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The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Humanitarian Work: Humanitarian Aid in Gaza as an Example

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Abstract:

In recent years, rapid advances in technology, foremost among them artificial intelligence (AI)—have reshaped multiple domains, including humanitarian action during crises and armed conflicts. Yet practice on the ground reveals marked disparities in how such technologies are deployed across contexts, raising serious questions about fairness in humanitarian response. This study seeks to illuminate these disparities through a comparative analysis of Ukraine and Gaza, where the scale and intensity of humanitarian attention and intervention diverge significantly despite both experiencing acute crises. Drawing on illustrative cases and international reports, the article examines whether AI is being deployed in ways that equitably serve affected populations, or whether its use is guided by implicit political criteria that undermine humanitarian neutrality and justice.

This study aims to Demonstrate the role that artificial intelligence plays in enhancing humanitarian response and accelerating the delivery of aid. Highlight the double standards in the application of artificial intelligence in crisis areas, with a focus on Gaza and Ukraine. Reveal the use of artificial intelligence in humanitarian work in light of the disparity in international support and field practices. The data included reports from international organizations, field operation records, and applications of artificial intelligence in the areas of health services, resource allocation, and communication with affected communities.

Key findings: AI plays a central role in supporting and accelerating humanitarian operations by improving resource allocation and speeding up decision-making. The study suggests that AI is not always neutral and may reflect the political biases that shape humanitarian outcomes and public opinion.

Keywords: *Artificial intelligence; Humanitarian action; Double standards; Digital media.*

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Introduction:

Amid the accelerating global transformations of the twenty-first century—particularly in the technological realm—artificial intelligence has emerged as a pivotal force shaping diverse spheres of life, including humanitarian action. International humanitarian organizations increasingly employ AI tools to hasten response and allocate resources in complex emergencies. However, this shift faces real-world constraints that may limit its effectiveness, prompting a central question: To what extent is the use of AI algorithms in humanitarian action fair and impartial, free from interests and hegemonic influence?

Accordingly, this study critically interrogates the relationship between technology and power in humanitarian practice, adopting a lens that centers justice, accountability, equality, and the safeguarding of human dignity—beyond the operational efficiencies AI can provide in accelerating response. Such efficiencies, we argue, still require rigorous inquiry in the absence of a robust ethical and legal framework to govern AI's use.

The topic's significance lies in the growing reliance on algorithmic systems to manage humanitarian crises. Organizations no longer depend solely on human intervention; rather, they leverage algorithms to determine both the speed and precision of responses—especially in complex conflict environments such as Gaza. The study thus aims to highlight AI's potential contributions to improving humanitarian work while revealing disparities in its application through a comparison between Gaza and Ukraine.

In short, AI has become a central tool for supporting and enhancing humanitarian operations. Yet field realities disclose a substantial gap in how these technologies are utilized, amid clear double standards that have characterized the international community's and digital media's engagement with the crises in Gaza and Ukraine—manifested in robust support for Ukraine and marked shortfalls in Gaza. This raises the guiding problem: To what extent has AI improved the performance of humanitarian action, and what are the limits of that role in light of the unequal responses to the humanitarian situations in Gaza and Ukraine?

To unpack these dimensions, the study employs a descriptive-analytical approach to evaluate AI's effectiveness in humanitarian action, complemented by a case study of the Gaza Strip as a living model through which opportunities and challenges can be systematically observed.

This study is based on the hypothesis that the use of artificial intelligence in the humanitarian field is not always neutral; rather, it is influenced by double standards and political interests that directly affect the distribution of humanitarian aid.
This hypothesis can be expanded through the following sequential analytical propositions:

- That the algorithms used in assessing humanitarian needs are shaped by the political environment governing the international system, making their outputs indirectly influenced by the priorities of dominant global actors.
- That donor states and institutions may direct the use of artificial intelligence in ways that serve their strategic interests, whether through control of data or influence over algorithm-based decision-making processes.
- That the unequal technological capacities among states and affected communities deepen disparities in access to AI-driven humanitarian tools, producing clear inequalities in outcomes—as seen in the case of Gaza compared with Ukraine.
- That the absence of a clear legal and ethical framework regulating the use of AI in humanitarian action allows practices that may reinforce geopolitical dominance rather than promote humanitarian justice.

