



# WHERE DOES GERMAN HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE STAND?

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March 2019

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

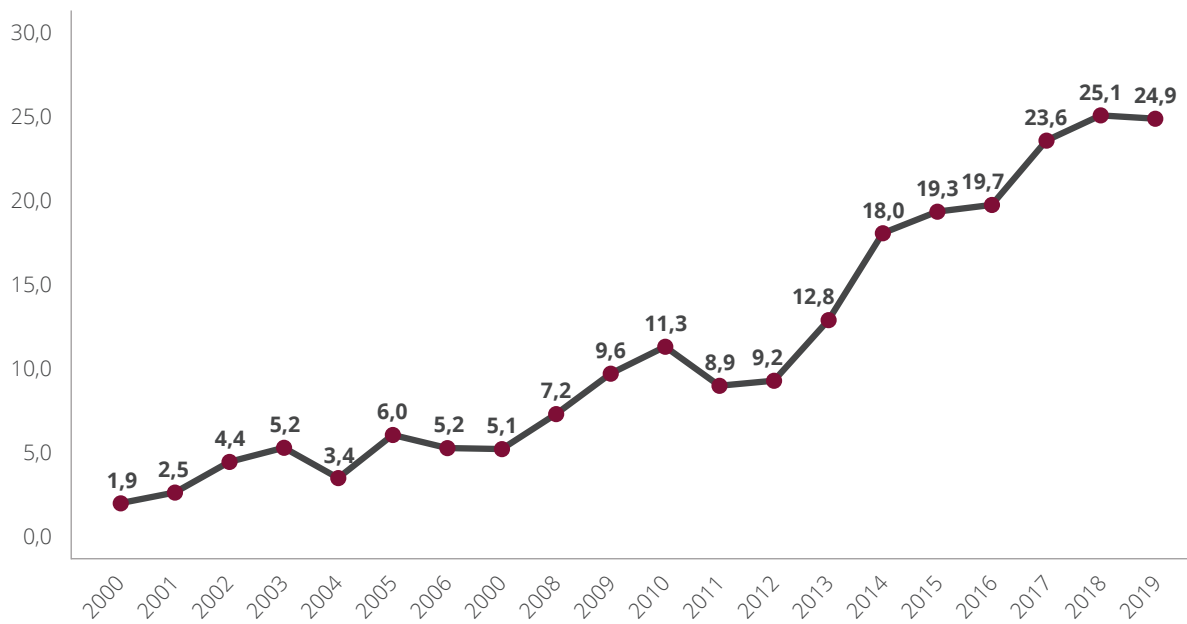
The Federal Government's humanitarian assistance, and with it Germany's role in the humanitarian landscape, is undergoing dramatic changes. The quadrupling of funds made available since 2014 has redefined Germany's role in the humanitarian world, making Germany the second largest donor state. This is extremely valuable, given the growing number of people in need and a more than tenfold increase in global humanitarian needs since the early 2000s (see Figure A).

At the same time, since the end of the Cold War, the humanitarian system has rarely been viewed as critically and its core principles of offering impartial and independent assistance based on need alone have seldom been so heavily questioned and undermined. The current case of Venezuela, where humanitarian action has been guided by political interests, is only the most recent example. Therefore, it is vital that the German Federal Government and German aid organisations use their increased funding in a principled, effective, strategic, and transparent way to assert their increased international influence in this direction.

Figure A:  
Yearly calculated requirements for humanitarian  
action according to UN appeals 2000–2017  
Source: OCHA FTS

## Global humanitarian overviews (appeals in billion USD)

A



## 2. DOES THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE SET THE RIGHT PRIORITIES?

### Regions, Instruments, Partnerships

The engagement of Germany's humanitarian assistance has clear regional priorities:

From a global perspective, Germany has played a disproportionately large role in the Middle East, where, in the context of the refugee movements to Europe, about 60% of German funds went in 2015. This remained the case, despite the fact that only about 25% of people in need worldwide lived in the Middle East. This tendency is exemplified by the fact that around 40% of Germany's humanitarian budget has been spent on Syria and its neighbouring states (see Figure B).

At the same time, Germany is moving within a global donor and humanitarian ecosystem in need of reform, where humanitarian response plans are not identical in time and content and, therefore, do not allow for the implementation of an annual plan purely based on timely assessed needs. Nevertheless, a donor should be measured by the result of its engagement in the synergy with other donors.

