



Overview

JICA Ogata Research Institute Report
Human Security Today

No.2 September 2024

**Human Security, Politics and Society
under Compounded Crises**

Appendix

What is Human Security?

- Values, Strategies, and Principles
- Evolution of the Human Security Idea in the United Nations
- Concepts Related to Human Security
- Japan and Human Security

About the Second Issue of *Human Security Today*

The JICA Ogata Research Institute regularly publishes its flagship report series, *Human Security Today*. This report series aims to explore the relevance of human security in today's changing world.

- ▶ The first issue, titled "Revisiting Human Security," was published in 2022.
- ▶ The second issue was published in Japanese in March 2024, followed by an English version in September 2024. Its theme is "Human Security, Politics and Society under Compounded Crises," reflecting the growing uncertainty we face. In this issue, problems caused by complex and cascading threats, such as **inflation and debt, nutritional challenges, natural disasters in conflict situations, and global governance issues**, are discussed from diverse expert perspectives.
- ▶ To address compounded crises, multiple security providers need to transform and collaborate in flexible ways while maintaining their autonomy in taking action.
- ▶ The theory and practice of human security nurture solidarity, promote co-creation and contribute to securing people's lives, livelihoods, and dignity. The significance of human security continues to grow in our era of compounded crises.



Core Message

Human Security in the Age of Uncertainty

How should we secure people's lives, livelihoods, and dignity in the face of multiple, entangled threats?

From the inception of the concept of human security to the present day, the nature of the threats facing people around the world has changed dramatically. Threats such as climate change, armed conflicts, pandemics, natural disasters, and economic crises are intertwined in complex ways, resulting in ever more serious and pervasive crises. Even problems that occur on the other side of the globe now have a significant impact on the lives of each and every one of us.

The human security perspective can effectively help societies to understand and respond to these global problems. This report seeks to answer how the concept of human security can be utilized in our precarious times, intending to identify best practices for implementing human security.

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Mely Caballero-Anthony, President's Chair in International Relations and Security Studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University

Akihiko Tanaka, President, Japan International Cooperation Agency

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Kota Sugitani, Part-time Research Assistant, JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development

Kaito Takeuchi, Research Fellow, JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development

Ako Muto, Specially Appointed Research Fellow, JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development

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Yoichi Mine, Executive Director, JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development

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Politics and Governance – Makiko Arai, Research Fellow

Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction – Fumiaki Ishizuka, Senior Research Fellow

Human Development – Akiko Ida, Research Fellow; Naoko Hikami, Research Officer

Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Support – Tsunetaka Tsuchiya, Research Officer

Global Environment – Ichiro Sato, Executive Senior Research Fellow; Fumiko Noguchi, Research Fellow; Kei Endo, Research Fellow

Development Cooperation Strategies – Hitoshi Fujiie, Executive Senior Research Fellow

Titles and affiliations are as of March 2024, when the Japanese version was published.

Q1

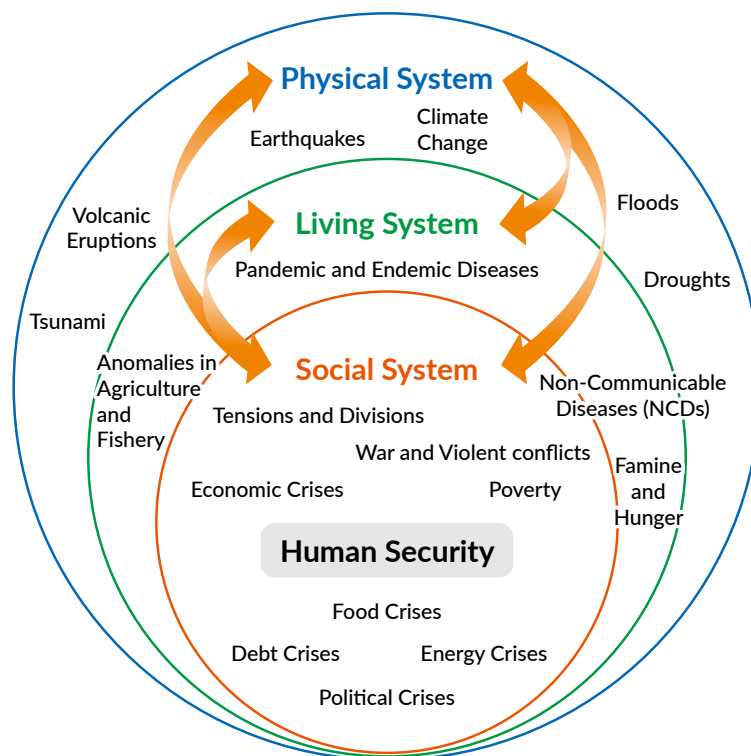
Security from What?

