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## Bioethical Discourse of Humanitarian Security

### [Bioetyczny dyskurs bezpieczeństwa humanitarnego]

**Streszczenie:** Autorzy analizują zjawisko bezpieczeństwa człowieka jako stan ochrony ludzkiego życia, kultury, wartości i ideałów, promocji i rozwoju praw i wolności. Bioetyka w badaniach naukowych i praktyce stosuje zasady etyki ogólnej do fenomenu ludzkiego życia, a odpowiedni dyskurs bioetyczny jest podstawową i integralną częścią treści bezpieczeństwa człowieka. Bioetyczny dyskurs bezpieczeństwa człowieka jest reprezentowany w kilku obszarach badawczych: bezpieczeństwo zdrowia fizycznego i psychicznego; bezpieczeństwo możliwości swobodnej samoidentyfikacji jednostek, grup społecznych i państw; bezpieczeństwo obywateli i państw w zakresie możliwości rozwoju i możliwości wyboru przyszłości. Raport identyfikuje również istotne zagrożenia dla bezpieczeństwa ludzi: trudną sytuację demograficzną, procesy migracyjne oraz brak bezpiecznego obrazu przyszłości. Ważnym aspektem obecnego dyskursu naukowego na temat bezpieczeństwa ludzi jest przesunięcie punktu ciężkości w jego kształtowaniu z państwa na człowieka. Jeśli wcześniej w aparacie kategoryjnym opisującym bezpieczeństwo człowieka dominowały terminy i pojęcia polityczne, prawne, społeczno-ekonomiczne, opisujące międzynarodowe stosunki bezpieczeństwa i zagrożenia na poziomie państwa, to współczesne badania koncentrują się na dominacji dyskursu bioetycznego związanego z bezpieczeństwem osobistym jednostki, które jest dominujące w stosunku do bezpieczeństwa państwa.

**Summary:** The article analyses the phenomenon of human security as a state of protection of human life, culture, values and ideals, promotion and development of rights and freedoms. Bioethics in scientific research and practice applies the principles of general ethics to the phenomenon of human life, and the relevant bioethical

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discourse is a basic and integral part of the content of human security. The bioethical discourse of human security is represented in several research areas: security of physical and mental health; security of the possibility of free self-identification of individuals, social groups and states; security of citizens and countries in terms of development opportunities and, in general, the ability to choose the future. The report also identifies significant threats to human security: the difficult demographic situation; migration processes; and the lack of a secure picture of the future. An important aspect of the current scientific discourse on human security is the shift in the focus of its formation from state-centred to human-centred. Actors and threats are being redefined. If earlier the categorical apparatus describing human security was dominated by political, legal, socio-economic terms and concepts that described international security relations and threats at the state level, then modern research focuses on the dominance of bioethical discourse related to the personal security of the individual, which is dominant in relation to the security of the state.

**Słowa kluczowe:** bezpieczeństwo humanitarne, bioetyka, dyskurs, życie ludzkie, zagrożenia dla bezpieczeństwa humanitarnego, bezpieczeństwo osobiste.

**Keywords:** humanitarian security, bioethics, discourse, human life, threats to humanitarian security, personal security.

## Introduction

Humanitarian security is a state of protection of an individual, family and their ethnic group; their goals, ideals, values and traditions, their way of life and culture; sustainable, necessary and sufficient encouragement of the development of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons, regardless of their race, gender, language or religion. A large part of humanitarian security is occupied by human life itself as a way of existence of a person in the manifestations of their physical, spiritual and mental states. Based on the fact that bioethics in research and practice applies the principles of general ethics to the phenomenon of human life, the relevant bioethical discourse is a basic and integral part of the content of humanitarian security. Security of life, independent development of a person, formation of a safe natural and social environment are not only practical steps of protection of human biological existence, but also the fundamental foundations of the ethics of life, which is represented by bioethical discourse in scientific research.

The concept of humanitarian security has a special meaning within the framework of the concepts of the third millennium's „new wars” – those being wars of ideas, clashes of civilisations, focusing primarily on destroying the mental and cultural identity of people and social groups.

The phenomenon of humanitarian security is closely related to bioethics, an interdisciplinary field that studies moral and ethical issues raised by

the latest advances in modern science and social practice. It is a set of ethical norms and principles related to the care of human life and health. In broad terms, bioethics are applied ethics, the subject of which is the problems of human survival and preservation of life (Horban O., Martych R., 2020, p. 101–115).

