The United Nations and Challenges for Human Rights in Twenty First Century

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Abstract

The formation of association of countries at global, regional and sub-regional levels has been seen as a matter of necessity by nation states in order to promote peace. It was on this premise that the United Nations organization was formed in 1945 to prevent another world war. The main objective this paper is to analyze the challenges for Human Rights in the twenty first century under the platform of United Nations organization. In order to protect and promote human rights globally, the organization established universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) that was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10, 1948 in Paris France. The cosmopolitanism theory underlines the framework for the analysis of the study. It made use of secondary sources like textbooks, magazines, newspapers, internet materials, official documents and UN websites as the method of data collection. The study found out that unless the above issues raise is addressed globally, it is difficult if not impossible to avoid world war III. The paper also posits that it was the failure of the league of Nations that was formed in 1919 after the first world war I (1914-1918) to address the problems that led to the world war II between 1939-1945. Finally, the paper therefore recommended that the nation-states and UN should work together to increase international order and the rule of law to protect and promote human rights globally.

Keywords: United Nations, Human Right, Humanitarian law, international laws and UDHR

Introduction

The formation of unions among countries of the world especially after World War II in 1939-1945 is to prevent another World War. Prior to this time, the league of Nations was established in 1919 shortly after the World War I that led to the loss of lives and great suffering of people. Ukagbu (2016, p.18) avers that the purpose of creating the league of Nations was to unite the people of the World, heal War wounds and prevent a re-occurrence of another World War. It was also to help nip in the bud situation that could escalate in to War of a high magnitude (Ola, 1997). Yet, in 1939, World War II broke out and millions of people died.

Lamenting on the devastated effect of the War, Findlay (1985) study which covered only the period between 1945 and 1984 rightly observed that;

It is estimated that over 20 million people have died from wars since the end of the second World War in 1945 and apart from the 20 million dead, about 26-30 million people become refugees or displaced persons during the same period.

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The league of Nations failed to prevent the War and was scrapped as a World body. In its place another body, called the United Nations organization was established in 1945 in San Francisco by 51 States to promote world peace, freedom and to prevent another War. It was also to facilitate conditions that are conducive to peaceful co-existence of Nations of the world (Ayoni-Akeke, 2008).

In order to protect and promote human rights globally, the universal declaration that specified the rights of individuals was put together by a committee led by Eleanor Roosevelt, the wife of the then President of the United States of America, Frank in Roosevelt. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10, 1948 in Paris, France and it consists of thirty articles.

However, the United Nations went further to create international laws to protect Human Rights. These international laws are binding on all nations that belong to the United Nations that is why the basic laws of many nations today include the rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. For instance, a section of the constitution of Nigeria, South Africa, Ghana, China, Russia, America, etc. contains these rights.

In line with this premises, Goldstein (2013) imports that the declaration roots itself in the principle that violations of human rights upset international order (causing outrage, sparking rebellion, etc) and in the fact that the UN charter commits States to respect fundamental freedoms. The adoption of the UDHR is a significant international commemoration marked each year on December 10, and is known as International Human Rights Day.

Thus, there are numerous challenges facing the United Nations Organization, but the aim of this paper is to focus on the issues of human rights. The paper is divided into five sections. Section one will introduce the topic. Section two will explain some concepts such as United Nations, Human Rights, UDHR, Humanitarian Law and International Laws. Section three will reveal and analyze the efforts of United Nations towards enforcing human rights globally. Section four will discuss the challenges for human rights in the twenty-first century while Section five will discuss seven cores of UDHR and conclusion.

Research Methodology
The study relied mainly on secondary sources of data drawn from text books, journals, official publications, conference papers, internet materials, newspapers, magazines and official documentaries that are relevant to the work. The analysis of data was based on deductions from the issues raised in the paper in the light of available data gathered.

Conceptual Dissection
For the purpose of better understanding, it is convenient to explain basic issues underlying this work. It is also relevant to state that the locus of our discussion would be based on the world view of the United Nations as a body. Having made these remarks, it is essential to clarify these terms in order to understand their meaning.

