



**PREVENTING HUNGER IN CONFLICT
DIALOGUE SERIES**

GLOBAL SYNTHESIS REPORT

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Background of UN Security Council Resolution 2417 and conflict-induced hunger	3
Overview of trends and themes raised by regions	4
Key themes and recommendations	4
1. Going beyond the UN Security Council: UNSCR 2417 implementation must involve global, regional, national and local stakeholders	4
2. Globally, the knowledge of UNSCR 2417 and its implementation must be strengthened	6
3. Need to Enhance Leadership of UNSCR 2417	6
4. The Conflict and Hunger agenda must be approached as a humanitarian and diplomatic issue. However, the implementation of UNSCR 2417 must be standardised and not depend on a political agenda	6
5. Ensure transparent and evidence-based reporting to serve the prevention function and ensure action and accountability	6
6. Implementation of a Humanitarian, Development and Peace nexus approach	7
Conclusion	7

INTRODUCTION

This report summarises the key outcomes of the “Preventing Hunger in Conflict Regional Dialogue Series”, four one-day events which took place between July 2023 and January 2024 in the key regional hubs of Nairobi, Panama, and Dakar. A fourth online event addressed the context in the Middle East. The series was organised by Action Against Hunger, Oxfam, Save the Children, WFP and World Vision.

These events systematically brought together Civil Society Organizations, UN agencies, and

Government representatives to discuss the background and content of UN Security Council Resolution 2417, reflect on the progress (or lack thereof) made to address conflict-induced hunger since its approval in 2018, and the challenges and opportunities in its implementation at the national and regional levels. This report is designed to reflect multiple perspectives and options for policy discussion and does not necessarily reflect the positions of the organisations associated with the event or this synthesis report.

BACKGROUND OF UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 2417 AND CONFLICT-INDUCED HUNGER

In 2018, the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 2417, recognising the link between armed conflict and food insecurity. The number of people facing severe food insecurity in conflict zones has significantly increased in recent years: in 2023, the number of people experiencing crisis-level or worse acute food insecurity (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above, or equivalent) reached nearly 282 million across 59 countries/territories, a 9% increase from the 258 million people in 58 countries/territories facing similar conditions in 2022. In 20 countries/territories, conflict and insecurity emerged as the primary driver¹.

This resolution represented the Security Council’s initial effort to address hunger within the context of its “protection of civilians” agenda, and it created an important framework to prevent and respond to conflict-induced hunger. It is a landmark resolution that shifted the debate on conflict and hunger away from being solely a humanitarian issue and into the political arena of peace and security, where it has encouraged several other positive changes at the international level. Among these is the historic 2019 amendment to the Rome Statute, which included the war crime of starvation in non-international armed conflicts; and the passing of resolution 2573 in 2021, which condemns

the attacks on critical infrastructure and objects indispensable to survival, and tries to bring home some of the protections around humanitarian access.

Resolution 2417 calls upon all parties engaged in armed conflict to uphold their obligations under international law and condemns the use of starvation as a weapon of warfare, as well as the obstruction of humanitarian aid and the denial and destruction of resources essential for civilian survival. The resolution also mandates the Secretary-General to promptly report on emerging risks of conflict-induced famine and widespread food insecurity and to provide updates on the implementation of Resolution 2417 in the annual Protection of Civilians report submitted to the Security Council. Moreover, it encourages all States to engage with and influence parties to the conflict, and to remind them of their obligation to comply with IHL. It also calls for States to conduct independent, full, prompt, impartial and effective investigations within their jurisdiction into violations of international humanitarian law related to the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare.

¹ <https://www.fsplatform.org/report/global-report-food-crises-2024/#acute-food-insecurity>

OVERVIEW OF THEMES AND TRENDS RAISED BY REGIONS

Each event focused on key themes and trends that were particularly relevant to each region.

In Latin American countries, violence and informal conflict were raised as key elements, as was the need to establish a strongly coordinated regional response due to the displacement crisis across the Darien region. Movement restrictions due to territorial disputes involving Non-State Armed Groups, such as in Colombia, affect all dimensions of food security, including availability and access.

The West African event focused on the impact of conflict and food insecurity on children, a group of whom presented a compelling call to action. The event also explored the interplay between conflict and climate change in different contexts and communities.

Participants in East Africa focused on the effects of food insecurity and violence at the sub-regional level, particularly between sedentary and nomadic communities, and the role that Civil Society Organizations can play in contextualising this agenda.

The Middle East event highlighted the specific impact that conflict has in urban settings, such as the damage to markets and infrastructure, and the lasting effects of protracted conflict in countries such as Yemen and Syria.

