

Right to Food Campaign (India) Inputs

UN Special Rapporteur Thematic Report on Human Rights and Starvation

General

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

The key thing to note in regards to human rights is that they are intersectional, which helps predict early warning signs for grave violations such as starvation. The right to food and nutrition is linked to the right to work, right to freedom of expression, right to decent living conditions and right to freedom from persecution, amongst others. A simultaneous attack on these rights is a sign of an attempt to use starvation and destroying of food systems as a weapon of war. For example, the rescinding of work permits of Palestinians directly impacts their income, which is directly linked to the quality, quantity and availability of food for them. Similarly, denial of the right to freedom of expression (targeting of Palestinian journalists, shutting down of international media offices in Gaza etc.) ensures that all news regarding the violations of rights will not be able to reach the world; effectively cutting off any possibility of extending aid/support to those affected by the genocide.

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

Starvation is caused by political failures and more often than not, by political inaction. The stronghold of one or two countries in the decision making processes of international institutions ensures that they are able to influence the decisions in a biased and often destructive manner (e.g. the USA thrice vetoed the UNSC resolution calling for a ceasefire). The most urgent changes necessary in international institutions such as the UNSC is the guarantee of everyone's vote having equal weight and/or votes' weight being representationally distributed, with Global South countries' votes/opinions holding more weight (as they have more at stake, compared to countries of the Global North).

Second, the institutional change necessary to prevent political failure and subsequent calamities such as mass starvation is to ensure that countries willing to provide humanitarian aid are not harmed in any way by their actions and if that happens, the aggressor parties are faced with dire consequences such as sanctions, suspension from the institution etc. Such a system should be put in place and strictly enforced.

Palestine and the Palestinian People

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

Other than being signatories to important statements, appeals and calls for action to stop the genocide in Palestine, some members of the Right to Food Campaign are also part of *Indians for Palestine* - a group of civil society activists, students and professors who have been trying to take proactive action to stop the Indian government's complicity with the ongoing Israeli genocide. The actions taken by this group have included public meetings, protests and calls for ending the MoU as a part of which Indian workers are being sent to Israel, ending the Adani-Elbit Systems tie-up under which drones and weaponized cargo is being sent to Israel. This work is an act of solidarity as it recognizes the erstwhile longstanding friendly relations between India and Palestine, and in hopes of continuing the same, the Indian people are resisting the Indian government's stance of supporting Israel and consequently supporting the ongoing genocide. The same Israeli blueprint of using drones to drop tear gas shells on civilians has been used by the Indian government to target its own farmers demanding their basic rights. Thus, this work is borne of a deep understanding of the consequences of complicity and ties between two aggressor nation states.

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?

The destruction of food systems in Gaza has been the top long-term detrimental impact to Palestinian People's food sovereignty. Enhancing this and supporting Palestinian peasants, small-scale fishers, pastoralists and small food producers would involve a restoration of Palestinian people's rights to their own land, water bodies and the viability of these ecosystems. This restoration will have to be a collective effort of the global pro-Palestinian community. In the process of this restoration, ensuring Palestinian People's food sovereignty would also involve supporting these peasants, fishers, pastoralists and food producers financially without interference in how the given finances are utilized (i.e. without any undue pressure to contribute to exports when their own self-sustainability is yet to be built up). Subsequently, in the longer run, inclusion of these stakeholders in trade ties and routes would ensure not only food sovereignty but empowerment as well.