



## **TQO The Weaponisation of Famine in Conflict**

Both historically and in recent years, civilians have suffered from conflict induced famine – a tactic used to weaken a population and strongarm an opponent into a decision, such as surrender. As the name suggests, weaponised famine involves a party either intensifying or causing a particular group of people to experience famine. This can mean the disruption or blockade of humanitarian aid, the destruction of farmland or water sources and even possibly using chemical warfare to render crops and livestock useless.

Although the use of starvation of a civilian population as a method of warfare is prohibited, there remain many examples of it being used, even today. In 2022, Russian troops destroyed agricultural machinery and cropland in Ukraine – similar scenes can be observed in Gaza, Yemen and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Civilians and soldiers alike suffer the consequences of weaponised famine, making it harder for civilians to evacuate dangerous areas and denying soldiers the sustenance they need to garner the strength to engage in any kind of conflict.

This issue doesn't just affect nations currently in conflict either – many nations are still feeling the consequences of weaponised famine in a previous conflict. As the United Nations, we should uplift these nations and help provide them with the opportunity to recover from these past tragedies.

A resolution on this topic should address the most effective ways for the United Nations to support countries currently experiencing weaponised famine, as well as how to help nations who've previously experienced it in recovering trade routes and ports and rebuilding the agricultural sector.

## **TQO The Exploitation of People in the Agricultural Industry**

In recent years, the exploitation of workers in the agricultural sector has become an increasingly dire issue. The rise of globalisation and overconsumption go hand-in-hand with this issue. This exploitation can manifest in many ways, such as underpaying and overworking farmers, forcing native people to leave their land in favour of expanding farmland,

and employing vulnerable people to do physically and mentally taxing tasks (i.e. children, disabled people, the elderly, etc.).

People across the world can end up in situations that force them to seek poorly paid agricultural work that is incredibly physically difficult, however people living in the third world are at an undeniably higher risk of falling into a situation like this. Global companies, such as Nestle, often exploit children to harvest cocoa beans – the banana industry is an equally serious situation. These children are in situations so desperate (often due to conflict and famine) that companies can get away with paying them miniscule amounts of money per day for long hours and back-breaking work.

Organisations, such as Fair Trade, work to stop this issue by hiring capable adults and paying the farmers a fair wage. It is an inescapable fact, however, that these efforts have not eliminated the mass exploitation of agricultural workers.

A resolution on this topic should consider how to make organisations such as Fair Trade more effective, how to deter international, wealthy companies from exploiting impoverished peoples' work for very little pay, and ways to move forward in the agricultural industry without exploiting any of the people involved, from planting a seed to harvesting the crops.

## **TQO The Obstruction of Education in Conflict**

Education is one of the fundamental human rights, as stated in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, in times of conflict and war, access to education is often severely disrupted. Education is not prioritised in times of conflict. Schools are often attacked and destroyed, temporarily shut down, or repurposed for military use, and educational infrastructure is . The obstruction of education in conflicts not only affects individuals in the short term but also has drastic long-term impacts on entire populations.

In 2017, 27 million children were out of school due to war and violence. As of December 2024, that number has increased to 52 million children in crisis-affected areas without proper schooling. This has drastic effects on communities. Extended conflict contributes to illiteracy rates, due to disrupted access to education. As well as this, the disruption to primary and secondary education creates a chain effect: Children without elementary education are less likely to be able to go to secondary,

and unlikely to go in to third level education. This means that the number of people qualifying as essential workers (doctors, nurses, teachers etc.) decreases, and the country of conflict becomes reliant on foreign aid, therefore losing aspects of self sufficiency. Refugee children who want to join education systems/schools abroad may face challenges, due to not only language barrier, but also illiteracy in any language, leading to stigmatisation and lack of integration. People are also open to exploitation as a result of a lack of education: girls are more likely to become victims of sexual and gender based violence.

Urgent action is needed to protect the right to education in areas of conflict. “The number of attacks on schools, students, and educational personnel as well as the military use of schools continues to rise, with a devastating impact on children, especially girls” said Virginia Gamba (Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Children and Armed Conflict).

A resolution on this topic must consider all aspects of the effects of the obstruction of education in conflict, and propose viable short term and long term solutions.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/25/world/americas/haiti-children-schools.html>

<https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/27-million-children-out-school-conflict-zones>

<https://www.chathamhouse.org/2023/06/three-priorities-protecting-education-conflict-zones>