The study aims to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian action in light of these disparities, using the cases of Gaza and Ukraine as a comparative model to illustrate field realities and the unequal implementation of humanitarian interventions.

Accordingly, this study highlights the gap in addressing humanitarian issues. Despite the potential of artificial intelligence to facilitate humanitarian work, its effectiveness is constrained by political and social factors.

The study is divided into three main sections: The first examines the role of artificial intelligence in humanitarian action**,** focusing on accelerating response and targeting aid. The second addresses double standards in the provision of humanitarian assistance**,** through a comparative analysis of Gaza and Ukraine. The third explores the impact of digital media coverage on humanitarian response**,** highlighting disparities between crises and their influence on aid distribution.

I. The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Humanitarian Action:

In recent years, artificial intelligence (AI) has become an effective instrument for delivering humanitarian assistance. International organizations increasingly rely on AI to overcome challenges related to response speed and to enhance the timeliness of crisis forecasting. This section highlights AI's effectiveness and its contribution to humanitarian work (Subsection 1), as well as its importance in identifying and targeting beneficiary populations (Subsection 2).

a) Rapid Response in Crises:

AI's advanced toolsets have substantially supported humanitarian operations by mapping refugee shelters and identifying disaster- and flood-prone areas through data streams that enable faster humanitarian response. For example, Mercy Corps has developed an AI tool to help humanitarian workers rapidly access reliable, evidence-based information, enabling needs triage against large databases that—ideally—rest on credible policies and protocols. AI algorithms have also been used to allocate water to internally displaced persons, furnish time-critical information, and propose life-saving options[1].

International organizations—such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)—are moving to harness AI's capabilities in field operations, with prominent applications including:

- Satellite-imagery analysis to estimate the scale of damage and set intervention priorities; and

[1]Business Insider, "How a Nonprofit's AI Tool Is Giving Aid Workers Life-Saving Answers during Humanitarian Crises," Business Insider, June 2, 2025 (https://urlz.fr/uI5Z), accessed July 20, 2025.

- Multilingual, real-time translation to help refugees obtain information in their native languages[1].

In the health domain of humanitarian response during emergencies, the World Health Organization – Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (WHO EMRO) launched in May 2025 an innovative All-Hazards Information Management (AIM) Toolkit powered by generative AI to produce rapid health-response plans. The toolkit generates operational protocols grounded in prior experience far faster than conventional models, which may take weeks. These contemporary plans cover tasks such as risk assessment, role allocation, quarantine procedures, and disease-control measures, drawing dynamically on real-time field data. The toolkit also presupposes a supporting digital infrastructure and the training of health personnel to operate it—contributing to lives saved, reduced mortality, and containment of disease spread in complex emergencies[2].

Beyond the health sector, AI plays a key role in coordinating humanitarian action among relief agencies, particularly in wartime contexts. Through "Methods Matcher", a Mercy Corps initiative developed in collaboration with Cloudera, a refined model was built to classify and assess damage, delivering preliminary results in under 24 hours—thereby streamlining decision-making and expediting multi-agency response[3].

[1]Wired, "More Humanitarian Organizations Will Harness AI's Potential," Wired, December 2024 (https://urlz.fr/uI60), accessed July 21, 2025.
[2]world Health Organization Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (WHO EMRO), "AIM Toolkit to Accelerate Health Emergency Response," WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, May 15, 2025(https://urlz.fr/uI61), accessed July 15, 2025.
[3]UN Global Pulse, DISHA Coalition with UNOSAT and Google Research. "AI Enabled Damage Assessment Allows 7× Larger Area and Produces Directional Findings in Under One Day," UN Global Pulse / DISHA, 2025(https://urlz.fr/uI63A), accessed July 16, 2025.

For two-way communication with affected populations, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) developed the Signpost platform, which helps target groups rapidly access essential services[1].

