

Averting hunger during armed conflict

PRACTICAL MEASURES

TO PREVENT AND MITIGATE
FOOD INSECURITY



PRACTICAL MEASURES TO PREVENT AND MITIGATE CONFLICT-INDUCED FOOD INSECURITY

The Practical Measures are designed to help armed actors meet their legal obligations to protect civilians. They give guidance to armed actors on policies, planning, conducting operations and post-operational procedures for how they can better reduce, prevent and address food insecurity in the areas they operate in.

Do not target food production, processing, storage, transport and distribution sites such as bakeries, warehouses and markets, trucks transporting food, silos, mills and agricultural facilities.

Avoid armed offensives during harvesting or market times and locations and food distribution routes.

Avoid contaminating agricultural land and water sources with explosive remnants of war, mines, biological or chemical weapons.

Collect information about food and water systems as part of the civilian environment in which operations occur including location of markets, crop fields and distribution routes.

Avoid conscripting farmers, fishers, and others engaged in vital food production and distribution.

Provide military units with sufficient food so that they do not appropriate civilian property.

Do not confine civilians. Do everything possible to avoid military presence in food and water infrastructures such as agricultural and pastoral land, fisheries, distribution sites or ports and facilitate civilians' safe access to these areas.

Facilitate a safe, rapid, and unimpeded access of humanitarian assistance and services.

Do not use strategies such as blockades that aim at starving the population.



ARMED CONFLICT AND FOOD SECURITY

Armed conflict is the main driver of food crises around the world. It can destroy livelihood, markets, livestock, and means of food production, contaminate agricultural land and water supplies and disrupt humanitarian aid, leading to a situation of critical food insecurity for millions of people.

Hunger does not only have a direct negative lasting impact on the health of civilian populations, causing illness, malnutrition or disabilities but it can also lead to displacement and escalate the risk of other human rights abuses such as child labor or gender-based violence.

However, as with any form of civilian harm resulting from armed conflict, conflict-induced food insecurity is largely the result of foreseeable and preventable ways that armed actors—state and non-state—conduct themselves.



TAKE ACTION

The Practical Measures have been designed for:

- Armed actors and their allies to help them better understand the consequences of their military operations and identify actionable steps to prevent and mitigate food insecurity and address harm caused to civilians
- Civil society and humanitarian organizations to engage in advocacy and negotiation with armed actors

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- United Nations Security Council Resolution 2417 recognizes conflict-induced food insecurity as a threat to international peace and security and stresses that the use of starvation as a weapon of war may constitute a war crime.
- Parties to conflicts have a legal obligation to comply with the International Humanitarian Law, many provisions of which are relevant to ensuring food security and preventing starvation in situations of armed conflict.
- International human rights law also enshrines people's right to food at all times and requires that states provide an enabling environment in which people can produce or procure adequate food for themselves and their families.



To learn more about Practical Measures for armed actors to prevent and mitigate conflict-induced food insecurity:

<https://www.interaction.org/blog/new-guidance-for-armed-actors-to-prevent-and-mitigate-conflict-induced-hunger>