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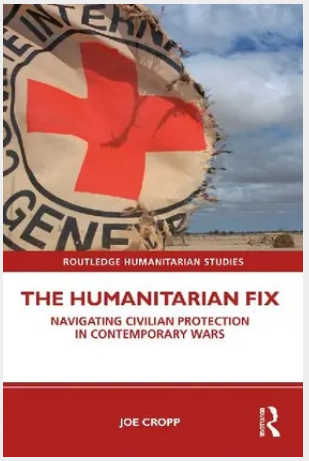
The Humanitarian Fix

Navigating Civilian Protection in Contemporary Wars



This book investigates how humanitarians balance the laws and principles of civilian protection with the realities of contemporary warzones, where non-state armed actors assert cultural, political and religious traditions that are often at odds with official frameworks. This book argues that humanitarian protection on the ground is driven not by official frameworks in the traditional sense, but by the relationships between the complex mix of actors involved in contemporary wars. The frameworks, in turn, act as a unifying narrative that preserves these relationships. As humanitarian practitioners navigate this complex space, they act as unofficial brokers, translating the official frameworks to align with the often-divergent agendas of non-state armed actors. In doing so, they provide an unofficial humanitarian fix for the challenges inherent in applying the official frameworks in contemporary wars. Drawing on rich ethnographic observations from the author's time in northern Iraq, and complemented by interviews with a range of fieldworkers and humanitarian policy makers and lawyers, this book will be a compelling read for researchers and students within humanitarian and development studies, and to practitioners and policy makers who are grappling with the contradictions this book explores.

This book investigates the relationship between the laws and principles of humanitarian protection, and what happens in practice on the ground in today's wars. Engaging and compelling, the book will be useful for researchers, practitioners, policy makers, and students within humanitarian and development studies.

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