Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development:

Lessons from Türkiye's Humanitarian Diplomacy in Africa with a Focus on the Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon.

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Abstract:

This paper examines Türkiye's humanitarian diplomacy in Africa with a special focus on Cameroon and the Anglophone Crisis, analyzing its implications for post-conflict reconstruction and development. The Anglophone Crisis, rooted in perceived historical and socio-political marginalization of Anglophone Cameroonians, has led to significant humanitarian needs. While Türkiye has increased its engagement in Africa, its humanitarian-led partnerships in Cameroon have indirectly benefited the Anglophone Crisis. Employing a qualitative case study analysis, this paper investigates Türkiye's humanitarian and developmental initiatives, guided by the theoretical frameworks of constructivism and human security. The study identifies a research gap concerning the specific

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analysis of Türkiye's humanitarian diplomacy in this context. By synthesizing existing literature and available reports, the paper draws lessons regarding best practices, challenges, and potential implications for future humanitarian interventions in post-conflict settings. The findings suggest that while Türkiye's development assistance contributes to long-term stability, a more direct and targeted approach may be needed to address the immediate humanitarian consequences of the Anglophone Crisis.

Keywords: Post-Conflict Reconstruction, Humanitarian Diplomacy, Türkiye, Turkish Foreign Aid, Cameroon, Anglophone Crisis.

Introduction

The implementation of post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa revealed multifaceted challenges that required comprehensive strategies addressing security, political governance, economic rehabilitation, and social reconciliation (Tzifakis, 2013). These complex settings necessitate the involvement of diverse actors, extending beyond traditional Western powers to include emerging global players (Bogatyreva, 2022). The Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon serves as a stark example of such a challenging post-conflict scenario. This protracted conflict, arising from elongated historical grievances and political struggles, has culminated in a catastrophic humanitarian crisis, warranting international concern and intervention (Akanga, 2025). Understanding the roles and approaches of various actors, including non-traditional ones, in these reconstruction efforts is crucial for developing effective and sustainable peacebuilding strategies globally.

The Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon is rooted in the country's colonial legacy. After World War I, following Germany's defeat, British and French forces occupied Cameroon, which was a German colony. Subsequently, it was divided by the League of Nations into two territories: French Cameroon and British Southern and Northern Cameroons (U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), 2025). This partition created distinct political, Sociocultural, legal, and educational systems in the two regions (Ekah, 2019). Following the emergence of decolonization and subsequent independence of African countries, British Northern Cameroons opted to join Nigeria while Southern Cameroons voted for unification with French Cameroon in a plebiscite that was organized by the UN in 1961, forming the Federal Republic of Cameroon (International Crisis Group (ICG), 2023; USCRI, 2025). However, the predominantly Francophone-majority government gradually centralized power, causing an outcry of marginalization and disenfranchisement among the Anglophone minority (Iyal et al., 2024; ICG, 2017, 2023). These long-standing grievances erupted in 2016 when English-speaking lawyers, students, and teachers protested against the perceived erosion of their cultural and legal heritage by the Francophone-dominated government (Bang and Balgah, 2022; USCRI, 2025). The government's heavy-handed response to these nonviolent demonstrations aggravated tensions, which amplified the radicalization of separatist groups (Fairbend, 2018; Bang

and Balgah, 2022). In October 2017, after the October 1st massacre1, Anglophone separatists declared independence for the Northwest and Southwest regions, proclaiming the new state of "Ambazonia,"2 which triggered an armed conflict with the Cameroonian security forces (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (GCR2P), 2025). The inability to address and resolve grievances of the Anglophone minority after unification paved the foundation for this protracted and violent conflict (USCRI, 2025).

The persisting conflict has created severe humanitarian conditions. Violent confrontations between government forces and separatist groups have multiplied and are plagued by numerous human rights violations perpetrated by both sides. These human right violations constitute extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, and the burning of villages (Oxford Human Rights Hub, 2019; Bang and Balgah, 2022; Salome, 2022; Human Rights Watch, 2024). As of February 2025, the crisis had registered over 900,000 internally displaced people, while over 60,000 people are seeking refuge in neighboring Nigeria (Ekah, 2019; Mutah, 2022; Fonkwo el al., 2023; Africanews, 2024b; USCRI, 2025). Over 3.3 million people are in need of humanitarian aid, requiring urgent assistance with food, shelter, healthcare, and protection(Tientcheu, 2023, TIKA, 2024). Humanitarian efforts are further hampered by increased restrictions on movement and targeted attacks on aid workers and facilities (USCRI, 2025).

In this complex humanitarian landscape, Türkiye has emerged as a significant global humanitarian actor, increasingly engaging with African nations (Tank, 2015; Bayram, 2020; Donelli and Cannon, 2025). Türkiye perceives itself as a state that champions justice, conscience, and fairness in its foreign policy, often framing its engagement through the lens of "humanitarian diplomacy"(Altunisik, 2019; Akpınar, 2021; Devecioğlu, 2024). The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) plays a central role in delivering Türkiye's development assistance across various domains in Africa, including Cameroon (Mehmet, 2018; Rugutt, 2023; TIKA, 2024). Given the severity of this humanitarian crisis, this article explores how Türkiye's humanitarian contribution to Africa and Cameroon in particular supports stability and development necessary for post-conflict recovery.

