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| **Testo di partenza**  **\*NON tradurre il testo evidenziato in giallo** | **Testo tradotto dal candidato** | **Spazio a disposizione del correttore** | **Punteggi** |
| Humanitarianism, State Sovereignty, and Authoritarian Regime Maintenance in the Syrian War  ON 22 FEBRUARY 2014, THE UNITED NATIONS Security Council (UNSC) adopted a sharply worded resolution on the Syrian crisis. Resolution 2139 called on all parties in the conflict to allow humanitarian workers to do their work while strongly condemning those who failed to observe this imperative, foremost the Syrian government. Yet Syrian president Bashar al-Assad responded with glee and confidently stated that the resolution must be implemented “with respect for the principles laid out in the UN charter, international law and the basic foundations of humanitarian work, especially state sovereignty and the role of the state, and principles of neutrality, transparency and non-politicized assistance.” |  |  |  |
| At first glance, Assad’s remarks could be taken as grossly out of touch with reality, as proof—if any additional proof were needed—of the regime’s disingenuousness, and as yet another instance of its coating itself in the formulaic pomp so typical of a stiffly authoritarian regime clinging to an image of reasonableness when its legitimacy has long evaporated. Responding to another such speech that Assad gave in Damascus’s opera house a year earlier, Rami Khoury, a Beirut-based commentator, captured this common perspective by saying, “It was operatic in its otherworldly fantasy, unrelated to realities outside the building.” |  |  |  |
| In this article, we present the argument that the regime’s embrace of humanitarianism and its key principles is not necessarily at odds with its blatant flouting of these same principles since the onset of the Syrian conflict in March 2011. |  |  |  |
| On the contrary, the regime’s deliberate deprivation strategies and untold repression are, disturbingly, mediated by and, to a significant degree, enabled by United Nations (UN)-led humanitarian assistance in the country. |  |  |  |
| From this, the international humanitarian system emerges as a key vehicle by which the Syrian regime has effectively projected and reaffirmed its claims on state sovereignty. In turn, we argue, this helped the regime generate tangible benefits and resources in its wider efforts to persist at all costs. |  |  |  |
| In short, the regime’s discursive universe—ridiculed by commentators and Syrian activists alike—*is* intimately related to “realities outside the opera building,” as it has made humanitarianism complicit in the regime’s endeavors to withstand mounting challenges since the beginning of the conflict in early 2011. |  |  |  |
| Framing our effort analytically is an attempt to critically combine and, through the Syrian case, contribute to three rather dissipated literatures relevant to the study of state sovereignty, humanitarianism, and authoritarian regime resilience. |  |  |  |
| Accordingly, we answer calls to “reclaim the dimension of empirical research” on state sovereignty and “‘move down’ from the broad study of authoritarian [international] diffusion to the concrete analysis of its constituent mechanisms.” |  |  |  |
| We argue, first, that the Syrian conflict countered the emergence of contingent or diluted state sovereignty in the less developed world, a phenomenon variously welcomed by those advocating humanitarian intervention while lamented by those seeing renewed Western penetration of the south in its name. |  |  |  |
| While the actual erosion of state sovereignty since the end of the Cold War remains a matter of dispute, we contend that the Syrian conflict can be viewed as an exemplary case supporting those who contended all along that reports of the death of state sovereignty were premature at best. |  |  |  |
| Less commonly, though, has it been noted that, especially in the context of civil war, state sovereignty can be reinforced by appropriating humanitarian organizations and their aid. Quite the contrary, these forces usually are viewed as challenging, compromising, or even usurping state sovereignty. |  |  |  |
| The Syrian case suggests that effective state sovereignty claims at times of armed conflict have been catapulted back into the international realm because of the regime’s projection of its categorical state sovereignty assertions onto and through the largest UN-led humanitarian assistance effort in decades. |  |  |  |