

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 14 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, under the presidency of the Dominican Republic, the Security Council plans to hold an open video teleconference entitled “Protection of civilians from conflict-induced hunger” on 21 April 2020.

In that regard, the Dominican Republic has prepared the attached concept note (see annex). I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) José **Singer Weisinger**
President of the Security Council



Annex to the letter dated 14 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General

Maintenance of international peace and security: protecting civilians affected by conflict-induced hunger

Concept note

Two years after the adoption of the landmark Security Council resolution [2417 \(2018\)](#), the Dominican Republic will host a Council briefing on one of the greatest humanitarian challenges facing civilians in most conflict-affected countries: conflict-induced hunger.

Background

The Security Council has spoken with a unanimous voice on ending conflict-induced hunger.

With the adoption of Security Council resolution [2417 \(2018\)](#) and the prior statement by the President of the Council ([S/PRST/2017/14](#)), Council members made a clear and unanimous expression of political will to end conflict-induced hunger. In the resolution, the Council strongly condemns the starvation of civilians as a method of warfare and the denial of humanitarian access for the prevention of famine, making clear the causal link between armed conflict, food insecurity and starvation.

Understanding the critical need to end the vicious cycle of conflict and food insecurity, the Council, in its resolution, calls on the Secretary-General and Governments to regularly report on its implementation, including by identifying early warning signs.

In the past two years, evidence has continued to show that war and conflicts are one of the major driving forces behind food insecurity, taking a heavy and devastating toll on civilians, including women and children. This trend needs to mobilize all actors involved in conflict prevention and resolution to preserve the well-being of future generations.

In spite of a global reduction in poverty, improved agricultural output and global wealth, the devastating statistics on hunger and the risk of famine are, unfortunately, now well known.

For instance, it is noted in the *Global Report on Food Crises* of 2019 that “more than 113 million people across 53 countries experienced acute hunger requiring urgent food, nutrition and livelihoods assistance” in 2018. These grave numbers are attributed to conflict and insecurity, and climate and economic shocks.

The *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* report of 2017 concluded that “food insecurity itself can become a trigger for violence and instability, particularly in contexts marked by pervasive inequalities and fragile institutions” and that “conflict-sensitive and timely interventions aimed at improving food security and nutrition can contribute to sustaining peace”.¹

In addition, many conflict-affected countries are experiencing the adverse effects of climate change first-hand. They include, among others, acute drought, erratic rainfall, flooding and other climate-related disasters. The interaction between all these factors in an already vulnerable context has a devastating impact on civilians and poses a serious threat to achieving sustainable development.

¹ The annual report is produced jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development, the United Nations Children’s Fund, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization.

Conflict affects all dimensions of food security, with devastating effects on civilians and humanitarian consequences.

There are four main dimensions of food security: the physical availability of food; economic and physical access to food; food utilization; and stability of the other three dimensions over time.² Unfortunately, conflict disrupts all four dimensions by destroying farms, roads and ports, crippling economic stability and disrupting humanitarian access.

The impact on civilians is devastating. Nearly 80 per cent of the world's 155 million stunted children live in conflict-affected countries³ and the number of those "literally marching at the brink of starvation"⁴ has gone up to 124 million people. Furthermore, health effects in the trajectory from hunger to starvation are well known and unjustifiable to the international community.

Moreover, in many contexts, the indiscriminate disruption of humanitarian access and the use of starvation as a method of war exacerbates food insecurity and contributes to the possibility of famine. Those gross violations of international humanitarian law by parties to conflicts continue to hinder principled humanitarian action and prevent efforts to meet the needs of those affected.

Beyond the immediate impact on human health, increased hunger has become a push factor for migration and recruitment by terrorist groups. The World Food Programme reports that countries with the highest level of food insecurity, coupled with armed conflict, have the highest outward migration of refugees.

We can end hunger by 2030, but not with conflict. There's still much to do.

Key Questions

1. How can we arrive at a more comprehensive implementation of Security Council resolution [2417 \(2018\)](#), including tools available to Council members?
2. How can the missions deployed by the Security Council, notably its peace support operations and special political missions, be harnessed to prevent and mitigate conflict-induced hunger?
3. What kind of action do humanitarian organizations need from the Security Council to enable them to address the needs of people affected by conflict-induced hunger?
4. What early warning capabilities does the Security Council require in order to respond early and what institutional measures could help to improve existing capacity?

Format and briefers

The briefing will take place on 21 April 2020. Its exact format will be communicated in due course. The speakers who will brief the Council are:

- Qu Dongyu, Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
- David Beasley, Executive Director, World Food Programme
- Jan Egeland, Secretary-General, Norwegian Refugee Council

² European Commission-FAO Food Security Programme, *An Introduction to the Basic Concepts of Food Security* (2008).

³ As reported by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock.

⁴ As reported by the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, David Beasley.