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LEADING INTERNATIONAL NGOS IN HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICE

Açar sözlər: *aparıcı QHT-lər, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, vətəndaş cəmiyyəti, vəkiliyyət fəaliyyəti, Save the Children, BMT, Civil Rights Defenders.*

Ключевые слова: *ведущие НПО, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, гражданское общество, адвокатская деятельность, Save the Children, ООН, Civil Rights Defenders.*

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I. Introduction

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are characterized as a non-profit or non-state organisations that focus on supporting education, equality, health, economic, social or political aims including humanitarian activities [7]. They are independent organizations that provide social and humanitarian services and functions and play a crucial role in international aid, development and charity. Their main aim is not getting benefit but promoting their goals [8].

The establishment of the United Nations inevitably contributed to the evolution of global non-governmental human rights movement. Through the adoption of the International Bill of Human Rights, the UN established a com-

mon set of universal standards in the area of the protection and promotion of human rights. Additionally, the development of international enforcement mechanisms and procedures enabled human rights activists to speak out, to inform the authorities about the human rights abuses and make perpetrators liable for their deeds [11, p. 101].

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) first became participated in formal United Nations decision-making in 1946 through ECOSOC. Article 71 of the UN Charter enabled ECOSOC to develop consultative relationships with NGOs. This relationship is governed by ECOSOC resolution 1996/31 which encourages NGOs to contribute to the Council's work through submitting written statements, reports distributed by the Secretary-General or delivered during Council meetings. By 2013, nearly 3800 NGOs had gained consultative status with ECOSOC highlighting the growing civil society engagement in United Nations deliberations [6, p. 5]. During 1960s and 1990s, Non-governmental organizations were actively participated in United Nations conferences and policymaking. This participation grew rapidly expanding the scope of NGOs activities. Since 1990s, NGOs have been participating not only in advocacy but also in humanitarian aid and development services. Through private donations and government funding, support NGOs managed their work in

areas like education, health and infrastructure [9, p. 7-9].

In the modern system of international relations, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a significant role in the protection and promotion of human rights. Along with intergovernmental mechanisms, these organizations act as one of the main actors in preventing, documenting, and communicating human rights violations to the public. Operating independently of governments, international NGOs strengthen the application of international human rights norms in practice and monitor the implementation of state obligations. Leading international NGOs – including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and Médecins Sans Frontières – have a significant impact on human rights practice through research, reporting, advocacy, and international campaigns. These organizations bring human rights violations to the international agenda, cooperate with the United Nations and regional mechanisms, and provide direct humanitarian assistance in conflict and crisis zones.

In addition, international NGOs represent the voice of civil society at the international level, contributing to the promotion of legal reforms, raising public awareness, and strengthening global accountability. Their activities are of great importance in shaping the normative framework in the field of human rights, as well as in ensuring the implementation of these norms in real conditions. In this regard, leading international NGOs are considered integral and influential actors in the modern human rights system.

There are various international NGOs which have a great impact on advancing human rights protection over the world. Although these organizations differ from each other by scope, focus area, methods, they jointly support the protection and promotion of dignity, justice and freedom

for vulnerable and marginalized groups. Leading international NGOs play a particularly important role in shaping human rights practice by exposing abuses, influencing policy debates, and holding governments and other actors accountable. Many of these organizations maintain close working relationships with international bodies such as the United Nations, regional human rights mechanisms, and international courts. Their reports and findings are frequently used as credible sources of information in legal proceedings, policy formulation, and international advocacy efforts. In addition, international NGOs often provide direct support to affected populations, ranging from legal assistance and medical care to education and humanitarian relief.