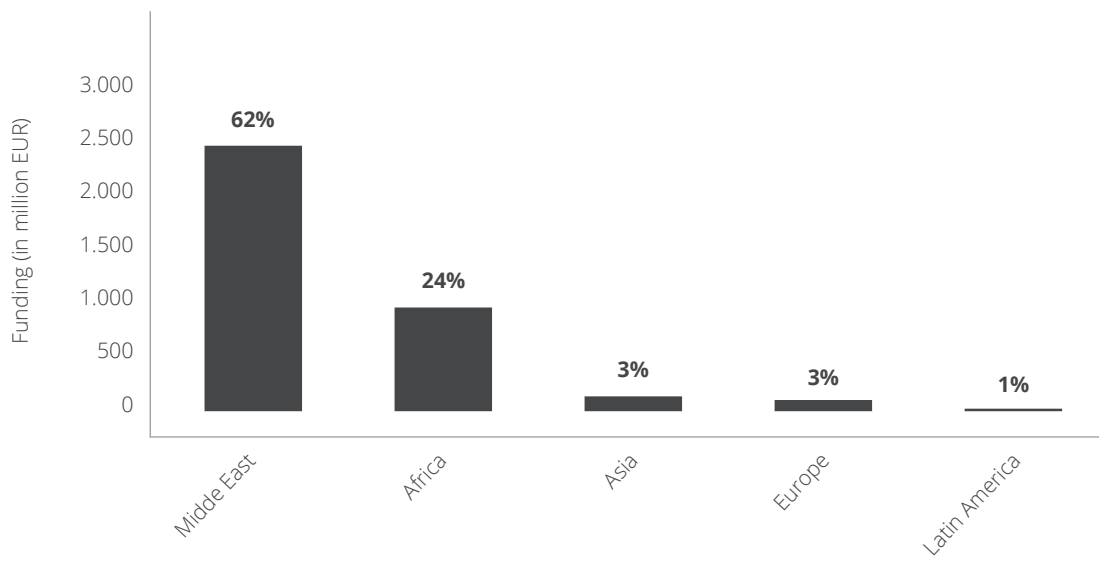
The Federal Government's output-oriented, instead of outcome-oriented report offers little evidence for this, since the criteria for regional allocation of funds are not specified and the question of an appropriate regional distribution cannot be answered based on the report alone. A retrospective analysis of the German funding of global crises leads to the following question: Has Germany's commitment in Syria led to an overall preference toward people in need in this region?

Has Germany's commitment in Syria led to an overall preference toward people in need in this region?

Figure B:  
German spending to geographical regions.  
Source: GFFO Report 2018

## German humanitarian assistance by region 2014–2017

**B**



Such a mixture of purely humanitarian allocations with (migration-related) political questions in the context of the Syrian crisis would deviate from a purely principle-oriented assistance that, according to the Federal Government, is «strictly» based on need alone. To this end, however, German humanitarian assistance must be placed within the context of other humanitarian actors. A comparative analysis of the Humanitarian Response Plans coordinated by the UN – as the most reliable indicator for global crises and their needs (see Figure C) – with German funding in 2017 reveals some interesting results.

The Syrian crisis and regional response, which was disproportionately well-financed by the Federal Government, was nevertheless almost 50% underfinanced, ranking it average when compared to other aid operations in terms of funding coverage. Various crises that had been neglected or only moderately considered by Germany – such as Afghanistan, Myanmar, and Niger – were financed much better, with up to 80% of needs financially covered. Thus, a stronger German commitment had been unnecessary. This points to comparatively successful donor coordination in major humanitarian crises and confirms donor indications to concentrate on other regions, e.g., in light of Germany's great involvement in the Syrian crisis.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the Federal Government provided no humanitarian assistance to the three worst-financed humanitarian crises (Senegal, Cuba, Djibouti) in 2017. Measured in terms of principle-based and need-oriented aid, this leaves room for explanation. Even an increased share of the budget for «forgotten crises» of approximately 20%<sup>1</sup> in 2017 could not prevent such funding gaps in a comprehensive way. Since «forgotten crises» are to become a strategic focus of German humanitarian assistance in the future, we call for a transparent development of criteria for their funding and the definition of an appropriate share of the budget.

At the same time, the question about the regional allocation of funds points beyond the Federal Foreign Office to the parliament and the public. It was the substantial expansion of humanitarian assistance, approved by the parliament and earmarked for the Syrian crisis, that made it possible in 2015 to massively increase German humanitarian funding, which quadrupled the previous budget for humanitarian assistance. This results in an ambivalent paradox with respect to humanitarian principles:

