

[Before I conclude], allow me to add the following in the name of Brazil and Switzerland, as informal co-focal points on Conflict and Hunger, with regard to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) on Acute Food Insecurity in the Gaza Strip published on December 21st.

More than ninety percent of Gaza's population is currently experiencing crisis-level food insecurity. Over 500'000 people are facing catastrophic hunger conditions. Almost two million people are either not meeting their daily food needs, or are only meeting minimal nourishment requirements by selling their possessions. Virtually all households are skipping meals every day. Many families go entire days and nights without eating. Adults go hungry, so children can eat. It is estimated that until February, the entire population in the Gaza Strip will face high levels of food insecurity. These levels of acute food insecurity are unprecedented in recent history.

The risk of Gaza experiencing famine increases with each day, with hostilities as the main driver. Crucial infrastructure such as bakeries, water reservoirs, agricultural lands and fishing ports have been destroyed or severely damaged. Agricultural activities have collapsed. Access to adequate food, water, health services and humanitarian aid has been severely disrupted in the Gaza strip. The delivery of humanitarian assistance is hindered due to ongoing hostilities and large-scale devastation.

We welcome the delivery of a first aid convoy by the World Food Program from Jordan to Gaza, reaching half a million people with food assistance. This could pave the way for a sustained corridor allowing for expanded humanitarian assistance. Nevertheless, only the resumption of commercial cargo moving into Gaza can ensure the much needed scale-up to provide relief to the people in need. It is critical that the commercial and public sectors resume their activities in Gaza, including agricultural production, so that markets can replenish their shelves. The governing bodies of FAO and WFP, as well as the Committee on World Food Security, have also underscored their distress over Gaza's dire food security crisis, in line with last week's IPS report.

Mr. President,

Food is running out in the Gaza Strip. If people need to pay five to ten times more for essential food items, such as flour and oil, we know that scarcity will affect the most vulnerable in catastrophic ways. This Council has adopted resolutions 2712 and 2720, which call for increased humanitarian access and aid as well as for urgent steps towards a sustainable cessation of hostilities. It is time that members of this Council use their influence to ensure that these provisions are implemented on the ground.

When adopting Resolution 2417 five years ago, the Council demonstrated its commitment to address conflict-induced food insecurity, including famine, while stressing the importance of full compliance with international humanitarian law by all parties. The resolution is clear in its condemnation of the unlawful denial of humanitarian access and depriving civilians of objects indispensable to their survival. As informal co-focal points, we call upon the members of this Council to give their full attention to the information provided by the United Nations on the risk of conflict-induced famine and to do their utmost to prevent it.