



Forum:	Human Rights Council
Question of:	Ensuring and protecting clean water, sanitation and food security for residents in times of conflict
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I. Description of the Issue

Access to clean water, sanitation, and food security is a fundamental human right that is often compromised during times of conflict. Armed conflicts can lead to the destruction of water and sanitation infrastructure, contamination of water sources, disruption of food production and distribution systems, and displacement of populations, making it challenging to meet basic human needs. Ensuring and protecting these essential resources is crucial for the survival and well-being of affected populations, particularly vulnerable groups such as women, children, and the elderly.

II. Definition of Key Terms

1. **Clean Water:** Water that is safe for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene, free from harmful contaminants and pathogens.
2. **Sanitation:** The provision of facilities and services for the safe disposal of human waste, including toilets, sewage systems, and waste management.
3. **Food Security:** A situation where all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.
4. **Conflict:** A state of open, armed, and prolonged fighting between two or more parties, often involving the use of force and violence.

III. Background Information

Access to clean water, sanitation, and food security is essential for human survival and well-being. However, during times of conflict, these basic needs are often compromised due to the destruction of infrastructure, displacement of populations, and disruption of supply chains. Conflicts can lead to the contamination of water sources, damage to sanitation facilities, and disruption of food production and distribution systems, putting the lives and health of affected populations at risk.



The consequences of inadequate access to these resources can be severe, including the spread of waterborne diseases, malnutrition, and increased vulnerability to exploitation and violence, particularly for women and children. Additionally, the lack of access to clean water and sanitation can exacerbate existing health issues and contribute to the spread of infectious diseases, further compounding the challenges faced by affected populations.

IV. Major Countries and Organizations Involved

1. **United Nations (UN):** The UN plays a crucial role in coordinating humanitarian efforts and providing assistance to affected populations through various agencies and programs, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Program (WFP), and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).
2. **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC):** The ICRC is a neutral and impartial humanitarian organization that works to protect and assist victims of armed conflicts and other situations of violence. It plays a vital role in ensuring access to clean water, sanitation, and food security in conflict zones.
3. **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs):** Various NGOs, such as Oxfam, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) are actively involved in providing humanitarian assistance including access to clean water, sanitation, and food security in conflict-affected areas.
4. **Conflict-affected countries:** Countries experiencing armed conflicts, such as Syria, Yemen, South Sudan, and Ukraine, face significant challenges in ensuring access to clean water, sanitation, and food security for their populations.

V. Timeline of Events

- 1949: The Geneva Conventions establish rules for the protection of civilians and the provision of humanitarian assistance during armed conflicts.
- 1977: The Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions further strengthen the protection of civilians and the provision of humanitarian assistance.



- 2000: The United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) include targets for improving access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.
- 2010: The United Nations General Assembly recognizes the human right to water and sanitation.
- 2015: The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include targets for achieving universal access to safe and affordable drinking water, adequate sanitation, and ending hunger by 2030.
- 2016: The World Humanitarian Summit highlights the need for increased efforts to address the challenges of water, sanitation, and food security in humanitarian crises.
- 2021: The United Nations Security Council adopts Resolution 2573, which emphasizes the importance of protecting civilian infrastructure, including water and sanitation facilities, during armed conflicts.

VI. Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

Various efforts have been made by the international community to address the challenges of ensuring and protecting clean water, sanitation, and food security in times of conflict. These include:

1. **Humanitarian assistance:** International organizations and NGOs have provided emergency relief, including the distribution of clean water, sanitation facilities, and food aid, to affected populations in conflict zones.
2. **Infrastructure rehabilitation:** Efforts have been made to repair and rebuild water and sanitation infrastructure damaged or destroyed during conflicts, as well as to establish temporary facilities in displacement camps.
3. **Capacity building:** Programs have been implemented to train local communities and aid workers in water and sanitation management, as well as sustainable food production techniques.
4. **Advocacy and awareness-raising:** Campaigns have been launched to raise awareness about the importance of protecting water, sanitation, and food resources during conflicts, and to advocate for the rights of affected populations.



