

# Security Council can and must do more to break the link between conflict and hunger, says UN relief officials

Hunger is on the rise worldwide mainly because “people won’t stop shooting at each other,” the head of the United Nations food relief agency said Friday, telling the Security Council that if it did more to break the link between conflict and hunger, countless lives could be saved.

David Beasley, the head of the UN World Food Programme (WFP) told the 15-member body that resolving conflicts and ensuring peace are indispensable to achieve food security.

That link, he underscored, is both strong and highly destructive.

“If you don’t know where your child’s next meal is coming from, you may be forced to make impossible choices,” he said, noting that for one per cent rise in the rate of hunger, there is a two per cent increase in migration.

Speaking via videoconference from Biel, Switzerland, he called on the Council to help end war and stressed that the price of programmes to tackle the root causes of hunger is far cheaper than the cost of the current conflict cycle.

WFP can save one billion dollars a year if all armed groups respected international humanitarian law and provided unimpeded access to civilian populations, explained Mr. Beasley.

Briefing the Council alongside the WFP chief, Mark Lowcock, the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, explained that almost two-thirds of the world’s hungry live in conflict-torn countries.

Conflict – often conflated with extreme climatic shock and high prices of staple food – is the main driver of global food insecurity – *UN aid chief Mark Lowcock*

“Conflict – often conflated with extreme climatic shock and high prices of staple food – is the main driver of global food insecurity,” he added, speaking via videoconference from Dublin.

On top of this, the conduct of combatants worsens the situation with their actions – contrary to international law – resulting in damage and destruction of water systems, farms, livestock and markets.

It is, therefore, crucial that all States ensure that international humanitarian law is respected by parties to conflict as per their obligation to do so, said Mr. Lowcock, calling on the Security Council to investigate

violations of international law and ensure that those who violate it are held accountable.

“This Council’s main responsibility is peace and international security. In other words, this Council can help prevent famine to ever occur again,” he stressed.