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**ASEAN and Human Security: Crisis-Driven Explanation**

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## **Introduction**

Transformations of the international structure normally influence changes in the foreign policies of states; involving changes in normative beliefs, which fundamentally shape the foreign policy direction. After the demise of the Cold War, representing the substantially relaxed ideological constraints on states' behaviours especially in nations belonging to the former Eastern bloc, ethnic confrontations, territorial disputes and religious conflicts emerged, calling for more attention to the interior affairs of these fragile states. These circumstances came to strengthen the international recognition that not only states, but also individuals can be the subject and coverage of international law (Hoadley, 2006: 20), illustrating the individual input into the traditional thinking of security discourse in which damage and suffering of individuals should be more seriously acknowledged. The United Nations (UN) took a key role in socialising the human security concept as the UN Development Programme (UNDP) published the Human Development Report in 1994. The UN was initially established to deal with problems arising from both human and national security, but the Cold War contributed to the Security Council dominating the UN politics and administration, and driving the focus more on national security agendas, marginalising the role of other significant organs such as the Economic and Social Council. The UNDP report, which proposed six major agendas, including the establishment of a Global Human Security Fund for the inaugural organisation of the World Summit for Social Development the following year, may have represented the growing international acknowledgement of the need for correcting this imbalance on security discourse by paying more attention to human security issues.

Insecurity perceived by human beings normally transcends national borders through trans-national criminal networks or refugees, so collective preventive actions by regional countries which tend to share those sources of human insecurity as grave threats can be more effective and practical than actions taken individually. It is thus no wonder that major regional institutions such as the EU have promoted human security cooperation, and Glasius and Kaldor (2006: 7) highlight the following cases as belonging to the human security category: genocide, large-scale torture, inhumane and degrading treatment, disappearances, slavery, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), another regional body which has sought to achieve a regional community, is not an exception, as the 2004 Vientiane Action Plan (VAP) prioritised the institutional coordination among relevant ASEAN bodies to promote cooperation on non-traditional security issues including

trans-national crimes; those issues are now seen as important policy ingredients in the formation of the ASEAN Security Community. Ong Keng Yong, (2007), then ASEAN Secretary-General, highlighted the significant areas that human security concerned in the case of Southeast Asia and they included: 1) Avian Flu, 2) HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases such as malaria, 3) haze and other trans-boundary environmental degradation, 4) narcotic drugs, 5) natural disasters and 6) friction and conflicts arising from migrant workers. It is now clear that the EU and ASEAN display different priorities and different approaches in terms of promoting human security; ASEAN's approaches omit issues related to protection of human rights, on which the EU places more significant weight. Canada is well known for keenly promoting this category of human security by pushing the 'responsibility to protect' (R2P) approach which intends to legitimize humanitarian intervention by outsiders to deal with genocide, ethnic cleansing or war crimes. Why do these distinctive categories of and approaches to human security emerge? Does ASEAN have no intention or power to promote R2P-related agendas in Southeast Asia, indicating that ASEAN's human security interests are selective? This paper examines the difficulties of introducing R2P as a human security approach to ASEAN by elucidating the process in which ASEAN has been striving to introducing human security norms through key critical events such as the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis, the 1999 East Timor independence and the 2008 Cyclone Nargis. This paper concludes although ASEAN's non-intervention principle is a major factor behind ASEAN's difficulty in accepting R2P as a security norm, even the UN has been struggling with the implementation of R2P.

### **Rise of human security**

The concept of human security emerged as a novel framework of emphasizing the significance of individual security, but human security tends to encompass a wide range of fields related to providing security to human beings and there is no definite clarification, causing a variety of approaches to be supported and employed by different nations and regional organisations. Yet, the UNDP Report (1994: 3) presented two main categories of human security: "freedom from fear" that includes violent threats to its people and "freedom from want" that include a broader concept of individual freedom and well-being, and the report (1994: 229) identifies four main features of the concept of human security: 1) it is a universal concern, relevant to people everywhere because the threats are common to all; 2) its components are interdependent since the threats to human security do not stay within national borders; 3) it is easier to achieve through early rather than later intervention; and 4) it is people-centred in that it is concerned

with how people “live and breathe” in society. The UNDP report (1994: 230) then argues that the concept needs to shift from concentrating on achieving security through weapons to concentrating on achieving security through sustainable human development.

