



Security Council (SC)

Topic B: Strategies to ensure the protection of civilians facing food insecurity due to armed conflicts

I. Introduction

Due to war, climate change, natural disasters, structural poverty, and inequality, ending world hunger is one of the greatest problems of our time. Around the world, 49 million people are experiencing emergency levels of hunger, and up to 828 million people lack access to enough food¹. Millions of people's health and prospects are being negatively impacted by diets deficient in vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients, which is also casting a shadow over the future of entire communities and nations.

Food insecurity is defined as a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food². However, there are different levels of severity in which food insecurity can be experienced. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), food insecurity is measured by making use of the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), which is divided in 3 main levels:

- **Food security to mild food insecurity:** uncertainty regarding the ability of acquiring food.
- **Moderate food insecurity:** compromises food quality and variety but also reduces food quantity, which could even cause skipping meals. People in this situation have insufficient money or resources for a healthy diet, uncertainty regarding the ability to obtain food and probably skipped meals or run out of food occasionally.
- **Severe food insecurity:** not having food for a day or more. People in this situation have run out of food and gone an entire day without eating at times during the year.³

Additionally, the Prevalence of Undernourishment (PoU)⁴ is used by the FAO as the traditional indicator at global and regional levels to monitor hunger and is based on the

¹ See: WFP. Ending Hunger. <https://www.wfp.org/ending-hunger>

² U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. (n.d.). *Definitions of food security*. Retrieved March 10, 2022, from <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/definitions-of-food-security/>

³ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Hunger*. (n.d.). <https://www.fao.org/hunger/en/>

⁴ FAO. "Indicator 2.1.1 - Prevalence of undernourishment" in *Sustainable Development Goals* <https://www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals/indicators/211/en/>





country's data on food availability, energy needs and food consumption. It is responsible for estimating the sufficiency of a population's intake in dietary energy.

That being said, conflicts can cause a reduction of food and an interruption of economic activities, which affects the lives of the country's population. In particular, armed conflicts can trigger the displacement of people, leading them to be cut off from food supplies and livelihoods. Refugees are often more vulnerable to face food insecurity as well as health insecurity. On the other hand, if civilians stay in their homes, surrounding armies can trap people inside an area and deny them access to food, medicine and basic needs. Many conflict zones need humanitarian aid; however, in some cases one or both parties in the conflict may block the entrance for supplies.

As a matter of fact, as reported by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), a "catastrophe" designation (IPC Phase 5) is the highest level in which food insecurity can be found. It includes famine conditions, but it is not declared as an outright "famine" (which occurs when at least 20 percent of the population is affected, with roughly one out of three children being acutely malnourished and two people dying per day for every 10,000 inhabitants due to starvation or to the interaction of malnutrition and disease).⁵

Therefore, the United Nations Security Council actively seeks the participation and cooperation of the international community to establish strategies that aim to ensure the protection of civilians facing food insecurity caused by armed conflicts and guarantee the access to dietary resources necessary for a nutritious, healthy and dignified life.

II. Concepts and definitions

- **Displaced people**⁶: people who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human-made disasters.

⁵ Protection of Civilians: Briefing on Conflict and Food Security: What's in Blue: Security Council Report. (n.d.). <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2022/09/protection-of-civilians-briefing-on-conflict-and-food-security.php>

⁶ UNESCO. *Migrants, refugees, or displaced persons?* 2021. <https://en.unesco.org/news/migrants-refugees-displaced-persons#:~:text=Displaced%20persons%3A%20Persons%20who%20have,natural%20or%20human%2Dmade%20disasters.>





- **Refugees**⁷: any person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his or her nationality... and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.
- **Livelihood**: the way someone earns the money they need to pay for food, a place to live, clothing, etc.
- **Famine**⁸: situation in which a substantial proportion of the population of a country or region is unable to access adequate food, resulting in widespread acute malnutrition and loss of life by starvation and disease.
- **Malnourished**⁹: deficiencies, excesses, or imbalances in a person's intake of energy and/or nutrients. The term malnutrition addresses three broad groups of conditions: undernutrition, which includes wasting (low weight-for-height), stunting (low height-for-age) and underweight (low weight-for-age)
- **Hunger**¹⁰: uncomfortable or painful physical sensation caused by insufficient consumption of dietary energy. It becomes chronic when the person does not consume enough calories (dietary energy) on a regular basis to lead a normal, active and healthy life.

III. Current situation

According to the Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Martin Griffiths, conflict is driving these food crises by forcibly displacing people and destroying infrastructure and assets essential to livelihoods and food security. In fact, conflict is still the biggest driver of hunger, with 60 percent of the world's hungry living in areas afflicted by war and violence.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ United Nations. *Famine Explained: Definition, causes and facts*. 2022.