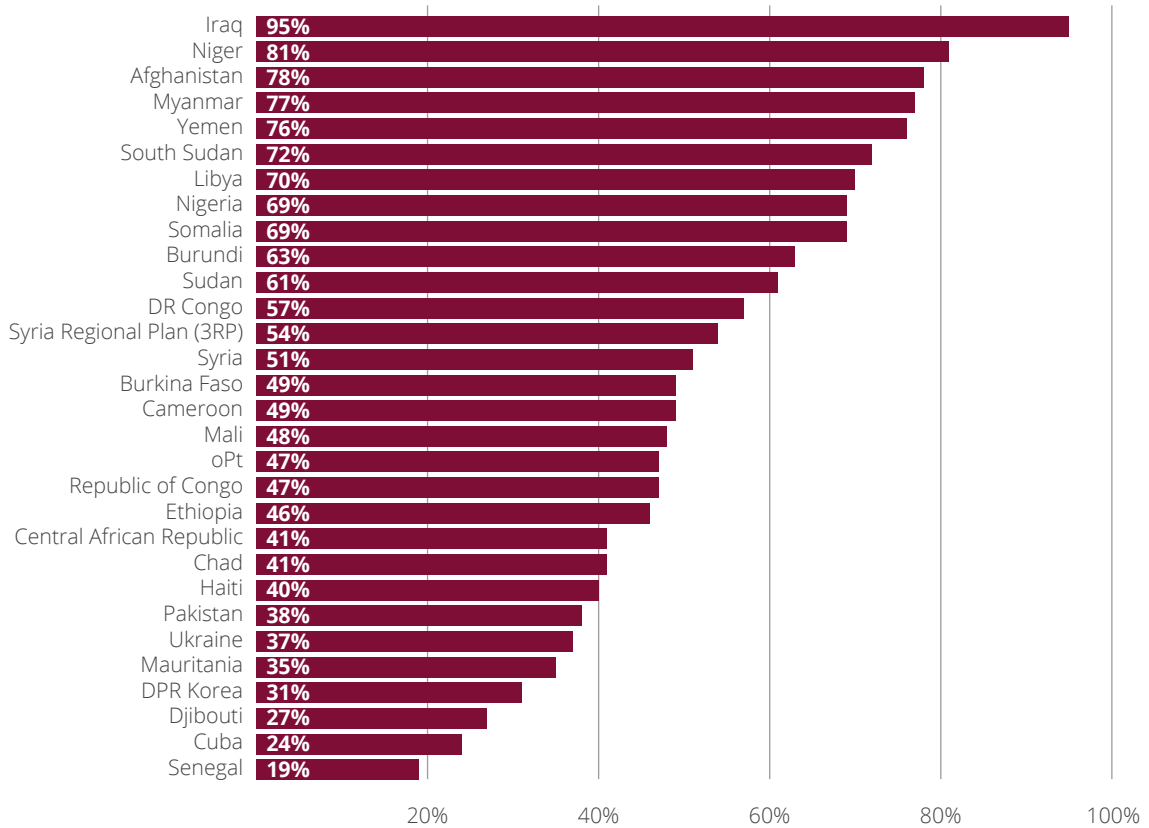
On the one hand, the humanitarian principles of impartiality and humanity, i.e., the requirement to help people based strictly on need, prohibits any confusion with political issues. On the other hand, a certain political blending of humanitarian and migration policy issues has obviously contributed to the fact that, today, a far greater number of people in need have their needs met through German humanitarian assistance, even beyond the crisis in Syria. The principle of humanity is thus further fulfilled than before.

Figure C:  
Percentage of appeal funding requirement met  
according to Humanitarian Response Plans in 2017  
Source: World Humanitarian Data and Trends 2018; OCHA FTS



## Appeal funding requirements met

C



**With regard to unearmarked, flexible funds for aid organisations, Germany continues to come in last.**

Regarding the instruments, pathways, and overall amount of German humanitarian assistance, three points need to be addressed:

The amount of German humanitarian assistance has grown impressively. At the same time, it is noticeable that, according to OECD in 2016, only about every 12th euro (8%) of German funding for international cooperation was used for humanitarian action, i.e., to primarily help people in acute need. Eight other large donor states reserved a significantly larger share of up to 18%<sup>2</sup> for this goal. It should be examined whether the German government should also set further priorities in this area, in light of the dramatic increase in humanitarian needs.

In addition, there are two ways in which the Federal Government can provide financial support to aid organisations, which are not dealt with in detail in the report: earmarked funds and multiannual funding. Germany's entry into the multi-year funding of aid programmes is a positive development. The Federal Government has reacted structurally to crises becoming increasingly protracted, on average 9 years<sup>3</sup>, by adapting corresponding planning requirements for aid organisations. Studies have shown that aid programmes can be up to 30% more cost-effective if medium-term planning is possible. While the facilitation of multi-year funding is to be praised, its share in the overall humanitarian budget still appears low.

With regard to unearmarked, flexible funds for aid organisations, however, Germany continues to come in last. Only 6% of its funds are allocated without any earmarking. This is low in comparison for example to France (23%), Great Britain (28%), Switzerland (30%), and Sweden (38%)<sup>4</sup>. This complicates both planning and short-term flexibility for aid organisations. A further increase in the German contributions to the CERF Fund, which allows aid organisations to help quickly where it is most urgently needed, is also advisable in this context.