1	 The October 1st Massacre refers to violent events that occurred on October 1st, 2017 during the symbolic declaration of the Independence of 'Ambazonia".(ICG, 2017)

2	 Ambazonia is a self- proclaimed independent state by Anglophone separatists in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon (ICG, 2017)

A comprehension of Türkiye's motivations, the types of aid it provides, and its overall approach can offer valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of humanitarian diplomacy and its potential contributions to post-conflict reconstruction and development. This paper seeks to address the following research question: What lessons can be learned from Türkiye's humanitarian diplomacy in Africa and Cameroon for post-conflict reconstruction and development? To answer this, the paper aims to examine the history, causes, and current state of the Cameroon Anglophone Crisis; investigate Türkiye's humanitarian diplomacy efforts in Africa and Cameroon; and analyze the theoretical frameworks guiding Türkiye's interventions; and ultimately, highlight the implications of Türkiye's aid for broader post-conflict strategies. Türkiye's bilateral relations with Cameroon strengthened, particularly following President Biya's visit to Türkiye in 2013. Türkiye's foreign policy towards Cameroon appears to prioritize economic cooperation and development partnerships (MFA, 2022). While Türkiye's broader humanitarian engagement in Africa has been subjects of academic inquiry, existing research documenting Turkish humanitarian aid interventions in Cameroon (Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), 2022) remains largely unexplored. This paper aims to address this gap by providing a focused examination of Türkiye's aid intervention in Cameroon. Filling this gap will contribute valuable insights to the fields of international relations, humanitarian studies, and African studies, potentially informing future policy and practice in similar contexts.

This paper employs a qualitative case study analysis to gain an in-depth understanding of Türkiye's humanitarian diplomacy in Africa and its impact on crisis-affected countries like Cameroon, as a mechanism for post-conflict recovery and development. The data for this study primarily comprises secondary sources. Academic articles focusing on the Anglophone Crisis, Turkish foreign policy, and humanitarian diplomacy provide crucial analytical perspectives (Bang and Balgah, 2022; Mutah, 2022.; Fonkwo et al., 2023), reports from international organizations such as the United Nations, the European Union, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the International Crisis Group offer valuable insights into the humanitarian impact of the Anglophone Crisis and the broader international response (ICG, 2017, 2023; USCRI, 2025, GCR2P, 2025). Official statements and reports from the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and TİKA provide insights into Türkiye's official stance and development activities in Cameroon (TIKA, 2024, 2035; MFA, 2022). News

articles and reports from reputable media outlets offer additional perspectives and details on Türkiye's engagement and its perceived impact and potential for post-conflict reconstruction in Cameroon.

1. Theorizing Türkiye's Humanitarian Diplomacy strategies in Africa

This paper utilizes the theoretical frameworks of constructivism and human security to analyze Türkiye's humanitarian diplomacy in Africa and by extension Cameroon and Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis.

Constructivism in international relations emphasizes the role of ideas, norms, and identities in shaping state behavior (Wendt,1992; Finnemore & Sikkink, 2001; Dixon, 2013). Constructivism posits that international relations amongst states is shaped by socially constructed ideas, norms, and identities rather than material power alone (Wendt, 1992). Unlike realism or liberalism, which prioritize material interests or institutional frameworks, constructivism emphasizes the role of shared beliefs and intersubjective understandings in shaping state behavior. Key tenets like ideational power posit that norms such as "human dignity" and "solidarity" are not static but evolve through interaction. For example, Finnemore (2015) argues that humanitarian norms gain legitimacy through repeated state practices and institutionalization. Constructivism also posits that non-state actors like NGOs, the media, and religious groups act as norm entrepreneurs, mediating state identity (Checkel, 1998). Türkiye's use of institutions like TIKA (Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency) exemplifies this. Lastly, identity formation as a constructivism tenet showcases how states craft identities through discourse and practice, which in turn influence how they are perceived (Hopf, 2002). Türkiye's humanitarian diplomacy is both a reflection and reinforcement of its identity as a "benevolent power."

When reconciling constructivism and humanitarian diplomacy, humanitarian diplomacy is inherently normative. It emphasizes values like solidarity and shared responsibility. Türkiye frames its aid as a moral duty rooted in historical Ottoman benevolence and contemporary Islamic solidarity (Özkan, 2010). This aligns with constructivist claims that state behavior is driven by identity narratives. For instance, Türkiye's emphasis on "Africa as a Strategic Partner" (Davutoğlu, 2013) reflects a deliberate effort to reconstruct its identity from a regional player

to a global humanitarian actor (Ipek, 2015). This framework helps understand Türkiye's motivations for engaging in humanitarian diplomacy, potentially driven by its evolving identity as a humanitarian actor and its aspiration to influence international norms around humanitarian intervention and development (Bayram, 2020; Devecioğlu, 2024). Türkiye's increasing emphasis on providing aid and engaging in diplomatic efforts can be viewed as a reflection of its changing self-perception and its desire to be recognized as a significant and responsible actor in the international arena. Constructivism offers a compelling lens through which to understand Türkiye's evolving behavior as a humanitarian actor within Africa. This theory emphasizes the role of ideas, norms, identities, and social interactions in shaping state interests and actions (Wendt, 1992).