The bioethical discourse of humanitarian security is represented in several research areas:

- Safety of physical and mental health of a person. In this area, bioethical discourse is represented directly by bioethical considerations of the value of life as a unique natural phenomenon (Horban O., Martych R., 2022, p. 87–96). Such a discourse of humanitarian security focuses on understanding the steps to preserve life and health, and create comfortable conditions for an individual's existence.

- Security of the possibility of free self-identification of individuals, social groups and countries. The bioethical discourse in this area is represented by the modern ethical paradigm of respect for and value of the independent choice of both biological and social self-identification of a person (Horban O., Martych R., 2022, p. 61–70). This discourse of humanitarian security forms not only new moral norms, but also affects the relevant social, legal, and religious norms by which modern society functions.

- The security of citizens and countries in terms of development opportunities and, in general, the ability to choose the future. The bioethical discourse of this approach represents ideas related to the co-evolutionary development of biological and social systems, in which there is a synergy of public interest at the level of civil society and the state to preserve human life and health (Horban O., 2019, p. 64–74). The main aspects of the humanitarian security discourse in this area partially coincide with the concept of sustainable development, which is being introduced by the UN, as well as the concept of human development.

It should also be noted that there are significant threats to humanitarian security. The main ones traditionally include:

- Difficult demographic situation. A number of countries and regions of the world are suffering from overpopulation. On the other hand, there are large regions and unions of countries (such as the European Union) where the birth rate is declining and this is already being discussed as a humanitarian threat.

- Migration processes. Uncontrolled flows of refugees and migrants pose a significant threat to humanitarian security. Most programmes aimed at integrating migrants into local cultures have proven to be ineffective. The European policy of multiculturalism is currently being heavily criticised by politicians and statesmen, as well as by ordinary citizens.

– Secure picture of the future. The Russian-Ukrainian war and the Arab-Israeli conflict do not allow us to form a single, coherent picture of a secure future in the world. These local and regional conflicts have a dangerous potential to spread to the nearest neighbouring countries and even go global. That is why a secure picture of the future can only be created by overcoming such military threats and ending the armed confrontation.

– The uniqueness of the phenomenon of life is based on the living processes of transmission and development of cultural heritage, which, under normal conditions, are transmitted through social communication to posterity as experienced and understood values, worldview, and ideas. Today, we are seeing that the traditional communication mechanisms and tools for transmitting culture are not able to appeal to those who are supposed to become their successors. Technologies impose their own rules for the parameters of communication processes on culture. The dynamics of current social, economic, and globalisation processes make us look for new ways to effectively transmit culture to our descendants.

## **Presentation of the Main Research**

There is no unambiguous and generally accepted definition of humanitarian security. The term „humanitarian security” is most commonly used in the literature on international relations and development issues, where it is referred to by various terms: a new theory or concept, a starting point for analysis, a worldview, a political agenda or as a policy framework (Kaldor M., Mary M., Selchow S., 2007, p. 273–288). Although the issue of humanitarian security remains open, there is a consensus among its proponents that there should be a shift in focus from a state-centred approach to a people-centred security. Borders should give way to a concern for the security of people living within those borders (Humanitarian Security, 2005, p. 5–9).

The simplest definition of security is „the absence of insecurity and threats”. To be safe means to be free from basic fears (physical, sexual or psychological violence, persecution or death) and to have basic needs met (paid work, food and health). Therefore, humanitarian security is about the ability to identify threats, avoid them whenever possible, and mitigate their effects when they occur (CHS, 2003). It also means practical assistance to victims to overcome the effects of widespread insecurity resulting from armed conflict, human rights violations and mass migration.

This expanded use of the word „security” encompasses two key ideas of bioethics: on the one hand, the idea that the concept of „security” should

go beyond mere physical security in the traditional sense and acquire an ethical and existential meaning. On the other hand, it is the idea that, as a result of the formation of the bioethical imperative, a person should be guaranteed a livelihood through „social protection” against sudden social cataclysms.