AI is also deployed across the disaster-management cycle through high-performance early-warning tools that forecast natural hazards and issue alerts ahead of earthquakes and floods, thereby reducing potential harm and enabling immediate response. Uncrewed aerial vehicles (UAVs) are used to pinpoint the most affected areas, while AI contributes to reconstruction planning through rapid and precise damage assessments and recovery roadmaps[2].

b) Delivering Aid to Target Populations:

AI plays a pivotal role in channeling humanitarian assistance to intended beneficiaries during crises. Reports by the World Economic Forum, in collaboration with humanitarian partners, highlight AI's potential to bolster the resilience of humanitarian supply chains in highly unpredictable environments and to shorten delivery times through rapid forecasting and analytics on truck movements and related logistics data[3].

Building on recent (2025) findings published in *LOGISTICS*, AI—via large-scale data analytics—has been shown to facilitate aid delivery by enhancing early-warning capabilities and optimizing logistics operations. Such tools enable anticipatory action, allowing responders to act before conditions deteriorate.

Field experience further underscores AI's contribution through initiatives such as MASAI and SKAI, which generate high-resolution damage maps and perform automated, rapid assessments of infrastructure. These tools reduce reliance on traditional, time-consuming evaluations and accelerate the routing of assistance to recipients. They also improve

[1]International Rescue Committee via AP News, "IRC Tests Signpost.AI Chatbot to Reach Displaced People with Vital Information," AP News, 2024–2025 (https://urlz.fr/uI65n), accessed July 17, 2025.
[2]"The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Managing Natural Disasters and Crises"**.** Arab Time, December 2, 2024 (https://encr.pw/xQZxG), accessed July 18, 2025.
[3]World Economic Forum Trade & Investment, "How Leveraging AI and Collaboration Can Strengthen Supply Chains for Humanitarian Aid," World Economic Forum, January 14, 2025(https://urlz.fr/uI6r), accessed July 19, 2025.

transparency and accountability, thereby strengthening confidence in humanitarian operations and encouraging international support[1].

AI can likewise forecast global food-security crises—including famine and acute poverty—by training algorithms on historical patterns that correlate precursors with subsequent crises. These models can predict emerging risks weeks or months in advance, enabling pre-positioning of supplies, advance deployment of aid, and shelter preparation. The result is a proactive posture with more precise targeting of affected groups, rather than ad hoc, reactive distributions[2].

Mobile-phone data can also improve the targeting of those most in need. In Togo (West Africa), researchers from humanitarian organizations, working with government counterparts, used indicators such as call volumes and internet usage to approximate household living standards. Lower internet use and fewer calls served as proxies for poverty. Compared with conventional approaches, this model proved more effective at identifying low-income populations, enabling direct aid delivery to those most in need while saving time—an especially powerful method in data-sparse settings.

Taken together, these developments demonstrate how technology can support humanitarian action, accelerate information flows, and improve response times at both local and global scales. Nevertheless, overreliance on such systems carries risks if underlying data are not rigorously validated, and if algorithms are trained or tuned according to particular policy preferences. These risks threaten humanitarian neutrality and equity in aid distribution—a concern we address in the next section through a discussion of double standards that hinder genuinely humanitarian objectives.

[1]World Food Programme Innovation, "SKAI: AI-Powered Satellite Building Damage Assessment," WFP Innovation Accelerator, 2024 (https://urlz.fr/uI6x), accessed July 12, 2025.
[2]Axios, "AI Can Now Forecast the Next Food Crisis," Axios, March 10, 2023 (https://urlz.fr/uI6z), accessed July 13, 2025.

II. Double Standards in the Provision of Humanitarian Assistance: Gaza as a Case Compared with Ukraine:

Under international humanitarian law, the provision of humanitarian assistance is expected to rest on the principles of neutrality and non-discrimination, ensuring delivery to intended populations regardless of extraneous considerations. In practice, however, a gap persists between principle and implementation—commonly described as double standards—where aid is not allocated strictly according to need but is shaped by economic and political incentives. This produces delays in some contexts, as in Gaza under blockade and restrictive measures, in contrast with Ukraine, which has received broad international support. The case of Gaza is examined here to illuminate these challenges[1].

a) Weak Humanitarian Response in Gaza:

Since 2007 and up to the present, Gaza has faced an unprecedented humanitarian crisis marked by inadequate international response, compounded by a prolonged blockade that has intensified suffering while Israel has restricted the opening of crossings. By 2025, Gaza experienced its most extreme phase, with the closure of all borders and the obstruction of aid—arguably the worst period in its history. According to a November 2016 report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the blockade has deteriorated the economy and rendered Gaza heavily dependent on humanitarian assistance, while restricting the movement of persons and leading to the closure of 95% of productive factories, thereby depressing living standards[2].