One key aspect of constructivism is the idea that state identities are not fixed but are socially constructed through interaction and the adoption of shared norms (Hopf, 1998). Türkiye's historical identity as a post-Ottoman, secular state with a growing economy has been evolving to embrace a more proactive and compassionate role in global affairs, including humanitarianism in Africa. This shift is partly driven by a desire to cultivate a positive image and enhance its soft power on the continent (Ipek, 2015; Güler, 2020). Türkiye's framing of its humanitarian actions often emphasizes solidarity, historical ties and a commitment to South-South cooperation, contributing to the construction of an identity as a benevolent and reliable partner for African nations (Sıradağ, 2022).

Norm diffusion, which is also central to constructivism, plays a significant role in shaping Türkiye's humanitarian behavior. The increasing global emphasis on humanitarian responsibility and the "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P) norm, while debated, has influenced the discourse surrounding state action in humanitarian crises. Türkiye's active participation in international forums and its engagement with organizations like the African Union expose it to these evolving norms, which can then be internalized and influence its foreign policy decisions, including its humanitarian responses in Africa (Sıradağ, 2025). For instance, Türkiye's increasing focus on providing aid in protracted crises and supporting resilience-building initiatives aligns with broader normative trends in the humanitarian sector (Tepeciklioğlu, 2021).

Social interaction and the relationships Türkiye cultivated with African states directly shape its humanitarian actions. Constructivism highlights that state

interests are not solely material but are also influenced by intersubjective understandings and shared meanings developed through interaction (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). Türkiye's growing diplomatic presence in Africa, the establishment of numerous embassies, and increasing trade and investment foster closer relationships. These interactions provide Türkiye with a deeper understanding of the specific needs and priorities of African nations, allowing its humanitarian assistance to be more tailored and effective. Furthermore, positive interactions can lead to reciprocal understandings and strengthen Türkiye's legitimacy as a humanitarian actor on the continent (Özcan, M., & Köse, 2024).

Finally, constructivism underscores the importance of ideational factors and the role of domestic political discourse in shaping foreign policy. The emphasis on humanitarian values and a proactive foreign policy under the AKP government has created a domestic environment supportive of humanitarian engagement in regions like Africa (Altunisik, 2019). This domestic consensus, shaped by religious values, historical narratives, and a desire for Türkiye to play a larger global role, provides the ideational underpinning for its humanitarian actions on the continent. A constructivist perspective illuminates how Türkiye's evolving identity as a caring global actor, the internalization of international humanitarian norms, its deepening social interactions with African states, and supportive domestic political discourse collectively shape its behavior as a humanitarian actor within Africa. This theoretical lens moves beyond purely materialist explanations, highlighting the crucial role of ideas, norms, identities, and interactions in understanding Türkiye's increasing and nuanced humanitarian engagement on the continent. Applying constructivism to Türkiye's humanitarian engagement in Africa reveals how shifting self-perceptions, evolving normative frameworks, and interactions with African states and international organizations have influenced its approach and priorities.

The human security framework provides a complementary perspective by shifting the focus from a state-centric view of security to a people-centric one (Conteh-Morgan, 2005, Adısönmez, 2016). It argues that security encompasses not just freedom from violence but also freedom from want and freedom from fear, addressing a broad range of threats to human lives and dignity (Muguruza, 2017). This framework broadens the understanding of security to encompass

various threats to human well-being beyond military conflict, including poverty, disease, and violence (Craig, 2020; Agwanda &Asal, 2021; Mutah, 2022). The Anglophone Crisis has created profound security issues for Cameroon, affecting the population, threatening their physical safety, livelihoods, and dignity (ICG, 2017, 2023; USCRI, 2025). Analyzing Türkiye's humanitarian efforts through this lens allows for an assessment of how its interventions have supported post-conflict recovery and development by addressing these multi-dimensional insecurities, thereby contributing to the overall well-being of Cameroon. This analysis explores how Türkiye's engagement via its broader humanitarian actions and its foreign policy priorities in Africa, has impacted Cameroon and the Crisis.

2. Reviewing the Crisis, Humanitarian Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development

The Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon has been extensively studied, with existing literature providing a comprehensive understanding of its historical roots, underlying causes, and the escalation of the conflict (Achu, 2023; Okereke, 2022; Achu & Tutumlu, 2023). The crisis is deeply embedded in the legacy of colonial rule, where the partition of Cameroon under British and French mandates created distinct socio-political and legal systems involving distinctive French and English linguistic, educational and legal (Common law and Civil law) structures (ICG, 2017, 2023; Iyal et al., 2024). The subsequent unification in 1961, while intended to foster national unity, inadvertently laid the groundwork for future conflict due to the centralized governance that often marginalized the Anglophone minority (Okereke, 2018; USCRI, 2025). This marginalization, encompassing political, economic, social, and linguistic dimensions, fueled resentment and a sense of second-class citizenship among Anglophone Cameroonians (Agwanda & Asal, 2021; Sobseh, 2024). The government's violent response to peaceful demonstrations led by lawyers and teachers in 2016 decrying the imposition of Francophone legal and educational systems in Anglophone regions sparked the emergence of the 2016 Crisis (Achu &Tutumlu, 2023). The violent crackdown on these protests led to increased calls for secession and the eventual declaration of independence of "Ambazonia" in 2017, marking a significant escalation into an armed conflict (Fon et al., 2024, Bang and Balgah, 2022). The ongoing violence has resulted in a severe humanitarian crisis, with widespread displacement,

human rights abuses, and urgent needs for basic necessities (USCRI, 2025). As of February 2025, over 3.3 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance across Cameroon, with the Anglophone regions bearing a significant burden.