II. Leading international NGOs

Amnesty International

Amnesty International was founded in 1961 and is based in London. It is one of the largest human rights organizations in the world. Its work is carried out as a global movement with millions of supporters in over 150 countries. This organization aims to promote and protect internationally recognized human rights, including campaigns for freedom of expression, prevention of torture, abolition of the death penalty, gender equality, and minority rights. It carries out independent, fact-based research and investigations into human rights violations, publishes reports on them, and engages in advocacy and lobbying as well as public campaigning to persuade governments and international institutions. Legally speaking, Amnesty International operates as an INGO that mainly relies on individual donations for funding; it has also been granted consultative status with ECOSOC which gives it access to participate in global policymaking processes related to human rights. Besides its direct activities, Amnesty International has a normative and political role within the international human rights system by acting normatively as an entrepreneur at the

same time being a main actor in transnational advocacy networks increasing discourse accountability norm diffusion internalization globally [3].

Human Rights Watch (HRW)

Human Rights Watch is an international human rights organization which investigates and reports on human rights abuses all over the world. It was founded in 1978, as Helsinki Watch to monitor the countries and investigate human rights violations in those countries that signed the Helsinki Accords. It is headquartered in New York city. It inspects massacres, genocides, government take-overs of media and the baseless arrests of activists and political opposition figures. It also expands its work to inspect the violations against the people who suffers from discrimination, including women, LGBT people and disabled people [5].

HRW is famous for on-site investigations, interviews with victims and witnesses, satellite imagery is also used to track the destruction of villages and cities. It compiles thorough and fact-based reports on human rights cases, such as armed conflict, political repression, gender-based violence, refugee rights, child labor, and freedom of expression, in the world. These reports are influential tools for advocacy and are frequently referenced by international bodies such as the United Nations, the International Criminal Court (ICC), and different governments [1].

Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders)

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), or Doctors Without Borders is a leading international medical humanitarian organization which was founded in 1971, by a group of French doctors and journalists and it is headquartered in Geneva. It operates in the most volatile, dangerous and conflict-ridden places of the world. They are known for providing medical assistance to the people

who are victims of war, epidemics, natural disasters and other disasters and suffer from exclusion of healthcare. Along with medical aid, MSF provides necessary services to people in need, such as trauma surgery, maternal and child healthcare, vaccination campaigns, mental health support, treatment for diseases like malaria, tuberculosis, cholera, HIV/AIDS [8] [4].

MSF's work is based on three core principles: neutrality, impartiality and independence. It doesn't take sides in conflicts, doesn't associate with any political, religious or military agendas. It continues operating relying on donations from individuals and private sources, instead of government funding.

The organization received the Nobel Prize in 1999 in recognition of its pioneering humanitarian efforts and its ethical stance in speaking out against injustice.

Civil Rights Defenders

Civil Rights Defenders was established in 1982 as the Swedish Helsinki Committee for Human Rights to monitor compliance with the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Final Act. Civil Rights Defenders is an independent organization whose mission is to protect civil and political rights of people. It is currently operating actively in the world's most repressive regions. It reinforces human rights globally through advocacy, litigation, and public campaigns. Civil Rights Defenders allocates expertise and support to those who defend human rights and hold offenders accountable for their actions. It assists people to have an access to justice and provides respect for their civil and political rights [4].

Anti-Slavery International

Anti-Slavery International (ASI) was founded in 1839 by British abolitionists like William Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson. It is headquartered in London and is the world's oldest human rights organization. The organization functions to fight against and eliminate all forms of

slavery and human trafficking. Its work is based on the UN treaties against slavery [4].

There are various types of slavery in modern world as well, though it was mostly related to the past. Human trafficking, forced labor, child slavery forced marriage, etc. are types of modern slavery. Modern slavery is demonstrated as when a person is exploited against their will for the benefit of others. They lose their freedom through force, threats, coercion or deception. The victims of modern slavery are used to make clothes, serving food, working in factories and etc. against their will. The organizations main mission is to end slavery everywhere and for everyone [1].

ASI maintains advisory status with the UN Economic and Social Council, as well as observer statuses at the International Labor Organization.

