencial de influir y cambiar la forma en que la acción humanitaria se lleva a cabo.

Palabras clave: Acción humanitaria; Turquía; donantes emergentes; potencias emergentes; sistema humanitario de la ONU; humanitarismo; humanitario; clusters.

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1. Introduction

The global international system is undergoing one of the biggest transformations up to now. More than a change of system, there is a transformation in the system going on. Globalization and the fact that global politics are dynamic and changing have led to a shift of power in the international arena. A rearrangement and realignment of both regional and global power is taking place among other things, due to the surge of the emerging powers. These new powers have the potential to reshape the world affairs¹. That is why they have become the focus of attention of international analysts. But despite all the research done so far, it is still unclear how they will impact the system, and how the future international order will look like. The present status quo is not very likely to remain and the future will probably be a world of new coalitions for cooperation with different and changing centers of power. There is place for greater inclusivity in the international system, but also for more conflict². The options range from a *multipolar world* without a single leader but many countries competing to emerge; to a *non-polar world* (a world dominated by dozens of actors possessing and exercising various kinds of power). Or even a renewed *bipolar world* [China-United States (US)]. It could also be a world without center of gravity, a world that belongs to no-one; an era of great complexity³.

In the current setting, the strategy of emerging powers will be neither to accept the current system nor to be excluded or create a new one. Instead of using the established international institutions, ad-hoc and regional arrangements between the emerging powers (or between some of them and traditional powers) will probably become more and more common. Last developments suggest that, up to now, the emerging powers seem to be interested in the stability of the traditional Western powers.⁴ Not challenging the system (yet) gives them extra time to strengthen their international profile, build on their societies and try to ensure a sustainable growth. All necessary elements if they are to play a relevant role. Maintaining the status quo temporarily seems the most probable scenario for a while. In the meantime, the emerging powers are likely to continue seek-

¹ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Strategic Vision: America and the Crisis of Global Power* (New York: Basic, 2012). Charles Kupchan, *No One's World: The West, the Rising Rest, and the Coming Global Turn* (New York: Oxford UP, 2012).

² Carnegie Endowment, *The New Geopolitics: Emerging Powers and the Challenges of a Multipolar World* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 10 nov. 2012).

³ Charles Kupchan, op. cit.

⁴ In this paper West/Western relates to the geographical North-West, this being mainly the US and Europe.

ing a level of influence appropriate to their positions. There is little doubt that they will try to review and reshape the system according to their values and interests⁵.

But the current architecture for international cooperation is already showing its limitations and is proving to be increasingly outdated. The structure of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is just the most striking example. Its inability to reflect the shift in power and the new geopolitical realities has reduced its legitimacy and this puts a thread to its relevance in the forthcoming years⁶. Something will have to change if Western powers want to keep on having a high international profile in a world of alternative powers and pacts (as the nuclear proliferation deal reached on May 2010 between Iran, Brazil and Turkey)⁷. The current international dynamics show that multipolarity will not necessarily bring along more multilateralism. In a globalized world, these geopolitical challenges apply directly to the humanitarian system.

2. Changing aid landscape: emerging donors

The humanitarian system has kept evolving somewhat organically; as a response to several factors, but mainly history and geopolitics. Indeed, it is through foreign policy that countries project themselves internationally.⁸ Humanitarian affairs have become (explicitly or implicitly) a tool of foreign policy, a soft power instrument to raise the international profile and gain international leverage. In this sense, humanitarian response can be a tool to project an image of responsible state what can in exchange contribute to a higher international profile and better access and weight to international organizations; it can regionally contribute to expand regional influence; or help improve bilateral relations.⁹

⁵ Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008). Charles Kupchan, op. cit.

⁶ Ambassador Richard S. Williamson and Jana Chapman Gates, *Rising Powers and a New Emerging Order* (Working paper. Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 5 september 2012).

⁷ Despite it became watershed, the deal reflects the potential emerging countries have in become brokers of new agreements in this new configuration of the international system. Mariano Aguirre, "Brazil-Turkey and Iran: A New Global Balance", *OpenDemocracy* (Weblog post, 2 june 2010).

⁸ Emma Mawdsley, *From Recipients to Donors: Emerging Powers and the Changing Development Landscape* (London: Zed, 2012).

⁹ Andrea Binder and Claudia Meier, "Opportunity Knocks: Why Non-Western Donors Enter Humanitarianism and How to Make the Best of It", *International Review of the Red Cross* (2011): pp. 1135-149.

International dynamics explain not only the current organization of the humanitarian system but also the emergence of new donors in the aid sphere. Indeed, changes like the surge of the emerging powers can be seen in humanitarianism too. In this sense, it has been the countries with more international power in international relations in the last decades (this is Western countries), the ones that have had the largest impact in humanitarian action so far. But the current global geopolitical trends (shift in power) have the potential to change and challenge the way we understand humanitarian action today.

Increasingly more countries are becoming active in the sector of aid. Officially 16 governments answered to the humanitarian crisis in Bosnia in the 90s, whilst in 2004, 92 countries responded to the Indian Ocean Tsunami.¹⁰ The new responders in the humanitarian and development sectors have become widely known as “emerging donors”. These are countries like China, India, Brazil, South Africa, Turkey or Saudi Arabia. Countries that have raised the profile of their aid programs, and that have become active in humanitarianism¹¹.

Traditional donors, mainly Western countries part of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) still give the largest part of the emergency response funds. The US remains the largest contributor but all the European Union (EU) states together exceed its contribution by a wide margin. Indeed, in 2008 the OECD-DAC donors provided 90% of multilateral funds for humanitarian action. This confirms what Donini said: nowadays, humanitarian action is a universal ethos with a Western apparatus.¹² Even the United Nations (UN) humanitarian system, here understood as the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the clusters system, could be accused of Western shaped. Because despite UN agencies are in theory more democratic, they are often dominated by the countries with more financing capacity and power —this has been up to now Western countries—. ¹³ However, there seems to be a changing trend. Not only new and non-Western international NGOs are growing and/or spreading (i.e. BRAC, Mercy Malaysia or SEEDS Asia), but also, as mentioned, new countries are becoming new founders in the humanitarian landscape: the emerging donors. Some of them have a double identity being both emerging donors and emerging powers.

¹⁰ Adele Harmer and Lin Cotterrell, “Diversity in Donorship: The Changing Landscape of Official Humanitarian Aid”, *Overseas Development Institute (ODI)* (Humanitarian Policy Group, sept. 2005).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Andrea Binder and Claudia Meier, op. cit.

¹² Antonio Donini, *Proc. of The Elusive Quest for Principled Humanitarian Action* (New York: IPI, 11 feb. 2013).

¹³ Emma Mawdsley, op. cit.