Displacement is a major concern, with over 900,000 people internally displaced and 60,000 having fled to Nigeria and other countries. More than 500,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) are currently residing within the Anglophone regions. These populations face limited access to essential services, including food, shelter, protection, water, and healthcare. For instance, in the North-West and South-West regions, almost 500,000 people lack adequate shelter, and 36% of schools are non-functional due to the conflict (USCRI, 2025). The conflict has resulted in significant casualties, with over 6,500 people killed since 2016. Both governmental security forces and separatist armed groups have been implicated in human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings, sexual and gender-based violence, and arbitrary detention.

The humanitarian response remains severely underfunded. For example, Cameroon's 2024 humanitarian response plan was only 45% funded, leaving a gap of $202.8 million (UNFPA, 2025). This shortfall impacts critical services, with UNFPA reporting a 50% reduction in their humanitarian response as of March 2025, potentially leaving over 25,000 direct beneficiaries without access to essential sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence services (OCHA, 2025). As such, any strategy for terminating violence and implementing sustainable peace requires an anticipatory trajectory for post-conflict reconstruction and development that includes the support of international actors.

Although post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa is well-documented, addressing the complexities of rebuilding societies shattered by violence and conflict is still a major issue plaguing Africa's development (Tzifakis, 2013; Neethling & Hudson, 2013; Earnest, 2015; Oder, 2021). The cessation of violent conflict often marks not an end, but rather the commencement of a complex and protracted process of post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD). This phase necessitates a holistic approach encompassing security sector reform (SSR), economic recovery, the cultivation of local ownership, and the restoration of vital political and social institutions (Rutherford & Saleh, 2019; Barakat, 2020; Fiedler & Mross, 2023). Together these pillars ensure the sustainability of peace and the trajectory of development in war-

torn nations. Security sector reform stands as a foundational element of the PCRD. The presence of fragmented, politicized, or abusive security forces can undermine peace agreements and perpetuate instability (Nathan, 2007; Achu, 2023). Effective SSR mechanisms can transform the security apparatus into a legitimate, accountable, and professional entity that serves the needs of the entire population. This involves demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants, the restructuring and training of military and police forces, and the establishment of civilian oversight mechanisms (DCAF, 2019). However, the implementation of SSR in Africa is fraught with difficulties. Weak governance structures, a lack of financial resources, and resistance from entrenched security elites often impede progress. Moreover, externally driven SSR initiatives can be perceived as impositions, lacking the crucial buy-in from local actors necessary for long-term success (Richmond, 2004). The African Union's revised Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy (2024) emphasizes the importance of African leadership and national ownership in SSR processes, recognizing that sustainable reform must be rooted in local contexts and priorities.

Furthermore, economic recovery is inextricably linked to the consolidation of peace. Conflict devastates infrastructure, disrupts livelihoods, and depletes human capital, leaving behind widespread poverty and unemployment. Post-conflict economic strategies must focus on creating opportunities for income generation, stimulating productive investment, and addressing inequalities that may have fueled the conflict (UNDP, 2008). This often involves a combination of short-term measures, such as humanitarian assistance and job creation programs, with long-term strategies aimed at diversifying the economy, strengthening institutions, and promoting inclusive growth. However, African states emerging from conflict often grapple with weak institutions, a lack of access to capital, and the lingering effects of war economies, including illicit trade and corruption (Du Rand, 2010). Also, the equitable distribution of the benefits of economic recovery is crucial to prevent the resurgence of grievances and instability.

Additionally, the principle of local ownership is increasingly recognized as a cornerstone of a successful PCRD. External actors can provide valuable technical and financial assistance, but ultimately, the responsibility for rebuilding and developing a country lies with its own people and institutions (Paffenholz, 2010).

Local ownership entails the active participation of a broad range of stakeholders, including government, civil society organizations, traditional leaders, and the affected population, in shaping the priorities and processes of PCRD. This ensures that interventions are culturally appropriate, contextually relevant, and responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people. The lack of genuine local ownership can lead to the imposition of externally driven agendas, which may not address the root causes of conflict or foster sustainable peace. Empowering local actors and building their capacity to lead and manage PCRD processes is therefore essential for long-term success (Interpeace, 2020).

Lastly, the restoration of political and social institutions is vital for establishing legitimate governance and fostering social cohesion in post-conflict settings. This includes rebuilding state capacity, strengthening the rule of law, promoting democratic processes, and creating inclusive platforms for dialogue and reconciliation (Call, 2008). The legacy of conflict often manifests in deep-seated mistrust, social fragmentation, and weakened institutions. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive strategies that promote justice, accountability, and reconciliation. Transitional justice mechanisms, such as truth commissions and reparations programs, can play a crucial role in addressing past abuses and fostering healing. Moreover, inclusive political processes that ensure the participation of marginalized groups are essential for building a stable and equitable society. The African Union's Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) Policy Framework (2006, revised 2024) underscores the importance of inclusivity, equity, and non-discrimination as guiding principles for the restoration of political and social institutions.

Despite growing recognition of the key elements of an effective PCRD, the current state in Africa remains complex and often falls short of achieving sustainable peace and development. Challenges such as limited financial resources, weak institutional capacity, persistent insecurity, and a lack of genuine local ownership continue to impede progress in many countries. Moreover, the interconnected nature of these challenges necessitates integrated and coherent approaches that are often difficult to achieve in practice. External interventions, while often necessary, can also be fragmented, poorly coordinated, and insensitive to local contexts.