United Nations Organization
United Nations is an international organization founded in 1945 in San Francisco by 51 States after the World War II to prevent another World War. Prior to this time, the league of the Nations was established in 1919 shortly after the World War I (1914 – 1918) that led to the loss of lives and great suffering of people with the mandate of promoting international cooperation, peace and security among member States. Annan (1999) imports that the twentieth century stands out as a century of War, genocide and immense suffering. Indeed, it was a century with not only the highest number of wars but also the century in which the world witnessed two separate World Wars (1914-
1918 and 1939 – 1945) and a cold war (1945-1989) that threatened to escalate into a nuclear holocaust.

Suffice is to say that the inability of the league of Nations to settle dispute among Nations led to the outbreak of the World War II in 1939, which was even more destructive than World War1. However, the United Nations was the successor to the League of Nations, which had failed to effectively counter aggression in the 1930s. It is currently made up of 193 member States.

Objectives of United Nations Organization (UNO)

i. To maintain international peace and security through effective and collective measures to stop aggression and prevent a breach of peace.

ii. To encourage all Nations to develop respect for fundamental human rights and freedom for all people without any discrimination based on race, language or religion.

iii. To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principles of equal rights and self-determination of peoples.

iv. To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character.

v. To remove and prevent causes of wars.

vi. To respect the sovereignty of every independent nation. This means that UN shall not intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of member states except when it is acting to enforce international peace and security.

Human Rights

The concepts of Human Rights have been globally contested by various scholars, because there is no generally acceptable operational definition of what human right is. The concept of human rights arises from at least three sources. The first is religion, this means that human beings were created in an image of a higher power and therefore all humans are to be afforded the dignity and respect that are due to the higher power. Secondly, political and legal philosophers like Aristotle (322), John Locke (1704), Immanuel Kant (1795), Thomas Hobbes, Jean Jacques Rousseau (1778), etc has discussed the idea of natural law and natural rights. They argued that a natural law exists that grants all humans the right to life, liberty, property and happiness.

Thus, political revolutions in the 18th century, such as the American and French revolutions, translated the theory of natural law and natural rights into practice. In America, the Declaration of Independence in 1776, and in France, the Declaration of the Rights of man and citizen in 1688, created laws that solidified the idea that human beings have certain rights that no State or other individuals can take away.

However, other scholars like (Charles, 2010, Goldstein, 2013) argues that human rights are universal. This means no matter where a person resides, no matter his or her ethnic nationality and no matter his or her local religious, ethnic or clan traditions, that person has certain rights that must be respected. But Charles further imports that the sovereignty gives States the rights to do as they please in their own territory, nobody can tell them how to treat their own citizens.

Having reviewed the various approaches of Human Rights, it is imperative to define it within this jurisdiction for the purpose of understanding. According to Okorie (2007), human rights are those fundamental rights that every citizen of a country is entitled to enjoy as a right. Ukegbu (2016, p.45), described human rights as the basic natural rights which are essential for human existence and every citizen is entitled to them and is expected to enjoy them in full without hindrance or
discrimination. Human rights are natural to all human beings. It is also inherent in man and cannot be taken away. This is why it is called ineligible rights.

In search of a more acceptable definition of human rights, Charles(2010] described human rights as the political and social entitlements recognized by international law as inalienable and valid for individuals in all countries by virtue of their humanity. In his own contribution, Kofi Annan, the former secretary general of the United Nations, argued that “Human Rights are foreign to no culture and cannot pick and choose among human rights, whether civil, cultural, economic, political or social”. It is the duty of the State to ensure that its citizens enjoy these rights, as articulated by the UN in 1948 and are entrenched in constitution of all member states.

**Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**

The background of the universal declaration of Human Rights can be traced back to Cyrus the Great First King of Ancient Persia who conquered the city of Babylon. He freed all slaves and asked them to return to their homes and declared that people should choose their own religions. This declaration of 539 BC, which he put in a clay tablet known as the Cyrus Cylinder, is still hailed as the first Human Rights declaration in history.

Second, was the Magna Carta Libertatum, commonly called Magna Carta was a charter agreed to by King John of England at Runnymede, near Windsor on June 15, 1215. As a result of the charter, King John was forced to restrict his powers and transferred power from the King to the people, giving people new Rights and making the King subject to the law. It was a national law signed by King John himself.