A joint statement by the IPC Famine Review mechanisms (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification) and UNICEF reported that in 2025 Gaza reached IPC Phase 5 (Famine). More than 500,000 people were assessed to be facing acute food insecurity, and the statement noted that restrictions impeding humanitarian aid had directly exacerbated

[1]Nature**,** "Machine Learning and Phone Data Can Improve Targeting of Humanitarian Assistance," *Nature*, 2022(https://urlz.fr/uI6Eic), accessed July 14, 2025.
[2]United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). "The Gaza Strip: The Humanitarian Impact of the Blockade", November 2016 (https://urlz.fr/uI6F), accessed July 8, 2025.

conditions; continuation of the status quo, it warned, would drive fatalities to catastrophic level[1].

The blockade and inadequate response also precipitated a health emergency and infrastructure collapse. As noted by the World Health Organization in its July statement, Gaza witnessed a near-total breakdown: hospitals shut their doors due to shortages and blockade-related constraints, compounded by the lack of electricity and fuel. Approximately 5,000 children suffered from malnutrition amid shortages across all sectors[2].

These shortfalls are not new. By late 2023, UN data already indicated protracted, catastrophic hunger lasting more than a year, alongside a stark gap between actual needs and what was provided. The table below illustrates, by way of example, the daily discrepancy (December 2023) between needs and deliveries to Gaza.

Table 1. Daily Needs vs. Daily Deliveries in Gaza — December 2023

Type of assistance	Daily requirement	Daily provision (early Dec.)	Coverage rate
Trucks carrying humanitarian assistance	170 trucks	100 trucks	59%
Fuel for essential services and facilities	110,000 liters	69,000 liters	63%

***Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA),* Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel, Flash Update #91, 4 December 2023.**

As the table suggests, the humanitarian response fell short of daily needs for both fuel and trucks—an illustration of a broader pattern of under-delivery. In sum, the international response to Gaza has been hampered by political interests and inattention from powerful states to grave human-rights violations in the Strip, with few genuine efforts to offer

[1]IPC Consortium," IPC ALERT: Famine Unfolding in the Gaza Strip", July 29, 2025 (https://urlz.fr/uI6I), accessed July 10, 2025.
[2]World Health Organization, "Malnutrition Rates Reach Alarming Levels in Gaza, WHO Warns," World Health Organization, July 27, 2025 (https://urlz.fr/uI6K), accessed July 11, 2025.

durable solutions. This stands in sharp contrast to the scale and tempo of international mobilization for Ukraine, a disparity that underscores the phenomenon of double standards—a theme to which we now turn.

b) The International Community's Response in Ukraine:

Since the outset of the Russia–Ukraine war in February 2022, the international community moved with unprecedented speed to provide assistance. Ukraine received substantial, rapidly mobilized funding, coupled with highly flexible mechanisms and effective coordination from the very first days. Within mere days of the conflict's eruption, a response plan was put in place focusing on life-saving measures, including emergency food and medical supplies, restoration of electricity and water services, protection of civilians, and the organization of cross-border convoys from Poland and Romania in cooperation with international organizations—constituting a stark contrast with the situation in Gaza[1].

During the initial months, the humanitarian response was notable for both its scale and intensity: more than 11.7 million people were reached in the first five months, and 66% of identified needs were covered—figures considered high in humanitarian operations. This rapid uptake underscores the degree of political will mobilized for the Ukrainian crisis. By 2023, the response continued effectively; in the first nine months of 2023, six million people benefited, and approximately 107 cross-border humanitarian convoys were facilitated—evidence of operational agility notwithstanding the conflict environment. Collectively, these indicators suggest that the Ukrainian crisis attracted exceptional international attention compared to Gaza, despite Gaza's acute humanitarian needs[2].

