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The right to food

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Sofía Monsalve Suárez, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 80/210 and Human Rights Council resolution 58/10.

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Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Sofía Monsalve Suárez

Reasserting human dignity in times of global war economies: an inception report

Summary

In this first thematic report since her appointment in May 2026, the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Sofía Monsalve Suárez, sets out the strategic vision and thematic priorities that will guide her mandate.

The mandate holder shares her vision centred on human dignity as the foundational lens through which the right to food must be understood and advanced. The report provides an assessment of structural and long-standing challenges to the realization of the right to food and identifies newly emerging challenges, including those arising from the deployment of new technologies in food systems, the crisis of social reproduction, and the normative collapse related to the accelerating use of food as a weapon of war and coercion.

I. Introduction

> I believe in the progressive humanization of the human being. I have received and experienced so much love in the course of my life that it is impossible for me not to believe in the work of God.
>
> – Jean Ziegler (first Special Rapporteur on the right to food), *Chemins d'espérance: ces combats gagnés, parfois perdus mais que nous remporterons ensemble*

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 80/210 and Human Rights Council resolution 58/10, the Special Rapporteur on the right to food submits the present report to the General Assembly at its eighty-first session.

2. This is the first report of the current mandate holder, Sofía Monsalve Suárez, who took up her functions as Special Rapporteur on the right to food on 1 May 2026 and has since engaged in an extensive process of consultations in preparation for this report. She held two virtual consultations with civil society organizations, grass-roots movements, trade union representatives and human rights defenders working on issues related to the right to food. She also consulted with representatives of Member States, including permanent missions in Geneva, and diplomats accredited to Rome-based agencies, as well as with senior officials and technical staff of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Committee on World Food Security. She also convened bilateral consultations with independent academic experts and researchers.

3. The Special Rapporteur wishes to express her profound gratitude to all actors who generously engaged with her during the preparation of this report: the government officials and diplomats who shared their perspectives; the civil society actors, grass-roots organizations and communities whose testimony and advocacy continue to place human experience at the centre of the right to food; and the independent experts for sharing their findings.

4. The purpose of this inception report is threefold: to articulate the Special Rapporteur's vision for her mandate, including thematic priorities and her approach to engagement with all relevant actors over the next six years; to identify newly emerging challenges that require urgent attention from the international community; and to offer an assessment of the structural challenges that continue to impede the realization of the right to food at the global level.

5. At the heart of the Special Rapporteur's vision lies the notion of dignity. The right to adequate food is, at its core, a right grounded in the inherent dignity of every human being. The Special Rapporteur will place the human dimension and the dignity of individuals, families and communities at the centre of her work. This means paying particular attention to those whose dignity is systematically undermined by structural inequalities and, in the worst cases, by famine. It includes women and girls, whose care work sustains food systems yet too often goes unrecognized; young people, who must be active participants in shaping the future of food; and persons with disabilities, communities that are facing structural racism and discrimination and all those individuals and communities engaged in collective and solidarity-based approaches to food sovereignty and food security.

6. The Special Rapporteur will also place strong emphasis on localization: the transformative potential of territorial food systems, markets and governance. Cities, municipalities, communities and local governments are increasingly at the forefront of innovative, solidarity-based responses to food insecurity. The Special Rapporteur intends to engage meaningfully with these actors and to amplify their role in the collective realization of the right to food.

II. Vision of the mandate holder

7. The Special Rapporteur starts her mandate at a time of a looming food crisis due to the combined effects of El Niño, ongoing conflicts and wars, cuts in humanitarian assistance, economic shocks of geopolitical instability, and the context of global war economies (see sect. III.B).

8. The living knowledge built by this mandate remains a fundamental reference framework to guide the work of the current mandate holder (see sect. IV). Issues related to land, seeds, water, fisheries, reduction of agrochemicals and promotion of agroecology, dignified working conditions, social protection, corporate accountability and addressing corporate concentration, strict regulation of ultra-processed foods and advertisement, promotion of healthy diets, social participation and democratization of decision-making remain of paramount importance for the Special Rapporteur.

