

## Military Humanitarianism: Reimagining the Nexus Between Aid Operations and Armed Forces

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Historians have largely written about humanitarianism and the military as parallel but separate subjects, ones which can enhance interpretations of the other, but which rarely overlap. Both fields have yet to fully engage with the many points of connection between humanitarian organisations and military actors. This panel address this blind spot by considering the nexus of military and humanitarian histories in detail. These papers identify instances of past military humanitarianism and places the often-elastic theoretical concept into historical context. We will explore the liminality of humanitarian and military action in practice and the fluidity of 'military' and 'humanitarian' identities in conflict environments from the 19th to the 21st century. In doing so, we highlight the intersections between these two histories to show how these interactions enrich our interpretations of conflict, power, and international hierarchies.

Existing scholarship on military humanitarianism has largely been limited to the post-Cold War era. IR scholarship has entrenched a belief that the paradoxical phenomenon of military interventions motivated or justified by humanitarian ideals emerged at the end of the Cold War as an unprecedented result of the increasing dominance of liberal interventionism and human rights rhetoric in international spheres during the mid-1990s and early 2000s. Recent historical scholarship has challenged the post-Cold War chronology by revealing a longer genealogy of humanitarian feeling and intervention. This panel builds on this new historiography by adopting an expansive definition of military humanitarianism and takes a new approach by tracing field-based practices as well as identifying the strategic and human consequences of these overlapping military and humanitarian spheres. These papers demonstrate that military humanitarianism was far from unprecedented in the 1990s, that humanitarian intervention was not the only – nor even the primary – form that the military-humanitarian nexus took, and that understanding its evolution through past conflicts is crucial for nuancing scholarship on the politics and power of both humanitarian and military actors.

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