It is important to note that the surge of the emerging donors is linked with another key factor that works in their favor and raises even more their profile: the economic crisis. Indeed, global economic trends can have an impact on the way in which the international humanitarian system is financed.¹⁴ As a consequence of the economic and financial crisis traditional donors, like Spain or the US, are already cutting aid budgets. Also the EU has already announced cuts in aid spending.¹⁵ The emerging powers, with their booming economies, have the potential to overcome the financial humanitarian challenge. Their preeminent economic position gives them the opportunity to raise the profile of their aid programs.¹⁶

Emerging donors are still providing only a small share of the global official humanitarian assistance budget (if compared with traditional donors) but their role in humanitarian crises is increasing¹⁷. They are making their humanitarian efforts more relevant and visible.¹⁸ As a matter of fact, the two major donor contributors to the Haiti emergency response fund were Saudi Arabia (US\$50 million) and Brazil (US\$8 million).¹⁹ Over a decade, the volume of humanitarian aid reported by emerging powers has increased by almost twenty-fold (from US\$34.7 million in 2000 to US\$622.5 million in 2010).²⁰ Their share and commitment is likely to keep on growing if aid-budgets remain linked to economic trends²¹. Round and Odedokun already signaled that aid is a luxury good in a State budget and

¹⁴ Elizabeth G. Ferris, *The Politics of Protection: The Limits of Humanitarian Action* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2011).

¹⁵ Mark Tran, "EU's Aid Budget Facing Cuts despite Evidence It Will Pay for Itself by 2020", *The Guardian* (Guardian News and Media, 20 nov. 2012).

¹⁶ Filippo Grandi, "Interview with UNRWA Commissioner-General Filippo Grandi", *Interview by UN News Service* (ReliefWeb, 14 mar. 2013). John Borton, *Future of the Humanitarian System: Impacts of Internal Changes* (Rep. Tufts University. Humanitarian Futures Programme, nov. 2009).

¹⁷ Of the amount governments contributed in 2010 to international humanitarian crises, US\$11.8 billion, approximately 95%, came from members of the OECD-DAC. Non-DAC countries contributed US\$623 million, approximately 5% of the total. In fact, the volume of humanitarian assistance from non-DAC donors increased from US\$34.7 million in 2000 to US\$622.5 million in 2010. Elizabeth G. Ferris, op. cit. Kerry Smith, *Non-DAC Donors and Humanitarian Aid. Shifting Structures, Changing Trends* (Rep. Global Humanitarian Assistance. Briefing Paper, July 2011).

¹⁸ Adele Harmer and Ellen Martin, eds., "Diversity in Donorship. Field Lessons", *Rep. no. 30* (Humanitarian Policy Group, March 2010).

¹⁹ Kerry Smith, op. cit.

²⁰ Alex Whiting, "New Donors Chip Away at Aid Industry Status Quo", *Where Is the Money? The Future of Humanitarian Aid* (AlertNet, 26 Jan. 2012).

²¹ Determining exactly the total amount of their contributions, and comparing them with traditional donors' ones, is not possible yet. As of yet emerging donors do not apply the same criteria and definitions of aid as traditional donors (i.e. most of them do not distinguish be-

therefore, the higher the real income of the country, the greater the fraction of real income given as aid²².

The Ocean Tsunami in 2004 catapulted most emerging donors to the humanitarian spotlight. The arrival of emerging donors like Brazil, China, Turkey, or Saudi Arabia, is somehow a new phenomenon for the traditional actors of the humanitarian system. For years humanitarian practice has been understood and executed as the unilateral deployment of Western expertise to the "South".²³ Therefore, the fact that India sent humanitarian aid after hurricane Katrina in the US in 2005, that Cuba sent doctors after Haiti Earthquake in 2010, that China gave US\$5 million to Sudan in humanitarian aid, or that Turkey is praised by many for its response to the crisis in Somalia, is still surprising for many. In this sense, the activity of emerging powers and donors in humanitarianism is still understated and under-appreciated in humanitarian debates and also understudied; although the interest is growing.²⁴ But still many actors in humanitarianism find it difficult to accommodate traditional systems and approaches to the new paradigm.²⁵

It is also important to stress that emerging donors are not only bringing new funding, but also different practices and understandings of aid. Some of them might report development and humanitarian responses together; others might include building religious buildings as part of their humanitarian aid; and some might understand the humanitarian principles differently and might decide to strictly link their donations to regional or even religious interests. All this challenges the mainstream way in which humanitarian action is understood today.

Summarizing, there is a shift going on in at least four areas: (a) who finances the humanitarian system, (b) who leads the humanitarian sys-

tween humanitarian and development aid). Adele Harmer and Lin Cotterrell, op. cit. Kerry Smith, op. cit. Emma Mawdsley, op. cit.

²² Jeffery I. Round and Matthew Odedokun, "Aid effort and its determinants", *WIDER Discussion Papers* (World Institute for Development Economics, 2003).

²³ ICRC, "The Future of Humanitarian Action. Humanitarian Debate: Law, Policy, Action". *Publication no. 884*, vol. 93 (Geneva: ICRC, International Review of the Red Cross, december 2011).

²⁴ A prove of that is the growing number of forums that are discussing the issue (also in development cooperation terms). To cite a few examples: the ICRC's flagship publication was dedicated in December 2011 to "The future of Humanitarian Action" and addressed the issue of emerging donors. AlertNet explored the future of humanitarian and devoted a couple of articles to the impact of the emerging donors in the system. The Graduate Institute in Geneva organized along with other partners a conference on "Aid, Emerging Economies and Global Policies".

²⁵ Randolph C. Kent, "Planing from the Future: An Emerging Agenda", *International Review of the Red Cross* 93.884 (december 2011), 939-63.

tem, (c) who shapes and supports the work of multilateral institutions, and (d) who influences the way humanitarian aid is conceptualized and supplied. As the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) indicates, we are in front of a challenge to “the *de facto* monopoly of Western organizations”.²⁶ The fact that now the emerging donors are becoming (pro)active donors brings new experiences and mindsets on board. As emerging donors will be taking a larger share in the forthcoming years, Western humanitarian actors have to understand that in a multi-polar world they will not be the only ones to define humanitarianism and as a consequence they will have to come to grips with this rapidly changing reality²⁷.

3. Humanitarian architecture and geopolitical changes

Despite its claim for universalism, the current institutionalized humanitarian system has been accused of being Western-shaped and failing to represent global visions in humanitarian action²⁸. Indeed, Bragg referred to an attempt to officially create a “global” humanitarian system.²⁹ Western actors and entities are the ones that have had a largest impact on the way humanitarianism is politically and culturally assumed. These entities have established an institutionalized system (mainly through the UN), have developed the key concepts and shaped the history of humanitarianism.³⁰ Key decisions are still made, and debates take place, in Western capitals (e.g. Geneva, London, New York, or Rome) where traditional humanitarian institutions like the ICRC, think tanks like Overseas Development Institute (ODI), or organizations like Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) have their headquarters³¹. The majority of the international humanitarian organ-

²⁶ ICRC, op. cit.

