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# BASIC INFRASTRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION OF DISASTER VICTIMS AND TO DEMONSTRATE THE FUNCTIONING OF AN NGO

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*ABSTRACT: In this paper, we define the concept of natural and humanitarian disasters, their historical and civilisational context, their consequences, and their impact on people and their environment. Protection agencies run by states, together with civil society organisations (CSOs), must provide the necessary infrastructure to accommodate displaced people and meet their needs until they can return to their homes. Disaster refugees are not a modern phenomenon, we have seen them in every period of history, but we are now aware of the causes and consequences of natural and humanitarian disasters and are consciously working to prevent, avert, and recover from them. This paper, by examining international practice, identifies the basic infrastructure requirements necessary for the temporary housing of refugees and, in the practice of one NGO, describes the infrastructure tools used.*

*KEYWORDS: disaster refugees, infrastructure, NGOs, enforcement authorities*

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## INTRODUCTION

Human life is a constant struggle between threatening phenomena and natural disasters in our environment that lurk in every moment of life. When people deliberately over-consume, natural phenomena multiply, upsetting the natural balance.<sup>1</sup> Human civilisation has created the potential for an unpredictable number of life-threatening phenomena of incalculable danger, which we now call humanitarian and natural disasters, depending on their origin. For humans, a disaster is a situation in which life, health, human values, and the environment are damaged in a way that could have irreversible consequences, even resulting in the destruction of life.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, it is very important to see the antecedents, look for causal links, map the natural phenomena we observe, assess the changes in our environment, and decipher the antecedents of the events that occur. Knowing our history and our environment can provide

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<sup>1</sup> Lányi 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Ferguson 2021.

more certainty of foresight, but modelling why a society failed in a stage of history or why a particular epidemic, earthquake, or flood occurred, and whether it had predictable, foreseeable signs, is very difficult.<sup>3</sup>

Also, a natural disaster is a humanitarian disaster only if it occurs in a place where people live, but if it occurs far from the area inhabited by people, it can be called a natural disaster but not a humanitarian one, since it only affects the population of animals and other living beings and can be recorded as damage to the local flora and fauna. It is very important to define precisely what natural and humanitarian disasters are, what the relationship between them is, and to explore their interactions. It is worth listing what life-threatening phenomena have occurred and still occur in our history, what societies before us have faced and what we, as members of today's societies, are facing.

Important questions are where the unexpected event or disaster occurs, in which geographical area, under what conditions, who the victims are, what their way of life is, and what their values are. All these questions can provide important answers for the countries affected by a disaster but also for the countries hosting disaster refugees. When we talk about disaster refugees, we do not refer to the status of voluntary refugees. Voluntary refugees can be individuals or groups of people whose lives and dignity are not in danger and whose flight is motivated by poverty, unemployment, hunger, and the hope of a better life. Real disaster refugees are those who are forced to leave their homes because their lives are in imminent danger due to war, natural disaster that makes survival impossible, ethnic cleansing, political persecution, etc.<sup>4</sup>

It is important to define who has a role to play in taking care of a group of refugees, what the state's obligations are in terms of the infrastructure needed to temporarily accommodate refugees, and what tasks can be carried out by NGOs (coordinated by the state), accredited volunteers, and rescue teams certified by state bodies.

Democratic states have very well-developed active civil societies and charitable organisations, and the role of these organisations in social security is now inescapable and indispensable. Today, the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta is one of the largest operators of social and humanitarian institutions in Hungary.<sup>5</sup> For this reason, it supports and actively coordinates the social and human security tasks of marginalised social strata – such as the homeless, the elderly, the disabled, the sick, and the poor, as well as those who are forced to flee, whether because of natural or man-made disasters, such as war or political and economic persecution – in cooperation with the state and international bodies.<sup>6</sup>

## CATEGORISATION OF DISASTERS

Act No. CXXVIII of 2011 concerning disaster management and amending certain related acts is very precise in its definition of disaster:

a condition or situation that is suitable for leading to the declaration of a state of emergency or that does not reach the extent of such a declaration, which endangers or damages the life, health, material values of people, the basic supply of the population, the natural envi-

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<sup>3</sup> Ferguson 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Refugee status is determined by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), depending on whether they are voluntary or forced refugees.

<sup>5</sup> Romhányi et al. 2021.