In conclusion, post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa is a multifaceted and long-term endeavor that requires sustained commitment

from both national and international actors. While significant progress has been made in understanding the key pillars of a successful PCRD – security sector reform, economic recovery, local ownership, and institutional restoration – their effective implementation remains a significant challenge. Future efforts must prioritize genuine local ownership, build institutional capacity from the ground up, adopt integrated and context-specific approaches, and ensure the equitable distribution of peace dividends. By learning from experiences and adapting strategies to the unique challenges of each conflict-affected nation, Africa can move towards a future of sustainable peace and development. The African context presents unique challenges, including weak governance structures, systemic corruption, and the potential for external interventions to exacerbate existing tensions (Kalu & George, 2021). Lessons learned emphasize the need for context-specific approaches that address the root causes of conflict, promote inclusive governance, and foster reconciliation. Effective post-conflict reconstruction requires coordination among multiple actors and a long-term commitment to building sustainable peace.

3. Türkiye and Humanitarian Diplomacy in Africa

The field of humanitarian diplomacy has witnessed a growing involvement of non-traditional actors, moving beyond the conventional dominance of Western powers (Özerdem,2017; Bogatyreva, 2022). Humanitarian diplomacy involves leveraging diplomatic channels to advance humanitarian interests and goals (Geremedhn & Gebrihet, 2024). This includes negotiation, advocacy, and building relationships with various stakeholders. Non-traditional actors, such as Türkiye, are increasingly engaging with African countries under the humanitarian context (Donelli and Cannon, 2025). Türkiye's foreign policy has undergone a significant transformation, moving from a historical focus primarily on Western and neighboring regions to a more diversified global engagement (Bayram, 2020). Traditionally, African affairs held a secondary status, with Turkish governments since the Republic's establishment in 1923 prioritizing political, economic, and military relations with the West, often influenced by Cold War dynamics. However, a pivotal shift occurred with the adoption of the "Action Plan for Opening up to Africa" in 1998, which gained increased prominence under the government of the Justice and Development Party (Altunisik, 2019). This re-engagement reflects Türkiye's broader aspiration for a more dynamic

and constructive role in post-Cold War international politics, particularly in regions like Africa (Özkan, 2010; Donelli, 2018).

Türkiye's approach to foreign aid is often referred to as the "Turkish way" or "Ankara consensus," presenting an alternative model of development cooperation distinct from the Washington or Beijing consensus. (Parlar Dal and Dipama, 2023). This model is characterized by a "sincere, unconditional, transparent, and human-oriented approach," aiming to cultivate fair, equitable, and sustainable relationships. A key distinguishing feature is Türkiye's preference for providing grants to African countries, eschewing loans, which sets it apart from both traditional Western donors and emerging donors like China (Parlar Dal and Dipama, 2023). In 2017, Türkiye's official development assistance (ODA) reached $8.12 billion, representing 0.95% of its Gross National Product (GNP), surpassing the UN's 0.70% target and positioning Türkiye as the 6th largest donor among OECD DAC members and 4th globally by ODA as a percentage of GNP (TIKA, 2017). Türkiye's engagement with African countries has significantly expanded over the last two decades, evolving from an opening policy to a strategic partnership (Devecioğlu, 2024; Donelli & Cannon, 2025). This comprehensive shift, often framed within the context of "humanitarian diplomacy," seeks to establish Türkiye as a "benevolent power" through extensive foreign aid and development initiatives (Turhan, 2024). This "Turkish-type" aid model, which focuses on grants, human-centered approaches, and a non-colonial ideology, serves as a strategic differentiator for Türkiye, granting it influence and acceptance in African nations wary of traditional or loan-heavy aid models (Turhan, 2021). This combination of humanitarian, economic, diplomatic, and geopolitical motivations indicates that aid is employed as a versatile tool, not purely altruistic, but designed to build long-term, mutually beneficial relationships that serve Türkiye's strategic interests while simultaneously contributing to the recipient countries' development.

Turhan (2024) argues that Türkiye's commitment to humanitarian aid, particularly in the healthcare sector, is driven by humanitarian motives and has remained consistent, even amidst domestic and international challenges. This approach, rooted in a public diplomacy paradigm, aims to foster a positive image and new and deeper engagement with African nations, positioning Ankara as a strategic partner on the continent. Özkan (2023) complements this perspective by delving into the broader political, economic, military, and cultural dimensions of Turkish

African relations. He asserts that foreign aid, particularly humanitarian and development projects implemented through entities like TİKA and AFAD in over 40 African countries, is a crucial element of Türkiye's soft power on the continent (Özkan, 2023). This soft power strategy, encompassing humanitarian activities, cultural diplomacy, and scholarships, enables Turkey to emerge as an important international actor and secure diplomatic support, particularly in global forums (Tepeciklioğlu et al., 2023). Türkiye's foreign aid policy is also primarily defined by its humanitarian and benevolent identity, an identity that can be traced back to the Ottoman era. He suggests that humanitarian assistance serves as an "entry point" to the continent, allowing Türkiye to establish a presence and cultivate relationships beyond mere economic considerations (Özkan, 2018).. This dimension offers a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary analysis, discussing various dimensions of Türkiye's African engagement, such as public diplomacy, humanitarian/development assistance, and religious activities. This broader analysis of Türkiye's peacebuilding responses in Africa, such as the case of Somalia, provides a conceptual framework for understanding how Türkiye might approach humanitarian diplomacy in conflict-affected regions (Tepeciklioğlu, 2021). This underscores how Türkiye's involvement goes beyond summit diplomacy, utilizing diverse soft power tools, including humanitarian aid and development assistance, to solidify its presence and influence (Ipek, 2015; Rugutt, 2023).