Compounded Crises

- ▶ **Risks are intertwined.** Human activities are bringing about increasingly rapid and irreversible changes in our natural and social environments, causing the threats surrounding human beings to become more serious, pervasive, and complex. As socioeconomic globalization proceeds, the world is becoming more connected at every level, and events occurring on the other side of the globe are having profound impacts on our lives.
- ▶ In “Toward a Theory of Human Security” (*JICA-RI Working Paper No. 91, 2015*) cited by several articles in this report, Akihiko Tanaka, President of JICA, discusses the multifaceted and complex nature of threats surrounding us. According to Tanaka, the sources of these threats are attributable to three systems: **the physical system** that causes natural disasters like earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, and droughts; **the living system** that leads to the outbreak of infectious diseases and disruptions to primary industries; and **the social system**

that induces violent conflicts and economic and social crises. **Threats to human beings arising from these three systems interact.** For instance, economic activities in the social system give rise to large-scale malfunctions in the physical system, such as climate change. A pandemic such as COVID-19 originates in the living system but causes severe damage to the social system in the form of unemployment and recession. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 not only posed a military threat to the world but also threatened energy security and food security, both of which are interconnected with the physical and living systems.

- ▶ Research on compounded crises requires **collaboration across all academic disciplines, including physics, chemistry, engineering, biology, medicine, and agriculture, as well as the social sciences and humanities.** Similar efforts are necessary for international cooperation agencies such as JICA, which engages in operations across multiple fields. **Human security could become a powerful tool for co-creating knowledge and value that transcend sectionalism in the research and practice of development cooperation.**



This figure illustrates the complex, relational, and nested nature of the crises from the perspectives of the physical system, the living system, and the social system.

Q2

Security of What?

Individual Persons Matter

- ▶ Since World War II, **people have enjoyed the fruits of human development worldwide**, even though the pace of progress has been uneven. However, it remains unclear whether the fundamental rights we have gained—the right to choose our own lives—will still be secure tomorrow. Despite the relative security we enjoy today, **a strong sense of uncertainty about the future persists**.
- ▶ National security is an agenda that seeks to protect the integrity and sovereignty of the nation from threats posed by the actions of external states or groups. By contrast, **human security attempts to safeguard each individual person's freedom from diverse threats extending beyond physical and military aggression**.
- ▶ **Human beings are vulnerable to multiple risks**. If we ask “what security” human security protects, the answer should be that **it protects the security of each and every human being** rather than institutions or territories.
- ▶ It must be emphasized that focusing on human beings as the referent object of security **does not justify the human domination over nature**. As human activities intensify, the relationships between humans and nature have fundamentally changed, so that the very survival of humanity is being threatened.

Q3

Who Provides Security?

Rethinking the Role of Government

- ▶ The multiplicity of threats requires the combined efforts of multiple actors. **In addition to national governments, it is essential that the private sector, local governments, civil society, universities, and research institutions cooperate in bilateral and multilateral settings**.
- ▶ At the same time, we should remember that the state plays a crucial role in realizing human security. **A democratic state trusted by its citizens and neighboring countries is truly a strong state and expected to contribute to human security effectively**.

Q4

Who Provides Security and How?