<sup>6</sup> Solymári et al. 2016.

ronment, natural values in such a way or to such an extent that the prevention or control of the damage, or the elimination of the consequences exceeds the protection capabilities of the organisations designated for this purpose in the prescribed cooperation arrangements and requires the introduction of special measures and the continuous and strictly coordinated cooperation of local authorities and public bodies, or the mobilisation of international assistance.<sup>7</sup>

The Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta Emergency Management Team's Toolkit for the Training of Disaster and Crisis Intervention Volunteers is simpler and clearer but based on the same essential aspects:

a disaster represents the exposure of a vulnerable group of people to danger, causing serious disruption to the functioning of society and causing human, material, economic or environmental losses that exceed the resilience of the affected community or society to such a situation. A disaster is the result of a combination of hazards and vulnerability that exceeds the capacity of society to mitigate the potentially negative consequences of the risk.<sup>8</sup>

Of course, it is difficult to define the meaning of disaster very precisely; it is also difficult to determine when a particular natural phenomenon, say a river leaves its usual course after a heavy rainfall, constitutes a disaster and to what and to whom it poses a threat. The same can be said of earthquakes. It is very important to distinguish among natural phenomena that, although can cause enormous destruction in their immediate vicinity, are far from any human habitation and therefore have little or no impact on human life and property. We know very well that the majority of natural disasters are completely independent of humans, because earthquakes, floods, and volcanic eruptions are not caused by human intervention, they can cause enormous destruction, and all man can do is try to protect himself against them and adapt his architecture and his housing habits to minimise the damage caused by these natural phenomena. However, there are disasters that, due to human intervention or omission, cause enormous human losses and serious natural damages, often with irreversible consequences. These include industrial disasters such as the Chernobyl nuclear reactor disaster, poorly constructed collection dams, explosive industrial plants, and structurally defective structures and bridges.<sup>9</sup>

Earthquakes are the most recognised and one of the most devastating natural disasters. Between 1900 and 2017, earthquakes with magnitudes above 9.1–9.3 have been recorded around Japan, South Sumatra, the west coast of South America, and the Gulf of Alaska, with very high population densities compared to the average. But if we also look at the seismological reports of this period, it is clear that from Alaska southwards, on the western coasts of the two American continents, the mid-Atlantic, and the Mediterranean coasts eastward to the Arabian Sea, there is an outstanding number of high-magnitude earthquakes, but the situation is the most severe around Japan, on the western Pacific coast, and the archipelago from southern China to Australia.<sup>10</sup> These areas are also quite densely populated. The natural phenomena are difficult to predict and therefore pose a high risk, not

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<sup>7</sup> Act CXXXVIII 2011.

<sup>8</sup> Training of Disaster and Crisis Intervention Volunteers 2015, 98.

<sup>9</sup> Faragó 1996.

<sup>10</sup> Ferguson 2021.

only locally but also regionally, and sometimes even as a starting point for a global disaster, as in the case of the Fukushima nuclear reactor, especially if the earthquake is also followed by a tsunami. In such cases, the damage is enormous and the human toll is very high. There are also many seismically active areas in the southeast of Europe, so disasters in the surrounding countries can also affect Hungary and its region. As Hungary is a member of the EU, the UN, and NATO, Hungarian authorities and their active and qualified organisations are involved in rescue operations, with their human and technical resources.

**Floods** can occur anywhere on Earth, and our country is not a flood-free zone. Floods are the most common natural disasters in Europe and Hungary, and River Tisza is the most dangerous, with a length of 965km and a discharge of 792 m<sup>3</sup>/s. It flows from north to south and crosses the entire country in a north-south direction. Tisza collects water from rivers such as Viso, Túr, Szamos, Kraszna, Bodrog, Körös, and Maros, which together are more than 1,500km long and also pose a flood risk.<sup>11</sup> River Danube is not without flood risks either, just think of the floods of 2006 and 2013, and perhaps it is worth mentioning the Pest-Buda flood of 1838, when it flooded nearly 2,882 houses and claimed 153 lives, according to some sources.<sup>12</sup> Internationally, it is important to mention floods that have taken a huge human toll. The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a period of floods not only in Hungary but also on a global scale when flooded rivers caused a great deal of suffering and destruction. The rapid population growth in China led to the alteration of the Yellow River, a lot of forests were cut down, the land was made arable, and the alteration of the riverbed led to a series of huge floods that reached the surrounding settlements, resulting in the death of many people. The flood of 1887 killed almost 900,000 people, but the Yangtze spill of 1931 is reported to have killed nearly 2 million, while the 1938 flood of the Yellow River killed 4–500,000. The number of homes destroyed is also high, placing a huge burden on the state. Mississippi River in the United States also flooded a few times in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, with fewer deaths and less damage. We could also cite the history of rivers bursting their banks on every continent of the world or floods caused by sudden surges of water, river flooding, or earthquakes (in Sri Lanka), which in these cases not only result in disasters of local and regional significance but also entail risks that transcend continents, sometimes at a global level. In this context, prevention, recovery, and intervention require a broad, often global, response.<sup>13</sup>