Table 2. Aid to Ukraine in Trucks and Fuel, 2022–2023

Type of assistance	Assessed need	Actual provision	Coverage rate
Trucks for humanitarian aid	4,000 trucks over two years	3,700 trucks	93%

[1]United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Ukraine Humanitarian Response 2023 Situation Report, November 23, 2023(https://urlz.fr/uI6Q), accessed July 6, 2025.
[2]United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Flash Appeal Ukraine 2022, July 28, 2022 (https://urlz.fr/uI6W-2022), accessed July 5, 2025.

Fuel for services & transport	Sufficient quantities to run convoys	Continuous, uninterrupted supply	90%

Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA),* Ukraine: Humanitarian Response Achievements 2022–2023, *December 2023.

The logistical trajectory of humanitarian operations in Ukraine reflects clear and sustained international backing—evident in the steady provision of trucks and fuel—whereas Gaza has faced constricted humanitarian space under multilayered forms of blockade. The contrast points to a pronounced double standard in international crisis response, shaped by political and geopolitical considerations.

III. Double Standards in Digital Media and the Humanitarian Response in Gaza and Ukraine:

The media plays a crucial role in armed conflicts by exposing violations and presenting facts to public opinion. Yet in practice, control by Western platforms often differentiates among crises in line with their interests. Comparing Ukraine with Gaza reveals a marked disparity in treatment: algorithmically governed social-media systems have heavily amplified Ukrainian narratives, whereas Gaza has lacked comparable international endorsement. This section foregrounds the Gaza case in contrast with Ukraine to illustrate these dynamics.

a) Digital Coverage and Its Impact in Gaza:

Digital coverage has become a primary driver of humanitarian action, as platform algorithms amplify certain narratives and downrank others in ways that serve political interests and pressure both policymakers and public opinion. In Gaza, this dynamic has translated into diminished global visibility of the humanitarian catastrophe and the marginalization of human suffering. The crisis is too often framed through security and political lenses that overshadow the humanitarian dimension that should, in principle, take precedence. This deprioritization weakens Gaza's

placement on public-agenda priorities, delays urgent humanitarian action, and distorts facts in line with the interests of major powers[1].

Journalists reporting on Gaza's humanitarian collapse—especially local reporters—have faced restrictions, threats linked to shortages of food and basic necessities, and profound psychological strain that undermines their capacity to document events. International coverage has also been curtailed by restrictions on foreign correspondents, underscoring the double standard. Following repeated attacks on newsrooms, many journalists have been forced to work from their homes via social media despite frequent power outages and poor internet connectivity; some have been targeted in their residences, and the entry of electronic equipment that would facilitate their work has been blocked. Journalist Rahaf Aziz, for example, has reported working under crushing conditions, without pay and without electricity—conditions echoed by many colleagues who attest that even basic tools are unavailable[2].

Contemporary warfare increasingly targets core infrastructures of isolation and control. In this context, Gaza has experienced repeated internet and telecommunications blackouts, depriving residents of their right to access information. A complete outage in 2023 severed Gaza from the outside world for over 36 hours amid ongoing bombardment. Further outages were recorded in 2024, with Access Now characterizing the shutdowns as a systematic digital closure—wielded as a weapon that impedes humanitarian work and enables information control[3].

A report by the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor the same year documented direct targeting of journalists and deliberate communication cutoffs, framing digital isolation as a tool of repression and obfuscation designed to block the documentation of abuses, impose an information blackout on external audiences, manipulate the informational

[1]Centre for Media Monitoring, *Media Bias: Gaza 2023-24*, March 2024, pp. 14–27
[2]Fahmy, E., Salama, M., &Alsaba, M. R., "Unbroken Stories: Journalists Perspectives from the Frontlines of the Israel–Gaza War," *Shattered Lives*, (OMGC / De Gruyter 2024), pp. 52–75.
[3]Al-Araby Al-Jadeed. "Accusations of Western Media's Complicity in the Coverage of the Assault on Gaza," Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, October 15, 2023, https://www.alaraby.co.uk, accessed July 15, 2025.

environment, conceal realities on the ground, and delay humanitarian interventions.

