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Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Food
Programme

Concept Note

Protection of Civilians Week

Side-Event to the UN Security Council Open Debate on the Protection of Civilians

"Fact or Fiction on Conflict & Hunger: Exploring Evidence-based Drivers, Impacts and Tools"

Date: Wednesday, 21 May 2025, 1:15 – 2:30

Location: CR-8, UN HQ, New York

RSVP by 19 May [here](#).

As the humanitarian community reflects upon the Secretary General's Annual Report on the Protection of Civilians, conflict-driven hunger remains of great concern, leading both to immediate humanitarian and protection concerns, as well as to long-term reverberating consequences. 2024 was no exception.

In 2024's report, the Secretary-General reflected that:

*"Conflict remains the major driver of acute food insecurity, displacing people from land and livestock grazing areas, destroying food stocks and agricultural assets and disrupting food systems and markets, leading to increased food prices or decreased household purchasing power, and decreased access to supplies required for food preparation, including water and fuel."*¹

Time and again, parties to conflicts around the world have been called upon to refrain from targeting, looting, or incidentally damaging assets, sites and infrastructure vital to food systems, facilitate the movement of commercial food supplies and allow access to necessary fuel and cash, as well as ensure safe, rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief.

All too often, these calls to action and respect of international law have gone unheeded and civilians continue to suffer life-threatening impacts of conflict-induced hunger. Women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities and other marginalized and vulnerable groups frequently suffer disproportionately as they often have fewer financial and material resources to rely on, as well as navigate severe protection risks and are at higher risk of adopting negative coping strategies to access food.

The UN Security Council has expressed clear positions on conflict and hunger in its resolution 2417 (2018) that recognises the link between armed conflict, violence and food insecurity and highlights the need for early action to address situations where civilians are at risk. In adopting the resolution, Security Council members unanimously condemned violations of international humanitarian law and reaffirmed the primary responsibility of States to protect populations throughout their entire territory.

¹ SG's Report on PoC 2024.

Resolution 2417 affirms and complements existing international humanitarian law instruments such as the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols, the Rome Statute, and the Malabo Protocol, which criminalize the use of starvation as a method of warfare. Resolution 2417 was further bolstered by resolution 2573 (2021), which condemns the destruction of civilian infrastructure indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, and requires parties to conflict to ensure the proper functioning of agrifood systems. In adopting these resolutions, the UN has established clear policy frameworks, based on existing international humanitarian law obligations, which must be decisively implemented and operationalized to prevent, detect, respond to, and mitigate conflict-induced hunger.

Objectives and focus of the event

This event takes place on the margins of the 2025 Protection of Civilians Week and offers a critical opportunity to reflect upon how parties to conflicts create or perpetuate conflict-induced hunger and explore relevant tools, practical mechanisms, strategies, national legislation and policies and practices available to better protect civilians from conflict-induced hunger. Emphasis will be placed on the role of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in mitigating these impacts and ensuring compliance with established legal frameworks. This event allows for an interactive experience between participants and briefers in the mutual exploration of several drivers, impacts and tools related to conflict-induced hunger.

This event is guided by the following questions:

- 1. How do various factors—such as displacement, destruction of agricultural infrastructure, economic and livelihood shocks, impediments to humanitarian access, and other violations of international humanitarian law—exacerbate food insecurity in conflict zones?**
- 2. What are the early signs of conflict-induced hunger and what leads to its escalation? How does it affect vulnerable civilian population? How can international humanitarian law help prevent or mitigate its impact and how do we encourage effective application of international humanitarian law in order to do so?**
- 3. What are the tools available (or needed) to better measure and understand conflict as a driver of hunger, including the conflict dynamics that have the most significant impact on food insecurity? How do we best use those tools, and encourage others to use them, to reduce the impact of conflict on food security?**
- 4. What are relevant practical policy mechanisms, strategies, national legislation, international legal mechanisms, policies and practices available to better protect civilians and prevent conflict-induced hunger? How can we encourage relevant actors to implement these policies and practices to deliver impact?**

This event is co-organized by Guyana, Slovenia and Coalition Against Conflict & Hunger, and co-sponsored by the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Ireland, Kuwait, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Sierra Leone, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme.

Its innovative format will immerse the audience in the discussion and invite participants to contribute to the conversation, explore the available tools and mechanisms and empower stakeholders, Member States, the UN system and civil society organizations, to meaningfully employ the tools and mechanisms in their future engagement.

Programme

Moderated by **Ms. Cynthia Brady**, Adelphi Associate, adelphi

1:15 – 1:25

Opening remarks by Guyana & Slovenia

- **Ambassador Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett**, Permanent Representative of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana to the United Nations
- **Ambassador Samuel Žbogar**, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Slovenia to the United Nations

1:25 – 2:05

Interactive session with innovative approach introducing the key facts, figures and challenges of conflict-induced hunger

Segment 1 – Drivers & Impacts

- **Ms. Alexandra Saieh**, Head of Humanitarian Advocacy and Policy, Save the Children International
- Video message by **Mr. Laurent Bukera**, Country Director, World Food Programme Sudan Country Office
- **Ms. Angélica Jácome**, Director of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Liaison Office to the United Nations in New York

Segment 2 – Tools, Mechanisms & International Humanitarian Law

- **Ms. Catriona Murdoch**, Starvation and Humanitarian Crisis Division Lead, Global Rights Compliance
- **Ms. Emmanuela-Chiara Gillard**, Senior Fellow at the Institute for Ethics, Law and Armed Conflict at the University of Oxford

2:05 – 2:25

Q & A session and interventions by keynote listeners, including high-level representatives of the co-sponsors

2:25 – 2:30

Closing remarks