9. In this sense, regressive measures in fields such as the regulation of ultra-processed foods to safeguard public health, the application of the precautionary principle regarding new genomic techniques, and the regulation of land tenure to prevent further concentration are matters of great concern. In carrying this living knowledge forward, the Special Rapporteur intends to continue the path paved by her predecessors, deepening the paradigm shift towards food systems grounded in food sovereignty, agroecology and human rights.

10. Based on this living knowledge, the Special Rapporteur is ready to support countries in their efforts to develop, implement and monitor national legislation, policies and strategies for the progressive realization of the right to food, to better prepare to attend to upcoming emergencies, and to transform food systems so that they are more sustainable and resilient, healthier and more just. She will also contribute to conversations and debates around these topics throughout her mandate.

11. The following cross-cutting approaches will guide the mandate holder in fulfilling her role and in responding to the challenges of the time.

A. Dignity as the foundational approach of the mandate

12. Fulfilling the mandate in the current global context requires a profound commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The resurgence of famine and starvation presents an unprecedented moral challenge to the international community.

13. To avoid normalizing impunity and the narratives that seek to justify starvation, the Special Rapporteur has placed the concept of dignity at the centre of her mandate as a foundational approach. This approach is aligned with one of the recent thematic reports of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health in which she elaborated extensively on the right to health as an enabler of human dignity throughout the life course.[1]

14. Dignity is understood as “the inherent and equal worth of every human being; it is not conditional on status or achievement, but grounded in the fact of being human, including the shared capacity to suffer, to depend on the empathy of others and to develop one’s personality and life plans”.[2] This understanding echoes the Charter, in which the peoples of the United Nations reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human

[1] A/HRC/62/66.

[2] Ibid., para. 1.

rights, the dignity and worth of the human person, the equal rights of men and women, and their determination to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

15. Beyond its implications for laws and policies, the Special Rapporteur intends to explore the non-legal dimensions of centring dignity in the pursuit of the right to food. As part of an effort to reactivate the commitment enshrined in the Charter, it is necessary to revive and strengthen the cultural values, cosmovisions and spiritual traditions that underpin faith in human dignity as a complementary effort to demand observance of international obligations with respect to the right to food.

16. An understanding of dignity that goes beyond an abstract, theoretical statement requires recognizing the relational, symbolic, material and ecological conditions without which dignity cannot be realized. It also demands a historical and dynamic perspective, one that acknowledges how dignity is unevenly recognized due to intersecting forms of oppression. In this sense, dignity is emergent rather than predetermined: it denotes processes and trajectories through which it is claimed. Dignity is not merely an idea; it is, more profoundly, a social practice and an embodied lived experience.[3]

17. In line with this perspective, the Special Rapporteur will centre the voices of survivors of famine and other severe forms of food insecurity throughout her activities, not only as an act of care but as a humble contribution to their healing and to the restoration of their dignity. This effort will also help the international community better understand what is at stake and mobilize the political will needed to prevent famine, improve assistance and rebuild food systems so that survivors, in a self-determined way, can once again feed themselves in dignity.

18. Moreover, the Special Rapporteur plans to engage in sustained dialogue with traditional, customary and spiritual systems to understand how they uphold human dignity, the right to food and connected rights in today's context. This engagement recognizes that, for most of the world, access to food is mediated not only by State law and markets but also by communal practices, ritual hospitality and sacred relationships with nature. Many Indigenous and spiritual traditions conceive of food as a gift embedded in reciprocal obligations rather than a commodity, and they encode ethical commitments to collective survival that predate and complement international human rights frameworks. By entering into this dialogue, the Special Rapporteur aims to identify normative resources that can reinforce legal and policy approaches to food security.

19. At the same time, this dialogue is pursued with critical discernment, recognizing that customary and spiritual systems are not immune to hierarchical exclusions based on gender, caste or ethnicity, and may themselves reproduce oppression. The Special Rapporteur thus approaches these traditions in the spirit of learning from their emancipatory potential accountable to universal principles of equality and non-discrimination.