The Perspective of the Ogata-Sen Commission and Beyond

- ▶ While it is essential for governments to protect people, we should reaffirm that the state is not the sole guarantor of security for its people. In the discussion at the Commission on Human Security (Ogata-Sen Commission), **Sadako Ogata highlighted the urgent need for the protection of people's lives from the perspective of humanitarian assistance**, whereas **Amartya Sen emphasized the importance of securing people's livelihoods and empowering individuals and communities from a development perspective**. In the context of compounded crises, **we should capitalize on the Commission's approach, which combines political and economic insights**.

Frontiers of Human Security Thinking

Co-Creation and Solidarity

- ▶ The human security approach can be applied to the measurement of human security/insecurity. A policy tool to realize human security can be developed by quantitatively analyzing **people's subjective perceptions and objective factors** that influence them.
- ▶ Co-creation and solidarity are essential when practicing human security. In Japanese, people say we should transcend “*tatewari*” (vertical divisions of administration) or escape from “octopus pots” (turfs of academic disciplines), similar to how we refer to parochial “silos” in English. To address compounded crises, **we must leverage specialized expertise in research and practice, go beyond narrow job roles, and participate in a space of trustful co-creation**.

Introduction of Articles

Part 1

Human Security, Politics and Society under Compounded Crises

Developing Countries after the COVID-19 Shock

Inflation, Debt Crisis, and Future Outlook

- ▶ To firmly embed the human security concept in policymaking, downside risks to the economy must be considered alongside socio-political risks. The compounded crises that the world faces are characterized by chain reactions and the mutual intensification of risks, uncertainty about the future, and complex policy dilemmas. Developing countries, particularly low-income countries have been struggling with inflation driven by soaring food and energy prices. Moreover, debt repayments by financially vulnerable countries have become increasingly difficult in recent years, partly due to the changes in the composition of lenders.
- ▶ Developing countries are urged to pursue growth opportunities through quality investment while maintaining sound economic management and improving their capacity to manage debt risks. The international community should also make a concerted effort to develop a framework for addressing global economic shocks.

Responding to Increasingly Complex Nutrition Issues by Implementing Multi-Sector/ Multi-Stakeholder Approaches

- ▶ The nutritional status of populations is changing in complex ways, influenced not only by compounded crises such as climate change, emerging infectious diseases, and conflicts but also by changes in population structure and disease patterns. There are concerns that people's nutritional status may worsen in the future due to climate change and precarious food production. The shift in nutritional status from undernutrition to overnutrition, known as the "nutrition transformation," is accelerating in various regions, including developing countries.
- ▶ A human security perspective is vital for nutrition cooperation. Alongside empowerment, developing healthy food environments from a protection perspective is essential for promoting behavior change among individuals and populations. It is necessary to examine and experiment with multi-sector and multi-stakeholder practices to address the complexity, locality, and diversity of the issue.

Natural Disasters in Conflict Situations

Compounded Crises in Syria and Their Implications for Human Security

- ▶ A large-scale natural disaster can occur suddenly amid an armed conflict. This article examines the 2023 Türkiye-Syria Earthquake during the Syrian civil war as a case study of a compound crisis.
- ▶ Two practical strategies that promote human security are protection and empowerment. In emergencies, protecting lives, livelihoods, and dignity must be prioritized. In the aftermath of large-scale natural disasters, the international community cooperates in reconstruction efforts. In conflict situations, however, how reconstruction unfolds depends on the relationship between the parties to the conflict and the international relations of the countries concerned. Three factors will promote human security under such circumstances: the empowerment of the Syrian people, the partial easing of Western sanctions, and a rapprochement between the Syrian government and the member states of the Arab League.