Save the Children

Save the Children is a charity that began in 1919 in Britain when there was a need for humanitarian support for children after World War I. It has its main office in London. From the beginning, this organization has been an advocate of the idea that children have individual rights as independent holders of these rights and has played a key role in developing international standards regarding children's rights. Its mission is to protect and promote those rights at all levels by ensuring that every child has the basic opportunities to survive, learn, and be safe from violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect – principles which were later reflected in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Save the Children works worldwide through emergency humanitarian assistance; long-term health and education development programs; child protection initiatives; and policy advocacy at national and international levels. It partners with governments and UN agencies as well as civil society actors to strengthen systems for children's welfare. It legally operates as an international

non-governmental organization coordinated through Save the Children International which is registered under UK charity law. The organization has consultative status with ECOSOC that enables it to participate in global policymaking processes. Today, it deals with armed conflict, climate change impacts, displacement challenges, funding limitations as well as reduced civic space. Conceptually speaking about Save the Children can be placed under transnational advocacy networks connecting local actors to global institutions aimed at creating pressure for policy change. The organization also acts as a norm entrepreneur by promoting and diffusing international child rights norms. Thus besides service delivery, this organization plays a significant normative and political role within the global human rights system influencing state behavior toward consolidating child rights as universal standards [10].

Advocates for Human Rights

The organization is founded in 1983 by a group of lawyers who were eager to use Minnesota's spirit of social justice to promote and protect human rights in the world. It is located in the United States [1]. It is an independent, non-governmental organization which functions under 501(c)(3) status. The organization investigates and exposes the violations of human rights against women, immigrants and refugees who are the victims of human rights violations. Through research, educations and advocacy it raises awareness about the implementation of international human rights standards [3]. The main issues that the organization works on are: violence against women, immigration and refugee rights, human trafficking, death penalty, judicial independence and rule of law.

The Advocacy for human Rights play a structural role in linking domestic legal systems with the international human rights regime. It is not only an investigator and advocate but also en-

gages with global accountability mechanisms through its reports to UN treaty bodies and participation in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). By these means, it contributes to independent evaluations of state compliance and reinforces the supervisory and monitoring functions of international human rights law. From an analytical perspective based on Constructivist International Relations Theory, this organizations can be described as a norm entrepreneur. It describes issues such as the death penalty, refugee protection, and judicial independence as binding international legal obligations rather than merely domestic policy preferences. This framing strategy helps in internalizing global human rights norms into national legal discourse and policymaking arenas.

Conclusion

This study examines the growing role of international NGOs in the safeguarding and promotion of human rights in the current human rights regime. The paper contends that some major international NGOs have developed into institutionalized and powerful players operating alongside intergovernmental structures within the global architecture for human rights. In addition to advocac, these organizations are also involved in systematic documentation of violations, setting agendas, mobilizing the public,, ensuring accountability, and providing direct support to affected population.

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch are examples of the epistemic authority that NGOs have through independent, evidence-based investigations that bring local abuses to international attention and create normative and political pressure on states. Médecins Sans Frontières carries out human rights protection by providing neutral medical help in armed conflict situations and humanitarian crises. This ties humanitarian practice to principles based on rights. At the same time, groups like Civil

Rights Defenders and The Advocates for Human Rights work toward strengthening the rule of law through legal advocacy, strategic litigation, and building institutional capacity. Issue-specific organizations such as Anti-Slavery International and Save the Children further prove specialization plus thematic diversification, which is typical for contemporary transnational civil society. International NGOs are not simply reactionary; rather, they are deeply involved in norm entrepreneurship as well as the dynamic process of progressively developing international legal standards. United Nations bodies often rely on their reports, shadow submissions, and policy recommendations as credible sources of information and analysis. In this role, NGOs act as intermediaries between local realities and global governance structures for both discourse and decision-making processes.

The findings demonstrate that the activities of international NGOs are not limited to responding to human rights violations, but also influence the formation and development of international legal norms. Their reports and recommendations are used as a reliable source by the United Nations, regional human rights mechanisms, and international courts. This shows that NGOs act as legitimate and influential partners in international decision-making processes.