20. Ultimately, this engagement aims to foster a pluralistic normative ecosystem in which State law, customary norms and spiritual ethics interact dynamically to protect the right to food. By bridging these often-siloed domains, she hopes to sow the universal framework of the Charter in the diverse, ethical soil of human experience, so that the right to food becomes not merely a legal entitlement but a living, collectively guarded reality.

[3] Susan Marks, *Trucanini's Stare: Reconsidering Dignity in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Cambridge University Press, 2025).

B. Food care work and intergenerational justice

21. Centring the principle of gender equality in food systems transformation is another priority of the mandate. A gender-equitable approach to land, seeds, water, small-scale farming, fishing, livestock keeping, decent working conditions, territorial markets, social protection, emergencies and recovery remains paramount. These interconnected concerns cannot be addressed in isolation, for they are all mediated by deeply entrenched gender inequalities that shape who produces food, who accesses resources, who bears the burdens of scarcity and who is most vulnerable in times of crisis.

22. There is growing recognition, including in recent jurisprudential developments such as advisory opinion 31/25 of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, of the fundamental importance of care work for sustaining economies and societies, and of the right to care itself. Yet the specific food dimension of this right remains strikingly underexplored.

23. Food care work, defined as the set of tasks guaranteeing the reproduction of life in relation to food, is essential for human survival and dignity. It encompasses everything from breastfeeding to the stewardship of common goods, and while its full scope still requires deeper conceptualization, it includes at least four interrelated dimensions: first, the provision of healthy, culturally appropriate food oriented not towards market exchange but towards self-consumption, territorial food markets and community food sovereignty; second, care for other living beings, including animals and plants – peasant and Indigenous women often act as guardians of biodiversity, co-creating with nature by selecting breeds and seeds that lie at the heart of their farming, fishing and livestock systems; third, the management and conservation of water at the microwatershed, spring and traditional irrigation levels, involving monitoring, channel cleaning, equitable distribution and conflict resolution – unpaid activities vital for all forms of life; and fourth, the intergenerational transmission of culinary knowledge, encompassing cultivation, harvesting, preservation, fermentation and preparation techniques that constitute both intangible cultural heritage and adaptive strategies for food resilience during crises.[4]

24. The Special Rapporteur seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of this fundamental care dimension within the right to food and to identify the policies and laws required to recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid food care work, as well as to reward and represent paid food care work. To do so, she conceives of care not merely as a set of activities but as an ethics, one centred on empathy and solidarity as the driving force of justice. This perspective moves beyond utilitarian and even anthropocentric frameworks, opening towards biocentric realms that the ethics of care has long made visible. The ethics of care can serve as a powerful interpretive foundation for the right to food, offering a lens through which interdependence, vulnerability and responsibility come into focus as central rather than peripheral concerns.

25. The understanding of dignity as inherent and equal worth, grounded in the shared capacity to suffer, to depend on one another and to develop one's life plans, finds its necessary complement in the ethics of care. These two categories nourish and construct each other. Their intersection leads to relational ontologies and multidimensional forms of justice. This perspective also implicitly challenges the colonial instrumentalism of law, offering instead a positive, grounded vision of justice that emerges from lived experience, embodied practice and the daily labour of sustaining life. By placing the ethics of care in dialogue with dignity, the Special

[4] See https://fiancolombia.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/FIAN-V-INFORME.pdf.

Rapporteur hopes to enrich the interpretive foundations of the right to food and to support ongoing transformative processes that are not only legal and political but deeply cultural, spiritual and relational.

26. A further priority of the mandate is the principle of intergenerational justice, which the mandate holder approaches by taking deliberate stock of the living knowledge built by her predecessors. The analyses, assessments and recommendations developed over successive mandates remain strikingly valid and relevant today. Countries that have centred the right to food in their policies and partially implemented these recommendations have demonstrated tangible results in reducing hunger and malnutrition – proof that this accumulated knowledge is not abstract theory but proven practice.