²⁷ Antonio Donini, *The Golden Fleece: Manipulation and Independence in Humanitarian Action* (Sterling, VA: Kumarian, 2012).

²⁸ Andrea Binder and Claudia Meier, op. cit.; Eleanor Davey, *New Players through Old Lenses. Why History Matters in Engaging with Southern Actors*, vol. 4 (HPG Policy Brief, July 2012).

²⁹ Dr. Catherine Bragg, “The Global Humanitarian System: Why Should I Care?”, in *2012 Intensive Programme in Warsaw. Network on Humanitarian Action (NOHA)* (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 8 sept. 2012).

³⁰ Jérémie Labbé, *Rethinking Humanitarianism: Adapting to 21st Century Challenges* (Rep. New York: International Peace Institute, 2012).

³¹ Only the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA, an NGO consortia): member of and the National Societies of the Red Cross / Red Crescent Movement have internal members with headquarters in non-Western capitals.

izations managerial staff has a Western nationality or background (education). The oldest and most influential international humanitarian Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) were born in the West³². In fact, nearly all of the international humanitarian NGOs are based in the West [45% in the US and 34% in Western Europe³³]. And traditional donors (mainly US and EU) have been providing the largest part in humanitarian action. This is the reflection of the global dynamics (geopolitics) up to now, the reflection of the centers of power in international relations for the last decades, but as power in international relations is moving, this is changing.

The UN humanitarian system or architecture took years to get organized. Several reforms have contributed to improve its capacity and effectiveness. As a consequence of the slow and inadequate response to the Darfur crisis in Sudan in 2004, in 2005 the so-called "Humanitarian Reform Agenda", the last big reform of the humanitarian system, took place. One of the most important achievements of this reform was the introduction of the cluster approach essential to the current humanitarian architecture. By grouping humanitarian response through particular sectors, the clusters are supposed to enhance the creation of partnerships between humanitarian actors. This is particularly useful considering the density and multipolarity of the humanitarian landscape. They are therefore a crucial tool to ensure coordination and cooperation among actors in times of emergency what ultimately should contribute to saving more lives in a more effective way.

Even though the UN humanitarian system is far from perfect, it is perceived to have improved considerably in its performance. That is why keeping the UN humanitarian system relevant and legitimate should be a priority. However, for that the emerging donors and powers will have to be included somehow. Indeed, Stuenkel signaled that only by learning more about emerging donors and approaching them as equal actors can traditional donors identify common interests, possibilities for cooperation and mutual learning.³⁴ At a moment in which emerging donors are still defining their role, there is still time to adapt in a smooth way. Understanding what trends are taking place is crucial in order to adapt the humanitarian institutions to a changing environment. Accepting "other humanitari-

³² As a matter of fact, the biggest today are: Médecins Sans Frontières, Catholic Relief Services, Oxfam International, Save the Children and World Vision International; all West based.

³³ ALNAP, *The State of the Humanitarian System 2012* (Rep. London: ODI, July 2012).

³⁴ Oliver Stuenkel, "How Rising Powers Are Changing Humanitarian Assistance", Web log post. *Post-Western World: How Are Emerging Powers Changing the World?* (11 Feb. 2012).

anisms", being inclusive, and adapting to them, is not a choice anymore but a requirement. As Donini put it, "the world is changing faster than its institutions".³⁵ Hence, grasping what are the changes taking place can help the organizations retain relevance in a changing reality.

Some efforts have been made to include the new donors in the system. In this regard, some UN agencies are trying to court them. Agencies like the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or the World Food Programme (WFP) are already cooperating successfully with some of them (i.e. some Arab Countries³⁶).³⁷ But only recently some non-Western NGOs have started participating in the clusters system or in the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP). The IASC has not succeeded yet in attracting significant funds to the CAP from the emerging powers and donors.³⁸ And the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) process of trying to engage with the BRIC countries³⁹ has been underway for over a decade. The reactions to these efforts are being diverse and responses and capacity to engage with emerging donors is substantially different.⁴⁰

The rise of emerging powers as donors is desirable and offers opportunities in terms of more inclusiveness and increased legitimacy of the humanitarian system. However, it also poses many risks.⁴¹ For instance, the emerging donors could have interest in introducing some changes to the UN humanitarian system, or could be willing to review the humanitarian principles. Other tensions relate to how different understandings will reflect in practice. Analysing the impact of emerging donors practices in humanitarianism is an essential topic since as Donini puts it, orchestrating different conceptions and practices in humanitarian crisis is not an easy task.⁴²

³⁵ Antonio Donini, ed., *The State of the Humanitarian Enterprise; Humanitarian Agenda 2015: Final Report* (Rep. Medford, MA: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University (march 2008)).

³⁶ I.e. in 2008, Saudi gave the WFP US\$500 million, the WFP's largest donation ever. Alex Whiting, "Factbox-Profiles of New Humanitarian Aid Donors", *Thomson Reuters Foundation* (26 jan. 2012).

³⁷ Adele Harmer and Ellen Martin, eds., op. cit.; IRIN, "Analysis: Arab and Muslim Aid and the West: 'two China Elephants'", *IRINnews* (19 oct. 2011).

³⁸ Dr. Catherine Bragg, op. cit.

³⁹ This is: Brazil, Russia, India and China.

⁴⁰ Oliver Stuenkel, op. cit.

⁴¹ John Borton, op. cit.

⁴² Antonio Donini, ed., op. cit.

4. Bilateralism or multilateralism?

If Western influence shaped humanitarian action past and present, the future will be influenced by non-Western actors; and mainly by the emerging donors that are also emerging powers. Indeed, authors like Donini already said that it is “doubtful that the love affair of the West with humanitarian action will continue far into the 21st century”.⁴³ As a matter of fact, the economic crisis affecting many of the developed economies in the West is just catalyzing this process.

The main question mark relates to whether the emerging powers that are also emerging donors will subscribe and embrace the UN humanitarian architecture. One of the biggest concerns is that emerging donors seem to avoid using the UN and other multilateral channels⁴⁴. They seem to prefer giving bilateral aid⁴⁵ and funding regional mechanisms⁴⁶ or domestic organizations⁴⁷ to act abroad.⁴⁸ Academics are concerned about the implications of these choices for the UN humanitarian system. Indeed, the contributions of emerging donors through multilateral channels show considerable variation.⁴⁹ At a fundraising level some emerging donors have shown a steady commitment with the multilateral humanitarian system (e.g. contributions to the Central Emergency Response Fund —CERF—), but it is not the case for all. Besides, at the field level the support to multilateralism is way lower. Hence the question: will the emerging powers and donors prefer bilateralism or multilateralism?

