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Research Material

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Analysis of the 2022 Humanitarian Access Index

Surging Demand for Humanitarian Assistance

As the COVID-19 pandemic persists, there is growing demand for humanitarian assistance in Ukraine, which has suffered from the prolonged Russia's invasion, and other countries affected by food and energy crises. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), 306 million people worldwide are in need of humanitarian assistance as of June 2022. Most of the countries¹ on the 2022 Emergency Watchlist released by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) have suffered from crises, such as large-scale refugees as a result of political and regional conflicts, including civil wars, on top of inappropriate responses to COVID-19 and natural disasters which have aggravated starvation and poverty. As such, demand for humanitarian assistance is soaring, but with limited financial resources, it is difficult to provide adequate support to each country based on its unique context and the characteristics of the crises it faces. With regard to this, the Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS) publishes the Humanitarian Access Index, which measures challenges in humanitarian access by country and compares access constraint levels across countries. By allowing us to identify access constraints to humanitarian assistance, the index will serve as a reference to facilitate strategic support.

Humanitarian Access Index

ACAPS was established in 2009 as a nonprofit private organization based in Geneva, Switzerland to take stock of and analyze humanitarian assistance to help donors make informed decisions. ACAPS publishes the Humanitarian Access Overview on a half-year basis to provide an analysis of humanitarian access constraints in countries experiencing humanitarian crises based on nine indicators under three pillars (See Table 1.)

¹ Sudan, Syria, Somalia, Myanmar, DRC, South Sudan, Nigeria, Yemen, Afghanistan, etc.

Table 1. Humanitarian Access Analysis Framework

Pillars	Indicators
Pillar 1 Access of people in need to humanitarian aid	1. Denial of existence of humanitarian needs or entitlements to assistance 2. Restriction and obstruction of access to services and assistance
Pillar 2 Access of humanitarian actors to people in need	3. Impediments to enter the country (bureaucratic and administrative) 4. Restriction of movement within the country (impediments to freedom of movement and/or administrative restrictions) 5. Interference with the implementation of humanitarian activities 6. Violence against humanitarian personnel, facilities and assets
Pillar 3 Security and physical constraints	7. Insecurity or hostilities affecting humanitarian assistance 8. Presence of landmines, improvised explosive devices, explosive remnants of war and unexploded ordnance 9. Physical constraints in the environment (obstacles related to terrain, climate, lack of infrastructure, etc.)

Source: ACAPS 2022a, 3

Each indicator is scored on a scale of 0 to 3, and the higher the access constraints, the higher the score. The scores are combined for each pillar and rated on a scale of 0 to 5. The Humanitarian Access Index is the average of the aggregate scores of the three pillars and is ranked according to the following scale: extreme access constraints (5), very high access constraints (4), high access constraints (3), moderate access constraints (2), low access constraints (1) and no significant access constraints (0).

Pillar 1 analyzes whether people in need can smoothly access humanitarian assistance with two indicators. Indicator 1 assesses whether a government acknowledges humanitarian needs and guarantees equal access to assistance. If humanitarian crises are driven by political or economic factors rather than natural disasters, a government often denies the need for assistance. To give a few representative examples, women's freedom of movement and access to education are restricted in Afghanistan, and the Rohingya people are deprived of citizenship and face restrictions on travel and access to services in Myanmar.

Indicator 2 deals with physical and administrative obstacles that interrupt access to humanitarian aid and basic services. Aside from travel restrictions, there are barriers, such as complex bureaucratic procedures to receiving assistance and miscellaneous fees and costs for issuing documentation.