**Volcanic eruptions** also have a high disaster risk and have been common throughout the Earth's history. Science has now established that many of the volcanic eruptions in the Earth's history had a global impact because average temperatures rose following eruptions. The most notable volcanic eruptions – such as Okmok (in Alaska), which erupted in 45 BC, the well-known Mount Vesuvius, which erupted several times: in 1780 BC, 79 BC, and 1631 BC, and the Taupo volcano in 1631 BC – had a significant impact on the global temperature. 232 AD completely changed the regional climate, affecting not only the surrounding settlements but also causing regional shifts and climatic changes, leading to population migrations.<sup>14</sup>

In the context of disasters, we most often talk about extreme natural phenomena and their effects, such as earthquakes, floods, and volcanic eruptions described above, which

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<sup>11</sup> Training of Disaster and Crisis Intervention Volunteers 2015, and Dobák 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Vekerdy 2002.

<sup>13</sup> Ferguson 2021.

<sup>14</sup> Ferguson 2021.

can have a major impact on the geographical locations where they occur, but local social cultures can combat these phenomena with different effectiveness and the affected populations can adopt different protection strategies.<sup>15</sup> Such natural phenomena may shape local conditions in such a way that the affected population chooses to leave the geographical area but we also often find that they choose to remain by transforming their environment. We may encounter geographical areas where critical infrastructures of society are under constant threat from extreme disasters, yet the response of the area's population is not to move but to protect, prevent, and be prepared. For a long time, most natural disasters were not the results of extreme human intervention. However, later on, some of these phenomena were caused by human intervention, depending on the cultural context in which the people were living because in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there are still people who have developed a social structure that does not endanger their micro and macro environment or pollute their environment, as is the case in societies that are now under pressure due to their high industrial development.<sup>16</sup>

However, wars, famines, and epidemics can generate major global population movements but societies are not always prepared, neither in the sending nor in the receiving countries. This is clearly visible, for example, in the case of the Western Sahara conflict, where in 1975, the former Spanish colony was attacked by Morocco and Mauritania. The indigenous Sahrawis were unable to resist and more than half of them (160,000 people) fled to the neighbouring Algeria, where they were temporarily lodged in tents in the desert near Tinduf. This temporary habitation started 48 years ago. No one knows whether they will ever return to their homeland.<sup>17</sup> Many social security problems could be contained if the geopolitical games of the great powers did not pose such a risk to so many societies because wars generate famines, famines generate epidemics, and so on. The interconnections between natural and humanitarian disasters are often very clear, one phenomenon is a consequence of the other, and one consequence generates the other. We can therefore conclude that the symbiosis of the relationship between man and nature, or the lack of it, the cultural heritage, the respect for life, or the social order in which it is lived, very often contribute to the development of natural and humanitarian disasters.<sup>18</sup>

## DISASTER REFUGEES

We are already familiar with the phenomenon of irregular (undocumented or irregularly arriving refugees) and regular (documented refugees crossing the border) migrations, as numerous studies have been carried out in recent years. In simplified terms, they are voluntary and forced refugees, who are, by definition, disaster refugees since those fleeing war, famine, economic hardship, political anarchy, and the threat of epidemics are also disaster refugees.<sup>19</sup> However, the failure of a state's critical infrastructure (water or electricity shortages) can also lead to a lack of conditions for basic human life, which can also raise the possibility of flight, and thus, we can also speak of disaster refugees in this case. At the global level, human populations have most often been displaced for the reasons listed

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<sup>15</sup> Vekerdy 2002.

<sup>16</sup> Nagy 2010.

<sup>17</sup> Besenyő 2010.

<sup>18</sup> Nagy 2021.