Third, in 1628 there was petition of rights sent by English parliament to King Charles complaining of a series of breach of law which set out the rights of the people. This was followed by the United States Declaration of independence in 1776 which proclaimed the rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Fourth, in 1789, a revolution took place which changed the face of Europe and affected the whole world. It was called the French revolution and was fought by the peasants against the rich aristocrats of France. It brought about the declaration of the rights of man and of the citizens in 1789 stating that all citizens are equal under the law.

Finally on this note, in 1948, the UN General Assembly adopted Universal Declaration of Human Rights and listed thirty rights that everyone is entitled to. The declaration proclaims that “all human beings are born – free and equal” without regard to race, sex, language, religion, political affiliation or the status of the territory in which they were born.

From the above background, UDHR is the global proclamation specifying the rights of individuals. It is the primary international expression of fundamental or inalienable rights of members of the human race. As earlier noted, it was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization on December 10, 1948 in Paris, France.

The following points are the seven core freedoms of the UDHR:

i. Right to life
ii. Freedom of speech
iii. Freedom of Assembly
iv. Freedom from fear
v. Freedom from want
vi. Freedom from Discrimination
vii. Freedom of movement

In order to protect human rights globally, there is an obligation placed on the member states by the international law to act in a way that does not infringe on the Human Right of Citizens,
which is enshrined in the constitution of every member states of the United Nations But we must state here that the law does not established human rights, human rights are founded on respect for dignity of man.

**International Humanitarian Law**

International Humanitarian Law is the law that regulates the conduct of war (Kelsen, 1952). It is the branch of international law which seeks to limit the effects of armed conflict by protecting persons who are not participating in hostilities and by restricting and regulating the means and methods of warfare available to combatants.

On the other hand, Forsythe (2005) described international humanitarian law as a set of rules established by treaty or custom that seeks to protect persons and property/objects that are affected by armed conflict and limits the rights of parties to a conflict to use methods and means of warfare of their choice. The treaties include, the Geneva conventions and the Hague conventions, as well as subsequent treaties, case law, and customary international law. Hashmi (2002) avers that the convention defines the conduct and responsibilities of belligerent nations, neutral nations and individual engaged in warfare, in relation to each other and to protect persons, usually meaning non-combatants.

According to Umozurike (2010) international humanitarian law derives from the basic principle that the individual is entitled to certain minimum rights whether in peace or in war. Umozurike further argues that the person is entitled to protection, security and respect, if wounded or captured, he is entitled to care and humane treatment, if dead, his body is entitled to decent treatment. International humanitarian law aims at limiting human suffering in situations of armed conflicts while at the same time prevent atrocities.

Giving credence to above submission, the world leaders submit in 2005 enshrined the concept of the responsibility to protect (R2P), which holds that government worldwide must act to save civilians from genocide or crimes against humanity perpetrated or allowed by their own government (Goldstein, 2013).

Below are the Basic Rules of International Humanitarian Law:

1. Persons who are not taking part in hostilities in situation of armed conflict, example, neutral nationals shall be protected in all circumstances.
2. The wounded and the sick shall be cared for and protected by the party to the conflict which has them in its power. The emblem of the “Red Cross” or of the “Red Crescent”, shall be required to be respected as the sign of protection.
3. Captured persons must be protected against acts of violence and reprisals. They shall have the right to correspond with their families and to receive relief.
4. No one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
5. Parties to a conflict do not have an unlimited choice of methods and means of warfare.
6. Parties to a conflict shall at all times distinguish between combatants and non-combatants. Attacks shall be directed solely against military targets (Stewart, 2003).

However, the examples of Rules of International Humanitarian Law are, the prohibition on attacking doctors or ambulances displaying a red cross. It is also prohibited to fire at a person or vehicle bearing a white flag of truce, indicates an intent to surrender or a desire to communicate in either case, the persons protected by the Red Cross or the white flag are expected to maintain neutrality and may not engage in war activities under a
white flag or a red cross is itself a violation of the laws of war.