The primary instrument for Türkiye's development cooperation overseas is the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA). Established in 1992, TİKA initially focused on former Soviet republics but has since expanded its mission to encompass a wide array of development assistance across various regions, including Africa. Türkiye has established a growing presence in Africa, including Cameroon, primarily through its development assistance channeled via TİKA (Turkish Red Crescent, 2022). These efforts encompass various sectors, including education, health, infrastructure, and agriculture (Gülabi, 2015; TIKA, 2024, 2024c). The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) serves as a key instrument in implementing Türkiye's development and humanitarian policies in Africa (Gunner, 2020; Ipek, 2015). TİKA plays a significant role in shaping Türkiye's foreign policy through its focus on development and humanitarian aid. Established in 1992, TİKA operates as a government agency dedicated to fostering sustainable development and providing humanitarian assistance across a wide geographical area, spanning from the Balkans to Africa, the Middle

East, and Latin America (Ipek, 2015; Altunisik, 2019). This extensive reach allows Türkiye to engage with diverse nations and communities, building goodwill and strengthening diplomatic ties. TİKA's approach centers on understanding and responding to the specific needs and priorities of partner countries (Donelli, 2018). This demand-oriented strategy ensures that projects are relevant and impactful, contributing to long-term development goals rather than imposing external agendas. By implementing projects in crucial sectors such as education, healthcare, agriculture, and infrastructure, TİKA directly supports the socio-economic progress of recipient nations (Ipek, 2015). This commitment to tangible improvements on the ground enhances Türkiye's image as a reliable and supportive partner in the international arena.

Furthermore, TİKA's rapid response to humanitarian crises underscores Türkiye's dedication to alleviating suffering and providing timely assistance. Whether it's delivering essential supplies, establishing healthcare facilities, or supporting vulnerable populations, TİKA's humanitarian efforts reflect Türkiye's principled stance on global solidarity. This proactive engagement in humanitarianism not only addresses immediate needs but also fosters stronger relationships based on shared values and empathy (Beşgül, 2024). Through its multifaceted activities, TİKA serves as a key instrument of Türkiye's soft power, promoting cooperation, development, and cultural exchange. By prioritizing human-centered and sustainable solutions, the agency effectively translates Türkiye's foreign policy objectives into tangible actions, contributing to a more peaceful and prosperous global environment.

In the context of Cameroon, Türkiye's humanitarian diplomacy aligns with these principles, leveraging humanitarian aid for public diplomacy, establishing a benevolent presence, and potentially contributing to post-conflict reconstruction through development projects. While direct engagement in the complex Anglophone Crisis is challenging due to its internal dynamics and the Cameroonian government's stance, Türkiye's established mechanisms for humanitarian assistance and development cooperation in Cameroon offer avenues for support in areas such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure, influencing stability and post-conflict recovery in the long run. However, the specific implications for post-conflict reconstruction and development in Cameroon would depend heavily on the nature and scale of Türkiye's involvement, as well as the local political and security landscape.

4. Analysis: Türkiye's Humanitarian Diplomacy in Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis

Cameroon holds particular strategic importance within this evolving foreign policy. Identified as one of Africa's "most emergent countries" and a "close ally in Central Africa," Cameroon became a key partner for Türkiye (Amadou, 2024). A landmark visit by Cameroonian President Paul Biya to Türkiye in 2013, the first of its kind, provided substantial impetus to bilateral relations, fostering increased public interest in Türkiye within Cameroon (MFA, 2022). This diplomatic connection has directly contributed to a steady rise in Turkish companies' engagement and investment in Cameroon's ambitious goal of becoming an emerging economy by 2035 (MFA, 2022). This demonstrates that Türkiye's engagement in Cameroon is not merely an isolated or opportunistic endeavor; rather, it is a direct and strategic manifestation of a broader, long-term foreign policy pivot towards Africa, aiming to diversify international relations and establish new spheres of influence beyond traditional Western alliances. High-level diplomatic engagement, such as presidential visits and accelerated rapprochement, serves as a direct catalyst, enabling the intensification of practical development cooperation and increasing economic interest from Turkish entities in Cameroon.

TİKA's direct presence in Cameroon began with the opening of its Yaoundé Program Coordination Office in 2014, which has since intensified its activities across diverse sectors. As such, Turkish companies are increasingly contributing to Cameroon's infrastructure and transformational projects, and the total trade volume between Türkiye and African nations surged from $1.35 billion in 2003 to $12.4 billion in 2023 (Parens and Plichta, 2025). Since its establishment, TİKA has intensified its activities, developing projects in collaboration with Cameroonian authorities across various sectors, such as education, health, infrastructure, and agriculture (Turkish Red Crescent, 2022; MFA, 2022; APO Group, 2023b). These projects include the renovation of health centers, support for educational infrastructure, and initiatives to boost agricultural production (TIKA, 2024c). These development-oriented initiatives align with Türkiye's broader foreign policy strategy in Africa, which emphasizes building long-term partnerships and contributing to sustainable development (Amadou, 2024).