<sup>19</sup> Reticz 2018.

above. A major earthquake, which may have been repeated several times, may have caused people living in a particular geographical area to leave and choose a safer area. This was not always a major problem before the development of state boundaries, but with their development, later this was and still is a legal constraint.<sup>20</sup>

We need to distinguish between internal and external disaster refugees:

- 1) Internal disaster refugees are internal refugees of a disaster within a state, whose accommodation and care infrastructure are most often provided jointly by the security services of the state and its accredited, contracted, and qualified NGOs. If the state and its agencies cannot provide for the care of disaster refugees on their own, the state may request assistance from international security agencies with which it has contractual relations.<sup>21</sup>
- 2) We talk about external disaster refugees when a disaster in another state forces populations of people to leave their homes and seek safety in a neighbouring state, as we have seen in the case of groups of refugees from Syria to Turkey and from Ukraine to Hungary.<sup>22</sup> However, the choice of a third state is also common, often for socio-political reasons.<sup>23</sup>

The security strategy of the European Union states and the coordination of disaster-crisis situations are essentially determined by the policy framework regulated by the European Commission, the European Council, and the European Parliament. Council Regulations on humanitarian aid set out the framework that can be used, which is not only earmarked for disaster relief in the European Union but also for all global disasters. All EU Member States are also members of sub-organisations of the United Nations, such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), through which the UN OCHA provides assistance to disaster victims. At the same time, most EU Member States are members of NATO, of which Hungary has been a member since 1999. The Civil Emergency Planning (CEP) program is the Alliance's non-military program that oversees the activities of the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC). NATO's military alliance is increasingly linked to civil society issues, which, while emerging as new challenges, also include the protection of critical infrastructure in addition to operational coordination of disaster response. For example, in the fight against climate change, NATO has developed a broad spectrum of linkages with its strategic partners.<sup>24</sup>

The United Nations, NATO, and other security organisations around the world are constantly monitoring the world's population and the millions of people displaced by natural and humanitarian disasters, whether caused by epidemics, extreme natural phenomena, war, political persecution, famine, or economic hardship. At present, it is estimated that nearly 70 million people are displaced somewhere, in temporary camps or reception facilities. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 25 people were forced to flee their homes every minute in 2018.<sup>25</sup> Africa and the Middle East have the largest refugee camps in the world, but refugee reception camps are found all over the world.

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<sup>20</sup> Frivaldszky 2020.

<sup>21</sup> Nagy 2021.

<sup>22</sup> McClelland 2014, and Kövecsi-Oláh 2017.

<sup>23</sup> Frivaldszky 2020.

<sup>24</sup> <https://katasztrofavedelem.hu/159/nato> (Accessed: 2 January 2023).

<sup>25</sup> Aburamadan et al. 2020.

## MAIN PRINCIPLES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF REFUGEE CAMPS

Based on our national and international knowledge and experience, we know that the most common temporary accommodation for disaster refugees is in the form of refugee camps. We can mention the refugee camps in the Middle East (Jordan and Turkey) and the refugee camps in Africa (Kenya), but we can also recall the temporary camps for refugees from the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in 1989, which were set up and run by NGOs in Hungary for as long as they were needed.

It is very difficult to define what is meant by the concept of a temporary camp for disaster refugees. Temporary accommodation for people who have been displaced or have fled a small-scale disaster of local significance is not the same as for the refugees of a large-scale, protracted, nationwide natural or humanitarian disaster. In both cases, we are talking about temporary camps, but in the case of the former, the temporary claim is true, while in the case of the latter, it is questionable, and if so, it is worth considering that the best solution would be to integrate the refugees in towns and villages (in existing infrastructures) rather than in camps, where they could live and work under human conditions, i.e., where they could integrate into the daily life of the society concerned.

In the case of tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of refugees, this idea is of course difficult to implement; we know that a significant number of Syrian refugees are not living in refugee camps but have settled in many towns and cities in Turkey, where they have effectively integrated into the social fabric and have not caused any supply problems, despite the strain on the basic infrastructure of the Turkish population.<sup>26</sup> However, as the Hagadera Camp in Kenya demonstrates, any planned and supervised refugee camp can turn into a town if its population does not choose to return.<sup>27</sup> In Hungary, we can see the use of different methods to accommodate disaster refugees from natural disasters of local nature affecting a significant amount of the population (1970 Szatmárnémeti flood, 2001 Bereg flood, 2006 flood, 2010 Devecser red sludge disaster, 2010 Miskolc flood, 2010 and 2013 Danube floods).<sup>28</sup> Hungary's disaster management authorities, in cooperation with humanitarian organisations, consider the use of existing infrastructures a priority.