In order to further protect human rights globally international humanitarian law established several treaties that outlaw specific weapons. There conventions were created largely because these weapons caused deaths injuries long after conflicts have ended. Unexploded land mines have caused up to 7,000 deaths a years (Koskenneimi, 2002). An estimated 98% of the victims are civilian, farmers tilling their fields and children who find these explosives have been common victims. For these reasons, the following conventions have been adopted:

- The convention on prohibitions or restriction on the use of certain conventional weapons which may be deemed to be excessively, injurious or to have indiscriminate effects (1980), which prohibits attacking civilians incendiary weapons.
- The convention on the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines and on their Destruction (1997), also called the attawa treaty or the Mine Ban Treaty, which completely bans the stockpiling.
- The optional protocol in the involvement of children in Armed Conflict (2000), an amendment to the convention on the rights of the child (1989), which forbids the enlistment of anyone under the age of eighteen for armed conflict.
- The convention on cluster Munitions (2008), which prohibits the use of bombs that scatter bomblets, many of which do not explode and remain dangerous long after a conflict has ended (Christopher, 2008,p).

**International Law**

The absence of rules and regulations in international relations is an invitation to chaos and anarchy. Giving credence to above assertion, international law is the set of rules generally regarded and accepted as binding in relations between states and between nations (Slomanson, 2011,p.34). International law serves as a framework for the practice of stable and organized international solutions.

In line with this submission, Charles (2010) described international law as the body of general normative principles and specific legal rules that govern the behavior of states in their relations with one another. No principle of international law is more important than state sovereignty. Opponheim (1905, p.98) view international law as the body of customary and conventional rules which are considered legally binding by civilized states in their intercourse with each other.

Finally, Vyshinsky (1948) cited in Palmer (2010) defined international law as the sum total of the norms regulating relations between states in the process of their struggle and cooperation, expressing the will of the ruling classes of these states and secured by coercion exercised by states individually or collectively. International law, unlike national laws, derives not from actions of a legislative branch or other central authority, but from traditional and agreements signed by states. It also differs in difficulty of enforcement, which depends not on the power and authority of central government but on reciprocity, collective action, and international norms.

**Theoretical Framework**

The paper adopts the cosmopolitanism theory as the framework for explaining the challenges of human rights in twenty first under the platform of United Nations. The word cosmopolitanism was derives from Greek, cosmo, meaning “Universe” and polis (city) meaning “citizen of the world”. It is the idea that all of humanity belongs to a single global community (Brock 2005, p.205). Archibugi (2005) imports that every human being is seen as a citizen of the world in his capacity of
reason regardless of bloodlineage and racial origins. The thinkers of the enlightenment, such as Kant in the eighteen century, embarked this idea.

However, cosmopolitanism theory can be traced back to the founding fathers of the cynics movement in Ancient Greece, Diogenes of sinope (412 BCE). They adopted ideas of Socrates, contributed significantly stoic system of ethic, established a traditional of challenging established beliefs in order to discover truth. Cynics school was the first to presented this idea stoics developed it with Alexander the Great’s expeditions and the formation of Roman Empire as its backgroud.

The proponent of the theory are Beck (2005), Appiah (2006), Archibugi (1995), Demotrius (2011) and Charles (2010). They believe that all humans, and not merely fellow-citizens, come under the same moral standards. The above scholar further argued that the boundaries between nations, states, cultures, or societies are therefore morally irrelevant. For instance, Diogenes was asked where he came from, he answered, I am a citizen of the world.

In line with this, the revolution in telecommunications has contributed to “the death of distance” as virtually instantaneous communications are possible nearly everywhere. According to Charles (2010), cosmopolitanism theory is an ethnical theory that places the ultimate source of moral value in individuals. The argument of the theory is that all individuals, solely by virtue of being human, have rights that no state can deny and that warrant global protection. The belief in a transcendent humanitarian imperative, a conviction that human suffering suffering obliges others to respond has ancient roots as we earlier noted. From zeno (335-263 BCE) and Chrysipus (250-207 BCE) through Seneca (4BCE-65CE) and marcus Aurelius (121-180CE), Greek and Roman stoics believed in the equality and unity of human kind.

