



BACKGROUND PAPER:

United Nations Sustainable Development
Food Security in Conflict Zones

Introduction:

Food insecurity and the threat of famine, disrupts all aspects of life. Civilians are injured or killed, driven from their homes, and lose their land and livelihoods. Farms, food supplies, livestock, infrastructure and public services are damaged or destroyed. Over time, such challenges drive up food prices, tear apart the social fabric, undermine institutions and erode economic growth and development. The World Food Programme (WFP) estimates that the number of people suffering from food insecurity is projected to more than double by the end of 2020, to 270 million people.

Background & History:

Conflict is the main driver of hunger in most of the world's food crises. Conflict breeds hunger. It can displace farmers and destroy agricultural assets and food stocks. Or it can disrupt markets, driving up prices and damaging livelihoods. In this vicious circle, conflict and lack of food break down the very fabric of society, and all too often lead to violence.

In 2018, the United Nations Security Council passed an historic resolution recognizing that hunger drives forced displacement and conversely forced displacement can have a devastating impact on agricultural production. Hunger will never be eliminated without global peace.

WFP has found that countries with the highest level of food insecurity, coupled with armed conflict, have the highest outward migration of refugees. Additionally, when coupled with poverty, food insecurity increases the likelihood and intensity of armed conflicts, something that has clear implications for refugee

outflows. By promoting peace and ending violent conflict, the world could save billions of dollars in humanitarian food assistance costs every year.

Current Status & The Problem:

It's obvious that there is a problem with our food systems: While we produce more food than ever before, one in nine people still go hungry and 2 billion people don't get enough nutritious food. The carbon footprint of food production is significant. So is the pressure agriculture puts on water resources: agriculture accounts for 70% of water withdrawals. And agriculture is the main driver of biodiversity loss. At the same time, 30% of produced food is wasted or lost after harvest, before it even reaches the consumer.

Spotlighting the situation in some of the most severely impacted countries, nearly 22 million people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are now acutely food insecure, the highest number in the world, as a result of the impact of decades of conflict. Violence by extremist non-State groups in north-east Nigeria are driving up humanitarian needs. In the Sahel region, an upsurge in violence and armed group attacks have displaced huge numbers of people, with some 3.3 million people severely food insecure in Burkina Faso alone.

Summarizing the situation in countries and areas most at risk, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yemen, north-east Nigeria, South Sudan and Burkina Faso, in Latin America, hungry families have been hanging white flags — the universal sign of surrender — outside their houses to show they need help.

In all countries affected, those who are hit hardest include the urban poor, informal workers and pastoral communities as well as people who are already particularly vulnerable — children, women, older persons, the sick and people with disabilities — calling for more political will and stronger support for local food production. Such development work is closely linked to peace and security, as well as mutually reinforcing.

People on the brink of starvation need more help than ever. Without the necessary resources a wave of hunger and famine still threatens to sweep across the globe — especially in countries scarred by violence. While humanitarian actors remain committed to continuing their work to eradicate

hunger, they face repeated attacks and restrictions on their movement and access. Too many parties of conflict do not abide by the crucial principles of international humanitarian law, and the humanitarian community risks being overwhelmed by rising need.

Committee Mission:

As delegates consider the implications of the current hunger crisis on individual peoples and entire countries as a whole. The committee must consider taking immediate action towards the securing food in conflict zones and de-escalating current conflicts to prevent mass hunger and famines. Delegates are also urged to take into account the relations of countries relative to this subject considering the significant impact hunger and conflict has on virtually every country

Questions to Consider:

1. What protections will be provided to those delivering humanitarian aid in conflict zones?
2. What measures will be put into place to ensure that countries are complying with anti-hunger policies?
3. Are there countries that need to be prioritized over others in regards to current conflict and impact of hunger and famine?
4. What would adequate humanitarian food assistance entail for countries in need, and what is the criteria for a country needing such aid?

Additional Research:

Delegates are encouraged to research the presence of food insecurity in conflict zones further and consider their own country's stance in confronting it. This background guide should be the first research delegates consider before diving even further into the topic. In terms of research, be sure that you

understand the situation as a whole before narrowing the scope to focus on your own country.

Helpful and reliable sources include the UN, BBC, and the CIA World Factbook. In terms of expanding their understanding of food insecurity, delegates might consider the presence of bias in their sources and inform themselves of both the climate situation as a whole and their own country's views on it.

Sources:

<https://press.un.org/en/2020/sc14308.doc.htm>

<https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/news/breaking-vicious-circle-hunger-and-conflict>

<https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000099172/download/>