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Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

**Joint written statement* submitted by Organization for
Defending Victims of Violence, Action internationale pour la
paix et le développement dans la région des Grands Lacs,
Kham Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture, non-
governmental organizations in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[02 February 2025]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.

Starvation used as weapon of war in Gaza

Introduction

The Gaza Strip is facing a dire humanitarian crisis marked by acute food insecurity and widespread starvation. The ongoing blockade, coupled with persistent conflict, has rendered the population of 2.15 million people, including over a million children, vulnerable to famine and malnutrition. According to recent reports from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), nearly 96% of Gaza's population suffers from food insecurity, with approximately 345,000 individuals experiencing catastrophic levels. This situation is a grave violation of the fundamental human right to food and poses an immediate threat to human life and dignity. It is imperative that the international community, including governments, organizations, and individuals, take decisive action to address this crisis.

Current Situation

Recent assessments by the United Nations and humanitarian organizations highlight the severity of food insecurity in Gaza. According to IPC data, between November 2024 and April 2025, nearly 2 million people in Gaza are projected to face crisis-level food insecurity or worse. This includes over 345,000 individuals who are at risk of starvation due to severe restrictions on humanitarian aid and the destruction of critical infrastructure.

The World Food Programme (WFP) has reported that food prices in Gaza have skyrocketed, with staples such as wheat and rice becoming unaffordable for the majority of families. Furthermore, the blockade has severely disrupted food supply chains, leaving the population dependent on limited and unpredictable aid. Fishing, once a key source of livelihood, has been decimated by Israeli-imposed maritime restrictions. Simultaneously, the agricultural sector has been crippled by the deliberate destruction of infrastructure by Israeli forces, worsening an already dire humanitarian situation. These challenges exacerbate the already dire living conditions in Gaza, where due to a prolonged and unlawful blockade, over 80% of the population relies on international aid to survive.

Impact on Vulnerable Populations

The impact of food insecurity in Gaza is most acutely felt by vulnerable groups, particularly children, pregnant women, and the elderly. Reports indicate rising levels of acute malnutrition among children under five, with stunted growth and developmental delays becoming increasingly common. According to UNICEF, approximately 45% of children in Gaza suffer from anemia, a direct consequence of poor nutrition and limited access to healthcare.

Pregnant and lactating women are also at heightened risk, with inadequate nutrition leading to complications during pregnancy and childbirth. The elderly population faces significant challenges in accessing sufficient food, further compounded by chronic illnesses and limited mobility. The widespread hunger and malnutrition in Gaza have long-term implications for physical and cognitive development, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and deprivation.

Legal and Ethical Considerations

The right to food is a fundamental human right enshrined in international law, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 25) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 11). The deliberate denial of access to food and humanitarian aid in Gaza constitutes a violation of these rights and may amount to the use of starvation as a method of warfare, prohibited under the Geneva Conventions.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Michael Fakhri, has emphasized that the situation in Gaza represents a systematic denial of food sovereignty and self-determination.

He has called for immediate action to address these violations, stressing that the international community has a moral and legal obligation to intervene. The International Criminal Court (ICC) has also recognized starvation as a potential war crime, underscoring the need for accountability in addressing the crisis in Gaza.

Recommendations

1. **Immediate Humanitarian Access:** Humanitarian agencies must be granted unimpeded access to Gaza to deliver essential supplies, including food, water, and medical aid. All parties involved in the conflict should facilitate the safe passage of aid convoys and ensure the protection of humanitarian workers.
2. **permanent peace, Ending Occupation, and Protection of Civilians:** The international community must pressure Israel to establish permanent peace, end the occupation, and ensure the protection of civilians. The continuation of the occupation not only fuels conflict but also prevents humanitarian aid from reaching those in need.
3. **Lifting of the Blockade:** As condemned in numerous UN resolutions and reports, the blockade on Gaza must be lifted to enable free movement of goods and people. This step is essential for restoring local markets, reviving agriculture, and rebuilding food production infrastructure.
4. **Investment in Local Agriculture:** Long-term solutions to food insecurity in Gaza require investments in local agriculture and fisheries. Support for sustainable farming practices, access to modern equipment, and rehabilitation of agricultural land can help reduce dependence on external aid and promote food sovereignty.
5. **International Monitoring and Accountability:** An independent international body should be established to monitor the delivery of aid, investigate allegations of violations of international law, and ensure accountability. This includes documenting instances of starvation as a method of warfare and pursuing legal action against perpetrators.

Comparative Analysis

The crisis in Gaza is not an isolated case; it shares similarities with other regions facing food insecurity due to conflict and blockades. For instance, the famine in Yemen, exacerbated by a protracted conflict and restrictions on humanitarian aid, highlights the devastating impact of such policies on civilian populations.

Similarly, the crisis in South Sudan, where conflict and displacement have disrupted food production and distribution, demonstrates the critical role of local agriculture in mitigating hunger. International efforts to support small-scale farmers and rebuild agricultural infrastructure in South Sudan provide a model for addressing food insecurity in Gaza.

Conclusion

The situation in Gaza is a humanitarian catastrophe that demands immediate and sustained action from the international community. The deliberate denial of food and humanitarian aid is not only a violation of international law but also a moral failure that undermines the principles of human rights and dignity. Addressing this crisis requires a multi-faceted approach, including immediate humanitarian access, the lifting of the blockade, and long-term investments in local agriculture and infrastructure.

The international community must prioritize the right to food as a fundamental human right and work collectively to prevent further loss of life in Gaza. By taking decisive action, we can uphold the principles of justice and human dignity, ensuring that the people of Gaza have access to the resources they need to survive and thrive.

International Movement for a Just World , Center for Peace and Reconciliation Center Studies, Bahjat Al Fuad Center for Psychological and Medical Rehabilitation for Torture Victims, Children's Right to HealthCare (CRH), NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.