The choice of effective instruments and partnerships will continue to be decisive, especially with German humanitarian assistance growing so rapidly. It is commendable that the Federal Government is choosing partners based on «the specific mandates and strengths of the respective organisations,»<sup>5</sup> which does not follow any preferences in principle. In an increasingly volatile world of changing hot spots and crisis contexts, a generalised system of preferences based on e.g., UN or NGO quotas does not seem appropriate. The results of the last major Joint Evaluation of German Aid Abroad and the only parliamentary hearing on the subject of bilateral and multilateral development cooperation thus far, have also pointed against such a categorisation.

Nevertheless, Germany roughly doubled its funding to NGOs in absolute numbers, while, at the same time, NGOs received a minor funding share in comparison to some other donors' practices. In principle, this can have good

or questionable reasons. For example, an NGO study conducted during the CHA's founding process came to the following conclusion in view of the current dominant crises in conflict zones: «There are hardly any organisations in Germany that could provide emergency aid in conflict zones on a larger scale; hardly any organisation can, for example, work in Yemen at short notice. Many avoid such extremely difficult contexts or do not implement themselves.»<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, within the context of protracted crises, large-scale cash programmes – as currently implemented in the Middle East – can reasonably focus on a few large partners or even the single agency approach (see below), as small cash-card systems from many organisations can be inefficient. The German system of humanitarian assistance being centralized in Berlin also makes it difficult for a desk officer to manage the considerable coordination and risk monitoring needs of projects if these are run by multiple small partners while other donors are working more decentralized. Such structural problems cannot be solved by increasing staff in the Federal Foreign Office. Thus, the allocation to intermediary organisations (e.g., UN, international NGO, pooled funds) for local coordination can stem from both good and bad reasoning, the latter being e.g. a lack of capacity or time at the end of a budget year. In general, a chain of intermediary organisations with corresponding losses in coordination and efficiency must be avoided at all costs. It remains unclear in this report what criteria were used to allocate the funds and how these criteria can be further developed in the course of a stable annual budget.

The Federal Government's localisation efforts must be assessed in other regards as well. A current funding of 20% for local partners appears quantitatively impressive in the light of the Grand Bargain goal of allocating 25% of aid directly (or via one intermediary partner) to local organisations by 2020. If, however, intermediary UN or INGO partners receive German funds without qualitatively supporting their actual medium-term goal of making themselves superfluous by expanding independent local capacities, the Grand Bargain goal would only be achieved formally and the actual goal of localisation would be missed. The formally impressive output (20% funding) has not yet led to the desired outcome (improvement of local structures) or its effect is not apparent in this report.

In this context, the requested fundamental increase in the administrative lump sum for NGOs funded by the Federal Foreign Office, e.g., for the purpose of investing in local partners, must also be weighed against a conditional funding of local capacities. German support for pooled funds, such as the country-based pooled funds (CBPF) managed by OCHA, which are directly accessible to local partners, should be further expanded by the Federal Government. Furthermore, the local anchoring of the pools should be continuously improved.

**The formally impressive localisation output has not yet led to the desired outcome.**

### 3. WHAT ABOUT THE CAPACITIES AND STRATEGIC CAPABILITIES OF GERMAN HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE?

With the increased financial commitment, expectations of Germany as a strategic policy actor have also risen immensely. The potential and need for stronger engagement are far-reaching: Internationally, humanitarian action faces immense challenges in the course of a virulent reform debate, in which other influential donors often have differing views and priorities, ranging from radical change to the promotion of the status quo. The same applies to the defence of the humanitarian principles in the face of a shrinking space for humanitarian action, which is already being undermined or questioned as a value by some Western governments, numerous crisis countries, and conflict parties (see section on principle orientation).

The hopes of Germany taking on a mediating role as an «honest broker» are therefore substantial. At the same time, the expectations of the German commitment in almost all humanitarian issues are excessive. With less than 70 staff in the humanitarian assistance department of the Federal Foreign Office, Germany still has fewer specialists than other top donors in local embassies alone. Likewise, Germany's local staffing levels are very low and professionally trained staff are seldom available while important committees meet locally and make decisions. The more recent practice of engaging external expertise should be consolidated and secured according to German labour law. If Germany wants to play a greater strategic role in the long term, there is an acute need for trained personnel both in the ministry and in the local embassies.

At the same time, the Federal Government has succeeded in participating in numerous international debates, including the World Humanitarian Summit 2016 and its follow-up process. Germany can play an influential role in the donor landscape, especially as it takes some independent, pragmatic positions with regard to the radical reform of the humanitarian system. Its engagement in areas such as the Good Humanitarian Donorship, the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus, crisis prevention, and Forecast-based Financing are good examples of Germany's broad efforts.