In the case of urgent displacement of small populations, important infrastructure facilities are usually local halls, gymnasiums, suitable industrial facilities, schools if necessary, and non-functioning hospitals, but in many cases, also tourist facilities, so temporary tent camps are only built in justified cases (e.g., GDR refugees in 1989, 2015 refugee wave). Existing settlements, towns, and villages are always better suited to meet human needs but if the size of the refugee crowd does not allow it, refugee camps should be built for temporary purposes, as we have seen in many cases, for example in the case of the GDR refugees.<sup>29</sup>

Today, the aspects of establishing a refugee camp are very complex: there are many issues to be considered before a camp can be built quickly and professionally. First of all, who are the refugees? From which country, territory, or region are they? Are we talking about internal or external migration? What type of disaster are they fleeing or evacuating from? What is the composition of the population (male, female, children, elderly, disabled, sick)? Religious distribution (homogeneous or mixed)? Cultural background? How long will the

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<sup>26</sup> Kövecsi-Oláh 2017.

<sup>27</sup> Hagadera Refugee Camp 2020.

<sup>28</sup> Romhányi et al. 2021.

<sup>29</sup> Tampu 2020.



disaster require the population to be accommodated? What are the climatic conditions? All these questions show that building a refugee camp is not only a question of infrastructure but also a very complex set of human policy considerations.<sup>30</sup> Of course, the occurrence of a disaster does not leave much time to ponder over these issues, so the experts must have many different scenarios in mind as acting quickly will save human lives, especially if there are injured people among the fleeing population.<sup>31</sup> This means that even before the construction of the camp starts, the most important thing is to provide first aid, treat the wounded, avert danger to life, and if necessary, transport the people in danger to hospitals (paramedics of the National Ambulance Service, Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta), because this is how human lives can be saved.<sup>32</sup>

Taking into account cultural anthropological aspects is a cardinal issue when setting up a camp because if ethnicity and religion are not taken into account, the campers' lives can be made hell. We cannot put Christians in a camp with Muslims because religious differences make coexistence difficult, but a mixed ethnic population would also cause difficulties. When setting up such camps, the fact that they come from the same settlement is usually taken into account because if they already know each other or may have family ties, they can help each other. At the same time, it is important to establish house rules and provide police service to prevent abuses from turning into crime.

## INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

The key to setting up a temporary camp for disaster refugees is to choose the site quickly, considering whether the camp will be needed for a short or longer period. The advantages and disadvantages of the chosen site must be considered very quickly, as these must be combined to ensure the safety of the population accommodated there. The site should be transparent, free from natural disasters, far from war zones, easily defensible, and preferably with usable infrastructure (roads, water, and electricity).<sup>33</sup> Once the site is chosen, a decision must be taken on the possible districts, the degree of fragmentation of units, or whether a single camp – large in size – is to be set up to cater to a large population. The size of the area will also depend on the population ratio as the basic minimum requirement is 30m<sup>2</sup> per person, or more if possible, depending on how temporary the set-up is and how long it may take before moving back becomes possible. This cannot always be guaranteed. During the Darfur conflict, the refugee camps set up in the El Fasher area met almost no requirements and the Sudanese government authorities were unable to guarantee the safety of the refugees, so the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) peacekeeping operation sent policemen and soldiers there, but only during daytime.

Public safety is very important in the operation of camps, and cooperation between NGOs and law enforcement agencies is essential to ensure the safety of temporary refugee camps. This cooperation focuses on maintaining security, protecting human rights, and providing basic services to refugees. Cooperation can take place in several areas, including security and protection, exchange of information, humanitarian assistance, legal and ethical monitoring, conflict management, and preservation of human dignity. This cooperation

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<sup>30</sup> Dudás 2015, and Nagy 2009.

<sup>31</sup> Training of Disaster and Crisis Intervention Volunteers 2015.

<sup>32</sup> Szilágyi 2021.

<sup>33</sup> Dubin 2015.



will contribute to maintaining a balanced approach to security that protects refugees while ensuring respect for their dignity and human rights.

