"Protecting the defenseless in times of armed conflicts" is it a myth or reality? Discuss.

With at least 13 countries facing terrorism insurgencies in 2020-2021; including African countries like Nigeria, Mozambique, Libya and more, along with Algeria, Iraq, Chad and other unstable countries, the people of those countries are left defenseless, distressed, scared. During the last few decades, the world has also witnessed people falling victims to the ethnic war in South Soudan and the drug war in Colombia and Mexico leaving them with nothing but the hope that one day the war will end and they will regain a normal life.

The International Humanitarian Law (IHL) is a set of rules and principles that seek to mitigate the impacts of armed conflicts and as such, they put in place fundamental principles to protect the civilians and limit humanitarian catastrophes such as useless massacres as much as possible during war times. To do so, precepts were made to limit the loss of human lives, at least those of innocent civilians as one of the principles is to distinguish between combatants and normal civilians. Another one is the interdiction of attacking those that are outside the combat zone. Furthermore, the IHL comprises of other rules that countries in armed conflicts should abide to in order to keep the losses under control to prevent humanitarian catastrophes even in war, for example, the interdiction to bring about unnecessary sufferings, the principle of necessity and that of proportionality. Moreover, other laws were made to contain or rather limit the human loss and exploitation during war times. For example, it is forbidden to force children to enlist in military or armed conflicts and the states that break those rules face juridical consequences in international courts and this prevents young children from being forced to participate in a fight that isn't theirs.

In addition, mobile forces are deployed in areas of conflicts along with rescue teams and medical support to take care of the victims of the areas involved in cross fire. For example, when there are terrorism attacks, insurgencies, civil wars and other internal and external conflicts, the authorities sends its troops to mitigate the situation and help the victims along with humanitarian workers and volunteers. Humanitarian workers not only help victims of great natural disasters like after tsunamis hit but also areas of conflicts where civilians are left to fend for themselves without support, treatment and help in any kind as the level of armed violence is high. But despite everything there are organizations like the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement who do their best to try and help to alleviate human suffering and help to protect human life, health and respect towards each individual. Those two organizations

alone count around 97 millions of volunteers' worldwide ready to help troubled areas where victims are helpless and on the brink of death and despair.

However, can we really say that the people in war areas are helped, supported and saved? According to the United Nations, a quarter of the population worldwide, 2 billion people, lives in war zones. In other words, 1 out of 4 of the world's population lives in conflict zones as of the 31 March 2022. With approximately three dozens of countries currently in conflicts and wars, the situation of those populations are dire and the numbers of authorities and volunteers is not enough to help the victims, survivors and injured escapees of those conflicted areas. According to online reports, countries of the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, North-West Asia and Mexico are the major zones of armed conflicts meaning that they also contain the highest level of mortality rates, violence, rape, or exploitation rates compared to other areas of the globe where it is more politically and socially stable. Furthermore, countries like Afghanistan, Yemen and Mexico are areas that are the most at risk due to the insurgencies, civil and drug wars, meaning that the people in those areas cannot benefit much support from the authorities and other humanitarian organizations as not many people will risk their lives only to try to tend to people who are living in constant fear of losing their lives. Moreover, even If humanitarian organizations got involved in the areas of conflicts to help the civilians they would only be able to do so after the harm is done. They will only help after the tragedy and will only be able to treat victims and survivors not civilians.

And lastly, other countries do not interfere in areas of conflicts so as to not trigger a bigger war and this leads to the people being left to face armed soldiers and assailants on their own often dying trying to escape or save their families. A good example of other countries not interfering in matters that involve mass violence, abuse of power and war crimes due to a breach of the International Humanitarian Law would be the Russia/Ukraine war that has been raging for a while now. Although other countries like the US provided and expressed their support for Ukraine, they did not meddle in the conflict so as to not incite a bigger war which could result in a possible World War III due to the powers involved on both sides. But that is only my and a few other's assumptions. However, in situations like these, citizens end up becoming refugees in other countries, often being left to fend for themselves without basic needs which in turn lead to theft, more violence and more suffering on both the refugees and the locals who are being robbed of their resources by outsiders.

In conclusion, in times of war, measures are put in place whether they work or not. Being able to protect the defenseless in those troubled times is difficult, while sometimes we can appease their troubled soul and situation, we cannot always save everyone. There will always be people left behind, hurt, tormented and killed but what we can do is try our best to support the people we can when we can to prevent bad cycles from repeating.