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Global politics
Higher level and standard level
Paper 1

18 May 2026

Zone A afternoon | **Zone B** afternoon | **Zone C** afternoon

1 hour 15 minutes

Instructions to students

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Answer all the questions.
- The maximum mark for this examination paper is **[25 marks]**.

Legitimacy in global politics: Sources of legitimacy of non-state actors

Read all the sources carefully and answer all the questions that follow.

Source A

Removed for copyright reasons

Source B

Removed for copyright reasons

Source C

Adapted from “Do international NGOs cause more problems than they solve?” by Julia O’Driscoll, published in *The Week UK* (3 March 2022).

The demand for humanitarian aid² reached unprecedented levels in 2022, with a record number of 274 million people globally in need of urgent help. While NGOs often play an important role in trying to deliver aid, critics have suggested that “broken” humanitarian aid systems risk doing more harm than good. [...]

These problems can arise when an NGO arrives in a community with good intentions to solve a temporary issue but remains there far longer than intended. Foreign NGOs may recruit local workers, which can contribute to an “internal brain drain³” of the community’s best thinkers and hardest workers. As NGOs become involved in a community for longer periods of time and take on more projects, the group’s original aims may also be forgotten. This may decrease the government’s motivation to invest in long-term efforts.

NGOs can become too connected to governments through funding arrangements and contracts to fulfil government services such as health care. However, when NGOs don’t work closely enough with governments, it can lead to a lack of communication and cooperation, resulting in inefficient use of resources. [...] Many people working in international humanitarian aid believe that change to how NGOs collaborate with governments is needed, but that the work of NGOs is essential and often lifesaving. In this imperfect world, we need to ensure aid is as effective as possible. Doing so requires a targeted and grassroots approach to empower people in local communities.

² humanitarian aid: aid to support the basic needs of people affected by conflict, displacement and natural disasters

³ internal brain drain: the movement of local qualified experts to areas or organizations where they get better pay

Source D

Extract from Oxfam’s *Statement of Legitimacy and Accountability*.

NGOs are sometimes challenged about their legitimacy to speak out on issues such as world poverty. In response to such challenges, Oxfam, an NGO based in the United Kingdom, outlines the sources of its authority and legitimacy.

Oxfam’s experience is wide-ranging and in-depth. Oxfam has worked with people living in poverty in developing countries for more than 70 years. Currently, the NGO is working with more than 1000 partners in 67 countries. Oxfam employs local people who understand the issues that keep local communities trapped in poverty. Its work is respected by the international community, governments across the globe, partner organizations, allies and other agencies. More than 400 000 people in the UK support Oxfam’s work through monthly donations. Oxfam is an independent NGO and, as such, does not have a political connection to any government.

Oxfam also carries out important advocacy and policy work to ensure that governments and international organizations understand the needs of people living in poverty and work towards improving their lives.

1. According to Source A, outline **three** ways for an NGO to claim legitimacy. [3]
 2. With explicit reference to Source B **and one** example you have studied, explain the impact NGOs have on global politics. [4]
 3. Compare and contrast the views of Source C **and** Source D regarding the effects of NGOs. [6]
 4. Using **at least three** of the sources **and** your own knowledge, examine the view that NGOs are not legitimate actors in global politics. [12]
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References:

- Source C** O'Driscoll, J., 2022. Do international NGOs cause more problems than they solve? [online] *The Week UK*. Available at: <https://theweek.com/news/world-news/955954/do-international-ngos-cause-more-problems-than-they-solve> [Accessed 22 April 2025]. Source adapted.
- Source D** The material "Statement of legitimacy and accountability – Oxfam – <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/about-us/plans-reports-and-policies/statement-legitimacy-and-accountability/>" is adapted by the publisher with the permission of Oxfam, Oxfam House, John Smith Court, 2600 John Smith Drive, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 2JU UK www.oxfam.org.uk. Oxfam does not necessarily endorse any text or activities that accompany the materials, nor has it approved the adapted text.