Likewise, the mission's logistics system has repeatedly assisted refugees, but only on an ad hoc basis, so their food and water supply has been inadequate.<sup>34</sup>

The camp to be set up needs to be planned: it usually reflects the structure of the settlements. Health safety must be taken care of; protection from rain, snow, wind, cold, heat, mud, and pathogens must be provided. It must ensure privacy and human dignity, as well as the ability to earn a living. The distance between the facilities provided (tents, containers, and shelters built with other local materials) is also an important consideration, bearing in mind fire safety regulations, and a possible rapid evacuation. Information centres, as well as sanitation facilities (toilets, showers, washing facilities, and access to clean drinking water), should be designed according to the size of the camp. Sanitation centres should not be located in close proximity to the living facilities, to avoid the risk of infection. Provision should of course be made for firefighting equipment that can be deployed quickly if necessary to prevent the possibility of another disaster. A health centre should also be planned for the camp area, with a medical service to accommodate patients, and a pharmacy to buy basic medicines. It is not incidental to provide a school room within the camp if the refugee population has school-aged children, in case the camp is far from populated settlements, which would allow access to the local school.<sup>35</sup> The establishment of (religious) worship places cannot be excluded because to a refugee in crisis, the spiritual connection to his/her faith is not negligible from the mental health point of view, nor is the need for the camp to have a mental health centre.<sup>36</sup> It is also important to set up and run a shop because a well-guarded camp does not always allow for in-and-out access, so it is good to have some basic necessities available within the camp. Food and catering facilities are also necessary because in many cases, for example, if cooking facilities are not available in the tents of the population, they have to be provided centrally, even by setting up several such facilities. Healthy and regular meals are a basic humanitarian right, as is access to clean water. It is also important to provide storage facilities for the raw materials needed to supply the camps, which must be safe, dry, and dust-free to preserve the quality of the stored materials (e.g., medicines).<sup>37</sup> For longer-term camps, it is also advisable to provide communal facilities, usually consisting of large tents of several square metres, where camp residents can meet their visitors and which are also suitable for cultural events and public meetings.

Still today, similarly to the past practice, the classic way of building a camp is to use a tent that can be set up quickly and efficiently. This is all the more so because it can be set up by the refugee himself without any particular difficulty, dismantled and reused after the danger has passed, and carried in case the need arises again. Today, there are much more modern and cheap solutions that are quick to set up and better suited to accommodate a family with children, which can be supplemented with solar panels to provide part of the energy supply. However, the UNHCR still considers the use of canvas tents faster and cheaper. The Emergency Crisis Response Team of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta also has a tent kit for setting up a fast camp. Tents can also be of several types. Depending on the duration of the camp and the climatic conditions, different types of tents can be

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<sup>34</sup> Besenyő 2021.

<sup>35</sup> Dubin 2005.

<sup>36</sup> Sáfár 2018.

<sup>37</sup> Sáfár 2018.

used: there are single-fly tents, which protect against rain but do not provide thermal insulation and are ideal for short periods, preferably in warmer climates. Better quality tents (double-fly tents), with improved strength and weather resistance, are longer-lasting structures that can be used in harsher weather conditions, including, of course, milder cold. The type of tent that can be used in all weathers, to protect children, women, and the elderly, is winterized tents, which can be equipped with a stove so that the floor can be insulated in colder climates.<sup>38</sup> The lifespan of tented camps is not infinite, even the best tents need to be replaced every 10 years or less, so there is an effort to encourage residents of decades-old camps to build their own accommodation structures using local building materials where possible, to make their camp homes more comfortable and durable.<sup>39</sup>

For those fleeing wars in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, refugee camps are often built from containers or using local building materials, as we have seen in the case of the African refugee camps, which are much more comfortable as they are furnished, have a much higher level of comfort, are safer, and are not affected by major rainfalls.<sup>40</sup> If there is a roof, i.e. a tent, which protects from rain, snow, and sun, then the interior equipment needed is important: mattresses, clothing, bedding, sleeping bags, and blankets. Electronic equipment (computer, television, radio, and telephone) should also be provided as access to information is now a fundamental right, and a person fleeing a disaster is fearful, and fear can be alleviated by a constant supply of appropriate information.<sup>41</sup>

The right to access healthy food is a basic condition for survival, so, providing food to refugee camps is also a fundamental right as the refugee population may have children and elderly and sick companions who cannot work even temporarily to provide their food.<sup>42</sup> Food is usually provided by humanitarian NGOs working with government agencies to meet these needs and is usually collected in the form of donations through social partnerships or even through the philanthropy of large companies. If there is no electricity or water at the campsite, this must also be provided; electricity is usually supplied by appropriate aggregators and water by water tankers.<sup>43</sup>