The United Nations has strove to identify the policy steps with a view to promoting human security. For instance it adopted eight “Millennium Development Goals”, with a target date for achievement of 2015 at the United Nation’s Millennium Summit in 2000. The specific policy goals included eradicating hunger, protection of the environment, sustainable development and education. The UN then published the 2003 “Human Security Now” report drafted by Commission on Human Security, which highlighted ten issues that can be basically categorized into two components of protection and empowerment of vulnerable people to promote human security. The UN’s contribution in terms of the socialization of human security is not only to stress the need to focus more on individuals as subjects of protection, but also to identify and refine arrays of threats to human beings well beyond the traditional coverage of national security approaches that include economic, health or environmental areas.

The human security’s refinement and conceptualisation process resulted in the broadening of agendas, meaning that the human security approaches and scopes became diversified, depending on foreign policy priorities and national interests of states. While Japan has tended to support ‘human development’, which aims to eliminate poverty, improve the health and enhance living standards, Canada has keenly promoted the concept and the R2P approach intended to legitimise humanitarian intervention by outsiders to deal with genocide, ethnic cleansing or war crimes in a fragile country. As the 1994 Human Development Report (UNDP, 1994: 32) declares, the ability of people to live in a society that honours basic human rights is one of the most important aspects of human security, and R2P is supported by the participants in the Human Security Network (HSN) established in 1999 by Canada. The ‘intervention dilemma’ refers to when humanitarian intervention is controversial, for instance when the UN decides on humanitarian intervention too early or too late, specifically on conflicts in Rwanda, Bosnia, Kosovo and Somalia (ICISS, 2001: 1). With regard to this, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) launched an influential expression with principles and processes for using coercive measure to protect endangered people. The concept is based on an assumption that sovereign states have a responsibility to protect their own people. It also indicates that a state is considered to

have failed to protect its people if they suffer from war, repression and state failure that the government is unwilling or unable to restrain (ICISS, 2001: XI). The concept has a rhetoric that gives international community a right to interfere in a state without its request or rejection for the sake of human protection.

So, it is clear that the different approaches have different priorities for different agendas in the human security debate among even enthusiastic supporters of human security. Thus, as Paris (2001: 88) contested, just like the case of sustainable development, everyone supports human security, “but few people have a clear idea of what it means” due to its substantially expansive coverage and vague definition, “which provides policymakers with little guidance in the prioritization of competing policy goals and academics little sense of what, exactly, is to be studied.” Sadako Ogata, then the Chief for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, also admitted the conceptual vagueness: human security “can mean all and nothing; it is as elusive as it is appealing ... almost any matter concerning people’s lives can fall within the scope of human security, rendering it conceptually vague and of little practical use” (cited in Edström, 2009: 28). In sum, the introduction of human security functioned as a wake-up call for world leaders, especially in well-developed nations, who had tended to see the security paradigm too much from military and state-to-state conflicts; a conventional way of thinking during the Cold War era.

In addition to the ambiguity and too broad coverage, human security is promoted mainly by economically developed or politically stable nations, regardless of the different priorities the freedoms from ‘want’ and ‘fear’ place. First, while national security is primarily concerned with a nation-state’s own defence and safety, human security denotes the provision of security for another state whose government cannot take care of the protection of its own citizens’ lives. In other words, developed nations, which have found it natural to consider and provide human security for their own citizens, tend to hope to transmit human security to these fragile nations. Secondly, human security is seen as secondary or irrelevant in states or regions where the security environments are not so stable and its safety is at high risk. For instance, most of the states in North and Southeast Asia tend to see human security agendas as complementary, at best, to national security. If a nation who principally sees the use of force as a means to settling the territorial disputes or existing political tensions, the neighbours would be forced to prepare for the situation in which they would be targeted for attack. This is true with the case of North Korea in Northeast Asia. Thus, even Japan,