Therefore, the division of the world into separate states is not barrier to intervene and save mankind in times of conflict. Singer (1979) cited in Charles (2010,p.236) argues that if one has the power to prevent something bad from happening to those living elsewhere, action should be taken as long as it does not sacrifice anything of comparable moral significance. The concept of the responsibility to protect (R2P) justifies the above assertion.

**Application of the theory on this study**

Cosmopolitanism is relevant and germane to this, in that it explicitly explains the actions and inactions of united Nations to protect human rights globally. Thus, with the establishment of the concept of Responsibility to Protect civilians from genocide or crime against humanity perpetrated by their own government, the UN has power to intervene either direct or indirect. For example, the body authorized NATO in Libya in 2011 to intervene followed from the R2P concept to save civilians. The theory place high premium on individuals than the states. It holds that all individual have rights that no, state can deny. So, states has moral obligation to protect human rights.

**Challenges for Human Right in Twenty First Century**

Despite the efforts of United Nations to protect human rights globally especially after world war II, there are several challenges confronting the union on enforcing human rights. Some of these challenges are as follows:

1. **The Challenge of Enforcing Humanitarian Intervention on Human Rights**

Humanitarian intervention refers to actions taken by the international community to assist the population of a state experiencing unacceptable, persistent levels of human suffering caused by natural disaster, political
collapse, or deliberate government policy (Malaquias, 2001). The decision to engage in humanitarian intervention is controversial, because it pits the legal principle of territorial sovereignty against what some scholar see as a moral duty to protect vulnerable populations from egregious violations of human rights.

However, universal declaration of Human Rights, unanimously adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 10, 1948 does not have the enforce of international law. Sovereignty gives states the right or power to do as they please in their own territory, nobody can tell them how to treat their own citizens. This assertion is supported under the nonintervention rule in international law. Article 2 (7) of the UN Charter proclaims that “nothing should authorized intervention in matters essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state”.

Along the line, on April 29, 2008, the government of Myanmar (formerly known as Burma) had natural disaster caused by rainfall, over 100,000 people died, with more than 1 million people left homeless. After several days of the storm, Myanmar’s military government took no actions to assist survivors. General than Shwe, the government’s leader, rebuffed attempts by former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to persuade him to allow emergency aid into the country. Although Myanmar was on the verge of a humanitarian catastrophe, the government repeatedly turned away rescue teams from foreign nations as well as offers of relief supplies from U. S. and French naval vessels in the Andaman sea.

According to the world food programme, only 20 percent of desperately needed food aid was getting to cyclone. French foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner suggested that international aid might have to be imposed on Myanmar. In his own contribution on abuse of human rights, Diego Lopez Garrido, Spain’s Secretary of state for European affairs, avers that the regime’s obstructionism was similar to a crime against humanity. Also, David miliband, Britain’s foreign secretary added that the world community would be morally justified in using all available instruments to open Myanmar’s borders to aid under the doctrine of responsibility to protect concept (Economist, May 17, 2008).

However, the above examples and other cases show that human rights, from Communitarians theorist perspective, are a matter of national Jurisdiction, because sovereignty empowers the states to do as they please in their own territory. The establishment of the concept of Responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes against humanity by UN in 2005 is problematic within the concept of non-intervention rule international law (http://www.un.org/summit2005)

In this regard, what international community defined or view as a crimes against humanity or genocide may not be crimes within territorial states. The case of Biafra versus Federal government of Nigeria in 1967 -1970 is a good example. The Nigerian government and the international community rejected what secessionist (Biafrans) called ethnic cleansing despite the probable cause of the crimes. However, after half hearted investigation by international community the federal government of Nigeria were exonerated from the crime against humanity.

2. International law versus state sovereignty on Human right Enforcement

The UDHR does not have power to enforce international law on violation of human rights by state because sovereignty gives states the right to do as they please in their territory without external interference as we earlier noted. International norms concerning human rights conflict with state sovereignty, causing friction in relationships such as that of Burma (Myanmar) with the international community.
Here, in 2008, Buddhist monks in Burma’s capital lead huge demonstrations against the repressive military government, which cracked down harshly within days. Western powers apply economic sanctions against Burma because of its human rights record (Goldstein, 2013).

