

UN Security Council open debate on "Famine and conflict-induced global food insecurity" ([S/2023/560](#)), under the agenda item "Maintenance of international peace and security"

Statement by the Kingdom of Belgium, Luxembourg and the Kingdom of the Netherlands

August 3, 2023

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- Thank you, Madam President.
- Let me start by congratulating you on assuming the Presidency of the Council for the month of August, and by thanking you for organizing this open debate. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Benelux countries: Belgium, Luxembourg and my own county, the Kingdom of the Netherlands. We align ourselves with the statement just made by the European Union.
- The Benelux countries would like to stress the continued importance of Resolution 2417 (2018). Which we consider to be a landmark resolution. Because it was the first time the SC recognized the link between conflict and hunger. And today, we reiterate the call for collective action and renewed commitment for its implementation.
- Sadly, as we heard from the briefers this morning, five years after the adoption of the resolution, conflict continues to be the main driver of hunger and famine, with 70 percent of people facing food insecurity living in areas affected by conflict.

Madam President, allow me to briefly highlight a couple of points:

- First: With conflict-induced humanitarian needs ever increasing we need to realize that this is a global challenge we cannot leave to humanitarian organizations alone: we all have a responsibility to break this vicious cycle. Access restrictions in particular often pose an obstacle for the effective delivery of humanitarian aid. Through Resolution 2417, we have committed ourselves to prompt, safe and unimpeded delivery of assistance in line with humanitarian principles. This includes allowing for a cross-border mechanism so that humanitarian aid can continue to reach those in need in Syria.
- Second, Resolution 2417 reminds us that under IHL the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is unacceptable. While underlining that it is the primary responsibility of States to protect the population in their territory, all parties to armed conflict are to respect IHL. Those responsible for violations of IHL must be held accountable, including through international mechanisms when accountability cannot be achieved through the national efforts. Member states can contribute to ensuring accountability:
 - by supporting the capabilities of human rights organizations and others to investigate violations of IHL related to conflict and hunger.
 - and by ensuring that the importance of impartial investigation of allegations of hunger-related violations of IHL is reflected in resolutions, such as those adopted by the Human Rights Council.
- Third, Resolution 2417 calls on the SG to report to the SC when conflict may lead to acute food insecurity. It also commits Council members to act on such reports. We urge this Council to step up efforts in this regard. More frequent reporting and more Security

Council action are vital if we are serious in our commitment to prevent conflict-induced hunger.

- Finally, the destruction and deliberate targeting of agricultural land and critical agricultural infrastructure, as we now see in Ukraine, should stop. Their effect on the civilian population, and on global food prices and availability is devastating, particular for the most vulnerable countries and populations. We therefore join others in calling on the Russian Federation to immediately restore the Black Sea Grain Initiative to avert a global food crisis. The Benelux countries, on their part, remain committed to support countries in combating food insecurity.
- Madam President: five years ago we committed ourselves to break the cycle of conflict and hunger. It is now more important than ever that we live up to that commitment. This is a collective responsibility: we count on Council members to hold us and themselves to it.