a promoter of the freedom of 'want' type of human security, considers national security as a "precondition" or "prerequisite" for promoting human security, as Yukio Sato, former Japanese Ambassador to the UN, declared (cited in Edström, 2009: 48). In Southeast Asia where, according to Acharya (2001a: 62), many of the "intra-ASEAN bilateral security agreements were geared to managing border security problems" for decades, a state-centric approach to security policy has been encroached in Southeast Asia. Yet, Southeast Asia is not blind to human security, as detailed later. Although the term 'human security' was not explicitly used in the ASEAN Charter, for instance, consideration about issues related to human security was insinuated in the Charter; it asserts that to "place the well-being, livelihood and welfare of the peoples at the centre of the ASEAN community building process" and the adherence to "respect for and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms" (ASEAN Secretariat, 2008a). A point here is whether the orientation of human security is deeply embedded within ASEAN's norm through implementing collective actions to save the people whose lives are put under the threat.

#### **ASEAN and the introduction of human security**

A crisis occasionally creates a major incentive for promoting regional or international collaboration and cooperation to tackle the crisis-led problems, especially after older beliefs, regimes and systems are judged inappropriate. Economic security emerged as a key concept to pursue both human security and national security in ASEAN after the members economies underwent the Asian financial crisis in 1997-8 that caused serious human suffering such as the increased unemployment rates and the lower wages which came to question the conventional belief of enhancing national security through economic growth. As the 1994 Human Development report highlights, economic problems such as unemployment are one of the main factors underlying political tensions and ethnic violence in many countries, and ASEAN was urged by the crisis to enhance economic cooperation, especially concerning economic security; an approach that aims to provide more opportunities to the poor in underdeveloped countries in the region. As the 2003 Human Security Now report suggests, more efforts are needed to provide economic opportunity to poor and for that reason developing countries in the block where economic difficulties makes people's lives miserable. For instance, Surin Pitsuwan, current ASEAN Secretary-General and then Thai foreign minister, pushed for the concept of a social safety net, modeled after the developed nations, in the wake of the crisis in 1997, and then established a Thai proposal for the creation of an ASEAN-Post Ministerial Conference Caucus on Human Security in 1998. ASEAN,

however, failed to materialise Surin's proposal by taking collective action to save people who lost jobs due to the Asian financial crisis (Cotton, 2001: 129), despite its repeated concern that the absence of income would downgrade living conditions and occasionally jeopardise human life, as it would deprive people of the opportunity to receive appropriate health care and sufficient food; a serious threat to human security.

The Asian financial crisis caused the human security concept to be "crept into the security lexicon used by ASEAN officials" (Caballero-Anthony, 2009: 194). For example, ASEAN leaders announced the "ASEAN Vision 2020" in Kuala Lumpur on 15 December 1997, which acknowledged the importance of human security-related issues such as food security, deprivation, and minorities' empowerment; all issues, which can be categorized into threats concerning 'freedom from want'. However, one of the reasons behind ASEAN's incapability to move under the banner of human security at crisis time was due to its adherence to the so-called ASEAN way: its guiding principles, which include the absolute significance of state sovereignty, non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other members, and avoidance of a legally binding approach to decisions, as the Article Two of the ASEAN Charter stipulates (ASEAN Secretariat, 2008a: 5). Therefore, the higher level of regional institutionalization, which would require regulation and obligation on each state, has not been accomplished in ASEAN (Iain-Johnson, 1999: 290). The adherence to the principle of non-intervention makes it most unfeasible for ASEAN to serve to resolve any violence affecting human lives in any member state. For instance, Thai Prime Minister Thaksin threatened to walk out of the 2004 ASEAN Summit Meeting in Vientiane, if other members such as Indonesia and Malaysia raised the issue of Muslim unrest in southern Thailand during the meeting based on ASEAN's non-intervention principle, while So, the ASEAN way serves as an impediment to the promotion of not only the 'freedom from want' version of human security, as seen in the Asian financial crisis, but also the 'freedom from fear' version of human security or R2P.