Against this backdrop, Abdullahi (1991) posits that enforcing norms of human rights is difficult because it involves interfering in a state’s internal affairs. For example, cutting off trade or contact with a government like the case Burma that violate human rights tends to hurt the citizens whose right are being violated by further isolating them. Continued sanctions and trade embargoes have done little to challenge the country’s military rulers. Yet, such measures keep those suffering from human rights abuses in the global spot light, drawing more attention to their plight.

Despite the foregoing, international law, unlike national law, derives not, from actions of a legislative branch or other central authority, but from traditional and agreements signed by states. Enforcement of international law on violation of human rights depends not on the power and authority of central government but on reciprocity, collective action, and international norms. It is truism because there is no world police force. But on other hand, reciprocity works only if the aggrieved state has the power to inflict costs on the violator. Collective response or actions works only if the collective cares enough about an issue on respond (Bork, 1989)

3. The Enforcement Challenge on Human Rights

There is no unanimous consensus adopted by international community to intervene in order to enforce human rights globally. As the international commission on intervention and state sovereignty noted in its December 2001 report, the responsibility to protect, “If intervention for human protection purposes is to be accepted including the possibility of military action, it remaining imperative that the international community develop consistent, credible, and enforceable standards to guide state and intergovernmental practice”.

However, agreement about the principles that should guide humanitarian intervention has proven elusive. The issue is not whether there exist a compelling need to do a just response, when any response will interfere in the domestic affairs of a sovereign state (Doyle, 1997). The failure of the international community to take timely, decisive action in 1994 in Rwanda, Sudan in 2004, Libya in 2011, Yugoslavia in 1999 etc. to stop the genocide in the above countries is because there is no uniform agreement on how to intervene and conflict of interest (Schulz, 2011).

4. Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction

This is another challenges facing UN on enforcing human rights globally, because many countries of the world are amassing weapons capable of destroying the whole world. The current case of North Korea who recently succumbed to the pressure of international community to dismantle the weapons of mass destruction is a good example. The first nuclear weapon was tested in a desert of New Mexico in the United States on July 16, 1945. Since then, over 2,048 nuclear experiments have conducted in the world.

However, several efforts have been made by international community before the World War II for Disarmament. This was embarked upon after the publication of Kant in 1795, “perpetual peace”. He insisted on the disarmament of the armed forces of the states which created conditions of war. As a result, in 1817, Britain and the United States signed an agreement (Rush- Bagot Agreement) which limited naval strength of America and Canada. Another conference was constituted by Russian King Nicholas II in 1899 where the
issue of disarmament was discussed. Since then till date, the issues of disarmament have failed.

It is remarkable to note that on August 6 and 9, 1945, United States of America exploded two nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nazasaki, and the two towns disappeared from existence. Since then, other countries have acquired these bombs as earlier noted. The fear and the wound is still a fresh in our mind. It is a great threat to human rights. The world indeed is drafting towards calamity.

5. Poverty Challenges

According to United Nation Report on Human Cultural Development in 1997, there are 100 million poor people and 37 million unemployed people even in the richest countries of the world. Least Developed countries are among the most vulnerable countries in the world with large segments of their population living in extreme poverty with few prospects to improve their situation (2017 UN Report). This is an embarrassing challenge to human rights in the twenty first century. Therefore, poverty is in itself not only a denial of human rights but also erodes or nullifies the realization of both socio-economic and civil and political rights.

6. Political Goals Challenges

Political goals will always subvert the promotion of human rights. It is truism because, when push comes to shove, states will ignore human rights abuses to achieve other political goals. Whether it is the United States ignoring political repression in China, China ignoring genocide in Sudan, or South Africa ignoring a crackdown in Zimbabwe, states of all types will turn a blind eye to human rights abuses if it serves their purposes (Goldstein, 2013).

However, the core UN human rights treaties lack political will to enforce them. Infact, some of the worst violator of human rights are often the first to sign these documents because they know there will be no enforcement of the rules. The treaties are only pieces of paper.