## THE HUNGARIAN CHARITY SERVICE OF THE ORDER OF MALTA'S TOOLKIT FOR REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AND ITS HUMANITARIAN ROLE IN HUNGARY, EUROPE, AND GLOBALLY

The history of the Sovereign Military of the Order of Malta, which dates back more than 900 years, began in Jerusalem because the social conditions of the time, namely the consequences and horrors of the Crusades, created the necessary basis for the creation of an organisation that could take care of the citizens of Jerusalem, then a war disaster. If we look at the events from today's perspective, it is clear that the inhabitants of a city in a state of disaster needed an organisation to provide security and the material goods and conditions necessary for survival. The Order found its final home in Rome in 1834 and is now pres-

<sup>38</sup> Tents: A Guide to the Use and Logistics of Family Tents in Humanitarian Relief 2004.

<sup>39</sup> The 7 Largest Refugee Camps in the World 2020.

<sup>40</sup> The 7 Largest Refugee Camps in the World 2020.

<sup>41</sup> Tents: A Guide to the Use and Logistics of Family Tents in Humanitarian Relief 2004.

<sup>42</sup> Frivaldszky 2020.

<sup>43</sup> Training of Disaster and Crisis Intervention Volunteers 2015.

ent on every continent, maintaining diplomatic relations with 108 countries and operating humanitarian, social, and health organisations in some 120 countries, with rescue, disaster relief, and social security missions.<sup>44</sup>

The Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta was founded in 1989 when Hungary, which was part of the Soviet sphere of interest, was embarking on the path of democratisation and entering an era of building its sovereignty. The events of the period in East-Central Europe upset the political events and thus the risk to the security of the citizens greatly increased. The flight of GDR citizens from their homeland turned into a humanitarian disaster in Hungary in 1989. From 14 August to 14 November 1989, the Hungarian Red Cross set up its first temporary refugee camp in the garden of the Catholic Church in Zugliget, where 48,600 East German citizens who wished to flee were provided with accommodation, food, and guidance.<sup>45</sup> To build the camp, the organisation used military-style tents from West Germany, which arrived in the country the day after they had been requested. The tents, in which camp beds and mattresses were placed, were pitched inside the churchyard in an orderly manner and in accordance with the fire safety regulations. An information centre was set up in the camp and containers for sanitation services arrived from Germany. Hygiene supplies were supplemented by donations from the church's parishioners. A dining facility was also built in the camp, where the camp residents received regular and adequate meals from the food donated and prepared by various restaurants. Security and protection were also coordinated by the organisation as the camp residents' fears were not unfounded. The Hungarian state and its security services also contributed to the camp's operation. The Csillebérc youth camp was also opened and the facilities of the Zánka camp were turned into a temporary refugee camp in the autumn, the latter being run by the Hungarian Defence Forces (HDF).<sup>46</sup> It is important to note that the role of the HDF in disaster management, like that of any other country's armed forces, is extremely important as they perform tasks that are essential for the security and defence of the country. In the field of disaster management, the HDF perform several key activities. One of these is the "state of readiness". The HDF are constantly on the alert so that they can intervene if necessary. This includes continuous training of personnel and maintenance of appropriate equipment (infrastructure). The task of "disaster response" is of paramount importance. The HDF are involved in the response to natural and industrial disasters, such as floods, earthquakes, fires, or chemical accidents. The equipment and special units provided by the HDF enable rapid response and rescue operations to ensure the safety of evacuated and displaced people in time. Therefore, they play a key role in the construction, maintenance, and security of refugee camps, both nationally and internationally. In order to prevent and manage disasters, the HDF work closely together with disaster management authorities, the police, ambulance services, and other state and municipal institutions, as well as with all civil society organisations (CSOs). The relationship of the HDF with CSOs is a close and continuously developing cooperation, which is manifested in several areas. CSOs often work together with the HDF in disaster response and rescue missions. In addition to the experience and expertise of the HDF, CSOs ensure a faster response through their local presence and direct contact with communities. Cooperation allows the best expertise and resources to be available to help those in distress. In order to build relations between the HDF and CSOs,

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<sup>44</sup> Török et al. 2009.

<sup>45</sup> Jauer 2009.