At the same time, international NGOs also face various challenges. Political pressures, financial constraints, security risks, and the harsh stance of some states towards civil society can complicate their activities. However, the independence, professionalism, and global cooperation networks of NGOs allow them to partially overcome these obstacles.

In conclusion, leading international NGOs increase the effectiveness of the international human rights system by acting as a bridge between normative principles and practical implementation in the field of human rights. Their

activities are of indispensable role in terms of protecting human dignity, ensuring justice, and forming a more inclusive and accountable global governance. In the future, stronger cooperation between international NGOs, states, and inter-

national organizations could contribute to more effective protection of human rights at the global level.

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**APARICI BEYNƏLXALQ QEYRİ-HÖKUMƏT TƏŞKİLATLARI VƏ
ONLARIN İNSAN HÜQUQLARI PRAKTİKASINA TƏSİRİ**

XÜLASƏ

Beynəlxalq qeyri-hökumət təşkilatları (QHT-lər) insan hüquqlarının qorunması və təşviqi sahəsində qlobal səviyyədə mühüm rol oynayırlar. Bu təşkilatlar insan hüquqları sahəsində vəziyyəti izləyir, pozuntuları və sui-istifadə hallarını sənədləşdirərək beynəlxalq qurumlara təqdim edir, həmçinin humanitar və hüquqi dəstək göstərirlər. Bu tədqiqat işində aparıcı beynəlxalq QHT-lərin insan hüquqları praktikasına təsiri araşdırılaraq, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Médecins Sans Frontières, Civil Rights Defenders, Anti-Slavery International, Save the Children və The Advocates for Human Rights təşkilatlarının fəaliyyətinə xüsusi diqqət yetirilir.

Araşdırma göstərir ki, bu təşkilatlar tədqiqat, vəkillik fəaliyyəti, hüquqi mexanizmlər, ictimai kampaniyalar və xidmətlərin göstərilməsi vasitəsilə beynəlxalq insan hüquqları standartlarının tətbiqinə əhəmiyyətli töhfə verirlər. Onların fəaliyyəti siyasi repressiyalar, silahlı münaqişələr, seçkilər, müasir köləlik və həssas qrupların müdafiəsi kimi geniş spektrli insan hüquqları məsələlərini əhatə edir. Nəticə etibarilə, aparıcı beynəlxalq QHT-lər normativ prinsiplərlə onların praktik icrası arasında körpü rolunu oynayaraq beynəlxalq insan hüquqları sisteminin əvəzolunmaz aktorlarına çevrilmişdir.

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**ВЕДУЩИЕ МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЕ НЕПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВЕННЫЕ
ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ И ИХ ВЛИЯНИЕ НА ПРАКТИКУ ЗАЩИТЫ ПРАВ ЧЕЛОВЕКА**

РЕЗЮМЕ

Международные неправительственные организации (НПО) играют важную роль на глобальном уровне в защите и продвижении прав человека. Эти организации осуществляют мониторинг соблюдения прав человека, документируют нарушения и злоупотребления, предоставляют информацию международным органам, а также оказывают гуманитарную и юридическую помощь пострадавшим. В данном исследовании рассматривается влияние ведущих международных НПО на практику защиты прав человека, с особым вниманием к деятельности таких организаций, как Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Médecins Sans Frontières, Civil Rights Defenders, Anti-Slavery International, Save the Children и The Advocates for Human Rights.

Исследование показывает, что эти организации вносят значительный вклад в реализацию международных стандартов в области прав человека через проведение исследований, адвокационную деятельность, применение юридических механизмов, публичные кампании и оказание услуг. Их работа охватывает широкий спектр вопросов в области прав человека, включая политические репрессии, вооружённые конфликты, выборы, современное рабство и защиту уязвимых групп населения. В результате ведущие международные НПО выступают незаменимыми актёрами в международной системе защиты прав человека, создавая мост между нормативными принципами и их практической реализацией.

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