7. Financial Impasse

According to Kyung-whakang, Deputy Emergency Relief co-ordinator in Syria, lack of fund is the major challenge hampering humanitarian aid to war-affected Syrians. Kyung further imports that some member states are no longer paying their dues. Even though the provisions of the contribution of member states is clearly stated in the UN Charter, for instance, article 17 of the UN Charter provides that the Assembly shall approve the budget of the organization and that the expenses “shall be borne by the members as apportioned by the General Assembly”. Article 19 stipulates that a member may not vote in the Assembly “if the amount of its arrears equal or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years”.

However, low funding is a major challenge threatening the enforcement of human rights globally. The UN’s humanitarian agencies are on the verge of bankruptcy and unable to meet the basic needs of millions of people because of size of the refugee crisis in the middle East, Africa, Europe, etc.

Efforts toward Promoting Human Rights Globally

1. International Treaties: Since the adoption of the UDHR, the UN has opened seven treaties for state signature to further define protection of human rights (see Table 7.3). Unlike the UDHR, these treaties are legally binding contracts signed by states. Of course, international law is only as good as the enforcement mechanisms behind it. Yet these seven treaties are important in outlining the basic protections for individuals expected by the international community.
Table 7.3: The ratification status of seven core UN Human Rights Treaties, 2011.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/n</th>
<th>Treaty</th>
<th>Date in force</th>
<th>Number of signatories</th>
<th>Key non-member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Convention on the elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)</td>
<td>January 7, 1969</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>Bhutan, Burma, Malaysia, North Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Covenant on economic, social and cultural rights (CESCR)</td>
<td>January 3, 1976</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>Cuba, Saudi, Arabia, South Africa U.S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Covenant On Civil And Political Rights (CCPR)</td>
<td>March 23, 1976</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>Burma, China, cuba, sandi, Arabia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>convention against women torture (CAT)</td>
<td>June 26, 1987</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>Burama, India, Iraq, Iran, Sudan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Convention on the protection of the Rights of all migrant workers (CMW)</td>
<td>July 1, 2003</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>France, Great Britain, China, Russia, U.S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Goldstein 2013

The above table shows several efforts made by various countries and international community to protect human rights globally.

2. Establishment of the concept of Responsibility to protect (R2P): This concept was established in 2005 by UN to protect civilians from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleaning and crimes against humanity perpetrated or allowed by their own governments. As a result of this development, the UN authorized NATO campaign in Libya in 2011 followed from the R2P concept.

3. Prosecution of Human Rights Violator: The UN has the power to arrest and prosecute human rights violators and order related crimes in the International Court Justice(ICJ). The case of former Yugoslavia, president Slobodan Milosevic who ordered his forces to kill thousands of Muslims in Bosnia was arrested after 13 years in hiding, is a good example on effort of UN in enforcing human rights globally. He is currently on trial in The Hague, charged with persecuting Bosnia Muslim and croats, shelling civilian population centers, and destroying property including places of worship. In 2011, his military commander was also arrested, leaving no Bosnia war criminals at large.

Following the civil war in Sierra Leone, the government there runs war crimes tribunals jointly with the UN in 2003, it indicted the sitting state leader in next- door Liberia, Charles Taylor, for his role in the war’s extreme brutality. He fled to Nigeria shortly afterward but was captured there and turned over to the tribunal in 2006. The above cases will serve as a deterrence to other leaders.

Conclusion and Recommendations

With all the available information on challenges of human rights in twenty first under the watch of United Nations, we recommend the following strategies as ways of combating human rights abuse globally.

1. United Nations should support NGOs such Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, etc. that play a key role in efforts to win war against human rights abuses globally. They monitor and report human rights abuses. The body has a reputation for impartiality and has criticized abuses in many countries including the United States.
2. Publicity and pressure instruments: Publicity entails digging up information about human rights abuses as Amnesty international does by naming the supports. This will embarrass the regime and change its behavior. The publicity also serves to alert those travelling to or doing business with offending regimes to the condition in those countries. On the other hand, the pressure of other governments, as well as private individuals and businesses, consists of threats to punish the offender in some way through non-violent means.

3. Humanitarian Interventions Instruments: The concept of Responsibility to protect (R2P) has empowered UN to use military force to overcome armed resistance by local authorities or warlords and bring help to civilian victims of wars and disasters. Finally, it is my belief that if the above recommendations are properly implemented, it will help to strengthen UN to protect and promote human rights globally.

Reference


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