Human Security in the Post-Post-Cold War Era

- ▶ The post-Cold War era saw the emergence of the concept of human security, which prioritizes the security of every human being. However, the recent escalation of great power confrontations has led to the revival of the traditional view of security centered on state-based military power. Although national security and human security are considered complementary, national security does not necessarily guarantee human security, and there is a risk that human security could be sacrificed in the name of national security.
- ▶ To realize human security, it is essential to restore the state's function of providing public goods that have been radically curtailed in the process of economic globalization and to reactivate dynamic "politics" as a means of consensus-building. By restoring people's dignity, overcoming divisions, and recovering social cohesion, both human security and national security can be achieved.

Part 2 Topics on Human Security

Revisiting Human Security from the Human-Centered Perspective

Results of a Perception Survey in Five African Countries

- ▶ Although human security has provided a common basis for actors in the diplomatic, military, development, and humanitarian fields to work together, the concept has been criticized as inadequate for analytical purposes. By examining individuals' sense of insecurity regarding the future, the author revisits the usefulness of the concept.
- ▶ This article analyzes human security scores derived from perception surveys conducted across five African countries. The results show that human security adds value in understanding the positions of vulnerable social groups and their specific concerns, visualizing core values such as human dignity, and examining subjective perceptions of future risks. It also demonstrates that human security can be applied in policymaking by incorporating the risk assessment framework.

Human Security and Gender

Insights from the Conflict and Gender-Based Violence Research Project by JICA Ogata Research Institute

- ▶ Gender scholars have raised various questions about how the term "human" should be conceptualized in the human security discourse. This article explores the question of what insights can be drawn from a human security perspective when discussing gender-based violence (GBV) as a crucial gendered issue. It first presents the critiques of human security raised by gender scholars and then it discusses the commonalities and differences between gender and human security.
- ▶ The JICA Ogata Research Institute has conducted research projects on GBV in refugee communities. The latter part of the article looks at the policy frameworks of human security in terms of people-centeredness, the nexus between individuals and communities, and dignity and then considers the implications of these perspectives for GBV.

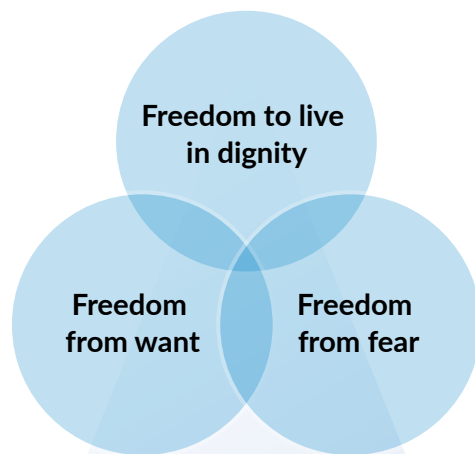
Appendix What is Human Security?

Values, Strategies, and Principles in the Common International Understanding

Definition Human security comprises both theory and practice, seeking to create a society where all individuals enjoy the right to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair, by addressing the complex crises we face.

