Security Council

Food Security in relation to Armed Conflict

Research Report

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"let us sing songs of freedom together"

Forum: Security Council

Issue: Food security in relation to armed conflict

Position: President

Introduction

Food security, the state in which all people, at all times, have sufficient access to safe and nutritious food, is an issue of paramount concern. In general, the absence of food can lead to a plethora of health issues, while in extremity a widespread famine can results in deficiencies, displacement and death. Throughout history, there has been a distinct connection between armed conflicts and famines, oftentimes one generating the other. The preservation of citizens health and nutrition during war time is essential, as while it may take time to diffuse an armed conflict, It only takes a few days for thousands to perish from hunger. Therefore, it is imperative we can help prevent those affected by armed conflict from starving, before addressing the wider issue of diffusing the conflict.

Definition of Key Terms

Food Security: A state of being that exists when all individuals have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life, without being at risk of future hunger.

Armed Conflict: Refers to a state of armed hostility or violent struggle between two or more parties, which may include states, non-state actors, or other entities, involving the use of force and military tactics.

Famine: A severe and prolonged food crisis in a particular region or population, resulting in widespread food shortages, malnutrition and even starvation. A famine is considered a humanitarian crisis.

Humanitarian Crisis: A situation that poses a serious threat to the health, safety, and well-being of a significant number of people, often requiring urgent response from NGO's including food aid, medical assistance and shelter.

Humanitarian Aid: Assistance provided by governments, non-governmental organisations (NGO's) and international agencies to support individuals and communities affected by crises, including the provision of food, clean water and medical care

Displacement: A forced movement of people from their homes or communities due to armed conflict or persecution.

Blockade: An act of sealing off a place, such as a city, port or region to prevent the entry or exit of goods, including food. A method often used as a strategy in armed conflicts.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL): Also known as the Laws of War or the Laws of Armed Conflict, is a set of rules and principles that regulate the conduct of armed conflict and protect civilians and combatants who are no longer taking part in hostilities.

Food as a Weapon of War: Involves deliberately depriving populations of food or disrupting the food supply chain to gain a strategic or tactical advantage in an armed conflict by applying pressure on specific groups or communities.

General Overview

With the backdrop of the Second World War, one can begin to understand the application of blockades and their implications. The deliberate targeting of food supplies by various parties such as Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union and the Allied Powers, including blockades and destruction of agricultural infrastructure, led to widespread famine in Europe and Asia. the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) and the establishment of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) were born out of the need to address these challenges.

For contemporary examples, we can look to both Yemen and South Sudan (another topic of this assembly). The civil war in Yemen, ongoing since 2015, has resulted in food shortages, displacement, and economic collapse. It is estimated that more than 16 million people face food insecurity, with a catastrophic humanitarian crisis on the horizon. In South Sudan, on the other hand, protracted conflicts have created a cycle of food insecurity. Displacement, destruction of agricultural infrastructure, and armed attacks on food convoys have left millions without access to food. Political solutions and peace agreements are necessary to address the root causes of this crisis.

Major Parties Involved

The United Nations

The United Nations plays a central role in addressing food security in relation to armed conflict as they are responsible for monitoring and resolving any of these conflicts. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization is instrumental in coordinating efforts to enhance food security in conflict–affected regions. FAO provides technical assistance, policy guidance and conducts research to promote sustainable agriculture and improve food distribution systems. Additionally, the United Nations world Food Programme (WFP) is another key agency that delivers humanitarian food aid to tose affected by conflicts. Its work includes emergency food distribution, nutrition programs and supporting resilience-building initiatives.

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

As a prominent NGO, the ICRC operates in conflict zones to protect and assist victims of armed conflicts, including addressing their food security needs. ICRC ensures that humanitarian law is respected by facilitating access to food and medical care and supporting the restoration of agricultural livelihoods in conflict-affected areas.

The United States of America

As a significant contributor to global efforts to address food insecurity, the nation has also contributed to the creation of many of the world's conflict zones. Specifically in the Middle East, the United States has been fundamental in creating instability in these nations' governments, creating a number of civil wars and political unrest. This had led to a strain on food supply chains and even famine for some nations.

Previous Solutions

- **Resolution 2417 (2018):** Highlights the link between conflict and food insecurity and emphasises the need for compliance with international humanitarian law to ensure unhindered humanitarian access to those in need.
- **United Nations World Food Programme (WFP):** The UN's food assistance branch. They implement initiatives like the "Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation" to provide food assistance to those affected by conflicts and support recovery efforts.
- **Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC):** The IPC is a tool supported by the UN, among other organisations, to monitor food security in conflict-affected regions. It assesses the severity of food insecurity and guides humanitarian responses.
- **The FAO's "Building resilience for Peace and Food Security" Program:** A program aiming to enhance agricultural productivity, improve livelihoods, and promote peace in areas with a history of conflict.

Possible Solutions

- **Protection of Civilians:**

Promote and enforce IHL to protect civilians and their access to food and humanitarian aid.

- **Humanitarian Access:**

Facilitate and ensure unimpeded humanitarian access to conflict-affected areas. This includes safe passage for aid convoys and humanitarian workers.

- **Sanctions Relief Mechanisms:**

Ensuring that economic measures do not unduly affect food security in conflict-affected regions.

- **Early Warning Systems:**

Develop and enhance early warning systems to detect and respond to potential food security crises before they escalate.

- **Local Markets and Trade:**

Support local food markets and trade systems to ensure a sustainable food supply chain in affected regions.

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