

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 3 March 2021 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to inform you that, under the presidency of the United States, the Security Council will hold a briefing on conflict and food security on Thursday, 11 March 2021. In order to help to steer the discussion on the subject, the United States has prepared the enclosed concept note (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

*(Signed)* Linda **Thomas-Greenfield**

Ambassador

Representative of the United States to the United Nations



## **Annex to the letter dated 3 March 2021 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

### **Concept note for the Security Council high-level open debate on conflict and food security, 11 March 2021**

#### **Concept**

1. The *Global Humanitarian Overview 2021* projects a historic level of food insecurity, with famine looming in several countries, due in large part to conflict, and with the World Food Programme (WFP) targeting more people in need than at any point in its 60-year history. In recognition of this reality, the Secretary-General will host the Head of State-level Food Systems Summit during the General Assembly high-level week in September 2021. While climate and economic shocks are increasingly driving needs, conflict remains the root cause of acute food insecurity in a rising number of countries. Seventy-seven million people in 22 countries experienced hunger due to armed violence in 2019. Ongoing conflict is leading to food insecurity and high rates of malnutrition in Syria, Afghanistan, north-east Nigeria, South Sudan, the Sahel, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and Yemen. Violence in Ethiopia's Tigray region has led to projections of emergency levels of acute food insecurity.

2. In 2018, the Security Council showed clarity and unity by unanimously adopting resolution [2417 \(2018\)](#). This resolution reinforced the Council's commitment to address conflict-induced food insecurity, including famine. The resolution recalled the Geneva Conventions of 1949, reaffirmed the need for all to respect humanitarian principles and stressed the obligation of parties to armed conflict to comply with international humanitarian law. It underlined that the starvation of civilians as a method of warfare may constitute a war crime. The resolution made clear the importance of safe and unimpeded access of humanitarian personnel to civilians in armed conflicts and called upon all parties, including neighbouring States, to cooperate fully in providing access.

3. The Security Council asked the Secretary-General to report to the Council when the risk of conflict-induced famine and widespread food insecurity was taking place. In September 2020, the Council received a report and briefing, triggered by resolution [2417 \(2018\)](#), concerning food security risks in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yemen, north-east Nigeria and South Sudan. In the six months since the Council received the briefing on how conflict is driving hunger, the food security and nutrition outlook has worsened even further, with the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) coming into sharp focus. It is essential that we understand where the risks are today, where they might be looming in future months, and where the Council must act to stop conflict-driven food insecurity and hold those responsible to account.

#### **Objectives**

4. To advance efforts by the Security Council, the United Nations and Member States to break the cycle of conflict-driven food insecurity, including by addressing areas where conflict is leading to the threat of famine and acute malnutrition, Council members will be invited to discuss the worsening food security environment, relevant obligations under international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions, challenges in mobilizing adequate and timely resources for humanitarian assistance, and the implementation of Council resolution [2417 \(2018\)](#),

which details the consequences for States and individuals who drive food insecurity and displacement through conflict.

### **Format**

5. The event will be convened as a high-level Security Council open debate by videoconference. Minister-level participation is encouraged. The Secretary-General will open the session with a briefing. In accordance with the agreed-upon Security Council working methods during the COVID-19 pandemic, non-members of the Council are encouraged to submit written statements; these statements will be included in the official record of the discussion.

### **Briefers**

6. The following speakers will brief the Security Council:
- The Secretary-General
  - David Beasley, Executive Director of the World Food Programme
  - Gabriela Bucher, Executive Director of Oxfam International

### **Guiding questions**

7. These questions may help to guide Member State interventions:
- (a) How can Member States enhance collaboration to increase access to civilians in need of life-saving assistance and overcome attacks on humanitarian personnel and other types of interference in aid delivery?
  - (b) Do we need a United Nations focal point to help to guide the implementation of resolution [2417 \(2018\)](#)?
  - (c) How should the Security Council prevent or respond to potential famine in the coming year?
  - (d) Where should we be focusing on starvation in conflict situations and where are displacements taking place because of food security disruptions?
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