The 1994 Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was an important milestone in the development of the humanitarian security concept. In this document, humanitarian security is defined as a way to combine the concepts of „freedom from fear” and „freedom from want”, which were traditionally considered by security theorists independently of each other. Thus, the second section of the document, entitled „New Aspects of Humanitarian Security”, states that „the struggle for peace must be fought on two fronts. The first is the physical security front, where winning means getting rid of fear. The second is the economic and social front, where winning means getting rid of need. Only victory on both fronts can guarantee the world a lasting peace” (PNUD, 1994, p. 24).

The report also defines humanitarian security, including security from chronic threats such as hunger, disease, repression and sudden stress. In addition, it discusses seven functional areas of security, each of which has its own unique significance.

1. Economic security. It dictates the need to ensure a decent standard of living for every person, as well as their protection from such structural problems as unemployment, including partial unemployment (especially among young people), poverty and prolonged economic crises.

2. Food security. The report states that the problem is not the lack of food, but its improper distribution.

3. Sanitary and hygienic security. The reality is a physical threat to human life and health from the negative impact of the environment. For example, the report notes the existence of large geographical areas in the world where there is a lack of drinking water. The problem of industrialised regions is the growth of cancer and cardiovascular diseases. It is postulated that poor people, especially children, are most susceptible to health threats.

4. Environmental safety. It means ensuring a favourable environment for human habitation and protection from degradation of local and global ecosystems. This includes soil and air pollution, deforestation, natural disasters, etc.

5. Personal security. This type of security is aimed at ensuring that people are protected from physical violence, whether it comes from their own state, other states or other groups of people. Particularly vulnerable categories of the population in the area of personal security are women and

children who are subjected to abuse, as well as citizens prone to auto-aggression.

6. Public security. It emphasises the important role of the family, charitable organisations, ethnic and racial groups in ensuring security. A new perspective on this problem is that „big families”, which until recently were thought to support their members, may actually be harmful to them. This social institution is also being deformed by the processes of globalisation.

7. Political security. It concerns the protection of fundamental human rights as a citizen of the state and the elimination of barriers to their implementation (political repression by the state, the use of systematic torture as coercion, abductions and disappearances, etc.) (PNUD, 1994).

The publication of the UNDP report in 1994 began the stage of forming an innovative discourse on the possibilities of implementing the concept of humanitarian security set out in it. The bioethical discourse was formed as a critical one in relation to the Report and developed in two directions. The first direction is related to the formation of humanitarian security in the narrow sense. This manifestation of the bioethical discourse was reflected in the decisions of the UN Ottawa Conference in 1997 (Ottawa, Canada). The Conference proclaimed the need to formulate „narrow areas” of humanitarian security that would ensure the protection of human life and health in relation to specific types of hazards and disasters. That is why the Ottawa Conference under the auspices of the United Nations was called the Convention Signing Conference and Mine Action Forum. It resulted in the signing of a treaty on anti-personnel landmines, which is considered an important first step in the implementation of the humanitarian security agenda. Since then, Canada and a number of leading countries (e.g. Norway) have focused their attention on humanitarian security in the sense of „freedom from fear” and policies for the protection of civilians in armed conflicts, prevention of such conflicts, participation in peacekeeping operations, etc. (Dedring J., 2008). Based on the established approach to humanitarian security in a narrow sense, further development of bioethical discourse was manifested through the ideas of partnerships for the protection of civilians in armed conflict, landmine treaties, the activities of the International Criminal Court, countering the possible proliferation of small arms, drug trafficking, and organised crime. A certain achievement of this direction of shaping the humanitarian security discourse was the Partnership for Action, which is based on the text of the Lysoen Declaration adopted in 1998, which aims, inter alia, to promote humanitarian security and human rights, strengthen international humanitarian law, prevent conflicts, and develop democratic governance.

Another direction in the formation of the bioethical discourse of humanitarian security is manifested in the broad approach to the interpretation of the 1994 UNDP Report, including the provisions contained in the expression „freedom from want”. The broad interpretation of humanitarian security includes it within the framework of intensified efforts to eliminate such threats to human life and dignity as poverty, environmental degradation, drugs, infectious diseases, AIDS, forced migration, etc. In 1999, as part of this approach, a fund was established in Japan under the auspices of the United Nations. Two years later, the UN Commission on Humanitarian Security was established on its basis. The Commission was a practical consequence of the idea put forward at the Millennium Summit in 2000 by the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan (Ogata S., 2004). The goals of the Commission are to clarify the concept of humanitarian security, taking into account different discursive approaches, and to develop a concrete programme of action. Along with the main goal, the Commission puts forward the main task of implementing the humanistic doctrine: to protect the personal manifestation of human life in such a way as to strengthen human freedoms and promote opportunities for personal fulfilment (Alkire S., 2003).