### **ASEAN and implementation of human security**

In 1999, after the East Timorese voted overwhelmingly in favour of a referendum for independence from Indonesia, pro-Jakarta militias killed tens of thousands in a wave of violence that created general anarchy in East Timor. ASEAN was reluctant to take any direct action in this brutal matter even though there were calls for "regional intervention" within East Timor; the situation was eventually met with a UN peacekeeping force. The fact that some ASEAN states such as Thailand and Singapore

were initially reluctant to send troops to East Timor shows the persistence of the non-intervention standard, given that the battles between Indonesian and ASEAN soldiers would bring a serious blow to ASEAN (Dupong, 2000: 165). The UN force had only limited participation by military personnel from the ASEAN states and the alternative solutions were provided by Australia, an outsider used to diminish ASEAN's significance. ASEAN was criticized for its negligence and inactiveness to prevent Indonesia's brutal invasion in East Timor and the following massacre. East Timor declared its independence from Portuguese colonization on November 28, 1975. Shortly after the declaration Indonesia invaded and occupied East Timor, declaring it to be one of the Indonesian provinces. Under the occupation period by Indonesia, which lasted 25 years until 1999, almost one-third of East Timor's population died and 70% of the economic infrastructure was destroyed (Robinson, 2003: 16). The other ASEAN members, however, remained silent to Indonesia's brutal treatment of the East Timorese. Thailand and Malaysia's eventual decision to join the Australian-led multinational force in East Timor (INTERFET) was not spawned by their humanitarian concern about the East Timorese people, but by their unease to be seen as Indonesian supporters and to restrict Australia's dominant control over the operation (Hackke, 2003: 199-201). Although ASEAN's silence was partly attributed to Indonesia's dominant status in the organization, a main rationale was its adherence to the non-intervention principle, so ASEAN did not move against Indonesia's military action by viewing the occupation as a domestic matter of one member state (Narine, 2002: 172).

In short, the 1999 East Timor case created the need for ASEAN to acknowledge that internal problems had serious regional and global implications, meaning that ASEAN has never been closed off from the rest of the world and the forces of globalization. So, Yet, ASEAN's indecision not to adequately respond to immediate human rights problems as seen in East Timor failed to create its new image as a rigid and practical institution in the upcoming global era. Yet, the East Timor case provided an initial opportunity with ASEAN to consider more effectively in dealing with human security issues including human rights.

When it comes to the "freedom from want"-type of human security, however, ASEAN gradually started implementing a collective action. The tsunami crisis of 26 December 2004 in the Indian Ocean promoted ASEAN to establish the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) in July 2005. As one of its key principles, the agreement aims to strengthen preventive, monitoring and mitigation



measures to reduce disaster losses in the region. During the earthquake in Indonesia on 27 May 2006, ASEAN member countries were amongst the first to respond to the earthquakes, bringing in search and rescue teams, as well as medical and other emergency supplies to Yogyakarta and Central Java. They were also quick to call for international assistance and were welcoming of aid during the crisis. The coordinated ASEAN response during the tsunami crisis was made possible after the repeated crisis-management activities, and One Keng Yong (2006) hailed it as one the early fruits of the AADEMER. It sounds rational to see Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva's confidence about ASEAN as a human security-oriented body as he, then ASEAN Chair, concluded the 2009 ASEAN Meeting and declared: that "[ASEAN members] have worked together to collectively address the challenges facing our region and peoples – be they the global economic and financial crisis; climate change; food and energy security, infectious disease; or natural disasters" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand, 2009).

The more difficult and significant challenge for ASEAN's commitment to human security is "Should the promotion of human security allow for collective action even if such action compromises the doctrine of non-interference in the internal affairs of states?" (Acharya, 2001b: 459). This means that ASEAN's non-intervention principle and human-security agendas, especially ones related to R2P, have been perceived to conflict with each other; moreover, these issues have become imminent problems in ASEAN. For instance, minority ethnic insurgents from Laos and Myanmar have taken shelter in Thailand, thousands of Indonesian illegal migrants have periodically strained Malaysia-Indonesia relations, and Indonesian terrorist recruits have journeyed to the southern Philippines for training in Islamist camps run by the Abu Sayyaf or Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Yet "ASEAN is able to do little to counteract these intramural frictions" due to the non-intervention principle (Sheldon, 2008: 287). The ASEAN challenge, arising from the contradiction between non-intervention principle and R2P was well presented when the Cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar in 2008.