However, it is regrettable in this context that, during Germany's membership in the UN Security Council for the next two years, the topic of humanitarian assistance will not play a substantial role beyond issues of humanitarian access. Meanwhile, international partners and observers are looking for

orientation on Germany's stances on major humanitarian issues of the future. Examples include opportunities and risks of the digitalisation of humanitarian assistance or the cross-cutting topic of cash assistance:

On the one hand, Germany is one of the largest cash promoters in the world and promotes the development of know-how and expertise, for example through the Cash Learning Programme (CaLP network) or in the Grand Bargain succession process. On the other hand, the Federal Foreign Office has not been able to draw up a clear strategy on cash policies or develop a unified position on important issues. This would be relevant since the topic in international debates reaches far beyond cash as a modality. Already today around 10% of global humanitarian action is provided in cash, with that percentage being much higher in major crises, such as the Syrian conflict. If the Grand Bargain primacy is being realised, the question «Why not cash?» in all future aid operations will become more pertinent, which could lead to a further expansion of cash programmes. This raises even more fundamental questions about the future of humanitarian action including, amongst others, different humanitarian cash implementation systems, multi-partner versus single agency approaches, future roles of NGO partners and localisation in large-scale cash programmes, and the development of independent assessment and monitoring systems. The development of a clear German position toward these matters would be crucial, as other donor states hold different positions, leading to considerable challenges for aid organisations.

Furthermore, digitalisation is offering far-reaching opportunities for humanitarian action, as well as significant risks. Germany seems to be ideally positioned to play a mediating and more relevant role internationally:

The digitalisation of humanitarian aid promises a quantum leap in efficiency, accountability, and targeting through technological opportunities. Such uses of technology include the use of biometric data, assistance tailored to the needs of a wide range of people, far-reaching big data analyses, technologically independent systems including humanitarian blockchains, and the potential to create and permanently secure digital identities for refugees without identification papers or proof of ownership. Digital innovations also offer completely new possibilities in the field of communication and participation of those affected in aid programmes.

Major improvements can also be made in terms of efficiency. By capturing the biometric data of refugees and more efficiently verifying their presence, a single refugee camp in Uganda has saved more than 1 million USD per month, which can be used to help other people in need. In the context of the Syrian crisis, data on refugees could be improved biometrically in such a way that the error rates in the registration and support of refugees were often cut in half.

Germany supports these processes as one of the leading players in the field of innovation. At the same time, it brings potential expertise on the controversial field of personal rights and data protection, which other major donors such as the United States would not necessarily share. Bringing in this expertise more explicitly and more strategically could be of great relevance, as operational pioneers of digitalisation, such as the UN, admit that data security, data protection, and secured processes in the field of digitalisation are often underdeveloped.

However, studies point to the challenge of ensuring that the opportunities of digitalisation are realised not only in efficiency gains and cost savings but also in the form of benefits for the beneficiaries themselves in terms of transparency, trust, and participation in the further development of the assistance programmes serving them.

For example, a recent study on humanitarian blockchains concludes that on the one hand, «transparency and trust are often cited as the most significant benefits»; while on the other hand, «improved efficiency, bureaucracy, and project cost savings [...] have proven to be more important for humanitarian actors.»<sup>7</sup> A genuinely German contribution in this exciting and controversial field, which substantially influences the international debate on the future of humanitarian action, could therefore be of great relevance.

In this context, it would also be necessary to define the goals and impacts the German commitment is striving for in the international debate. The Federal Government's report offers little evidence to which extent German policy engagement has had an impact: whether the output of a greater German presence has also led to an effective outcome remains unclear. At the same time, one must admit that the Federal Foreign Office is facing the challenge of playing financially in a league in which it cannot compete on an operational and strategic level, due to personnel and structural bottlenecks. Thus, the planned strategic and thematic prioritizations are welcomed, so long as these are appropriately set and fully developed.

Once again, however, the efforts of the Federal Foreign Office must be seen in the broader context of German humanitarian actors.

If we look eg at the Federal Government: The example of the much debated Humanitarian-Development-Peace-Nexus, which meets the complex challenges in all three fields in an integrated way, can be mentioned here.

The Federal Foreign Office has helped to advance the debate on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace-Nexus internationally. Yet, there are still quite different ideas on the substance and roles to play within the Federal Government.

For an important interface in this context, one can look at the transitional aid of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). There is currently no definition of its tasks or strategies. Furthermore, the spending review for humanitarian assistance and transitional aid conducted by the Federal Ministry of Finance concluded that, in 2018, humanitarian assistance and development cooperation lacked mechanisms for the exchange of information, joint analyses, coordinated approaches, and the allocation of funds.

Such a common approach seems particularly urgent today, due to Nexus discussions and protracted crises. These both point to future issues in which the integration of humanitarian action, transitional aid, and development cooperation is essential. Sustainable social security systems for refugees, which, according to the Do No Harm principle, should include the local population of host countries in which large refugee groups remain for a longer period, already play an important international role in that context. We advise that the Federal Government should be institutionally equipped to engage itself strategically in this topic.

