Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

CIHEAM ZARAGOZA

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International Symposium

Sustaining peace: The right to food in conflict contexts and protracted crises

CIHEAM Zaragoza, Campus Aula Dei, Zaragoza (Spain)

25 November 2026

HYBRID FORMAT
with English-Spanish interpretation

CONTEXT

Around one in six people around the world were estimated to have been exposed to conflict in 2025, which also saw the highest level of violence against civilians in the past five years.[1] Ten countries accounted for two-thirds of all people facing high levels of acute food insecurity in 2025 while around 1.4 million people faced Catastrophe in 2025 (IPC/CH Phase 5).[2]

Armed conflict and violence are a primary driver of acute food insecurity in multiple mutually reinforcing ways, including through the displacement of civilians, the destruction of food systems and constraints on humanitarian access. Conflicts can fuel environmental degradation, exacerbating climate vulnerability and diverting resources away from humanitarian, mitigation and adaptation efforts. Conflicts hinder households' ability to access food in multiple ways. Gender-based and sexual violence violates women's right to life and can impede women's and girls' capacity to physically access lands, markets or natural resources, or even to access food aid. Conflicts can lead to increases in the price of food and food inputs, which hampers households' economic access to food.

Conflicts can be triggered or worsened by weather extremes, climate crises and competition over the changing availability and distribution of natural resources. Economic shocks can also lead to social unrest, violence, conflict, and political instability as a result of rising unemployment, and increasing levels of poverty.

Famines are not inevitable – they are almost always foreseeable, preventable and driven by human actions. Famine is considered a failure of the humanitarian system and tends to occur in contexts of conflict, extreme vulnerability, poverty and marginalization, where livelihoods and coping strategies have been exhausted and access to basic services is increasingly lacking. Greater coherence in political commitments, funding allocations and interventions along the humanitarian-food-peace-development nexus is needed. This includes acting early when signs of acute food insecurity and malnutrition appear, supporting livelihoods, and improving access to essential services, rather than relying on food assistance alone.

Persistent disconnects remain between humanitarian practice, localization agendas, protection frameworks, international humanitarian and right to food frameworks, underscoring the need for stronger dialogue, greater technical consensus and more coherent engagement across these communities. Bridging these divides is essential to support more principled, effective and context-responsive action, strengthen accountability, protect livelihoods and food systems, and promote locally grounded and sustainable recovery and resilience pathways in conflict and protracted crisis settings.

[1] Box 6, p. 22 https://doi.org/10.4060/cd9424en

[2] https://doi.org/10.4060/cd9424en

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9:00 - 9:15 — **Opening Session**

- Raúl Compés, Director, CIHEAM Zaragoza
- Adriano Campolina, Deputy Director ad interim, Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division (ESP), FAO
- David Alonso – Head of Area of the Masar Al'An program, Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)
- Mary Robinson - First woman President of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; former Chair of The Elders (*inspirational video message*)

9:15 - 9:30 — **Introductory Session**

Ensuring the right to food in conflict contexts and protracted crises

- Giuseppe Palmisano, Vice-Chair, Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Juan Echanove, Right to Food Team Leader, FAO

9:30 - 11:00 — **Panel 1: Prevention and Early Warning**

Anticipatory action to prevent violations of the right to food in conflict contexts and protracted crises

Setting the stage:
- Sofia Monsalve, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food

Panellists:
- Andrew Seal, UCL Institute for Global Health
- Marlene Urscheler, OHCHR
- Timothée Herviault, Med-Amin Network
- Mohammed Hassan, Darfur Network for Human Rights

Moderator:
- Rebecca Blumenthal, Videre

Rapporteur:
- Andrew Forde, Dublin City University / Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

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11:00 - 11:30 — *Mediterranean breakfast*

11:30 - 13:00 — **Panel 2: Gender-Based Violence and Structural Discrimination**

The right to food of women and people in vulnerable situations, and their strategies for resilience

Setting the stage:
- Mona Rishmawi, UN Fact-Finding Mission in Sudan (*virtual*)

Panellists:
- Morena Bassan, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- Corita Tassi and Jose Ruiz Espi, DG ECHO (*virtual*)
- Rahma El Nemr, American University / MicroFert / Agrination Programme
- Wafaa Dikah Hamze, CIHEAM Governing Board / Regional Consultant in Gender Equality and Women's Rights

Moderator:
- Juan Echanove, FAO

Rapporteur:
- Abinet Tasew, CARE International

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13:00 - 14:15 *Lunch break*

14:15 - 15:45 **Panel 3: Environmental Degradation**

Armed conflicts, environmental degradation, and disruption of food systems

Setting the stage:
- Fabien Monteils, United Nations Environment Programme

Panellists:
- Livia Peiser, FAO (*virtual*)
- Nathaniel Raymond, Yale School of Public Health (*virtual*)
- Lisa Shahin, Coordinator of the CSIPM Working Group on Protracted Crises, Arab Group for the Protection of Nature
- Rami Zurayk, American University of Beirut

Moderator:
- Elisa Morgera, Special Rapporteur on Climate Change & Human Rights

Rapporteur:
- Julia Choucair Vizoso, Arab Reform Initiative

15:45 - 16:15 *Coffee break*

16:15 - 17:45 **Panel 4: Peace-Building, Reconstruction, and Resilience**

International cooperation, Rights-based approaches and people-centered reconstruction for the recovery of food systems

Setting the stage:
- Thoodan Al-Eryani, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

Panellists:
- Viktor Yarovyi, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine
- Sergio Coronado, Ombudsman's Office, Colombia
- Rosendo Castillo López, CINGRAL
- Jameson Zvizvai, FAO Syria

Moderator:
- Zdravka Dimitrova, FAO

Rapporteur:
- Christoph Herby, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

17:45 - 18:15 **Closing Session**

- Anas A. Al-Nabulsi, Committee on World Food Security Chair (*video message*)
- Teodoro Miano, Secretary General, CIHEAM *(virtual)*
- Adriano Campolina, Deputy Director ad interim, Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division (ESP), FAO
- Harry O'Crowley, Head of International Development, UN & SDGs Unit, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Ireland
- María García Perez, Director, Rural Development, Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, AECID

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