### **ASEAN, Myanmar and human security**

The mistreatment of its people by the military junta has brought the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar to international concern. Myanmar is one of the countries mentioned in the 1994 Human Development Report as "countries in crisis"; many people in Myanmar were cited as being threatened with food security, health issues, job and income security, human rights violations, as well as ethnic conflicts (UNDP, 1994: 42). In fact, the

refugee flows from Myanmar have been a social and security burden on its neighboring countries, like Thailand, as they trafficked drugs, transmitted HIV, and became a major source of regional instability. The view that the military junta in Myanmar has been threatening the security, safety and well-being of its citizens for decades for the sake of national security became more apparent in the case of both the violent crackdown of the anti-government protestors in the 2007 Saffron Revolution and the detainment of democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners.

Whether ASEAN adheres to the non-intervention principle in dealing with human security issues or not, especially in Myanmar is crucial as it has been seen as deteriorating ASEAN's effectiveness for regional cooperation on human security and hampering cooperative linkages with key Western countries. For instance, non-intervention principle has served as a useful protective shield for Myanmar to divert criticism of its internal affairs, such as abuse of human rights, by other members and Myanmar has been criticised, especially by Western societies for persecuting ethnic minorities and recruiting child soldiers. The EU has premised its cooperation with ASEAN on the basis of respect for human rights and democratic values. ASEAN is well aware that without making some concessions, including in the area of human security, the economic gains through the ASEAN-EU cooperation could not be attained. Thus, ASEAN leaders agreed to endorse the EU's insistence to include a human rights dialogue at the 8th and 9th ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meetings in the early 1990s (Manea, 2008: 375).

ASEAN's general approach to human security does not employ coercive means, such as conditions on aid or economic sanctions, and the so-called ASEAN way, which has attempted to gradually engage Myanmar into ASEAN's integration processes has not been so effective as to help eliminate Myanmar's repressive rule, which involved a campaign of mass arrests against Aung San Suu Kyi's supporters. While Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines tend to support a more interventionist approach, the latecomers of ASEAN are opposed to the idea of abandoning the non-intervention principle. Although Myanmar received strong criticisms from these member countries in the wake of the junta's brutal crackdown on civilian protesters in 2007, they did not intervene directly with the regime. As far as Myanmar's internal matters posing a threat to regional stability, peer pressure and friendly advice from other ASEAN members appears insufficient from the viewpoint of 'responsibility to protect'.

The Cyclone Nargis that devastated the Ayeyarwady and Yangon Division of Myanmar on May 2, 2008 caused a huge catastrophe with almost 140,000 dead or missing and it had a severe and adverse impact on 2.4 million people. Yet, the Myanmar's military government had a slow response to the relief efforts. Not only did Myanmar reject international humanitarian aid, the regime forced cyclone survivors to do menial labour in exchange for food (*Associated Press*, 5 June 2008). It was not until the junta realized its inability to handle the disaster, coupled by the mounting pressures from the international community that the military government decided to accept aid and assistance from outside forces. In the immediate days following Cyclone Nargis, French Foreign Minister Bernard Koucher responded to the junta's inertia by leading a campaign calling for the UN to invoke the international R2P as endorsed by the 2005 UN World Summit. Koucher asserted:

The discussions [with Myanmar] which have been going on for some days at the UN and at bilateral level have given greater priority to norms protecting sovereignty than those protecting life. We talk distress, they answer procedure. We condemn the predicted death of thousands more civilians, they criticize us for interfering in the domestic affairs of a sovereign state" (*Financial Times*, 22 May 2008).