Emerging donors’ choices in humanitarian affairs, their choice for bilateralism or multilateralism, will have crucial implications not only for the humanitarian system, but also for countries in crisis, aid organizations and agencies, NGOs, and all the other actors interacting in humanitarian crises.

⁴³ Antonio Donini, *op. cit.* (2012).

⁴⁴ Multilateral giving means that the economic support is directed towards international organizations which then distribute the money according to humanitarian needs (e.g. OCHA, UNHCR, FAO).

⁴⁵ Bilateral aid meaning aid channeled directly to the affected Governments. Providing bilateral aid allows more flexibility in choosing the destination of the funds; more visibility per contribution; permits ensuring effectiveness more easily; and implies fewer overheads (i.e. emerging donors often complain of the high costs of channeling aid through UN agencies). Kerry See Smith, *op. cit.*; Kaan Saner, *Head of International Relations*, Turkish Red Crescent, Turkey, 15 feb. 2013 (Skype interview).

⁴⁶ In example the Organization of the Islamic Conference or the African Union.

⁴⁷ The national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies are heavily funded and used to act abroad by some emerging donors like Qatar or China.

⁴⁸ Andrea Binder and Claudia Meier, *op. cit.*; IRIN, *op. cit.*; Jérémie Labbé, *op. cit.*

⁴⁹ Adele Harmer and Ellen Martin, eds., *op. cit.*

The fact that some emerging donors are also emerging powers puts these actors in a privileged position when it comes to impacting future humanitarian practices. The preference of emerging donors and powers for multi-lateral or bilateral contributions will have a definitive impact in the way humanitarian action is carried out and perceived. If in terms of development the South-South paradigm is defying the traditional North-South perspective. In terms of humanitarian action, traditional donors are challenged by the new views and practices emerging donors bring to the table. The UN humanitarian system is facing a critical historical juncture.

5. The Turkish case

Turkey is one of the countries with a two-fold identity. Indeed, Turkey is one of the most active emerging powers in the diplomatic field and one of the most dynamic emerging donors⁵⁰. Emerging powers are defined not only by a growing economy but also by recognition and soft power projection. Even though Turkey is not included in the most known emerging power acronym “the BRICS”⁵¹, it is part of at least two other groupings like the CIVETS⁵² and the Next Eleven (N11). The economy of the country has been growing rapidly since 2001⁵³. Nowadays it is the world 18th largest economy and statistics indicate that it will be in the 12th position by 2030.⁵⁴ The economic growth has given confidence to the country, and now it appears as a (post-Ottoman) regional power. Although Turkey has been hit by the global financial crisis in 2008-2009, the country has proved more resilient than the traditional economic powers.⁵⁵

Undiscovered as a donor for many, the country has been consistently involved in humanitarianism since the 90s when it was faced for the first time with a severe humanitarian crisis. Turkey’s engagement in humanitar-

⁵⁰ Turkey is both a recipient and a donor of humanitarian assistance. But it is its emerging donor facet what makes it a relevant case study in this case. For that reason, the study barely mentions the yearly natural disasters that affect the country since this would be more related to its nature as a recipient of aid.

⁵¹ Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

⁵² CIVETS stands for “Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, Turkey and South Africa”.

⁵³ Despite the country having difficulties in economic policy-making in the 1990s. André Bank and Roy Karadag, “The Political Economy of Regional Power: Turkey under the AKP”, *GIGA* (GIGA Research Unit: Institute of Middle East Studies, sept. 2012).

⁵⁴ Rediff, “World’s 20 Economic Superpowers”, *Rediff* (22 jan. 2013). Rediff, “World’s Top 20 Economic Superpowers by 2030”, *Rediff* (mar. 2012).

⁵⁵ André Bank and Roy Karadag, op. cit.; M. Ibrahim Turhan and Zübeyir Kilinc, “Turkey’s Response to the Global Economic Crisis”, *Inisght Turkey* 13.1 (2011): 37-45.

ian assistance is part of the country's strategy to maximize its reputation (a component of its foreign policy agenda). However, the whole Turkish foreign policy strategy is now compromised due to certain challenges. In example, Turkey is faced among other things with the consequences of the Arab Spring, with spillovers from the current conflict in Syria, and/or with the Kurdish issue (Bryant and Peterson 2013, Lesser 2012).⁵⁶ All this is relevant to humanitarian action as humanitarianism in Turkey is explicitly a matter of foreign policy and reputation. In this sense, the current challenges could compromise Turkish humanitarian policies. But humanitarianism could also become a tool to make up for the disruptions in place and keep on enhancing the country's status. Especially in a country where relief aid is still very state-centric and where the State is strong and civil society weak.⁵⁷

Due to historical and geographical reasons, Turkey has been exposed to humanitarian crises: both man-made and natural; both national and international. The country has historic experience dealing with refugees and earthquakes and it has been active in other kind of emergencies. Already in times of the Ottoman Empire, it was "very sensitive and tolerant on humanitarian matters".⁵⁸ It had policies of "open-doors" and accepted easily those seeking refuge. For example, many Jews tried to escape oppression in their homelands and found refuge in Turkey during the Spanish Inquisition in 1496. Also in a post-Ottoman Empire⁵⁹ era, Turkey was faced with humanitarian needs. It was the case of the massive arrival of Iranian refugees in Turkey after the Iranian revolution in 1979⁶⁰ and after the Turkish Erzincan Earthquake of 1939.

However, it was in the 90s, in the context of the Gulf War, when there was a massive displacement of millions of Iraqi refugees arriving in Turkey⁶¹. This was a turning point in Turkish aid, marking the beginning of

⁵⁶ Gönül Tol, "The 'Turkish Model' in the Middle East", *Current History* 111.749 (December 2012): 350-355; Pinar Tank, "Turkey's Challenges in the Syrian Crisis", *The New Middle East Blog* (Word Press, 13 Apr. 2012).

⁵⁷ Sema Genel (*Executive Director*, Support to Life / Hayata Destek, Turkey). "From a Turkish/Local NGO Point of View", 26 Feb. 2013 (skype interview).

⁵⁸ Dilek Latif, "Refugee policy of the Turkish republic", *The Turkish Yearbook* (2002).

⁵⁹ In 1922 the Ottoman Empire was replaced by the modern Republic of Turkey.

⁶⁰ Dilek Latif, op. cit. Turkey responded to the crisis by accepting some of the refugees; however, afraid of creating too much tension with the Iranian regime, International Humanitarian Law protection to refugees was not applied satisfactorily.