The German Africa policy should also be mentioned as an example: The German government emphasises the great importance of the continent for its policies. At the same time, BMZ and the Federal Foreign Office are currently trying to renew the «Africa policy guideline of the Federal Government», while at least six independent Africa strategies exist at the ministries for development, defence, economy, finance, and education.<sup>8</sup> In such contexts, international observers complain of a lack of a «strategic centre» for foreign policy within the Federal Government as a whole.

Many German aid organisations are still in the early stages of developing their own policy expertise.

Moreover, a policy-oriented, strategic supervision of the Federal Government by the Bundestag can only be partially discerned. For many years, the Committee on Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid has focused disproportionately on human rights, as statistics also show (see figure D).

Beyond individual crises, discussions on issues of humanitarian assistance hardly occur in committees or the Bundestag. When members of the Bundestag travel abroad, it is striking how predominantly German projects are visited locally; the international context of said projects are usually hardly covered by the programs drawn up by local German embassies lacking humanitarian expertise.

The German civil society works in close cooperation with the Federal Government. At the same time, the competent body mentioned in the report, the Humanitarian Action Coordination Committee and its working groups, are now a forum for the exchange of information rather than for policy debates in the view of many participants. Participants often complain about the growing focus on the positioning of members instead of open exchange. Relatively high public funding shares of German aid organisations compared to NGOs for example in France is mentioned as a challenge for open and critical discussions on questions of humanitarian principles and policies with the Federal Government. Many German aid organisations are still in the early stages of developing their own policy expertise. The mentioned study *The Challenge of Humanitarian Aid* comes to the following conclusion: «The humanitarian units of many organisations are focused on funding and implementation, they have scarce resources for humanitarian policy.»<sup>9</sup>

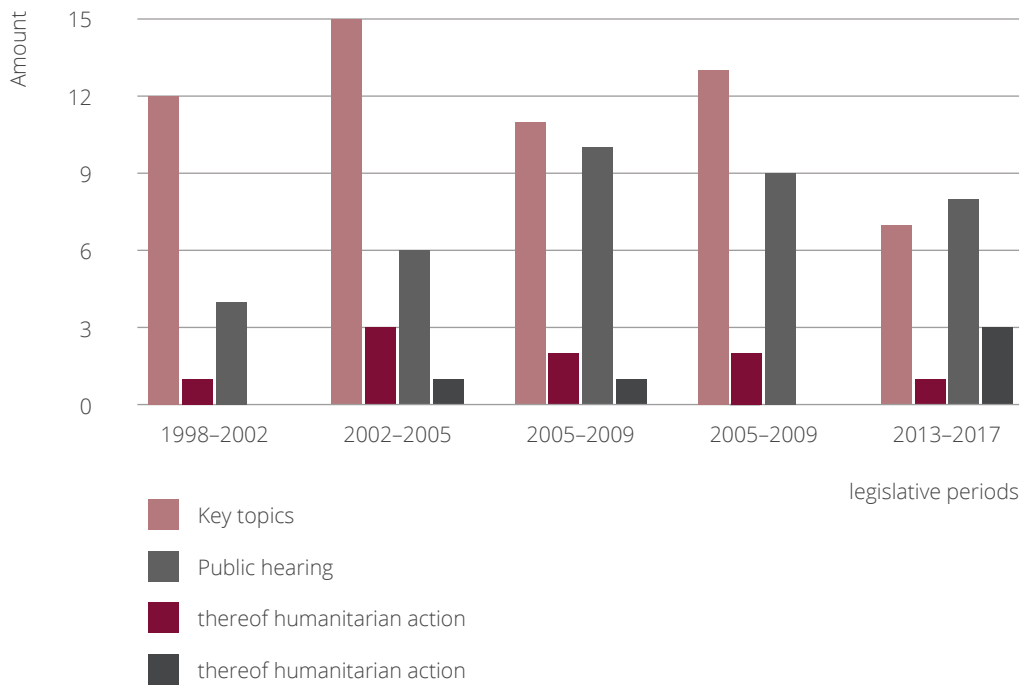
At the same time, the comprehensive development of capacities and know-how among all German humanitarian action actors is more important today than ever, given a shrinking space and questions being raised toward principled humanitarian aid.

Figure D:  
Frequency of thematic focus on humanitarian aid in the Bundestag Committee on Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid.  
Source: Quack 2016 p. 38



## Humanitarian assistance on the agenda of the Committee on Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid

D



## 4. DOES THE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FOLLOW THE HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES AND DEFEND THEM INTERNATIONALLY IN TIMES OF A SHRINKING HUMANITARIAN SPACE?

