

Loss of civilian lives and the loss of the UN's credentials

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ByHindustan Times

This article is authored by Sriparna Pathak, associate professor, Chinese Studies and International Relations, OP Jindal Global University, Sonipat.

The horrors of World War II were so immense that the international community decided to have frameworks and mechanisms to ensure the loss of lives on the scale that was witnessed, never takes place again. About 75 million people lost their lives in World War II, including about 20 million military personnel and 40 million civilians. Loss of civilians' lives were not just in the direct war between the nation states at war, but also because many civilians died of deliberate genocide, massacres, mass bombings, disease and starvation. For the purpose of ensuring the peace and stability of the international order, in which the protection of human lives becomes paramount the United Nations (UN) came into existence on October 24, 1945. As stated in the Charter of the UN itself, the protection of the civilian population is a basic element of humanitarian law. Civilians and all those not taking part in the fighting must on no account be attacked and must be spared and protected. Despite this, the reality continues to remain that civilian populations suffer most from the consequences of armed violence.



Security officials look on as the United Nations flag flies at half-mast to mourn the lives of UN workers lost during the war between Israel and Hamas, at the United Nations Office Nairobi (UNON)(AFP)

In 2023, at least 30 countries in the world are engaged in different forms of war. These types include direct military conflict between countries, civil wars, drug wars, terrorist insurgencies, ethnic violence and political unrest, to name a few. In the Russia-Ukraine war which rages on for more than a year now, as verified by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, a total of 9,614 people have lost their lives, and 17,535 people have been injured, as of September 2023. In October this year, Hamas launched an unexpected and brutal terrorist attack on Israeli civilians, in which more than 1,400 Israelis were killed and more than 240 taken hostage. The ministry of health in Ramallah has stated that more than 10,000 Palestinians have died in the military campaign launched by Israel in response to decimate Hamas and the number is going up by the day.

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In the Nagorno-Karabakh region, the situation is equally grim, as more than 53,000 people or about 45% of Nagorno-Karabakh's population of 120,000 had left the region for Armenia. Nagorno-Karabakh officials said earlier that at least 200 people, including 10 civilians lost their lives and over 400 were wounded in the fighting. In Myanmar, where a civil war rages on, the estimated casualties in the year 2022 stood at 13,646. In Mexico, a drug war rages on between the Mexican government and multiple powerful and violent drug cartels, an estimated 350,000 deaths have taken place with more than 72,000 people still missing for the period between 2006 and 2021. In Sudan, a war between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), rival factions of the military government of Sudan, began in April this year. As of October this year, about 10,000 people have lost their lives and up to 12,000 others injured.

According to a Human Rights Watch report that was published in January 2021, the official figures of Uyghurs put through the internment camps, which China calls vocational education and training camps is 1.3 million. Waterboarding, mass rape and sexual abuse are among the forms of torture used in the internment camps. In 2023, UN experts had even sought a clarification about nine imprisoned Tibetan human rights defenders.

Thus, wars keep raging on, and civilian lives continue being lost due the various formats in which wars continue to take place. As compared to the drastic changes in which violence gets perpetrated against civilians, the UN charter has been amended just five times since 1945. In 1965, article 23 of the UN charter was amended to enlarge the Security Council from 11 to 15 members. Article 27 was also amended in 1965 to increase the required number of Security Council votes from seven to nine. Article 61 also underwent an amendment in the same year and the Economic and Social Council was enlarged from 18 to 27 members. The charter underwent two more changes in 1968 and 1973 respectively, when Articles 109 and Article 61 were amended respectively to change the requirements for a general conference of member states for reviewing the Charter, and to further enlarge the Economic and Social Council from 27 to 54 members. What has been missed out in all these amendments is the fact that the loss of civilian lives continues. In fact, in the list of wars in 2023, two of the permanent members of the UN Security Council- China and Russia have

engaged in brutal killings of civilians. With every new war, irrespective of which format it in, the credibility of the UN only receives a further blow, and this will continue as it has since 1945 unless reform is seriously considered.

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Fostering diplomatic bonds - The India-Tanzania strategic partnership

ByHindustan Times

This article is authored by Novatus Igosha, lawyer and freelance opinion writer on diplomacy and international affairs, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

As Tanzanian president Samia Suluhu Hassan's plane touched down at JKN international airport, her state visit to India was met with great anticipation. It marked a significant diplomatic turning point in her presidency, a harbinger of new possibilities in the 21st century.



Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan(ANI)

India's modern diplomatic influence has ushered in a paradigm shift in global diplomacy, reshaping how nations cooperate and collaborate on multifaceted issues. In this age of interconnectivity and shared challenges, president Samia's visit to India holds immense importance for Tanzania. The establishment of a strategic partnership between India and Tanzania represents a beacon of hope and opportunity.