Climate change was raised throughout all Regions as a key factor multiplying both food insecurity crises and conflict. Overall, each event highlighted the importance of addressing the issue of conflict-induced hunger in conjunction with other concurring, contextual factors.

KEY THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Almost 6 years after its passing, the resolution remains largely unknown outside of the UNSC, and UNSC-related conflict and hunger fora. Since the adoption of the Resolution in 2018 there have only been seven White Notes submitted to the Security Council describing country-level warnings of conflict-induced food insecurity, and follow-up remains unclear. The roundtables all featured dedicated sessions in which participants were asked for recommendations on implementing UNSCR 2417.

With crises such as Gaza, Ukraine, Burkina Faso, Haiti, Colombia, and many more as a poignant backdrop to these conversations, questions of accountability, evidence gathering and triggers for reporting were at the forefront of the discussions. The recommendations below summarise the key suggestions raised across the roundtables. They are not exhaustive, and reflect the general trends identified across all Regions. Private, regionally-specific reports were written following each round table.

1. Going beyond the UN Security Council: UNSCR 2417 implementation must involve global, regional, national and local stakeholders.

The UN Security Council can play a part in ensuring that UNSCR 2417 is widely leveraged by providing strategic guidance and recommendations:

- Strategic vision and guidelines for implementation: Participants called for clear strategic guidance for implementing UNSCR 2417, developed by key stakeholders at the UN level such as OCHA, WFP, or the Group of Friends on Conflict and Hunger, clearly outlining the paths for upholding the resolution and the roles that stakeholders can play. This should include guidelines on reporting methods, and provide transparent indication of how reports will be followed up. Guidelines should be shared with stakeholders at global, regional and national levels
- Strengthening the White Notes: The recommendations of the reports, and

particularly of the White Papers, are often very general, with no indication of follow-up actions. This risks undermining the credibility of UNSCR 2417 as an accountability tool. To enhance the operational nature of the resolution, White Papers should be compiled in collaboration with Civil Society Organizations and made publicly available beyond the UN Security Council and limited Member States, and outline clear follow-up actions.

Regional stakeholders can hold a greater role in holding conflict parties accountable to the UNSCR 2417 framework, as well as integrating this agenda in existing meetings and frameworks:

- Knowledge and Capacity Building: Invest in capacity-building initiatives with a specific focus on IHL and IHRL compliance and impact on food security to enhance the expertise of relevant stakeholders.
- Regional and National legislations: The Conflict and Hunger need to be streamlined into national and regional legislation. Regional bodies can support this by articulating a regional framework that guides Member States in integrating international legal principles, including IHL, into their national laws and regulations.
- Leverage existing coordination mechanisms: The use of existing platforms as well-established mechanisms that can foster knowledge and implementation of the resolution. For example, Conflict and Hunger can be a standard agenda point in the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)'s regular meetings, or be integrated in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)'s early warning system, It could also be part of the agenda of the Subcommittee for the Eradication of Hunger in the Arab region, affiliated with the League of Arab States.

Member States and donors can play a key part in upholding this agenda, by engaging with parties to conflict, conducting investigations, supporting civil society and leveraging humanitarian diplomacy:

- Embed the Conflict and Hunger agenda in National Humanitarian strategies, foreign policy frameworks, and legal systems: Clear national strategies are key to reinforce the engagement in this agenda, and ensure the allocation of adequate resources. National Institutions, such as National Human Rights Commissions, can be actively leveraged as they can play a crucial role in addressing human rights abuses related to conflict-induced hunger. Member States can also ratify the Rome Statute amendment making starvation as a method of war an international crime, and recognise it as a crime in their legal systems.
- Engage in Humanitarian diplomacy: Develop a humanitarian diplomacy strategy to promote unimpeded humanitarian access and IHL compliance, protect civilians and their livelihoods, and prevent the use of violence against food security in a systematic and context-specific manner. The Conflict and Hunger agenda should be leveraged in bilateral relations. Member States can ensure strategic alignment with broader objectives, such as EU frameworks.
- Align the application of UNSCR 2417 with other resolutions and frameworks: UNSCR 2417 cannot be applied in isolation. For example, considerations around protecting civil society from the impact of sanctions must be included. The language of sanctions must be legally clear, and comply and promote with UNSCR resolution 2664 to expressly authorise humanitarian activities and actions necessary for aid delivery to the country under sanctions. Other resolutions, such as UNSCR 2573 on the protection of civilian infrastructure, and UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security must also be integrated into the application of UNSCR 2417.
- Engagement with Non-State Armed Groups: Engaging with non-state armed groups is a priority that emerged in several contexts, such as Somalia, Burkina Faso, Haiti and Colombia. Armed actors must comply with their legal obligations to protect civilians in all situations where they operate or control territory, and considerations to mitigate civilian harm can be leveraged in engaging with them.
- Support NGO programming and monitoring:

Provide long-term, flexible humanitarian and development assistance and funding to tackle the underlying drivers of conflict and violence, including the promotion of sustainable and local food production solutions. Civil society leadership is key to this agenda succeeding or failing and needs to be resourced.