The space and respect for the recognition of humanitarian aid and its principles is rapidly diminishing and faces its largest threat since the end of the Cold War. This shrinking space becomes clear for example in the criminalisation of sea rescue operations in the Mediterranean Sea. New counterterrorism rules make it more difficult for aid workers in crises to operate with all parties to the conflict and in all regions. There is an increasing number of direct attacks on humanitarian workers and institutions as means of war, and growing number of misuses of the values and concepts of humanitarian aid for domestic and foreign policy purposes.<sup>10</sup>

German actors are playing a significant role in this debate. Together with the Federal Government, they are regarded as comparatively principle oriented, neutral, and free of political agendas. With regard to the Federal Government's report on humanitarian assistance abroad, it can also be stated that there is no structural link between humanitarian assistance and political conditions. An exception to this is the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan, which is supported by German government and financed by the European Commission, which was linked to clear political conditions.

With regard to the humanitarian consequences of regulations related to the war on terror, Germany also plays a pragmatic and mediating role. New regulations of other donors related to counter-terrorism already substantially impair the space and spheres of action for humanitarian workers. Strict rules dealing with humanitarian assistance in war zones, as well as order in Western Europe, can also significantly hamper humanitarian aid and further decrease its already shrinking space. Here, as with the question of sanctions regimes, the Federal Government has often advocated a pragmatic approach, which should be increasingly promoted at EU level.

It is commendable that the Federal Government has raised the issue of «humanitarian access» as a priority in the UN Security Council, as well as in its

future humanitarian policy strategy. In both areas, the objectives of the Federal Government's activities and their implementation need to be further defined. However, the Federal Foreign Office's chances of defending the humanitarian space and achieving international success here are also linked to questions of political coherence and consistency. These arise less in the operations themselves mentioned in the report than in related foreign policy questions.

Example armament policy: The German stand on humanitarian access in Yemen cannot be seen as comprehensive if the Federal Government allows arms exports to Saudi Arabia, which, as a party to the conflict, massively restricts humanitarian access in what is currently the world's largest humanitarian crisis. Only recently, with the murder of a critic of the Saudi regime, a short-term moratorium has been achieved. Further aspects of German armament export policy, such as weapons cooperation with partners like France, point to a structural problem that extends beyond Saudi Arabia.

Example sea rescue: Aid organisations point to the disastrous consequences of the limited activities of the EU Mission Sophia in regard to the rescue of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea. The hindrance and criminalisation of civilian aid workers and their ships in the Mediterranean makes it impossible to provide help oriented to the needs of people. Referring to IOM statistics, this leads every 9<sup>th</sup> migrant or refugee who boards a boat drowning in the Mediterranean<sup>1</sup>. Rescued persons are often transported back to Libya with the support of EU, which is incompatible with humanitarian principles given the disastrous humanitarian conditions and violence in Libya. It can only be explained through considerations toward migration and domestic policy.

A consequent positioning of the Federal Government, especially along humanitarian issues, would be an important basis for a role as an «honest broker» of humanitarian principles.

Germany as an honest broker?

## 5. HOW IS THE IMPACT OF GERMAN HUMANITARIAN AID, ITS INSTRUMENTS, AND PRIORITIES TO BE ASSESSED?

Measuring the impact of humanitarian action is one of the biggest challenges in this field. This is traditionally due to the often short-term nature of the missions and programs, security issues, and limited possibilities for a subsequent initial analysis, as well as different cultures and time horizons in comparison to development cooperation. At the same time, the expectations of actors in a field with steadily growing financial needs and protracted humanitarian crises lasting several years are growing, too. The report of the Federal Government leads to questions on program funding as well as strategic questions such as those described above. It is still largely based on an output versus an outcome orientation.

The Federal Government has increased its efforts and expectations to its partners in regards to impact analysis. At the same time, comprehensive results are often still lacking, as this also means a conceptual and cultural change for aid organisations. Ten years ago, the largest humanitarian partner of the Federal Government, the UN World Food Programme, measured the effect of its work largely on the basis of output criteria (sufficient quantities of food or school meals supplied). The outcome measurement (e.g. improvement of nutritional status) still played a subordinate role.

The Federal Government's report mirrors this still ongoing process in the humanitarian world, which makes its final evaluation according to transparent criteria considerably more difficult. This conceptual challenge is combined

with practical capacity issues, such as the progress made with regard to the only recently expanded evaluation practice at the Federal Foreign Office, or the call for improved impact measurement at the interfaces of international cooperation with BMZ. In this broader context, administrative challenges must also be considered, such as the lack of staff and unclear divisions of labour in the spending review of project funds, which the Federal Audit Office highlighted last year. The Federal Foreign Office's binding funding guideline, which has been called for, has also not yet been completed. These deficits are undoubtedly due, in many cases, to the rapid expansion of German humanitarian aid, which is otherwise highly praiseworthy. There is, however, a great need for action in order to secure and legitimise this expansion in the long term.

In conclusion, it remains to be stated: German humanitarian assistance has undergone an impressive development, which should be commended. Today, it saves lives and livelihoods on an unprecedented scale. However, the expectations and the need for a coherent, strategically managed, and effective German humanitarian assistance have grown at least as rapidly as the funds made available. Neither the Federal Government nor German aid organisations have yet been able to fully meet these expectations. Further steps are therefore urgently needed to strengthen the humanitarian aid provided by German actors and to provide even better help to the extremely large number of people in need worldwide.

