

Call for input: Human Rights and Starvation, with an emphasis on the Palestinian People's Food Sovereignty

Issued by the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food

The People's Coalition for Food Sovereignty (PCFS) prepared this document to provide the perspective and aspirations of small food producers, especially those in the West Asia and North Africa (WANA) subregion, for the Palestinian people's right to food and food sovereignty.

All information in this document was gathered through different consultations organized by PCFS, International Indigenous People's Movement for Self Determination and Liberation (IPMSDL), and Asia Pacific Research Network (APRN) under their campaign against the rising number of bombings targeting rural communities. Particularly, organizations from Palestine, Lebanon, India, Burma, Pakistan, West Papua, South Africa, and the Philippines participated in the series of online discussions and consultations.

The consultation's organizers deliberately included the accounts from organizations outside the scope of the call – those based in countries that are not considered hunger hotspots or at emergency and catastrophe-level of food insecurity as defined by the IPC/CH acute food insecurity phase description – as they are also situated amid conflict and will eventually be at the risk of famine if left unaddressed especially amid growing geopolitical tensions and threats of wars.

1. How can human rights provide a way of generating an “early warning” to prevent starvation?

PCFS and allied networks launched the [Silenced Suffering](#) platform, a South-led global network of rural and indigenous activists, researchers, and human rights advocates against aerial bombings and militarism in the Global South, to jumpstart this initiative last year. Through grassroots monitoring, the platform aims to identify rural areas and territories that are afflicted with aggression and human rights violations, which have historically led to food-related insecurity and crises.

Starvation is being weaponized as neoliberal policies are in place, violating fundamental human rights and causing devastating effects on the food systems of vulnerable territories such as Palestine. Neoliberal approaches to land allocation have exacerbated the global food crisis, with policies such as market-assisted land reforms serving only to retain the monopolized control of elites over land.

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

The international community should recognize Palestine's right to self-determination. International institutions such as the UN should hold countries violating international laws accountable, especially the weaponization of starvation among many other war crimes that pushed Gaza to famine. Despite the US veto on ceasefire initiatives and its influences, states must uphold the international laws and treaties they have signed.

Rural peoples must be put at the center of decision-making as part of their right to self-determination. Local, regional, and global solidarity movements and allies are called upon to influence and pressure national governments to condemn the Israeli occupation and settlement.

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

PCFS has been consistent in expressing its solidarity with the Palestinian resistance, releasing statements and organizing webinars to call attention to their situation and solicit support in all forms. We provide space to our Palestinian members and networks to discuss their situation, raise their demands, and share their actions with a wider, global audience especially on their right to food and to produce food. Our members have also organized activities and solidarity protests locally in participation in our days of action in solidarity with the Palestinian people.

Palestine is one of the main territories highlighted in the campaign of PCFS and other ally organizations that call to stop the rising number of bombings in rural communities, which was publicly launched in mid-2023.

When the US-Israel genocidal war sparked in October 2023, PCFS kicked off its #RiseForPalestine campaign, calling to stop the deliberate starvation of the Palestinian people. Under this campaign, we initiated a sign-on statement with the Arab Network for Food Sovereignty titled Urgent Appeal for Palestine addressed to the CFS. It was originally proposed to be endorsed by the CSIPM but was rejected. Our urgent appeal gathered more than 121 signatory organizations from all over the world. The webinars we also organized had hundreds of participants from different countries.

We condemned the massacres of Palestinians seeking aid and highlighted the Palestinian people's right to land and right to resist during the Nakba Day 2024 commemoration as part of our Day of the Landless campaign.

We echo the ultimate demand of the Palestinian people for historical justice and freedom from the Zionist occupation and point out that the US and Israel's allies are just as accountable for enabling its war crimes.

4. What should be done to enhance the Palestinian People's food sovereignty and how can Palestinian peasants, small-scale fishers, pastoralists and small food producers be supported?

Championing the Palestinian people's food sovereignty must go beyond humanitarian aid. While the flow of support for peasants, fisherfolk, pastoralists, and other people affected by conflict, occupation, and colonialism continues, PCFS calls on the international community to gather under the banner of #RiseforPalestine and address the root causes of the genocidal war against Palestine.

The APN presented strategies to counteract the waves of colonization across the Global South, focusing on people-to-people, multisectoral solidarity. People's narratives must be put in the spotlight as a decolonizing tactic against the oppressive status quo and political agenda that has festered through colonial indoctrination among academic institutions and media. Support must be given to boycott and embargo campaigns, along with other forms of direct actions, both through the judiciary and popular tribunals.

A recent initiative of the APN supported 500 Gazan farmers by providing vital inputs as a response to the worsening famine in the territory. The Palestinian Farmers Union (PFU) also calls to impose sanctions on any institution, company, and government that collaborates with Zionist Israel as an

occupying power. They call for just and lasting peace built on social justice for Palestinian rural peoples struggling against the crimes of land grabbing, confiscation, and annexation.