⁶¹ Ibid. Not all the people who tried to get asylum in Turkey were accepted as refugees. Besides, the ones that were, did not get the complete status of refugees and the full protection of the 1951 Refugee Convention nor in the 1967 Protocol; instead the authorities preferred to talk about "temporary guests" or "asylum seekers".

the first generation of Turkish humanitarian aid.⁶² In 1991, Turkey refused to accept more refugees and decided to close its border with Iraq⁶³. The displaced got stranded in Iraq's mountainous border until the international community created a safe haven in Iraq.⁶⁴ It was the US, many European countries and Turkish Kurds who then assisted the displaced Iraqis in Iraq. Even though the Turkish army provided some supplies, the response was completely unsatisfactory.⁶⁵

After that crisis Turkey was faced with many other humanitarian emergencies (i.e. conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, or Afghanistan, to mention just a few). But it is since 2009, with the appointment of Davutoğlu that the humanitarian compromise has expanded. The period 2011-2013 has been especially critical for Turkey in humanitarian action, with the humanitarian activity reaching its peak. This is due to 5 factors: the continued response to Iraqi refugees (some arriving but mostly return operations); the response to the Somali famine; the beginning of the Syrian civil war and its humanitarian consequences; the internal humanitarian crisis produced by the Van earthquake in October 2011⁶⁶; and other relatively minor humanitarian efforts⁶⁷.

The Turkish diplomat Kocaefe, Counsellor at the Turkish Embassy in Oslo (Norway) calculates Turkey's value of humanitarian assistance (both in-kind and in-cash) as US\$178 million in 2005.⁶⁸ She points towards a decrease in spending between 2005 and 2009, but towards an increase later (from US\$152 million in emergency aid in 2010 to US\$264 million in 2011). She denies aid is being linked to regional or religious components

⁶² Alpaslan Özerdem, "Series #2: New Actors: Turkey", *Humanity House* (The Hague: Changing Humanitarian Aid, Youtube, 8 nov. 2012).

⁶³ The reasons for this choice were political. At that time the largest part of refugees arriving were Kurds and Shi'ites. Based on the fact that the Kurdish minority was already perceived as a problem for Turkish authorities, accepting more Kurds into their territory would potentially increase internal tensions.

⁶⁴ Alpaslan Özerdem, op. cit.

⁶⁵ Peter W. Galbraith, *Refugees from War in Iraq. What Happened in 1991 and What May Happen in 2003*. MPI Policy Brief, Vol. No. 2 (Migration Policy Institute (MPI), february 2003).

⁶⁶ Year after year, Turkey is hit by natural disasters, mainly earthquakes and floods. In 2011, the biggest earthquake since the Marmara one was registered in the Van Province. This year Turkish humanitarian efforts were especially directed to address internal humanitarian needs. The international humanitarian community also responded to the crisis by assisting Turkey with aid (amongst the donors there were emerging donors: i.e. United Arab Emirates).

⁶⁷ In example in: occupied Palestinian territories (Gaza), Sudan, Libya, Afghanistan, Yemen, Myanmar.

⁶⁸ Ülkü Kocaefe (Counsellor at the Turkish Embassy in Oslo), "Turkish Humanitarian Aid from the Perspective of the MFA", personal interview (27 feb. 2013).

and refers to the response to the Haiti earthquake to prove her argument. There seems to be a shift in focus: from a regional preference, to (first) an Asiatic and (later since 2005) an African expansion in its aid activities. But despite the regional expansion of activities, there seems to still be a cultural—religious— and regional preference.⁶⁹

Turkey's participation in relief operations has diversified and increased significantly. It looks like the country has evolved in its aid commitment. A substantial change can be observed: from its reluctant and evasive participation in 1991 when faced with the arrival of Iraqi refugees, to its proactive performance with Syrian refugees today. The country has gained considerable experience dealing with refugees, earthquakes, and food aid. Turkey seems to be doing less humanitarian aid as a military component, and more as a civilian activity. If humanitarian efforts were very much linked to military activities in the 90s, the latest humanitarian activities pursued by Turkey seem to be carried out by the Turkish Red Crescent independently from the military. At the same time, Turkish relief efforts seem to be part of a holistic (foreign policy) strategy since they are often accompanied by other components: development cooperation, education (i.e. student exchanges), religious activities (i.e. building mosques), reconstruction, security, investment and peacebuilding activities. One of the most important things to keep in mind is that Turkey ranks the fifth among the top 10 emerging donors in humanitarian aid between 2006 and 2010⁷⁰; and its humanitarian efforts seem to be here to stay.⁷¹ A good example of this are the latest efforts for the institutionalization of a legal framework for refugee protection⁷² and the important efforts the country is making to cover the needs of the Syrian refugees that keep arriving to the country.

Turkey is rather a bilateral donor than a multilateral one.⁷³ Bilateralism is considered to be a more effective way to invest resources, with fewer intermediaries, more proximity to the beneficiary. However, the Turkish MFA stresses that Turkish humanitarian aid is not only bilateral and that the country seeks to increase its support to international organizations such as the WFP.⁷⁴ Studying the interactions of Turkey with the UN humanitarian system components offers a broader perspective.

⁶⁹ In a decreasing order, between 2005 and 2011, the countries that have received more aid support from Turkey are: Palestine, Syria, Pakistan, Libya and Somalia.

⁷⁰ Today's Zaman, "Turkey among New Donors Shaking up Humanitarian Aid" (26 jan. 2012).

⁷¹ Ülkü Kocaefe, *op. cit.*

⁷² Law on Foreigners and International Protection 2013.

⁷³ Sema Genel, *op. cit.*; Kaan Saner, *op. cit.*

⁷⁴ Ülkü Kocaefe, *op. cit.*; IRIN, *op. cit.*

In this sense, Turkey has shown a certain degree of commitment with some of the funding mechanisms established by OCHA. While it does not contribute to the ERFs and Common Humanitarian Funds (CHFs), it contributes to the CERF. Considering the main differences between the funding mechanisms, it could be that the country prefers to channel its donations to UN agencies, rather than to NGOs and/or that Turkey feels more comfortable with a fund being administered by the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), closest to the UN secretary general, and therefore a more senior and political figure, rather than, by the Humanitarian Coordinator and the Humanitarian Country Team, a more technical and ad-hoc entity.

While some so-called emerging donors seem to have a steady or increasing contribution to OCHA for the period 2010-2012 (e.g. Republic of Korea, China, or United Arab Emirates —UAE—), Turkey's last contribution to the organization dates from 2010 when it ranked as the 29th largest donor.⁷⁵ Before 2010, Turkey had contributed to funding the organization, although in an irregular basis⁷⁶. The contributions show a certain degree of support what suggests that Turkey perceives OCHA as a legitimate institution. However, the lack of economic support in the last years might suggest a preference for other aid coordinating structures. In fact, the Turkish Red Crescent preferred to keep a bit of distance with OCHA due to the difficulties it was experiencing in coordination.⁷⁷ If the UN system is unable to deal with emerging donors high standards, cooperation is not likely to increase. Karen Hostens, Head of Programmes at the Norwegian Red Cross, pointed an interesting example: the Norwegian Red Crescent sent tents to Turkey after the Van Earthquake in 2010, however, after a field visit they saw that the tents were not being used except for storage purposes; the Turks had their own tents which were produced locally, at good quality, and probably at a lower cost.⁷⁸

Back to OCHA's funding, OCHA's 25th largest donors gather in the OCHA Donor Support Group (ODSG), an informal grouping⁷⁹. The group gives advice and feedback on policy, management, budget issues and fi-

⁷⁵ OCHA.b "OCHA Donor Ranking (Actual Ranking 2010-2011-2012 Paid and Pledged)", OCHA.