27. This act of recalling and reactivating living knowledge is particularly urgent at the current juncture. Shortly before 2030, it is clear that the international community will fail to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2. Progress towards the urgent transformation of food systems remains dangerously slow. At this critical moment, the need to replace the dominant paradigm of food security built on globalized trade and industrial food supply chains has become urgent. This mandate has contributed significantly to building an alternative paradigm rooted in food sovereignty, agroecology and human rights. Yet the challenge of implementation remains formidable: the paradigm exists, but its translation into policy, practice and lived reality has yet to be fully realized.

28. In this context, intergenerational justice demands that young people not only inherit this living knowledge but actively participate in its further evolution to meet the challenges of our times, envisioning a post-2030 agenda. Ensuring that they are equipped to understand, critique and carry forward this legacy is a priority of the mandate. Young people are not merely future beneficiaries of transformed food systems; they are indispensable agents of transformation in the present. Their voices, energies and visions are essential for reimagining food systems that are just, sustainable and resilient. By engaging them as co-creators of knowledge and co-architects of change, the Special Rapporteur seeks to bridge the gap between accumulated wisdom and emergent possibility, honouring the past while opening pathways for the future. This intergenerational learning process is itself an act of care, a practice of dignity and a foundation for the relational, ecological and multidimensional justice that the mandate aspires to cultivate.

29. Preserving the capacity of traditional knowledge systems to further evolve is a matter of intergenerational justice, particularly as the world confronts the triple planetary crisis (climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution), whose compounded effects are destabilizing food systems and undermining sustainable access to food for both current and future generations. Traditional knowledge, embedded in the practices, cosmovisions and ethical frameworks of Indigenous Peoples and peasant, pastoralist, fishing and other traditional communities, is not a static relic of the past but a living, adaptive reservoir of resilience that has continually evolved in response to environmental and social change. Yet its capacity to continue evolving is now threatened by rapid digitization, the extraction and concentration of data in the hands of a few corporate actors, and the deployment of artificial intelligence in ways that often bypass local knowledge holders and exacerbate existing inequalities.

30. The Special Rapporteur intends to assess the impact of these digital tools and artificial intelligence systems on the vitality and agency of traditional knowledge systems, examining whether they serve as enablers of intergenerational learning or as instruments of dispossession and epistemic erasure. On this basis, she aims to advance concrete proposals to regulate artificial intelligence in the field of food systems and to establish data governance principles and digital public infrastructure principles

grounded in the right to food. Such a framework should not only safeguard traditional systems but actively strengthen the agency of young people.

C. Localization, territorial food systems and the role of local actors

31. A central pillar of the Special Rapporteur's strategic vision is the urgent need to strengthen local food systems and short supply chains as a buffer against the volatilities that have repeatedly destabilized international markets. This approach not only reduces dependency on volatile global commodity prices but also revitalizes local economies, preserves culinary and agricultural biodiversity and empowers small-scale producers – particularly women and members of Indigenous communities – who are too often marginalized by industrial export-oriented models.

32. To complement this structural shift, the Special Rapporteur emphasizes the necessity of enhancing preparedness capacity for emergencies and crises. This requires investment in local food reserves and storage facilities as strategic infrastructures of resilience that can stabilize supplies and prices during shocks, protect harvests from post-harvest losses and ensure that communities are not left vulnerable when external supply chains fail. These reserves must be managed transparently and democratically, with the participation of local communities, and should be linked to early warning systems that enable timely and effective responses to impending food crises. Alongside this, the Special Rapporteur advocates the recognition and expansion of public groceries, public restaurants, community kitchens and bakeries as basic public infrastructure essential to guaranteeing the right to food. These spaces can become sites of dignity, social cohesion and collective care where culturally appropriate, nutritious food is made accessible to all, regardless of income.