A broad approach to the interpretation of the humanitarian security discourse is already being implemented in a number of international programmes. For example, in 2004, the Human Security Doctrine for Europe was developed, a normative document that reflects the principles of this approach. Also in 2015, the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 programme was launched and adopted by more than 170 countries. Among the goals of the Programme, which countries are striving to achieve, there are bioethical guidelines of the principle of humanity as a leading idea for countries to implement in their domestic policies, which will greatly contribute to the success of human security.

Both approaches to humanitarian security are primarily focused on human protection, but their semantic fields are different. A comparison of the two approaches to humanitarian security shows that their similarities in many respects outweigh their differences. Both approaches are based on methods that do not involve coercion, and the proposed ways of implementing a large-scale humanitarian project are „security sector reform, sustainable economic development, preventive diplomacy, post-conflict state-building and mediation, and negotiations with violating states” (Liotta P.H., 2006, p. 37–55). The ultimate goal of both approaches is to cope with threats to human security. It stands as a comprehensive concept that combines the development and approval of certain global ethical principles regarding the preservation of human life and health with the

adaptation of relevant policies to local conditions and circumstances. In this regard, it is extremely important to formulate a unified definition of humanitarian security based on the conceptual and categorical apparatus formed by bioethical discourse.

In addition to the above two approaches to the definition of humanitarian security developed within the UN framework, there is another view on this issue put forward by the Copenhagen School of Security Studies, which represents the post-positivist trend. According to their research, the key category of security is existence (McSweeney B., 1996). One of the important theoretical innovations of the Copenhagen school is the theory of securitization.

Post-positivists also rightly point out that the problems of citizen security have not been solved in developed countries. The liberation of the individual from the numerous restrictions associated with the institution of the state has led to a paradoxical state of affairs for liberal consciousness: fairly prosperous citizens feel threatened by a whole range of threats.

The meaning of the theory of securitization is that it is scientists and politicians who form an „epistemic community” who, by identifying and discussing a particular problem, forming a relevant scientific discourse, bring it to the international level, as a result of which the problem acquires the status of „existential” and becomes part of humanitarian security. For example, S. Zizek cites terrorism, neo-fascism and irrational violent behaviour of young people in the suburbs (based on the actions of people from Africa in France) as examples of existential threats (Zizek S., 1997). In this case, the defining element of security is discourse. If the expert community states that the process of reducing the level of humanitarian danger is reversed, the process of desecuritisation takes place, which removes the status of „existential” from the threat.

Unlike the two previously discussed approaches to the security problem, this approach has not yet been implemented in practice. In terms of content, the idea of securitisation is closer to a broad approach to humanitarian security, as it emphasises the lack of security for citizens, even in developed countries, which seem to have to address the physical security of their citizens first. This approach of including humanitarian security issues in the list of existential ones is of some interest, but has no normative status. So far, this approach exists only in theory, but it reflects the need for global human protection. It is promising in terms of further development of the conceptual and categorical apparatus of humanitarian security based on bioethical discourse.

Steps to transform the concept of humanitarian security into a doctrine that is applied in practice have been ongoing since its inception in 1994.



During this time, a large part of the international community has gradually recognised the value of humanitarian security, and bioethical discourse as its component is increasingly penetrating state-level documents. However, no agreement has yet been reached on the necessary elements of the doctrine at the international level.

Within the UN, the concept of human security has also undergone some changes. Since 1994, a number of amendments have been made to the Concept and an independent body has been formed to develop the basic principles of human security. This body was the Commission on Human Security, which in its final report „Human Security Now” defined human security as follows: „[...] to protect the vital foundations of all human beings in ways that promote freedom and fulfilment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms – freedoms that are an integral part of life. It is the protection of people from the most important (serious) and pervasive (widespread) threats and conditions. It means using processes that build on people’s strengths and aspirations. It is the creation of political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems, the combination of which allows people to form the basic blocks for survival, livelihood and dignity” (CHS, 2003).