Civil Society Organizations can play a key part in sharing contextually relevant information through engaging with local communities:

- Civil Society Organisations must be included in reporting on Conflict and Hunger: White Notes, statements and reports would be strengthened if written in collaboration with CSOs. Civil Society Organizations would be best placed to amplify community voices in specific contexts, gather testimonials from partners and other stakeholders, and provide field-level data on the impact on the civilian population of specific conflict activities.
- Facilitate Localised Civil Society Engagement: Context analysis and reporting should be driven by a community-centred approach. Engaging with communities at the local level, particularly among different groups, is key to understanding their unique needs and perspectives. Encourage the active participation and ownership of affected groups in decision-making processes.

2. Globally, the knowledge of UNSCR 2417 and its implementation must be strengthened

Governments and Civil Society stakeholders had limited knowledge of UNSCR 2417. Partners outside the UN system need more details on the resolution's content, mandate, reporting mechanisms and pathways for implementation, and how to use the resolution as a preventative tool, rather than a tool to be leveraged when a crisis is already in action.

Training on UNSCR 2417 should encompass the resolution's content, its place in a broad IHL context, and the parameters of the violation. This would increase the ownership from national and regional bodies, and their commitment to engage with this specific

agenda and address conflict and hunger in conjunction.

3. Need to Enhance Leadership of UNSCR 2417

Contrary to other thematic issues, there is no Special Representative of the Secretary General or Special Envoy on Conflict and Hunger. Addressing the leadership gap, as well as releasing a global strategy on the systematic implementation of UNSCR 2417, would significantly elevate the agenda. The lack of ownership and transparency results in a loss of credibility in the potential for implementation of the Resolution.

4. The Conflict and Hunger agenda must be approached as a humanitarian and diplomatic issue. However, the implementation of UNSCR 2417 must be standardised and not depend on a political agenda

UNSCR 2417 is an intrinsically complex resolution, and it is important to recognise that it links the humanitarian with the conflict-related, political and diplomatic sphere. Too often it is perceived as a solely humanitarian issue. However, to ensure its systematic implementation, the Conflict and Hunger agenda must be de-politicised: implementation must not rely on political will but on sound and consistent early-warning evidence of potential violations. The agenda requires clear, incontestable triggers for early warning, reporting and action, regardless of the context under examination. Systematic data collection must be used to counter accusations of politicisation.

5. Ensure transparent and evidence-based reporting to serve the prevention function and ensure action and accountability

Evidence gathering must follow clear, consistent guidelines, which in turn must consistently trigger action. Evidence data on IHL violations and monitoring must be widely available to enhance transparency and accessibility of information and to enable evidence-based advocacy on IHL violations. Participants also discussed that systems such as the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) can

enable swift action, as some countries are already familiar with the mechanism, but there must be clearer guidance on how this can be applied.

6. Implementation of a Humanitarian, Development and Peace nexus approach

The implementation of a Nexus approach is essential in order to harmonise and integrate

the political, development and humanitarian interventions. Participants emphasised the need to integrate good governance and peace planning in post-conflict contexts, with a specific focus on conflict prevention in times of transition. Reinforcing localisation efforts and grounding programming in local contexts can also actively advance the agenda.

CONCLUSION

Across all events, it was made clear that stakeholders at all levels must commit to turning the tide on conflict-induced hunger, and take responsibility for upholding this agenda through continued advocacy, capacity building, monitoring of violations, and bilateral diplomacy initiatives. Conflict and Hunger issues, in their humanitarian and political aspects, need to be more consistently integrated into Member States' and regional bodies' messages, positioning and strategy. The stakeholders at the global level must support this work by providing clear operational guidance on how to implement UNSCR 2417.

At the heart of this agenda is ultimately a desire to protect civilians. Starvation tactics are ongoing in conflicts where parties are emboldened by impunity, a lack of clarity and a lack of public outrage. These events highlighted a broad range of opportunities that can be taken up at the local, regional, and global levels. Ultimately, being able to look critically at how these issues interlink, we can reinforce this agenda and work, individually and collectively, to decrease the frequency and intensity of conflict-induced hunger - a trend that is becoming normalised through pervasive inaction.



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