33. School feeding programmes and public procurement policies represent another critical dimension of this plan. By linking school meals to local, agroecological production, governments can simultaneously guarantee decent incomes for small-scale farmers, enhance the nutritional status of children and create a reliable, predictable market for peasant and Indigenous agroecological production. Public procurement, when designed with equity and sustainability criteria, can become a powerful lever for transforming food systems – channelling public resources towards farmers who practice agroecology, respecting labour rights, and prioritizing biodiversity. The Special Rapporteur intends to highlight the often-overlooked yet indispensable role of local governments in realizing the right to food. Municipalities and regional authorities are uniquely positioned to design and implement context-specific policies that respond to local realities and that foster social participation and the development of social and solidarity economies. Strengthening their capacities, resources and legal mandates is therefore a priority, ensuring that the right to food is not merely a national or international commitment but a lived reality in every community, anchored in the everyday practices of care, solidarity and dignity that sustain life.

D. Accountability, international cooperation and solidarity

34. A renewed vision of international cooperation is indispensable for the realization of the right to food in the current global conjuncture. The Special Rapporteur intends to explore the untapped potential of South-South and triangular cooperation as vectors of solidarity, knowledge exchange and mutual learning among developing countries. These modalities of cooperation offer distinct advantages: they are often more horizontally organized, context-sensitive and rooted in shared

historical experiences of colonialism, structural adjustment and food system vulnerability. She will explore whether these cooperative frameworks offer an opportunity to build a more pluralistic, democratic and effective architecture of international solidarity.

35. Any meaningful discussion of international cooperation must also confront the structural financial constraints that systematically undermine developing countries' capacity to pursue long-term food security policies. Complementing the work of other mandate holders on this subject, the Special Rapporteur will continue to draw attention to the crushing burden of debt and to the relentless pressures of debt servicing, which in many countries outpaces expenditures on health, education and social protection combined and diverts scarce fiscal resources away from investment in agriculture, rural infrastructure and climate adaptation. The resulting austerity measures disproportionately affect marginalized populations and those living in extreme poverty. The cyclical nature of debt accumulation and restructuring perpetuates a dependency relationship that undermines policy space and national sovereignty, leaving countries unable to respond to food crises or to implement transformative policies to build resilient, equitable food systems.

36. The Special Rapporteur will continue engaging and contributing to strengthen legal standards and reinforce the norm that deliberate starvation constitutes a war crime or crime against humanity. International humanitarian law is insufficient, on its own, to prevent starvation and food insecurity in armed conflicts. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights interpreted alongside international humanitarian law, imposes affirmative and structural obligations that go further. While international humanitarian law prohibits specific acts, the International Covenant requires States to sustain the socioeconomic conditions necessary for life, dignity and development. The Covenant's framework, with its affirmative obligations to fulfil and its non-derogable minimum core, fills a critical gap in the protection architecture and gives rise to a duty to prevent famine. Therefore, she will also engage in enhancing existing early warning systems. The Covenant's obligations, including the duty to allow and facilitate humanitarian access, and the prohibition on the denial of access to food as a form of collective punishment, must be understood to apply alongside, and often beyond, international humanitarian law protections in these contexts.

37. There is a need to support and enhance international emergency response and humanitarian aid not only through the required resources but also through adopting a right-to-food approach.

38. Finally, the Special Rapporteur attaches great importance to close collaboration with Rome-based agencies and the Committee on World Food Security, and to strengthening the bridge between Rome, Geneva and New York, in the realization of the right to food.

III. Newly emerging challenges to the realization of the right to food

39. The following sections outline challenges to the realization of the right to food – some newly emerging, and others, such as food care, with evolving debates around long-standing structural problems. These cross-cutting themes will be taken up throughout the mandate via thematic reports, communications, country visits and policy engagement.