In the health sector, TİKA renovated the Nkol Mvak Integrated Health Center in Yaoundé, increasing its service capacity (TIKA, 2024b). TİKA has notably

undertaken the refurbishment of a safe house for women fleeing abuse in Yaoundé. Ongoing high-level discussions, such as the April 2025 meeting between Cameroon's Ambassador to Turkey and the Turkish Minister of Health, underscore continued efforts to strengthen health cooperation and finalize a legal framework for collaboration.

Education and capacity building are also central to Türkiye's initiatives. TİKA renovated the Nyambaka High School and built new classrooms (Turkish Red Crescent, 2022). TİKA supports global education efforts, including the construction, repair, and equipping of schools. In Cameroon, the Turkish Maarif Foundation (TMF) operates schools and a Turkish studies center at the University of Yaoundé 1 SOA, promoting Turkish culture through language instruction. Significantly, the TMF has also initiated Turkish language training for Cameroonian Army personnel preparing for courses in Türkiye. Since 1992, numerous Cameroonian students have benefited from Türkiye Scholarships (MFA, 2022). The involvement of the Turkish Maarif Foundation in education, particularly the provision of Turkish language training to the Cameroonian Army, signifies a deeper, long-term cultural and institutional penetration beyond conventional development aid, fostering closer ties and potentially shaping future leadership and bilateral understanding at a strategic level.

TİKA also established a fish farm in Maroua, supporting agriculture and rural development in the Far North Region, Cameroon, comprising three fishponds and providing material support to the local cooperative "SCOOPS Agros Pisciculteurs Du Sahel" (TIKA, 2024c). This project aims to enhance production capacity and contribute to local employment (AfricaNews, 2024). Under social infrastructure and women/youth empowerment, TİKA's efforts extend beyond humanitarian aid to focus on social welfare initiatives. In Dschang, Western region, TİKA constructed a multi-purpose sports field on the campus of the National Youth and Sports Center (CENAJES), commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Türkiye. This "100th Year Türkiye-Cameroon Multi-Purpose Sports Field" supports students' physical education and provides a safe community space (TIKA, 2024). Additionally, TİKA built a "Handicraft and Women's Shelter" in Okola, near Yaoundé, a 200 m^2 facility enabling Cameroonian women to produce and sell goods and serving as a venue for educational seminars and social activities (APO Group, 2023).

While these development projects are valuable for the long-term well-being

of the Cameroonian population, the available information suggests a limited direct response from Türkiye specifically targeting the urgent humanitarian needs of those affected by the Anglophone Crisis in the Northwest and Southwest regions. The snippets do not provide extensive details of Turkish humanitarian aid, such as the provision of emergency food, shelter, or medical assistance, directly aimed at conflict-stricken areas (USCRI, 2025). Nonetheless, these initiatives show Türkiye's commitment to Cameroon's development, which also impacts the conflict-affected regions. Türkiye's has also been involved in providing general food aid to families in need in Cameroon (Mehmet, 2018). Türkiye's humanitarian diplomacy efforts in Cameroon, particularly in relation to the Anglophone Crisis, appear to be primarily focused on broader development assistance rather than direct, targeted interventions addressing the immediate humanitarian needs arising from the conflict in the Northwest and Southwest regions. While Türkiye has a growing profile as a humanitarian actor globally, its direct engagement specifically targeting the Anglophone Crisis has been relatively circumscribed, primarily channeled through multilateral organizations and broader development initiatives rather than large-scale, direct interventions focused solely on the crisis. This limited direct engagement can be attributed to a confluence of factors, including geographical distance, Türkiye's foreign policy priorities in other regions, and the complex political dynamics of the Cameroonian conflict.

Despite the absence of extensive, direct Turkish humanitarian operations specifically labeled for the Anglophone Crisis, Türkiye's broader humanitarian principles and its increasing engagement in Africa with multilateral organizations active in Cameroon might represent an indirect form of humanitarian assistance to the Anglophone regions. Türkiye contributes financially and politically to bodies like the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food Programme (WFP), which are actively involved in providing aid to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees affected by the Anglophone Crisis (UNHCR, 2024; WFP, 2025). Türkiye's support for these organizations indirectly contributes to the humanitarian response on the ground, even if not through explicitly Turkish-led initiatives.

The limited direct Turkish intervention can also be understood within the framework of Türkiye's broader foreign policy priorities. Türkiye has significant humanitarian and development engagements in regions closer to its

geographical sphere of influence, such as the Middle East and the Balkans, as well as a growing focus on the Horn of Africa (Oğuzlu, 2020). The Anglophone Crisis, while a significant humanitarian concern, may not have yet reached the threshold of triggering a large-scale, direct Turkish intervention due to these competing priorities and the logistical challenges associated with operating in Central Africa.

Moreover, the complex political landscape of the Anglophone Crisis, involving secessionist movements and government responses, might present challenges for direct bilateral humanitarian intervention. Navigating the sensitivities of sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs is a crucial consideration for any external actor. Türkiye, like other international partners, likely prioritizes working through established international frameworks to ensure that humanitarian assistance is delivered impartially and effectively, without being perceived as taking sides in the conflict (Weiss, 1999).