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For instance, climate change is leading to power cuts due to drying natural water sources, and the strategic partnership with India has yielded signed agreements for constructing a water supply mechanism from lake Victoria to Dodoma City. This initiative is part of a broader collaboration involving approximately \$617 billion in water projects, including irrigation schemes for the agriculture sector.

Beyond water, the need for alternative power sources is pressing. In my humble view, it is imperative to foster a technological exchange and capacity building in nuclear energy for power generation.

President Samia's recent visit to India has rekindled the flames of friendship, ushering in a new era of cooperation that transcends geographical and cultural boundaries. This evolving partnership is not confined to economic and cultural ties but extends to the realm of security, a cornerstone of modern diplomacy. Her diplomatic visit to India signifies a new audacity in which India, a prominent player in both Indian and Western technology and a commendable member of the BRICS club, becomes a prospective partner in our economic diplomacy.

One significant area of consideration is the establishment of a Tanzania-India Center for Innovative Technologies, especially in the fields of security cooperation, nuclear energy, and information technology. Collaborative efforts and shared knowledge will better equip both Tanzania and India to address modern challenges.

We share the vast expanse of the Indian Ocean, the world's third-largest ocean, which plays a pivotal role in our comprehensive partnership. In a world threatened by sea piracy and terrorism, it is in our mutual interest to develop systemic approaches to address and combat sea-based terrorism.

The exchange of professional personnel is a prudent move. The diplomatic efforts of Indian prime minister Narendra Modi and Samia Suluhu have the potential to enhance Tanzania's maritime security through Indian expertise and technology.

Security challenges necessitate academic involvement. But in order to address natural calamities like El Niño, we need to bolster our capabilities in responding to natural phenomena effectively.

A strong strategic partnership between India and Tanzania is not merely a shield against emerging natural challenges but also a catalyst for regional stability, economic cooperation, and peace.

India's National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) is a reputable institution that could serve as a platform for a technology think tank, facilitating discussions and identifying areas of scientific and technological cooperation in civilian nuclear energy and other domains.

Historically, Tanzania and India were among the founders of the South-South Cooperation. This shared history enhances mutual trust and amplifies Tanzania-India's influence on the global stage, allowing us to engage more effectively in international forums.

To bolster our maritime capabilities, Tanzania can collaborate with India, a crucial partner in ensuring stability and safeguarding trade routes, especially in the vast Indian Ocean.

Some readers have suggested that I write with a sentimental attachment to Indian culture due to my high school background, where I interacted with Indian nationals. This perception is far from my reality.

Historically, India and Tanzania share deep connections, especially on the world stage. The philosophies of Mahatma Gandhi and Julius Nyerere resonate with their shared vision of equality and non-violent resistance. The time has come for India to become the de jure capital of modern diplomacy and for us to create a strategic partnership that benefits both nations.

India can offer valuable expertise in international trade, and together, we can adapt to the evolving rules shaping economic diplomacy in our time. President Samia's diplomatic team in India recognised the importance of foreign technologies and massive investments for Tanzania's economic growth. India, with its vast market and diplomatic significance, offers an invaluable partnership.

Cultural links between Tanzania and India, particularly for Tanzanian nationals of Indian ancestry, make this a crucial country for strategic collaboration. We can harness technical and economic assistance through India's International and Technical Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme.

As 2023 draws to a close, president Samia and prime minister Narendra Modi have laid the foundation for a new era of economic diplomacy. Mutual interests should guide our policy makers to ensure that diplomatic efforts serve the interests of both nations.

In all agreements, trust is crucial. Trust should be built carefully, respecting the sovereignty of each partner and balancing our interests.

In New Delhi, there is a diplomatic enclave named after Chanakya, ancient India's most famous political philosopher. His theory of international relations emphasises the importance of mutual trust in a world of layered relations and mistrust between nations.

The India-Tanzania strategic partnership, fortified by economic, cultural, technological, and security cooperation, holds the promise of a brighter future for both nations and the East African region. President Samia's recent visit is a testament to the unwavering commitment to this partnership, set to elevate India-Tanzania relations to new heights. Tanzania is poised to become East Africa's de facto power. By drawing inspiration from modern India's intellectual rigor and diplomatic excellence, we can adapt and thrive in our own context.

The India-Tanzania diplomatic nexus since president Samia's visit to India is poised to yield a strategic partnership that provides a robust model for other nations, showcasing the power of cooperation in addressing shared challenges and pursuing collective prosperity. As India and Tanzania embark on this transformative journey, the world watches with anticipation, hopeful for a future where mutual growth and peace reign supreme.

This article is authored by Novatus Igosha, lawyer and freelance opinion writer on diplomacy and international affairs, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

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