A. Digitalization, artificial intelligence and new technologies in food systems

40. For some actors, transforming food systems hinges on deploying digital tools and artificial intelligence to boost efficiency, productivity and sustainability. These technologies are increasingly applied across multiple domains: managing land, water and forests for policy planning; enhancing primary production (crops, livestock, fisheries) through support in decision-making, monitoring and automation; strengthening risk management and early warning systems that integrate weather, satellite, field, market and conflict data to forecast pests, droughts, floods and food insecurity; optimizing supply chains via price prediction, traceability, quality control and waste reduction; delivering public policies such as social protection in emergencies, inputs and subsidies, disaster relief, and safety oversight through interoperable digital ID and payment platforms; and shaping consumer choices in food environments via targeted advertising and personalized dietary guidance.[5]

41. However, assessing the impact of these technologies on the right to food requires a full value chain perspective. This means accounting for environmental costs – the mining of critical minerals and escalating land, water and energy demands for data centres – as well as labour impacts across the data value chain. Despite the pressure for rapid adoption, rigorous impact assessments are lacking. Empirical evidence on whether these tools actually advance the right to food remains scarce, and preliminary findings suggest the opposite: they risk amplifying structural challenges such as labour overexploitation, land and seed dispossession, data grabbing, biopiracy, further erosion of traditional knowledge systems and unequal participation in data benefits. Associated dangers include inequitable data access, power asymmetries, exclusionary property regimes, unethical tracking, price discrimination, behavioural manipulation, and market dominance by data-controlling entities.[6]

42. This is especially concerning amid growing corporate consolidation in food systems, where corporate tech giants and financial firms are driving agribusiness towards even greater market concentration. For global South countries, the threat is acute: they may be reduced to raw data providers for dominant United States and Chinese platforms while paying for processed intelligence, perpetuating a new digital dependency that reinforces, rather than reduces, global inequalities. Under current regulatory frameworks, the data-driven economy appears ill-equipped to support the Sustainable Development Goals or realize human rights. Instead, the rising power of global platforms – controlling data and capturing their value – is likely to deepen economic disparities both between and within nations.[7]

[5] See www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs2025-2026/BAG/8_April/CFS_BurAG_2026_04_08_04_AI_Digitalization_Concept_Note_01.pdf.

[6] See https://ipes-food.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/HeadInTheCloud.pdf; https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2024.2429480; www.etcgroup.org/sites/www.etcgroup.org/files/files/ais_large_looting_models_the_emerging_generative_biology_stack_as_the_next_frontier_of_biopiracy_1.pdf; www.etcgroup.org/sites/www.etcgroup.org/files/files/commons_to_code_how_platforms_rewire_agriculture_and_reshape_power_3.pdf; and https://acbio.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Digitalisation-in-Africa-Fact-Sheet-1_fin.pdf.

[7] See https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/der2019_en.pdf.

B. Global war economies and the intensified use of hunger as a weapon of war

43. The evidence shows a sharp decline in famines from the 1960s to the early 2010s, followed by a resurgence. Since 2016, famines have become more frequent and more lethal, with the annual average of famine deaths rising again.[8] The number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification phase 3 or above) has risen dramatically, from 105.2 million in 2016 to 295.3 million in 2024.[9] Although this figure fell to 266 million in 2025,[10] this does not signal improvement but rather reflects reduced country coverage due to data gaps.

44. Armed conflict and violence remain the primary drivers, affecting 12 of the 13 hunger hotspots in 2025.[11] This situation is compounded by economic shocks due to geopolitical volatility, severe funding shortfalls, and growing risks linked to a forecast El Niño event expected to bring uneven rainfall, droughts, and flooding across highly vulnerable countries. Weather extremes, including the lasting impact of the 2023–2024 El Niño in Southern Africa, La Niña in the Horn of Africa and tropical storms in Latin America, were the primary driver in 16 countries, where 87.5 million people faced high levels of acute food insecurity. Economic shocks have continuously declined since their 2022 peak, but in 2025 they remained the main driver in 12 countries, affecting 29.8 million people. Moreover, economic uncertainty and high food prices impacted many more as 31 countries reported economic shocks due to conflicts in West Asia and the Ebola outbreak as additional drivers.[12]