⁷⁶ FTS database (may 2013).

⁷⁷ Kaan Saner, op. cit.

⁷⁸ Karen Hostens (*Head of Programmes Region 1, International Department*) and Lars Erik Svanberg (*Program Coordinator for Middle East and North Africa*) (Norwegian Red Cross, Norway), personal interview (22 feb. 2013).

⁷⁹ The ODSG is currently comprised of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Korea, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UAE, United Kingdom, US and the European Commission.

financial questions, and discusses ways to assist OCHA. The members are committed to keep on supporting OCHA's activities (politically, financially and technically). The group, in cooperation with OCHA, has been actively engaged in efforts to build partnerships with the emerging donors. One of the tactics used have been celebrating conferences and events in emerging donors' countries. One of these meetings was actually hosted in Turkey, Istanbul in 2006. John Holmes, former ERC, openly and repeatedly encouraged Turkey to join the ODSG without succeeding.⁸⁰ Seeing the evolution of the country's contributions it is un-likely that the country will position itself amongst the 25th largest donors in the near future.

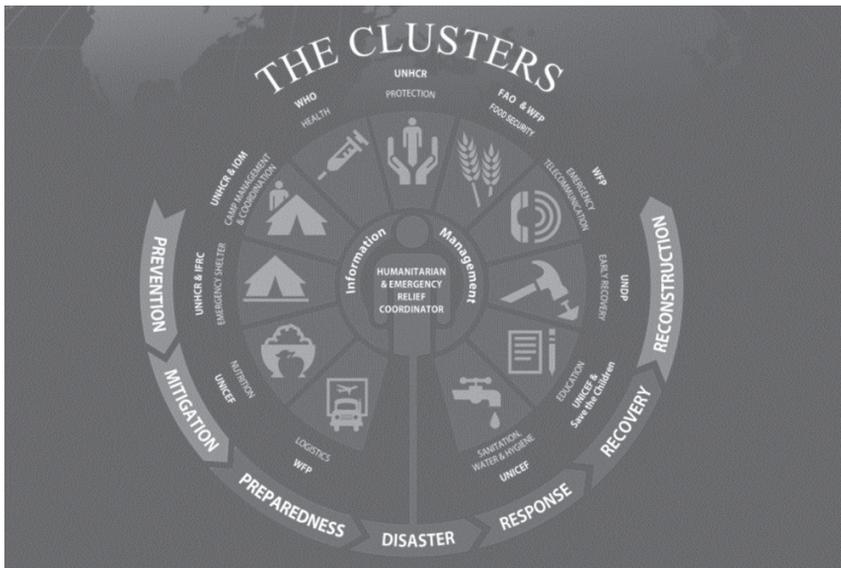


Figure 1

The clusters system. Source: Cluster Coordination. OCHA website

The relationship of Turkey with the Cluster Lead Agencies is not uniform. If the relationship with the WFP, the UNHCR, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) —in fact, with the Turkish Red Crescent rather than with the IFRC—, seems to be quite

⁸⁰ Andrea Binder, Claudia Meier and Julia Steets, "Humanitarian Assistance: Truly Universal? A Mapping Study of Non-Western Donors". *GPPI Research Paper*, No.10 (august 2010).

strong. In the case of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), FAO, World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the relation is weaker, at least in humanitarian issues. And with Save the Children, the NGO, the relationship seems to be inexistent. This could suggest a preference for international organizations and UN agencies, over NGOs.

6. Turkey: Somalia versus Syria

Turkey's involvement in humanitarian action is mostly known because of the aid provided to assist people affected by the Somali and the Syrian crisis. In this sense comparing the two responses from the perspective of multilateralism and bilateralism allows for a better understanding. In the case of the humanitarian response in Somalia after 2011⁸¹, unlike the international humanitarian community that had been working remotely from Kenya for nearly two decades, Turkey decided to have real presence in the field and sent Turkish aid workers and aid not only to Mogadishu but also to other Somali territories considered no-go zone for most international aid organizations. It was the Turkish presence what afterwards triggered other international humanitarian actors to move back to Somalia and to work from there.⁸² Despite Turkish economic contribution to humanitarian activities in Somalia was minor in comparison to other donors, the country was the largest emerging donor in the response. Besides, humanitarian efforts were topped up with the hopeful visit, in August 2011, of Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan who arrived in Somalia together with his family, members of his cabinet, businessmen and Turkish celebrities⁸³. The visit gave high visibility to Turkish efforts as a donor, both in Turkey and internationally.

It is relevant to consider the critiques to Turkey unfolding a unilateral humanitarian policy in Somalia. It seems that if Turkey wants to become

⁸¹ An extreme drought affected the Horn of Africa region unfolding a famine crisis, due to the hazardous context, the international humanitarian community had been working remotely from Kenya for nearly two decades.

⁸² Alpaslan Özerdem, "How Turkey Is Emerging as a Development Partner in Africa", *The Guardian*. Transforming Institutions Hub. Global Development Professionals Network (10 apr. 2013); International Crisis Group, "Assessing Turkey's Role in Somalia". *Policy Briefing, Africa Briefing*, n.º 92 (International Crisis Group, 8 oct. 2012).

⁸³ It was symbolically important because it was the first visit of a foreign leader to the capital in about 20 years. The visit also took place during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

a long-term player with a good reputation in the field of humanitarian response, this criticism could play against its own interest.⁸⁴ Turkey acted in Somalia through Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) and the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) but also through other ministries (i.e. health), governmental agencies (i.e. religious affairs directorate in the prime minister's office —known as Diyanet—) and NGOs (mainly the Turkish Red Crescent, but also NGOs like IHH or Kimse Yok Mu). The main critic to Turkey so far is that it did not coordinate its efforts with other humanitarian actors on the ground. However, Kaan Saner, Head of International Relations at the Turkish Red Crescent, and Kocaeefe signaled that the lack of interaction was due to the conjuncture; to the fact that not many international actors were present in Somalia.⁸⁵ Both interviewees complained about the high cost of supporting international projects (overheads, tickets, etc.) signaling how only 30% of the money transferred into multilateral entities would reach the beneficiaries. The unilateral performance of Turkey in Somalia generated ethical dilemmas, practical constraints, and created unnecessary tensions. In this sense, the interlinked political and economic interests unchained criticism on Turkey not respecting the humanitarian principles (mainly the neutrality one)⁸⁶. Besides, the long experience of traditional donors which learned by doing mistakes, was ignored when there is no need in re-inventing the wheel. By avoiding teamwork and coordination, traditional donors felt neglected. But more important than this, the unilateral activities could have led to duplication of efforts and population unattended. In the Somalia response, despite the clusters system was activated and there was presence of UN agencies, it was the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) who coordinated the work of aid agencies instead of OCHA.⁸⁷

Regarding the response to the humanitarian crisis to the Syrian conflict that started in 2011, and led to a massive displacement of Syrian refugees into Turkey that continues until today, this has been (and is) the largest challenge Turkey has faced up to date in humanitarian terms. In response to the Syrian crisis and to the arrival of refugees, the government, through AFAD, is in charge of the management and coordination of the humani-

⁸⁴ Alpaslan Özerdem, op. cit. (10 apr. 2013).