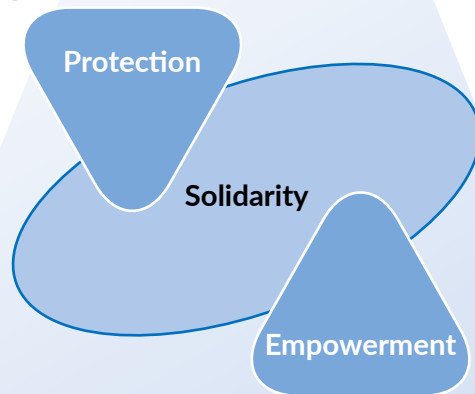
Values

that underlie
human security



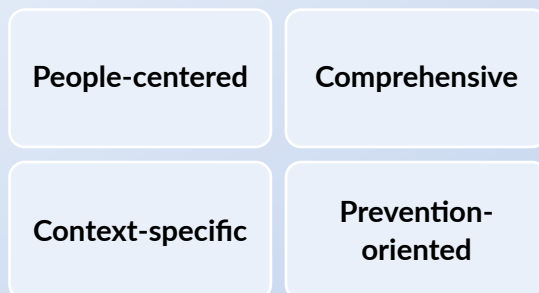
Strategies

that are combined
to realize human
security



Principles

that are
emphasized in
human security
practices



- ▶ Human security aims to realize a society in which people live free from fear, want and indignity.
- ▶ Human security addresses threats that jeopardize human life, livelihood, and dignity and acts to protect people.
- ▶ The crises people face in the world today are not only concurrent but also have cascading effects, causing compounded crises that severely affect people's lives.
- ▶ **Top-down Protection:** Ensuring that actors such as governments, international organizations, and civil society protect people from critical and pervasive threats that individuals alone cannot cope with.
- ▶ **Bottom-up Empowerment:** Releasing people's potential to choose their future and strengthen their capacity to address threats collectively and voluntarily.
- ▶ **Solidarity:** Promoting horizontal cooperation among diverse actors to overcome current and future challenges, recognizing the interdependence of societies, generations and between people and the planet.
- ▶ Taking initiatives to promote human security based on the principles of protection, empowerment and solidarity will enhance people's resilience.
- ▶ **People-centered:** Focusing on the perspectives of people in vulnerable situations.
- ▶ **Comprehensive:** Analyzing the interrelations between various issues and encouraging all actors to take coordinated actions.
- ▶ **Context-specific:** Respecting unique contexts and culture of each location and acting accordingly.
- ▶ **Prevention-oriented:** Identifying future downside risks that may intensify human insecurities.

References:

This figure is based on the Report of the UN Secretary-General on Human Security in 2024 (A/78/665) and the "Human Security Handbook," published by the UN Trust Fund for Human Security in 2016.

Evolution of the Human Security Idea in the United Nations

1994

[Link](#)

[Human Development Report 1994](#)

The concept of human security was systematically discussed for the first time. The report presents a perspective of securing people's safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease, and repression, as well as protecting them from sudden and hurtful disruptions in their daily lives. It also enumerates seven elements of human security.

1999

[Link](#)

[Establishment of the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security \(UNTFHS\)](#)

2003

[Link](#)

[Final Report of the Commission on Human Security: *Human Security Now* \(Ogata-Sen Report\)](#)

The final report of the Commission on Human Security, established in the UN in 2001, draws attention to downside risks and calls for greater freedom from fear and want and freedom to live in dignity.

2005

[Link](#)

[World Summit Outcome: Resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly \(A/RES/60/1\)](#)

Paragraph 143 refers to human security and states that the concept of human security will be further discussed in the UN General Assembly.

2010

[Link](#)

[Human Security: Report of the Secretary-General \(A/64/701\)](#)

The Secretary-General's report characterizes human security as a practical concept and presents four principles: 1) people-centered, 2) comprehensive, 3) context-specific, and 4) prevention-oriented.

2012

[Link](#)

[Resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on Human Security \(A/RES/66/290\)](#)

International agreement has been reached on a common understanding of human security: "...an approach to assist

Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood, and dignity of their people." It is clearly stated that human security is "distinct from the responsibility to protect and its implementation," as this approach respects national ownership and avoids using force and coercive measures.

2013

[Link](#)

[Report of the Secretary-General \(A/68/685\): Follow-up to General Assembly resolution on Human Security \(A/RES/66/290\)](#)

The secretary-general accentuates the importance of implementing human security at the regional, national, and subnational levels. Human security could be an overarching framework for the post-2015 global agenda.

2015

[Link](#)

[The Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#)

The "people-centered," "comprehensive," "context-specific," and "prevention-oriented" principles of human security are embedded in the slogan, "Leave No One Behind."

2022

[Link](#)

[Special Report on Human Security – New Threats to Human Security in the Anthropocene: Demanding Greater Solidarity](#)

The report advances the concept of "solidarity" in addition to protection and empowerment as strategies for human security in the Anthropocene. It indicates the significance of enhancing "human agency" through a combination of the three strategies.

