



Humanitarian Corridors

For Prelims: Humanitarian corridors, Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977, United Nation.

For Mains: Humanitarian corridors, Russia-Ukraine War, Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977, World War II, syrian civil war, Libyan civil war, and Gaza war

Why in News?

Recently, Russia declared a temporary ceasefire in the [Russia-Ukraine War](#) to provide "humanitarian corridors" for civilians.

- As the war enters a likely deadlier phase, **numerous civilians attempt to leave the country for safety and refuge**, there must be humanitarian measures taken to reduce civilian casualties.

What are Humanitarian Corridors?

- **About:** They are **demilitarised zones**, in a specific area and **for a specific time** — and both sides of an armed conflict agree to them.
 - The [United Nations](#) (UN) considers humanitarian corridors to be **one of several possible forms of a temporary pause of armed conflict**.
 - **For example** through large-scale bombing of civilian targets — humanitarian corridors can provide crucial relief.
- **Need:** The corridors are necessary **when cities are under siege and the population is cut off from basic food supplies, electricity and water**.
- **Function:** Through these corridors, either food and medical aid can be brought to areas of conflict, or civilians can be evacuated.
- **Accessibility:** Access to humanitarian corridors is determined by the parties to the conflict. It's usually limited to neutral actors, the UN or aid organisations such as the [Red Cross](#).
 - They can also be used by UN observers, [Non-governmental Organisations \(NGOs\)](#) and journalists to gain access to contested areas where war crimes are being committed.

What are International conventions related to the Humanitarian Corridor?

- Even before **international organisations recognised humanitarian corridors**, such zones were defined in armed conflicts including in [World War II](#) when **Jewish children were evacuated from areas under Nazi control** to the United Kingdom.
- Humanitarian corridors were defined in **resolution 45/100** of the UNs' general assembly in 1990.
 - It said that "**relief corridors**" are seen by the international community as an important instrument to back up the right of civilians to receive assistance during armed conflicts.
 - It is also recognized in the [Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977](#).
- In 1992, the **International Institute of Humanitarian Law** from Sanremo in Italy defined the concept more specifically.

- "Humanitarian assistance can transit, in this case, through the so-called humanitarian corridors, which must be respected and protected by the relevant authorities and, if necessary, under the authority of the UN".
- Humanitarian corridors have been frequently used in the [Syrian civil war](#), [Libyan civil war](#), and [Gaza war](#) among other such conflict zones.

What are Associated Issues?

- **Difficult To Enforce:** Since all sides need to agree to set up the corridors, **Humanitarian corridors are difficult to enforce.**
 - There are many wars and conflicts where calls for civilian corridors or **a pause in fighting have been made in vain.**
 - In the ongoing war in Yemen, for instance, the UN has so far failed in its negotiations.
- **Possible Misuse:** There is a **risk of military or political abuse.**
 - For example, the corridors can be **used to smuggle weapons and fuel into besieged cities.**

Way Forward

- **Need for Humanitarian Pause:** In addition to the humanitarian corridor, the global community should encourage a **humanitarian pause** as the corridors are constructed.
 - A humanitarian pause would involve a **temporary cessation of fighting** to protect civilians.
 - This will **enable civilians to reach the corridors and move through safely.**

PYQ

Q. Very recently, in which of the following countries have lakhs of people either suffered from severe famine/acute malnutrition or died due to starvation caused by war/ethnic conflicts? (2018)

- (a) Angola and Zambia
- (b) Morocco and Tunisia
- (c) Venezuela and Colombia
- (d) Yemen and South Sudan

Ans: (d)

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