⁸⁵ Ülkü Kocaeefe, op. cit.; Kaan Saner, op. cit.

⁸⁶ Hüseyin Oruç, "Humanitarian Principles: Perspectives from an Islamic NGO" (interview); *ICRC Resource Centre* (ICRC, 4 June 2013). Oruç explains that Turkey, and for that matter other Arab donors, accepts the humanitarian principles. However, it may understand them in a different way. Especially when it comes to the principle of neutrality.

⁸⁷ Alex Whiting, op. cit. (26 Jan. 2012).

tarian response. The Turkish Red Crescent Society has a privileged relation with AFAD and is working as an auxiliary to the Government of Turkey. It is the implementing partner providing humanitarian services (both essential food and non-food relief items and shelter services in the camps).

According to the information provided by the Government of Turkey, if 9,500 people were registered in the country by January 15th 2012; by mid-October 2013 the number of Syrians living in Turkey reached 200,045.⁸⁸ Turkey has been doing continuous efforts to address the evolving needs⁸⁹. At present, Syrians arriving in Turkey and seeking asylum enjoy an open border policy with admission to the territory; protection against forcible returns (respect of the non-refoulement International Humanitarian Law principle); and access to basic reception arrangements, where immediate needs are addressed⁹⁰.

As of October 26th 2013, there are 21 camps in Turkey.⁹¹ According to several sources the camp standards are one of the highest ever seen (i.e. they have schools, mosques, playgrounds, television watching units, three hot meals a day, and extras like fridges or fans). Panos Moutziz, UNCHR coordinator for Syrian refugees, states clearly in an interview that "Turkey provides things we are unable to offer in our camps, like hot water, three meals per day, and whoever gets married goes on a month holiday".⁹² Indeed, Sema Genel, Executive Director of Support to Life / Hayata Destek (Turkish NGO), and Hostens referred to 5 star refugee camps. The WFP expressed the same concern and was afraid of creating too high expectations to the refugee community.⁹³ A high representative of a Nordic country in Ankara (Turkey) was concerned that the international community was not in a position to offer such high quality standards. Several of the interviews were afraid that when finally Turkey asked for the cooperation of the international community; it would not be possible under the terms they desired.⁹⁴ Indeed,

⁸⁸ UNHCR, "UNHCR Turkey Syrian Refugee Daily Sitrep", *ReliefWeb* (21 october 2013).

⁸⁹ I.e. Preparing winterization strategies.

⁹⁰ WFP, "Regional Emergency Operation 200433: Food Assistance to Syrian Populations in Turkey", *ReliefWeb*, 21 aug. 2012. Amnesty International, *Turkey: national authorities and the international community must act in partnership to meet the needs of Syrian refugees* (Rep. Amnesty International Publications, 2013).

⁹¹ UNHCR, op. cit. Most of the camps are situated close to the Syrian border in the South Eastern Anatolia Region of Turkey. However, more than 300,000 Syrians congregate in informal settings and host communities.

⁹² Panos Moutziz, "Q&A: Crisis Escalates as International Community Fails Syria" (interview by Apostolis Fotiadis), *Inter Press Service* (ReliefWeb, 18 may 2013).

⁹³ WFP, op. cit.

⁹⁴ Sema Genel, op. cit.; Karen Hostens and Lars Erik Svanberg, op. cit.

having so different standards, way beyond Sphere⁹⁵, can be problematic for multilateral cooperation. In this sense, if the UN humanitarian system is incapable to cope with the standards of the emerging donors, they might prefer to channel their resources bilaterally or unilaterally rather than giving them to organizations that will not use them as they would do and that will achieve lower results (in quality). But at the same time, if camps are meant to be temporary shelter, providing better conditions than at home might also be an issue when it comes to return.

Regarding the cooperation issue, AFAD has involved several ministries in the humanitarian response⁹⁶. It is common that when a crisis is happening in a neighboring country, the humanitarian response is done through the deployment of civil protection and other national assets rather than through the UN multilateral system. At the beginning and for months, Turkey refused external aid, considering it could handle the situation on its own until the country realized of the immensity of the humanitarian efforts needed⁹⁷.

In comparison with Somalia, in Syria there has been more multilateralism. There has been some degree of opening up to UN agencies. But still, many coordinating activities seem to be done without OCHA. AFAD coordinates the agencies of the UN system and the organizations and NGOs that participate in the relief efforts. At the same time, UNHCR has been designated by OCHA as the lead agency for planning and coordination for the Syria Regional Refugee response. It coordinates the efforts of other UN agencies and international NGOs, however, it has a subsidiary and secondary role in terms of coordination and leading efforts. In this sense, António Guterres, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees appealed to the international community to establish "a much stronger bilateral cooperation with Turkey" in supporting the Turkish government's efforts.⁹⁸ UNHCR's and OCHA's partners in leading efforts by sector are: IOM and UNHCR (Core Relief Items); WFP (Food security); WHO (Health); and UNHCR (Shelter). Other agencies are participating in the efforts too

⁹⁵ The Sphere Handbook is an internationally recognized set of common principles and universal minimum standards in humanitarian response.

⁹⁶ The Turkish Ministry of Health provides health services at the camps and at the border; the Ministry of Family and Social Policies provides social aid to people affected; the Ministry of Education provides education for children; and for security issues, the Ministry of Internal Affairs is responsible for police and security.

⁹⁷ IRIN, "SYRIA: Turkey Opens up to International Aid in Camps", *IRINnews* (16 nov. 2012).

⁹⁸ World Bulletin, "Turkish Disaster Agency Signs Deal with UNHCR", *World Bulletin* (11 mar. 2012).

(i.e. UNICEF monitoring the situation and providing aid). The Cluster Lead Agencies that show a lower profile in the Syrian response in Turkey are UNDP, Save the Children and FAO. The IFRC "representation" seems to be partially done by the Turkish Red Crescent who has a very high profile in the response.