2024

[Link](#)

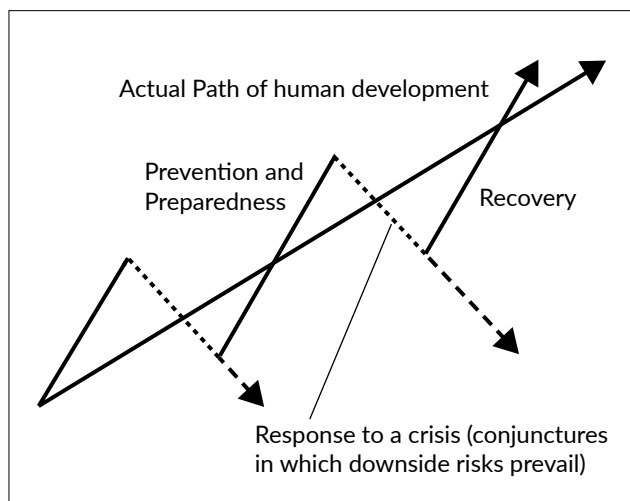
[Report of the Secretary-General on Human Security \(A/78/665\)](#)

The report emphasizes the importance of human security as a tool to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs under the complex crises the world faces. The role of "solidarity" is highlighted as a strategy for achieving human security. The report also presents various practices of human security at the local, national, regional, and global levels.

Concepts Related to Human Security

Human Development

Human development is a process of enlarging the range of people's choices so that they can live lives they value. It was originally proposed in the [UNDP's Human Development Report 1990](#). While human development focuses on "progress and augmentation," human security is intended to organize "rearguard actions" for addressing the situations in which downside risks manifest themselves. Human Security tries to put a society in distress back on track toward sustainable human development (see figure).



Human Rights

Every person born as a human being is entitled to basic human rights as a set of fundamental freedoms. However, there is room for debate regarding which freedoms should be prioritized in terms of protection and promotion in a particular society at a specific time. Human security can provide at least a partial answer to this question by scrutinizing the specific circumstances in which groups of people face extreme insecurity.

References:

- Ogata, Sadako. 2003. "Human Security and State Security." In *Human Security Now: Final Report of the Commission on Human Security* (Box 1.2, p. 5). New York: United Nations.
- Sen, Amartya, K. 2003. "Development, Rights and Human Security." In *Human Security Now: Final Report of the Commission on Human Security* (Box 1.3, pp. 8–9). New York: United Nations.

Human Dignity

Human dignity signifies that each person has intrinsic, inviolable value that deserves respect from oneself and others. It is essential to nurture an attitude of respecting the vital core of human life and to create institutions for this purpose. This idea is enshrined in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, forming the basis of the SDG ideal of creating a society where "no one is left behind." This is one of the three freedoms that human security seeks to achieve.

State Security

State security involves protecting the security of a state and its people. It is maintained not only by national policies but also through its relationships with allies and the collective security practices of international organizations. The independence of colonies after World War II expanded the security framework of sovereign states to a global scale. Human security is proposed as a complement to this framework.

Social Security

An institution through which society secures a minimal living standard for its members and protects them from disease, unemployment, accidents, and other specific risks. While the government is primarily responsible for this, the system also incorporates aspects of mutual aid. Although designed to address everyday risks citizens encounter, it can also provide the building blocks of human security in the event of large-scale disasters and pandemics, or during the process of post-conflict reconstruction, for example.

Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

The R2P is a doctrine aimed at preventing genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Human security is distinct from the principle of R2P and its practice. Human security is based on national ownership and does not advocate the use of force. This crucial difference between human security and the R2P was clearly recognized in the UNGA resolution of 2012 (A/RES/66/290).

Japan and Human Security

Japan embraces human security as one of its key diplomatic pillars and takes various initiative to promote human security in the international community.

1998

[Link](#)

Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi emphasized human security as a prong in Japanese diplomacy and announced the establishment of the UN Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) in a policy speech titled “Toward the Creation of a Bright Future of Asia.”

2000

[Link](#)

At the UN General Assembly subsequent to the Millennium Summit, Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori declared human security one of the pillars of Japanese diplomacy and announced the establishment of the Commission on Human Security.

