

Humanitarian corridors

March 9, 2022

In news– Amidst Russia-Ukraine war many countries urged both countries to establish safe Humanitarian corridors to allow civilians to leave.

What are Human Corridors?

- **Humanitarian corridors are demilitarized zones, in a specific area and for a specific time** and both sides of an armed conflict agree to them.
- Via these corridors, either food and medical aid can be brought to areas of conflict, or civilians can be evacuated.
- They are necessary when cities are under siege and the population is cut off from basic food supplies, electricity and water.
- **The term was first evoked during the Bosnian War in the 1990s, when the U.N. set up “safe areas” for civilians.**
- **In most cases, humanitarian corridors are negotiated by the United Nations** but sometimes they’re also set up by local groups.
- Since all sides need to agree to set up the corridors, **there is a risk of military or political abuse.** For example, the corridors **can be used to smuggle weapons and fuel into besieged cities.**
- On the other hand, they **can also be used by UN observers, NGOs and journalists to gain access** to contested areas where war crimes are being committed.
- **Access to humanitarian corridors is determined by the parties to the conflict.**
- They also determine the length of time, the area and which means of transport– trucks, buses or planes are allowed to use the corridor.
- **In rare cases, humanitarian corridors are only organized**

by one of the parties to the conflict (this happened with the American airlift after the Berlin blockade by the Soviet Union in 1948-1949).

- Humanitarian corridors have been put in place since the mid-20th century. For example, during the **Kindertransport from 1938 to 1939**, Jewish children were evacuated from areas under Nazi control to the United Kingdom.
- They were also **created during the 1992-1995 siege of Sarajevo, Bosnia and the 2018 evacuation of Ghouta, Syria.**