Collectively, these factors have produced severe humanitarian isolation and paralyzed civil and humanitarian institutions, including medical teams unable to coordinate responses due to communication loss. As Doctors Without Borders (MSF) noted, "the communication blackout prevents even knowing the locations of the wounded and the areas under attack, and increases the time required to reach them—resulting in deaths that could have been prevented[1].

b) Digital Coverage and Its Impact on Ukraine:

Ukraine has benefited from extensive digital-media coverage that has actively shaped global public opinion. Digital coverage has functioned as both a strategic instrument and a force multiplier, influencing the trajectory of international decision-making. This visibility catalyzed an unprecedented mobilization by the European Union and others—support that went beyond conventional geopolitical calculations. In this context, major Western technology platforms played a significant role in amplifying pro-Ukrainian narratives on services such as Twitter/X, YouTube, and Facebook, imposing restrictions on Russian state-aligned content while facilitating and promoting Ukrainian content. The result is a pronounced gap in media neutrality and a set of ethical questions about how information flows are governed across digital ecosystems[2].

Digital media, through its diverse tools, helped transform the Ukrainian crisis into a global public-opinion issue. It enabled Ukrainian authorities to communicate their narrative effectively and turned ordinary citizens into active conduits of real-time documentation via social networks. The proliferation of images and videos across these platforms stirred international sympathy and exerted sustained pressure on Western decision-makers, contributing to escalating political, military, and economic support for Ukraine. Notably, many Western political discourses

[1]Al Jazeera Net, "Israel Cuts the Internet in Gaza: What Does That Mean for Citizens and International Actors?", Al Jazeera Net, October 27, 2023, https://www.aljazeera.net / accessed July 20, 2025.
[2]Yousef, Nasser. "The Impact of Western Digital Media in Armed Conflicts: The Case of Ukraine," *Arab Journal of Political Science*, no. 58 (2023), pp. 112–129.

adopted the language, frames, and storylines propagated through digital media, underscoring its deep influence in reshaping foreign-policy priorities[1].

Taken together, a striking asymmetry emerges between the Ukrainian and Palestinian cases: Ukraine received unprecedented digital and media support, whereas Gaza faced content constraints and a conspicuous absence of official digital solidarity. This divergence reflects a discernible bias in media-response mechanisms and raises serious questions about justice and fairness in the deployment of digital media during humanitarian crises.

Conclusion:

This study demonstrates that artificial intelligence (AI) plays a consequential role across multiple spheres of life. Algorithmic systems have become effective instruments for improving humanitarian response, enabling more precise resource allocation and faster decision-making. Yet practical experience shows that such gains do not always align with ethical and normative frameworks; AI can be deployed as a tool of control rather than as a vehicle for neutrality and humanitarian relief.

Through the comparative lens of Gaza and Ukraine, the analysis indicates that algorithms are not invariably neutral. They may reflect political preferences and biases that shape humanitarian response and public opinion. This calls for a re-examination of humanitarian contexts and cautions against excessive reliance on unaccountable, unsupervised algorithmic systems.

Accordingly, AI should not be treated as a technological panacea. It is a tool that must be employed conscientiously and with integrity. When algorithms are permitted to determine outcomes that affect human lives without adequate safeguards, they risk widening existing inequalities.

[1]Abdel-Majid, Ahmed. "New Media and the Making of Public Opinion in Conflicts." *Journal of Digital Media*, no. 11 (2022), pp 35–48.

Findings:

- Growing reliance on AI in crisis management, particularly within humanitarian operations.
- Limited participation of affected communities in decisions governing the use of these technologies.
- Weak transparency, double standards, and shortfalls in humanitarian justice driven by algorithmic biases.

Recommendations:

- Establish clear legal and ethical frameworks for the use of AI in humanitarian action.
- Train humanitarian personnel to understand, audit, and appropriately apply AI models and algorithms.
- Safeguard—and never sideline—the human dimension and humanitarian principles in the design and deployment of AI systems.