2003

[Link](#)

The Commission on Human Security published its final report. The perspective of human security was incorporated as one of the basic policies in Japan’s Official Development Assistance Charter.

2012

[Link](#)

The Japanese government co-sponsored a resolution on the definition of human security, which was adopted by consensus at the UN General Assembly.

2015

[Link](#)

When the Official Development Assistance Charter was revised and the Development Cooperation Charter was adopted, human security became “the guiding principle” that lies at the foundation of Japan’s development cooperation.

2022

[Link](#)

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) published the *Special Report on Human Security* (with the support of the Japanese government).

2023

[Link](#)

In the 2023 revision of the Development Cooperation Charter, it was stated that “Japan will continue to position human security as a guiding principle that underlies all of its development cooperation.”

JICA and Human Security

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is the Japanese government agency responsible for development cooperation and is committed to the human security ideal as part of its official mission. Since 2003, when Ogata Sadako, then co-chair of the Commission on Human Security, assumed the presidency of JICA, the agency as a whole has been practicing development cooperation to contribute to the goal of human security.

About Ogata Sadako

Ogata Sadako led JICA as its former president from October 2003 to March 2012, emphasized the importance of field-oriented approaches and devoted herself to practicing human security. During her tenure, in 2008, Ogata established JICA Research Institute. In 2020, the institute changed its name to the JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development, with a view to succeeding and further developing its founding purpose—formulated by Ogata—and increasing its intellectual contribution toward world peace and development.

JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development

Our vision is “Co-Creating Practical Knowledge for Peace and Development”. We will work together with diverse partners for the purposes of world peace and development and conduct quality research with policy impact by integrating a field-oriented perspective.

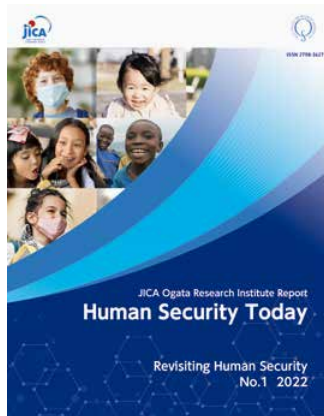
Basic Research Policy

- Conduct research of international academic standard and actively disseminating its results actively;
- Bridge research and practice by analyzing and synthesizing knowledge from the field; and
- Contribute to the realization of human security.

For more information about our human security research and initiatives, visit our website →

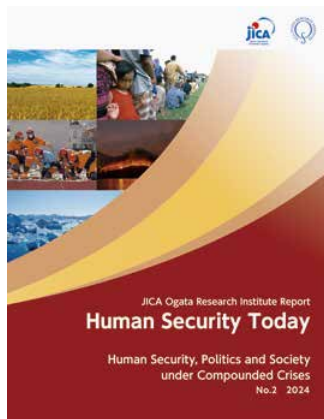


JICA Ogata Research Institute Report *Human Security Today*



The First Issue **Revisiting Human Security**

This inaugural report discusses the relevance of the human security concept today and its implications for development cooperation. It also includes an opening discussion on the history of and prospects for future research on human security, as well as a conversation between experts on human security. The “Topics” section examines human security during the COVID-19 pandemic from various angles, discussing the impact of the pandemic on the health sector, the changing understanding and practice of human security in Africa, and an economic analysis of migrant remittances. The report also gives an overview of the activities of the institute’s research clusters from the perspective of human security.



The Second Issue **Human Security, Politics and Society under Compounded Crises**

The second report contains articles, essays, and a dialogue related to cascading and compounded crises, such as inflation and debt, nutritional challenges, natural disasters that coincide with conflict situations, and global governance issues. Articles based on the featured theme discuss human security in the African context and the nexus of gender-based violence (GBV). Furthermore, besides several columns on human security, the report introduces research activities of different research clusters at the JICA Ogata Research Institute from a human security perspective, following the example set by the first issue.



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