Pillar 2 analyzes the extent of impediments facing humanitarian organizations in terms of carrying out activities in countries in need of humanitarian assistance. Indicator 3 tracks bureaucratic and administrative processes required for humanitarian responders to enter and operate in a country. If a country finds itself in the midst of a crisis driven by political and economic factors, the government may react negatively to foreign funds and impose multiple legal and administrative restrictions to control them. As for Indicator 4, if a country is split by different authorities, movement can be restricted within a country through checkpoints and other measures, and additional costs can be incurred when transporting supplies. Indicator 5 assesses restrictions put in place on the implementation of humanitarian response activities during the coordination process with a central government and local authorities based on their evaluation and monitoring outcomes. Some examples include additional costs required for the operation of humanitarian programs, shutdown of telecommunication services, and multiple stages of approval processes. Indicator 6 explores violence against humanitarian personnel, facilities and assets, which act as another barrier to humanitarian assistance. In armed conflict areas, humanitarian activities can be targeted by criminal elements, often resulting in casualties and looting.

Pillar 3 analyzes the security, physical and environmental limitations facing the humanitarian assistance. Pillar 1 and 2 indicate that countries with crises mainly triggered by political and economic conflicts exhibit high access constraint scores; however, pillar 3 shows that countries in crises caused by natural disasters also have a high level of access constraints. Pillar 3 consists of three indicators: Indicator 7. Discontinuation or delay of assistance projects due to hostilities toward humanitarian activities; Indicator 8. Casualties and property damage or damage risks caused by unexploded landmines, explosives and more; and Indicator 9. Climate (such as floods and storms), lack or absence of basic infrastructure, limited supplies such as of fuel and gas, restrictions on telecommunications and internet connections, unpaved and cut-off roads and other obstacles in geographic access.

Analysis Findings of the 2022 2H Humanitarian Access Index

ACAPS Humanitarian Access Overview for the second half of 2022 provides an analysis of humanitarian access across 94 countries based on the above-mentioned methodology. Among the 94 countries, there are advanced countries, such as Italy and Spain. Both countries are in need of humanitarian assistance due to the inflow of migrants and refugees via the Mediterranean Sea from Africa. Italy and Spain have high humanitarian access with low and no significant access constraints, respectively.

As of the second half of 2022 (July to October), countries with high humanitarian access constraints are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. List of Countries according to Humanitarian Access Index in H2 2022

Extreme Constraints	Very High Constraints		High Constraints	
Eritrea Ethiopia Myanmar Yemen	Afghanistan Burkina Faso Cameroon CAR Chad Colombia DRC Libya	Mali Niger Nigeria Palestine Somalia South Sudan Syria Ukraine	Bangladesh DPRK El Salvador Haiti Indonesia Kenya Mexico	Mozambique Nicaragua Pakistan Sudan Thailand Venezuela

Source: ACAPS 2022a, 11-27

Eritrea, Ethiopia, Myanmar and Yemen are categorized as countries with extremely high access constraints. Only a few humanitarian relief organizations are allowed to operate through partnership with government entities, and frequent armed conflict poses threats to their activities. Ukraine was listed as a country with extreme access constraints in the first half of 2022. However, the country's humanitarian access seems to have improved in the second half as the Ukrainian military forces regained control over some of the territory while the access constraint level remains high.

It is noteworthy that Thailand and Mexico show no significant access constraints in carrying out development cooperation activities, but their access constraints are high in terms of

carrying out humanitarian assistance activities. Thailand is not a signatory to the Refugee Convention and therefore does not grant legal status to refugees from Myanmar. In Mexico, as well, insufficient administrative procedures to handle a large influx of migrants cut off a necessary channel for migrants to receive proper assistance. Both countries illustrate that the absence of legal and administrative processes for migrants and refugees can lead to limited access to humanitarian assistance for them.

KOICA's Humanitarian Assistance

In 2021, KOICA provided cash and in-kind support for humanitarian aid to a total of 68 countries and carried out a wide range of public-private cooperation projects. The recipients include a number of countries with high access constraints, such as Ethiopia, Myanmar, Yemen, Nigeria, Palestine, Ukraine, Bangladesh and Sudan. To manage humanitarian assistance effectively, it is imperative to examine safety-related indicators, such as the Humanitarian Access Index, and develop an access strategy that can both offer safety measures for humanitarian personnel and effectively deliver humanitarian assistance when providing humanitarian assistance to countries with access constraints.

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Reference

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