According to contemporary scholars, humanitarian security should have appropriate systems of provision at the level of the individual, community, humanity and their various interrelationships. In particular, Claudia F. Fuentes and Hans Gunther Brauch have systematised the study of human security and identified four generalised components

- a) the absence of physical threats, i.e. the possibility of death or injury (landmines, street violence, repression, etc.);
- b) absence of socio-economic threats (poverty, unemployment, social stratification, etc.);
- c) absence of natural disasters, prevention of natural phenomena from turning into social catastrophes;
- d) the existence of fair laws in the state, their strict observance and peaceful settlement of disputes (Brauch, 2009). This view is reflected in the concept of HUGE (human, gender and ecological security) proposed by these scholars.

An important aspect of the modern scientific discourse on human security is the shift in the emphasis of its formation from state-centred to human-centred. Actors and threats are being redefined. If earlier the categorical apparatus describing humanitarian security was dominated by political, legal, socio-economic terms and concepts that described international security relations and threats at the state level, then modern research focuses on the dominance of bioethical discourse related to the

personal security of the individual, which is dominant in relation to the security of the state.

The shift in the emphasis of the human security discourse can be conditionally represented in the form of a table proposed by the authors of the Centre d'études et de recherches internationales (Humanitarian Security, 2005).

According to the concept proposed by Claudia F. Fuentes and Hans Gunther Brauch, humanitarian security encompasses four key components: physical security, socio-economic security, protection against natural disasters, and a fair legal environment. This concept is reflected in the HUGE (human, gender, and ecological security) model. In the context of the war in Ukraine, as highlighted in the work by Terepyschchy and Kostenko (2022), challenges related to ensuring humanitarian security have become particularly significant. The authors describe how educational and cybersecurity initiatives aim to mitigate risks for vulnerable populations, ensuring the safety of the educational process even under extraordinary conditions.

Oleksiienko and Terepyschchy (2024) examine academic precarity in Ukraine through the lens of humanitarian security, particularly emphasizing the difficulties faced by scholars in conditions of conflict and instability. They highlight the importance of individual security and its connection to the broader scientific infrastructure. This perspective aligns with the contemporary paradigm of humanitarian security, where the focus shifts towards protecting individuals rather than just the state.

Comparing the traditional security approach, which prioritizes state structures and their ability to maintain stability, with the new, human-centered approach, helps to understand the modern transformations in the field of humanitarian security. The authors of the studies emphasize the importance of protecting rights, ensuring access to education, and integrating new technologies to reduce the vulnerability of specific groups in crisis conditions.

This shift in paradigm reflects a broader view of humanitarian security in the postmodern world, where the security of the individual serves as a fundamental prerequisite for overall stability.

	State-centered Security (political and legal discourse)	Human-centered Security (bioethical discourse)
Security Referent (object)	The state is the primary provider of security: if the state is secure, then those who live within it are secure.	Individuals are co-equal with the state. State security is the means, not the end
Security Value	Sovereignty, power, territorial integrity, national independence	Personal safety, well-being and individual freedom. 1) Physical safety and provision for basic needs 2) Personal freedom (liberty of association) 3) Human rights; economic and social rights
Security Threats	Direct organized violence from other states, violence and coercion by other states	Direct and indirect violence, from identifiable sources (such as states or non-state actors) or from structural sources (relations of power ranging from family to the global economy) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct violence: death, drugs, dehumanization, discrimination, international disputes, WMD</li> <li>• Indirect violence: deprivation, disease, natural disasters, underdevelopment, population displacement, environmental degradation, poverty, inequality</li> </ul>
By what means	Retaliatory force or threat of its use, balance of power, military means, strengthening of economic might, little attention paid to respect for law or institutions.	Promoting human development: basic needs plus equality, sustainability, and greater democratization and participation at all levels. Promoting political development: global norms and institutions plus collective use of force as well as sanctions if and when necessary, cooperation between states, reliance on international institutions, networks and coalitions, and international organizations.

## Conclusions

Modern approaches to the analysis of humanitarian security form its conceptual and categorical apparatus on the basis of bioethical discourse. From this point of view, human security is seen as the complete protection of a person from physical and psychological threats, the existence of conditions for his or her happy life and self-realisation. This definition is based on a broad approach to understanding human security, which is comprehensive and requires a complete solution to security problems in all

spheres of human life. Therefore, humanitarian security should be viewed, firstly, as the highest idea that humanity should strive for, so that at least future generations can benefit from it, and secondly, as a general concept for all types of security. At the centre of this multi-component concept should be a person.

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