The junta's scepticism about receiving international aid and letting foreigners into the country stemmed from its fear that letting foreign agencies, especially those of Western countries, onto their sovereign soil would be a sign of its own weakness in managing the crisis, demonstrating the junta's intention to preserve its authority at expense of the safety of its people (Selth, 2008). It is also noteworthy to point out that Cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar at a time when its government was preparing to hold a controversial constitutional referendum on 9 May 2008. Critics argued that the government did not want foreigners to interfere in a process aimed at rubber-stamping the regime (*The Guardian*, 12 May 2008). The referendum was a major factor surrounding the junta's refusal to accept international aid at the onset of the catastrophe.

Despite the harsh criticism, Koucher eventually conceded during the campaign that the responsibility to protect in the UN text was envisaged only for armed conflicts. The critical question arising from the Myanmar and Nargis case is whether it is right to sanction, be it economically or militarily, a country whose population is already in distress due to a natural calamity.

ASEAN's failure to secure quick access by international humanitarian workers into the affected regions of Myanmar can be viewed as an example of the conflict between the spirit of humanitarian intervention and the norms of consensus-building in ASEAN. In other words, the Cyclone Nargis represented a case of mixed R2P and natural disaster; ASEAN's interest in dealing with the 'freedom from want'-type of human security was compromised due to the observance of the ASEAN way. However, recognising the futility of possible sanctions, Holliday argues that "in the state sector no figure in a position of real power seriously proposes launching military action, and in the non-state sector no known group is able to take out the junta by military means. The practical significance of this strand of thinking is therefore close to zero" (Holliday, 2009: 487). The fact that the first UN plane arrived only six days after the devastating storm and that the UN could do no more than to send its Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Special Adviser Ibrahim Gambari to the crisis-hit areas in Myanmar suggest that "the realm of non-coercion, consensual state engagement" is still prevalent even amongst the key powers and international organizations (Holliday, 2009: 488). In sum, if the UN could do no more than to "morally-persuade" the Myanmar regime to accept international aid during Cyclone Nargis, ASEAN, a much smaller grouping, could not be expected to intervene in a more forceful way.

Rather than violating the non-intervention principle, ASEAN established the ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force for the Victims of Cyclone Nargis to distribute and utilize the assistance from the international community to support the Myanmar government's relief, recovery and reconstruction effort (ASEAN Secretariat, 2009a). Simultaneously, ASEAN also set up Tripartite Core Group (TCG) comprising of the ASEAN, the UN and the Myanmar government to act as an ASEAN-led mechanism that facilitated trust, confidence and cooperation between Myanmar and the international community in the urgent humanitarian relief and recovery work after Cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar (ASEAN Secretariat, 2008b).

ASEAN's failure to secure quick access by international humanitarian workers into the affected regions in Myanmar in the case of Cyclone Nargis can be viewed as an example of the conflict between the spirit of humanitarian intervention and the norms of consensus-building in ASEAN. In other words, the Cyclone Nargis represented a case of mixed R2P and natural disaster; ASEAN's interest in dealing with the 'freedom from want'-type of human security was compromised due to the observance of the ASEAN

way. As Haacke (2008: 371) argued, this case presented ASEAN with an excellent opportunity to deepen its human security agenda since ASEAN was forced to discuss Myanmar's need for assistance and reconstruction".

Although member countries such as Singapore and Indonesia were active in providing humanitarian aid to Myanmar, they did so without political motives, nor as a tool for political pressure. According to Albright, a former United States Secretary of State, Myanmar was given the membership into ASEAN with the promise that the member countries would "push the junta to open its economy and move in the direction of democracy" (cited in *New York Times*, June 11, 2008), but ASEAN members remained reluctant to pressure Myanmar for change. This is clearly due to the adherence of the member countries to the ASEAN norm of non-intervention in domestic state affairs. Even though some member countries may show support for Myanmar's change towards democracy, ASEAN in general avoids public confrontation against the domestic affairs of its member countries. For instance, during the APEC summit 2009 held in Singapore, Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak displayed his view that he hoped that the "problem of national reconciliation and principles of democracy as a system to be adopted in Myanmar will become a reality, sooner or later" (*The Straits Times*, November 16, 2009). However, ASEAN's reluctance in interfering with Myanmar's domestic affairs was revealed when the call to release political prisoners held by the Myanmar Junta was not included in the joint statement released by the APEC summit (*The Straits Times*, November 16, 2009). As declared by Gloria Arroyo, Philippine's President, ASEAN will continue to pursue its "constructive engagement" with Myanmar, and such "conditional embrace" by ASEAN is regarded as the "Asian way" to deal with regional issues with understanding and sensitivity. According to Arroyo, it is designed "to encourage Myanmar to open up its democratic space" (cited in *AFP*, 25 October 2004). Such response by ASEAN has greatly disappointed the West and this questions the accountability of ASEAN and its norms in providing security for the people in the region, as well as ASEAN's role in leading regionalism in East Asia.