Türkiye's primary approach appears to be development-focused, which can contribute to long-term stability and resilience in Cameroon, including potentially in the Anglophone regions once the conflict subsides. Improved infrastructure, better healthcare, and enhanced educational opportunities can address some of the underlying socio-economic grievances that may have contributed to the crisis. However, the immediate humanitarian needs of the displaced population, including access to food, shelter, clean water, and protection from violence, may require more direct and targeted interventions. The effectiveness of Türkiye's current approach in directly addressing the urgent humanitarian consequences of the Anglophone Crisis may therefore be limited.

5. Lessons Learned and Implications for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development

Several key lessons can be drawn from Türkiye's humanitarian diplomacy in the context of Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis for broader post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts.

The diplomatic cooperation between Cameroon and Türkiye, formally established in the 1960s, has yielded "immense ramifications," with the Cameroonian government consistently benefiting from Turkish aid. This collaboration is characterized as a "beneficial cooperation that has come to stay" and a "win-win cooperation" (Amadou, 2024). Turkish initiatives contribute

directly to Cameroon's socio-economic development and welfare, supporting its sustainable development efforts. Specific projects, such as the fish farm, are designed to boost local employment, while the sports field enhances physical education and provides a safe community space (TIKA, 2024). The Maarif schools and scholarships further expand educational opportunities and cultural exchange for Cameroonian citizens.

This comprehensive cooperation extends beyond purely political relations to encompass economic, social, and cultural spheres, thereby deepening the bilateral relationship. TİKA's collaborative approach, involving engagement with international organizations like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World Health Organization (WHO), coupled with a strong emphasis on local participation, amplifies the reach and effectiveness of its efforts, fostering a sense of solidarity between nations while indirectly supporting Cameroon's post-conflict reconstruction.

Furthermore, these initiatives highlight the potential role of non-traditional actors like Türkiye in providing development assistance that can contribute to long-term stability in post-conflict settings. Türkiye's commitment to infrastructure development, capacity building, and educational support can help address some of the underlying socio-economic factors that contribute to instability and conflict. This aligns with the broader understanding that sustainable post-conflict reconstruction requires addressing the root causes of conflict and fostering inclusive development.

Thirdly, the case illustrates the challenges faced by non-traditional actors in navigating complex political landscapes and addressing immediate humanitarian crises. The Anglophone Crisis is deeply rooted in historical and political grievances, making external intervention a sensitive issue. Türkiye, while increasing its engagement in Africa, may be navigating these complexities by focusing on development assistance that is less politically contentious than direct humanitarian aid in a conflict zone.

Finally, Türkiye's growing influence and soft power in Africa present a potential avenue for its increased involvement in conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts (Cevik, 2014; Sofos, 2022). While not explicitly detailed in the context of the Anglophone Crisis in the provided snippets, Türkiye's experience in mediation and its relationships with various African nations could be leveraged to facilitate dialogue and contribute to a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

The lessons learned from Türkiye's experience in Cameroon have several

implications for future humanitarian interventions and post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Africa and beyond. There is a clear need for a multi-faceted approach that combines immediate humanitarian aid to address urgent needs with long-term development initiatives to foster sustainable peace. Non-traditional actors like Türkiye have the potential to play a more significant role in this process, particularly in providing development assistance and potentially contributing to peacebuilding through diplomatic channels. Effective coordination and collaboration among various international actors, including traditional and non-traditional donors, NGOs, and international organizations, are essential to ensure a comprehensive and impactful response to complex crises. Leveraging the diverse strengths and approaches of different actors can lead to more effective and sustainable outcomes in post-conflict reconstruction and development.

Conclusion

This paper has examined Türkiye's humanitarian diplomacy in the context of Cameroon and the Anglophone Crisis, drawing on lessons for post-conflict reconstruction and development. The Anglophone Crisis, with its deep historical roots and devastating humanitarian consequences, requires a concerted international response. Türkiye's foreign aid initiatives in Cameroon, primarily channeled through the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) and complemented by the Turkish Maarif Foundation, exemplify a strategic and evolving "Opening to Africa" policy. This aid is characterized by a distinctive "Turkish-type" development assistance model, emphasizing human-centered, unconditional, and grant-based support, with a focus on tangible, micro-level development projects across crucial sectors such as social infrastructure, education, health, and agriculture.

These initiatives have demonstrably contributed to Cameroon's socio-economic development and welfare, fostering a "beneficial cooperation that has come to stay". The engagement has strengthened bilateral relations across political, economic, social, and cultural domains, thereby enhancing Türkiye's soft power and diplomatic influence in the region. Turkey's foreign aid to Cameroon exemplifies a broader strategic shift in its foreign policy, effectively leveraging development assistance as a key instrument of soft power and economic diplomacy, while simultaneously addressing genuine humanitarian needs and contributing to local development.

TİKA's commitment to long-term partnerships, knowledge-sharing, and people-

centered development suggests a sustained and evolving role in Cameroon's developmental trajectory.

While Türkiye has increased its development assistance to Cameroon through TİKA, its direct humanitarian engagement, specifically targeting the Anglophone Crisis, appears limited based on the available information. However, its humanitarian contributions to Cameroon's development are also useful and significant for Cameroon's post-conflict recovery, especially in the context of the Anglophone Crisis. The study highlights the importance of context-specific interventions that address both immediate humanitarian needs and long-term development challenges.

Non-traditional actors like Türkiye have a significant role to play in contributing to sustainable peace through development, and potentially through leveraging their soft power for conflict resolution. Future efforts should focus on fostering greater coordination among all international actors to ensure a comprehensive and effective response to complex post-conflict scenarios in Africa and beyond.

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