Despite acknowledgement for the effort Turkey is doing, there seems to be some degree of discomfort on the way Turkey leads the response to the crisis. The Turkish Red Crescent's strong relation and interaction with AFAD has led to suspicions amongst other members of the movement who see it as an unacceptable distancing with the IFRC and the ICRC.⁹⁹ As many interviewees complain, the Turkish Red Crescent Society is the only organization that has been granted regular access to the Turkish border points and camps. Despite some exceptions that might indicate change the rest of the organizations cannot access them.¹⁰⁰ At the same time, the fact that some of the old camps do not respect the standard distance of 50km from the border and practices like the delivery of aid at the Syrian border zero point are seen with suspicion¹⁰¹. Besides, a factor that might show Turkey not being interested in cooperating with NGOs is that most international NGOs are working "undercover" since they do not get the official permission they require to work on the field.¹⁰² Other tensions relate to the fact that those seeking asylum are not officially considered refugees but rather "guests".¹⁰³

But in the case of Syria, the situation also goes beyond humanitarian aid. Turkey is affected directly by the conflict: from spillover attacks, to negative economic consequences. Turkey is not perceived as a neutral player. The country is said to support to the Syrian opposition, to enhance a sectarian policy against the Shiites and Syrian Alawites, and to have armed and hosted armed opposition groups.¹⁰⁴ As a consequence, the whole period has been accompanied by escalating tension along the Turkish-Syria border. It resembles the Iraqi crisis in the 90s and later in 2003-09 (e.g. Turkey has tried to establish a safe haven and no-fly zone in Syria). Hence, the country is looking and calling actively for political solutions at the time it raises the humanitarian profile.

⁹⁹ Karen Hostens and Lars Erik Svanberg, op. cit.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., Sema Genel, op. cit.

¹⁰¹ Karen Hostens and Lars Erik Svanberg, op. cit.: IRIN, op. cit.

¹⁰² Ibid., Sema Genel, op. cit.

¹⁰³ IRIN, op. cit.

¹⁰⁴ Gönül Tol, op. cit. Mark Naftalin (*Researcher*, PRIO, Norway), personal interview (24 nov. 2012). Mark Naftalin and Kristian Berg Harpviken, "Rebels and Refugees. Syrians in Southern Turkey", *PRIO Policy Brief* 10 (Oslo: PRIO, 10 september 2012).

Despite the criticism that Turkey has faced in both humanitarian responses for being perceived as an actor neglecting the rest, if both situations are compared —acknowledging how different they are—, it is clear that the degree of cooperation in the Syrian response is considerably higher than in the case of Somalia. In the case of the Syrian refugees, Turkey is now collaborating (through the Turkish Red Crescent) with key UN agencies and Cluster Lead Agencies in the provision of humanitarian aid in an increasing way. It looks like this is due to necessity rather than to a genuine interest for cooperation. The reasons remain to be studied. What is interesting is to see that gradually there seems to be more cooperation with the international humanitarian system.

7. Multilateral cooperation as a strategic choice

In a world context characterized by geopolitical and economic change—in the sense of emerging powers rising and Western powers undergoing an economic and financial crisis—, and raising humanitarian needs, the humanitarian field is faced with the arrival of the emerging powers and donors in the aid sphere. Emerging powers and donors have an important opportunity to increase their contributions, raise their profile, and project new conceptions of aid. Aware of this opportunity, Turkey has been increasing the scope of its humanitarian activities. It has to be noted that a single case study cannot be taken as a proof for all the emerging donors. Nonetheless, the case of Turkey contributes to the global picture of how emerging donors and powers are investing their resources in humanitarian assistance through the UN multilateral channels.

Turkey is an active emerging donor that seems to be seeking an identity in the field of humanitarianism. More than questioning the legitimacy of the UN humanitarian system, the cooperation with OCHA and most of the Cluster Lead Agencies suggests that Ankara is willing to support the multilateral humanitarian system. However, the fact that the cooperation is ambiguous and rather weak and/or ad-hoc, also suggests that the country is still identifying its best allies. It seems that the humanitarian commitments are there to stay, since humanitarian activities have been increasing and becoming more visible. This humanitarian activity has specially been proved through unilateral and bilateral channels. Indeed, Turkey has been accused of pursuing a unilateral and not very transparent response to the Syrian crisis; however the cooperation with the UN humanitarian system has increased significantly compared to the response to the Somali crisis. Turkey contributes to the UN humanitarian system; however, the relationship is not harmonized with all the organizations. It is strong with organi-

zations like the WFP or UNHCR and inexistent or very low with others like Save the Children. Considering the WFP is said to be the UN agency with stronger relations with emerging donors, this could suggest strong efforts from the organizations side, rather than a strong interest on behalf of Turkey.

It is understandable the concern shown by some Western actors to Turkey's unilateral and bilateral humanitarian actions. Indeed, it would be counterproductive if unilateralism would become the rule, the pattern for emerging donors in humanitarianism (what could happen in the case they did not feel recognized in the humanitarian system). Then, all sort of ethical and practical problems; along with tensions would turn not only against the donor itself, but also against the humanitarian system. This research builds on the fact that multilateral humanitarian action provides more guarantees for coordination; it allows less risk—but not immunity—of aid politization and instrumentalization. Also, it enhances more accountability and transparency; and from an economy of scale perspective, it generates more efficiency in the use of resources and less duplication of efforts. Therefore joint response efforts are meant to be more effective, but this requires building partnerships amongst the humanitarian actors.

The fact that Turkey has been increasing its cooperation with the humanitarian multilateral actors could point towards an era of more cooperation with the UN humanitarian system. Nonetheless, more than a compromise with multilateralism this looks more like an ad-hoc arrangement. It is presumed that if multilateralism had become a long-term approach, the cooperation would have been wider, more open, and extended to all the Cluster Lead Agencies, and even to international NGOs. Proving this right or wrong, and understanding if this will become a new trend will require further research in the years to come. In fact the choice for multilateralism or bilateralism seems to respond more to strategic and realistic choices based on *real politik* rather than to a multilateral vocation. Hence, Turkey's purpose is not per se to challenge the system or other humanitarian actors, since it admits its legitimacy by cooperating with it. The intention is rather to balance its humanitarian activity, with its foreign policy goals, and to build its own image as a strong and leading humanitarian actor.

The emerging donors, despite sharing a label, and in spite of the discourse of similarity, are not necessarily acting in the same way in humanitarian assistance. If each donor decides to act in its own terms, an anarchist and fragmented humanitarian system could emerge. If on the contrary, emerging donors would decide to harmonize their practices, like in other movements—i.e. NAM—, they could challenge the current sys-

tem and/or establish parallel forms of global humanitarian governance. Multipolarism in humanitarian action will not necessarily bring more multilateralism. A pragmatic and operational multilateralism is expected to exist in a system marked by the fragmentation of the actions. Hence, the best way to prevent fragmentation and promote a relevant UN humanitarian system is to adapt it, make it more inclusive, ensuring the representation of the so-called emerging donors.

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