Singapore and Thailand have taken on a tough stance on Myanmar. In May 2009, in its capacity as the ASEAN Chair, Thailand issued an unprecedented statement reminding Myanmar that the country has a "responsibility to protect and promote human rights" as a "responsible member of ASEAN" (cited in *Financial Times*, 26 May 2009). At the close of the 4th East Asia Summit Meeting in Thailand on 25 October 2009, the leaders issued a statement on EAS Disaster Management, describing the agreement in EAS to

“cooperate to enhance post-disaster management and recovery efforts, and encourage greater interaction of early recovery activities in the immediate post-disaster phase to ensure a smooth transition from relief to recovery, including supporting an ASEAN-led mechanism and other organizations in the region” (ASEAN Secretariat 2009b). The rhetoric and criticism aside, it appears that the crisis, be it financial or disaster, has urged the need of ASEAN to tackle issues related to freedoms from ‘want’ and ‘fear’ and thus, human security may eventually feature prominently on the ASEAN agenda.

### **Concluding remarks**

Human security and the ASEAN way, especially the non-intervention principle, are incompatible with each other since the former focuses more on individuals and necessitates an approach to undermining the state sovereignty, which ASEAN members have cherished as an uncompromisable political value. ‘Freedom from fear’ or ‘responsibility to protect’, which implies protecting humans from ethnic and intrastate violence, has also been debated at the global stage, like in the UN, but when and how the humanitarian intervention can be justified has been neither clearly defined nor determined. Observing the UN debates on R2P, Bellamy (2009: 195-6) argued that there has been “no criteria for the use of force, no guideline about how to proceed when the Security Council was deadlocked, no code of conduct on veto, and no continuum of measures ranging from prevention to rebuilding”.

The effect of endeavours to establish human security as a shared global/regional norm, by Japan and Canada, has been also limited, as seen in the fact that the UN finally used human security in its official declaration only eleven years after the 1994 UNDP report that touched on the term was published. In the United Nations Human Security Fund, a symbol of Japan’s commitment to the human security concept, for which it has used 39 billion yen by 2009, Japan remains as the only financial contributor; no other major country supports it financially. This means that the security discourse in the global setting remains state-centric, contributing to the human security concept not being prominently recognised in the global setting.

While there is a view that regional organisations are better placed to act on human security issues in contrast to an international institution such as the UN, there are also doubts surrounding the capacity of a regional grouping like ASEAN to tackle the broad spectrum of human security, as discussed so far. This has led Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy (2009: 206-7) to propose that international organizations with substantial resources such

as the UN should provide logistics and financial support to regional organisations. There are few such cooperative linkages between the UN and regional institutions, such as ASEAN, on human security. Yet, as this paper argues, ASEAN has been gradually changing its attitudes on and interest in human security through experiences human security-related crises; the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the 1999 East Timor crisis, the 2005 Indian Ocean Tsunami Crisis and the 2008 Cyclone Nargis Crisis. ASEAN's slow but realistic responses to these crises prove that the 'freedom from want' version that contains a broader definition of human security has possible paths for ASEAN to follow for the purpose of regional cooperation, which could avoid the incompatibility with the state-centric values of ASEAN way. ASEAN established the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights in 2009, although the draft committee had to reject any measures that would hold accountable any ASEAN member for its violation of human right or would deviate from the non-intervention principle. Then, will another crisis be necessary for ASEAN to develop its serious interest in dealing with issues related to the "freedom from fear" version of human security by giving teeth to the Human Rights Commission?

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