

Questions

General

2. If starvation is caused by political failures, what international institutional changes are necessary to avoid such failures?

Among others, it would require reforms within UN pillar organizations and organisations more focused on food security. The voting mechanisms of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) are particularly problematic - a recent example is the UNSC resolution on the protection of Palestinian people, where a single member state's opposition derailed the resolution. While the dynamics of UNSC voting are well-known, the broader implications on civilian populations are less recognized. In recent years, the world has witnessed a troubling resurgence of food crises – explicitly acknowledged by the UNSC (the same organisation which vetoed the UNSC resolution on the (food) protection of the Palestinian people in the armed conflict) in resolution 2417 concerning starvation and armed conflict. Allowing the fate of entire populations to hinge on any decisions of any (five) states, highlights the detrimental impact of this veto power and undermines prospects for future food security and thereby international peace and security (for which the UNSC bears main responsibility).

Having said that, where the UNSC voting dynamics cannot be addressed at its root cause, it is suggested that the authority and implementation mechanisms of UNGA resolutions in addressing urgent food crises be strengthened to ensure more timely and decisive action. With a clear mandate to adopt legally binding resolutions in situations of critical food insecurity which threaten the lives of entire populations (for instance in IPC Phase 4 and 5 cases) would be a much-needed step forward in addressing severe food crises and alleviating the living conditions of the respective civilian populations.

By means of legally binding resolutions, the UNGA could further provide a forum enhancing the collaboration with and between specialized agencies like the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Program (WFP). Clarity as to the (distinct) responsibilities of these respective organisations could create more integrated and effective responses to global hunger. By empowering the UNGA and fostering stronger inter-agency cooperation, the international community can better address the political failures that contribute to starvation.

4. What are the root causes of food insecurity in places where this is currently a high risk of famine like Burkina Faso, Mali, South Sudan and Sudan or places of emergency conditions of acute food security such as Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Pakistan, Somalia, the Syrian Arab Republic, and Yemen?

I will take Yemen as an example. In Yemen, food insecurity stems not only from active hostilities, such as the destruction of water plants, the bombing of agricultural land, the targeting of fishermen and humanitarian aid operations (which has often been highlighted in mainstream discussions), but also from profound internal economic disruptions. The fragmentation of the state's monetary system, with the absence of a unified currency, has severely undermined economic stability. This currency disunity has exacerbated inflation and has created barriers to trade and investment, further crippling the economy. Additionally, in unison with the public service collapse in 2016 (including the non-payment of civil servants for extended periods), the state has seen a collapse of its social protection system. It has deprived many families of their primary source of income leading to an inability to afford basic necessities including food, and

has left millions of Yemenis helpless in the face of lack of access to food, safe water and sanitation.

These economic and public service issues, combined with the direct impacts of hostilities, have created a devastating cycle of food insecurity, leaving large segments of the population vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition. This multi-faceted crisis underscores the need for comprehensive solutions that address both the immediate humanitarian needs and the underlying economic challenges in Yemen.

Unwarranted focus and attention on the effect of hostilities on food insecurity has led to a one-sided view on the situation and does not lead to an accurate interpretation as to what the Yemeni population truly needs. I believe this applies to the distinct food crises around the globe – to ameliorate food insecurity a thorough understanding of the situation at hand is critical.

Palestine and the Palestinian People

5. What actions of solidarity and care are you providing the Palestinian people? Please explain why this work is an act of solidarity.

I am a researcher on the extent to which conflict-driven starvation could be addressed within the framework of international criminal law and allow for the possibility to establish individual criminal responsibility. From a legal angle, I intend to provide clarity on the matter of how individuals could be held responsible for starvation-related conduct, and zoom in on various aspects of the armed conflict in Palestine.

Further, I participate in organised events on the matter of food insecurity in the armed conflict in Palestine (such as the event organised by Erasmus University Rotterdam on the documentary 'Broken – A Palestinian Journey Through International Law' where I clarified and engaged in a discussion on the legal implications of the conflict) and I was recently invited for an interview with a national newspaper (NRC) on the situation in Gaza, which was published on the frontpage.

By dr. Jolanda Andela