Neither  
the Federal  
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## SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **The Federal Government's humanitarian aid has entered new dimensions at an impressive pace.** This is extremely valuable in times of a rapidly growing number of people in need and a more than tenfold increase in the global need for humanitarian aid since the beginning of the 2000s.
2. Since the Cold War, the humanitarian system has rarely been viewed so critically, with humanitarian principles so disregarded and undermined as they are today. This makes it all the more important for a donor like Germany **to use its resources in a principled, effective, strategic, and transparent manner and to assert its international influence in this direction.** From the point of view of the CHA, there is both great progress and an **acute need for action.**
3. The **conceptual, strategic, and personnel capacities** of German humanitarian assistance were significantly expanded, but were unable to keep pace with the growth in financial resources and Germany's new role. The setting of clear priorities in terms of content and personnel investments in the Federal Foreign Office and the embassies on the ground are necessary and urgent. In many cases, German aid organisations also continue to lack capacities and know-how in basic humanitarian assistance issues; the responsible Bundestag committee has neglected the issue to this day.
4. Relating to its own migration policy, Germany has placed a clear **emphasis on the Syrian crisis in its humanitarian assistance.** This mixture of humanitarian and political factors **did not, however, lead to a demonstrably disproportionate promotion of the Syrian crisis** in the light of global donor coordination. Smaller **«forgotten crises»**, remain **a challenge** for German humanitarian assistance, despite progress in their promotion.
5. A **considerable stabilisation of the humanitarian assistance budget** has been achieved. This should also be used to further **increase planning scope and flexibility for partners through even more multi-year funding of programmes and less earmarked funds.**
6. The **share of humanitarian assistance in the total ODA budget** of the Federal Government has increased but remains **relatively low** by international standards. In light of the dramatic increase in demand, the Federal Government should also consider shifting funds to humanitarian aid within the federal budget.

7. An important German priority should be to address the challenge of internationally **shrinking space** for humanitarian assistance. Germany has the potential to **be an «honest broker»**, which, however, is only partially exploited. In addition, capacities and commitment in areas such as «humanitarian diplomacy» seem capable of expansion.
8. Germany's commitment to the defence of humanitarian assistance and its principles is inseparable from the Federal Government's overall **coherent policy on the humanitarian principles**. This must be questioned, for example, with regard to Germany's arms export policies in the context of humanitarian crises such as the one in Yemen or its policy regarding the **rescue of shipwrecked persons** in the Mediterranean Sea.
9. With respect to its humanitarian partners, the Federal Government's judgements **are based on the criterion of partners' capabilities** vs. their nationality or institution background (bi- / multilateral institutions). The increased **allocations to flexible funds** such as CERF and Country-based Pooled Funds **should be further expanded**.
10. The efforts to **localise** German assistance have shown great progress in quantitative terms, but should be clearly driven forward in qualitative terms by capacity building on the ground.
11. A change also in German humanitarian aid **from an output to an outcome orientation** seems necessary in order to better record and ensure its operational and strategic impact.
12. Increased impact analyses and evaluation capacities could allow the German government to develop more **transparent, substantiated criteria for the allocation and evaluation of German humanitarian aid**. They should form the basis of the Federal Government's next report on humanitarian aid. **More frequent reporting compared to the current four-year rhythm would be very welcome**.





## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Own calculations based on data of the Federal Foreign Office 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. OECD statistic in the Report on German humanitarian assistance abroad 2014-2017, Annex 5b.

<sup>3</sup> According to length of UN appeals, OCHA 2019, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> Numbers relate to the years 2016 or 2017 and are taken from the self-reporting of donors to measure Grand Bargain implementation. Retrievable at <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/self-reporting-exercise-2017-2018>

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Report on German humanitarian assistance abroad 2014-2017, p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Quack 2016, p. 60.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Coppi and Fast 2019.

<sup>8</sup> These include the Marshall Plan of the Development Ministry, the „Pro! Africa« Plan of the Economic Ministry, the Africa Strategy of the education ministry, the training partnership of the defence ministry, the Africa representative of the chancellor's office, the «Compact with Africa» of the finance ministry and the «Afrikapolitische Leitlinien der Bundesregierung» which should join those strategies coherently.

<sup>9</sup> Martin Quack 2016, p. 60.

<sup>10</sup> Examples: during the government shutdown in January 2019 US-President Trump speaks of a humanitarian crisis in the context of building the wall to Mexico (ZEIT Online 2019); Politicization of the Venezuela crises (Cf. Jones-Quiadoo 2019).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. [https://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean?migrant\\_route%5B%5D=1376](https://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean?migrant_route%5B%5D=1376).



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