<https://www.unrefugees.org/news/famine-explained-definition-causes-and-facts/#:~:text=doing%20to%20help%3F->

,What%20is%20famine%3F,life%20by%20starvation%20and%20disease.

⁹ WHO. *Malnutrition*. 2021. [https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/malnutrition#:~:text=Malnutrition%20refers%20to%20deficiencies%2C%20excesses,low%20weight%2Dfor%2Dage)%3B)

[sheets/detail/malnutrition#:~:text=Malnutrition%20refers%20to%20deficiencies%2C%20excesses,low%20weight%2Dfor%2Dage\)%3B](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/malnutrition#:~:text=Malnutrition%20refers%20to%20deficiencies%2C%20excesses,low%20weight%2Dfor%2Dage)%3B)

¹⁰ United Nations. *I am hungry. What does it mean?* 2021. <https://unric.org/en/i-am-hungry-what-does-it-mean/>





He even mentioned that in some cases, food and supplies for civilians are deliberately impeded, which is a clear violation of International Humanitarian Law (IHL)¹¹.

Also, armed conflict impacts on food security can be direct, like the destruction of agricultural assets and food stocks or displacement from land, livestock grazing areas, and fishing grounds, or indirect, like disruptions to food systems and markets, which result in higher food prices or fewer opportunities for households to buy what is needed, or decreased access to supplies that are required for food preparation. According to the Global Report on Food Crises, armed conflict and other threats to security pushed 139 million people into acute food insecurity in 2021 (almost a 40 million people increase compared to the year before)¹².

For this reason, in 2022 the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) took action to fight food insecurity, preserve lives and livelihoods, and limit the adoption of negative coping mechanisms by donating time-sensitive food aid and cash assistance. At the same time, families received emergency agriculture and livelihood support, enabling them to produce their own food. Country-specific recommendations for the Council in the white note for the briefing on armed conflict and food security were held on 15 September of 2022.

IV. Initiatives taken by the international community

According to the Sustainable Development Goals, the second one is about creating a world free of hunger by 2030. It looks forward to ending hunger and ensuring access to all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations (including infants) to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round. To monitor the progress towards this goal, the FAO's indicator, Prevalence of Undernourishment (PoU) is used to measure the proportion of the population that is experiencing moderate or severe food insecurity in some specific place. Also, the World Food Program (WFP) supports this goal through a range of life saving and resilience-building activities, targeted at vulnerable populations experiencing acute and chronic food insecurity (including refugees and IDPs) and those at risk of malnutrition.

Additionally, according to Security Council's 2417 resolution, the Council reminds all parties of the connection between armed conflict and violence, as well as the connection

¹¹ *Protection of Civilians: Briefing on Conflict and Food Security: What's In Blue: Security Council Report.* (n.d.). <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2022/09/protection-of-civilians-briefing-on-conflict-and-food-security.php>

¹² International Committee of the Red Cross. *Food security and armed conflict.* (n.d.). <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/food-security-and-armed-conflict>





between armed conflict and violence-induced food insecurity and the threat of famine, and calls on all parties to armed conflict to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law regarding respecting and protecting civilians, as well as constantly taking care to spare civilian objects, such as farms, markets, water systems, mills, food processing and storage facilities¹³.

In this context, it is relevant to emphasize that regulations that apply during armed conflict are known as International Humanitarian Law (IHL). These regulation's primary goal is to protect the civilian population, civilian property, and those who have ceased participating in hostilities. In addition, International Humanitarian Law regulations seek to limit how the parties to a conflict may use force during hostilities. The main organization for international humanitarian law is the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), a non-governmental humanitarian organization that has been given a mandate to safeguard victims of both external and internal conflicts by states that have ratified and signed the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977 and 2005.

That being said, another international initiative to fight this problematic is the Global Food Security-Call to Action, a chaired ministerial meeting in which 103 member states signed as their commitment to act, respond and treat with urgency food insecurity and nutrition of millions of people in vulnerable situations around the world by providing humanitarian assistance, building resilience in the populations who need it, social protection and safety nets, and trying to strengthen the food systems.

V. Guiding questions

1. How are the statistics of food insecurity in your delegation?
2. Does your delegation face food insecurity due to armed conflicts?
3. How many people are displaced in your delegation because of armed conflicts and how much are they exposed to food insecurity? How can this be addressed?
4. How many people in your delegation are trapped inside a certain area and denied access to food, supplies or humanitarian aid? How can this be addressed?
5. How can the Security Council help civilians in countries going through armed conflicts to overcome food insecurity and get a healthy diet?

¹³ Security council, S.C. (2018, May) Resolution 2417
http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2417.pdf





6. What can the international community do if one of the conflicting parties prevents food security for the inhabitants of its counterpart?

VI. References

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