<sup>46</sup> Tampu 2020.

there is also an ongoing dialogue in which the parties share their experiences, suggestions, and concerns. This open relationship promotes mutual understanding and effective cooperation. Overall, the relationship between the HDF and CSOs enhances community response capacities and is geared towards achieving common goals, be it disaster management, rescue, or refugee camp construction and operation.<sup>47</sup>

The Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta next encountered a catastrophic situation in 1991, when the horrors of the South Slavic war struck the citizens of the former Yugoslavia and many were forced to flee the consequences of the fighting. The Knights of Malta organisation was involved in the evacuation of the citizens of the municipality of Vukovar with its own ambulance and patient transport. It also helped to care for the masses of ethnic Hungarians who had fled to Hungary until the fighting subsided.<sup>48</sup>

Between 2006 and 2013, Hungary faced flood protection problems on several occasions, where the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta participated with all its means and human resources not only in the protection but also in the accommodation of evacuees and the recovery tasks. During these years, the evacuated population was usually accommodated in existing sports halls or in suitable facilities, where the organisation provided camp beds, mattresses, blankets, and food.<sup>49</sup>

The red sludge disaster that flooded the settlements of Devecser and Kolontár also gave the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta a task in 2010–2011. The citizens of the severely damaged residential properties were forced to leave their homes and the organisation also took an active role in providing rented accommodation, the cost of which was covered by the Charity Service. So, this time too, the organisation did not build a refugee camp to house the residents but used existing infrastructure to place the families in rented properties until they could return to their newly built homes.<sup>50</sup>

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is inexhaustible when it comes to disasters. In 2015, Hungary and its citizens experienced the biggest crisis of the refugee wave. We will not go into the reasons for the masses of refugees but the scale of them (triggered by the civil war in Syria) was staggering and would have been difficult for the state authorities to cope with if civilian, humanitarian organisations had not joined in the supply tasks. The Order of Malta was present at the borders, both at the entry and exit points, where its mobile medical unit was constantly on duty, its social workers provided food and rest in the tents set up, especially for women, children, and the elderly.<sup>51</sup>

The Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta proved its worth in taking care of European disaster refugees with humanitarian and technical support for GDR citizens in 1989, the care for refugees from Romania in 1988 and 1989, the evacuations from the South Slavic war in 1991, caring for victims of the Transylvanian and Hungarian floods in 2006 and 2013, taking care of refugees from the Middle East from 2015 to 2017, and hosting refugees of the war in Ukraine in 2022. With all these, it won professional recognition.<sup>52</sup>

Finally, the legal basis for its global role is its effort to help disaster refugees outside Europe.<sup>53</sup> The organisation was involved in helping people affected by the Sri Lankan disaster,

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<sup>47</sup> Tokovicz et al. 2012.

<sup>48</sup> Romhányi et al. 2021.

<sup>49</sup> Romhányi et al. 2021.

<sup>50</sup> Romhányi et al. 2021.

<sup>51</sup> Solymári et al. 2016.

<sup>52</sup> Romhányi et al. 2021.

<sup>53</sup> Solymári 2020.

provided relief after the war in Lebanon, provided medicines in Vietnam in 2009, organised voluntary medical training in Syria, and coordinated major programs in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania – mostly in a human security and health safety role –, built a hospital in Aleppo, organised and managed the evacuation of Hungarians from Venezuela, and continues to organise the evacuation and care for persecuted Christians in Pakistan.<sup>54</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, natural and humanitarian disasters have always occurred and will continue to occur in increasing numbers. Therefore, societies have developed self-protection reflexes, but an unforeseen and unpreventable disaster will very often trigger the affected population to be moved to safety until the danger is averted and they can return to their homes. The actors involved in temporary sheltering can be the state and its defence and security agencies or NGOs, which often provide voluntary and dedicated expertise and disaster management crisis stocks (infrastructure: tents, food, medical supplies, medicines, etc.). NGOs generally operate in a socialised form to protect and provide security for citizens. As a result, the inhabitants of a disaster camp are more likely to trust charitable NGOs than, in many cases, law enforcement officials. It is more difficult for traumatised individuals and groups to open up for law enforcement personnel because they are afraid, but it can be easier for volunteers from aid agencies. However, providing the infrastructure for the camps is a shared responsibility.

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<sup>54</sup> <https://nemzetkozi.maltai.hu/> (Accessed: 15 May 2023).

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