5. Legal and policy frameworks: International humanitarian law and human rights treaties, such as the Geneva Conventions and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, have been established to protect the rights of civilians and ensure access to essential resources during armed conflicts.

VII. Possible Solutions

1. Strengthening international humanitarian law: Enhancing the implementation and enforcement of existing legal frameworks, such as the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, to ensure the protection of civilian infrastructure, including water and sanitation facilities, during armed conflicts.
2. Improving coordination and cooperation: Fostering better coordination and cooperation among international organizations, NGOs, and local authorities to ensure a more effective and efficient response to water, sanitation, and food security needs in conflict-affected areas.
3. Investing in resilient infrastructure: Prioritizing the development of resilient water, sanitation, and food production infrastructure that can withstand the impacts of armed conflicts and natural disasters.
4. Promoting sustainable and localized solutions: Encouraging the adoption of sustainable and locally appropriate solutions for water, sanitation, and food security, such as rainwater harvesting, ecological sanitation, and community-based food production systems.
5. Enhancing early warning and preparedness systems: Developing and strengthening early warning and preparedness systems to anticipate and mitigate the potential impacts of armed conflicts on water, sanitation, and food security.
6. Addressing root causes of conflicts: Promoting conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and addressing the underlying causes of armed conflicts, such as poverty, inequality, and resource scarcity, to create a more stable and secure environment for ensuring access to essential resources.

VIII. Questions Delegates Should Consider During Research

1. What are the specific challenges faced by different conflict-affected regions in ensuring access to clean water, sanitation, and food security?



2. How can the international community better coordinate and collaborate to address these challenges more effectively?
3. What role can technology and innovation play in developing sustainable and resilient solutions for water, sanitation, and food security in conflict zones?
4. How can the rights of vulnerable groups, such as women, children, and the elderly, be better protected and their specific needs addressed in times of conflict?
5. What measures can be taken to prevent the intentional targeting and destruction of water, sanitation, and food production infrastructure during armed conflicts?
6. How can the international community better support and empower local communities and organizations in their efforts to ensure access to essential resources during conflicts?
7. What are the long-term implications of inadequate access to clean water, sanitation, and food security on the health, well-being, and development of conflict-affected populations?
8. How can the root causes of conflicts, such as poverty, inequality, and resource scarcity, be addressed to create a more stable and secure environment for ensuring access to essential resources?

IX. Relevant UN Treaties and Events

1. Geneva Conventions (1949) and Additional Protocols (1977): Establish rules for the protection of civilians and the provision of humanitarian assistance during armed conflicts.
2. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966): Recognizes the right to an adequate standard of living, including access to adequate food, clothing, and housing.
3. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 64/292 (2010): Recognizes the human right to water and sanitation.
4. United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (2015): Include targets for achieving universal access to safe and affordable drinking water, adequate sanitation, and ending hunger by 2030.
5. World Humanitarian Summit (2016): Highlighted the need for increased efforts to address the challenges of water, sanitation, and food security in humanitarian crises.



6. United Nations Security Council Resolution 2573 (2021): Emphasizes the importance of protecting civilian infrastructure, including water and sanitation facilities, during armed conflicts.

X. Useful Links and Sources

1. United Nations Water: The UN's inter-agency coordination mechanism for all freshwater and sanitation-related issues.
2. World Health Organization (WHO): Provides information and resources on water, sanitation, and hygiene.
3. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF): Works to provide access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene in humanitarian emergencies and development contexts.
4. World Food Programme (WFP): The UN's leading humanitarian organization addressing food security and nutrition in emergencies and protracted crises.
5. International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC): Provides water, sanitation, and habitat assistance in conflict-affected areas.
6. Oxfam International: Works to provide access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene in humanitarian emergencies and development contexts.
7. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF): Provides water and sanitation services in humanitarian emergencies and conflict zones.
8. International Rescue Committee (IRC): Provides water, sanitation, and hygiene services in humanitarian crises and conflict-affected areas.