45. This severe deterioration and warning come amid unprecedented funding shortfalls for humanitarian response. Funding for food assistance, emergency agricultural aid and nutrition in food crises declined by an estimated 59 per cent between 2022 and 2025, returning to levels last seen nearly a decade ago.[13]

46. Famine scholar Alex de Waal uses the concept of global war economies to explain the return of famine and the intensification of using hunger as a weapon of war. This lens examines how empires, States and subaltern polities – weak States, State-like entities and non-State actors – secure resources for military dominance, impose deprivation on adversaries and seek to legitimize their actions. War economies comprise three components: mobilizing material and financial resources for coercion; offensive economic warfare through direct attacks on the adversary's productive base or indirect measures to restrict movement of goods, labour and capital via sanctions and blockades; and a normative order that legitimizes imposing hardship, including deprivation of basic needs and starvation. Common tactics today include denying the existence of famine, suppressing information, controlling mechanisms for determining the gravity of food crises, dehumanizing the starving, appealing to higher values such as national pride or survival to justify famine, and preventing humanitarian aid by imputing nefarious motives to those seeking to assist.[14]

[8] See https://worldpeacefoundation.org/project/history-future-of-famine/; Alex de Waal, "Hunger in global war economies: understanding the decline and return of famines", *Disasters*, vol. 49, No. 1 (January 2025), available at https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/disa.12661.

[9] See https://doi.org/10.4060/cd7310en.

[10] See https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/86067cbb-9396-4e7d-8d19-e60ad00d2f73/content.

[11] See https://www.fightfoodcrises.net/sites/default/files/resource/file/CE0155EN.pdf.

[12] See https://doi.org/10.4060/cd9424en.

[13] See https://doi.org/10.4060/ce0155en.

[14] De Waal, "Hunger in global war economies".

C. Hidden overexploitation of food care work and the crisis of social reproduction

47. When addressing food systems' transformation, the dimension of food care work rarely appears. Yet one of the structural causes of gender inequality in food systems lies in the gender division of labour which assigns to women work that is typically devalued, not socially recognized, and relegated to a supposedly "non-productive" sphere (domestic work, subsistence agriculture and family/community care), as opposed to a "productive" sphere (what the economic system recognizes as productive) in which work oriented towards generating exchange value in global food supply chains is recognized and remunerated. Thus, women endure a dual exploitation: visible, through poorly paid productive labour (as wage labourers throughout food systems), and invisible, through unpaid reproductive and community work, without which local and global food systems would collapse. While women in many parts of the world dedicate close to a third of their time to unpaid food supply work, they lack autonomy, suffer severe physical and emotional exhaustion from dual exploitation, may face physical and psychological violence as employees at work and food providers at home and are excluded from political decision-making spaces on food policies.[15]

48. There is a growing gap between the essential, unpaid (or underpaid) work of caring for people and communities and the capacity of families, communities and the State to perform that work. It is a systemic breakdown in the "daily and intergenerational maintenance of life" – the cooking, cleaning, childcare, eldercare, healthcare and community support that keeps society functioning. Feminist thinkers refer to this as the crisis of social reproduction.[16]

49. The crisis of social reproduction is the predictable outcome of an economic system that treats life itself as a free subsidy to be exploited and discarded. It is not a natural shortage of care but a political and economic failure to value, support and redistribute the work that makes all other work possible. Addressing it requires not just more resources but a fundamental reorientation of values: away from gross domestic product, financialization and corporate profit and towards the concrete, daily acts of nurturing people and planet. As feminist economists argue, the question is not whether society can afford to pay for care but whether it can afford not to.

D. Normative collapse and dysfunctional global governance

50. The current international order, founded on the Charter of the United Nations and its principles, is in a state of dramatic decay. The prevalence of global war economies, coupled with intense geopolitical competition and instability, has effectively shattered the cooperative framework to which State relations once aspired to live up. In this tectonic shift, barbaric violence such as starvation is routinely inflicted upon children and civilian populations in an increasing number of countries. Unspeakable human suffering is on display daily.

51. The destruction of civil infrastructure, including roads, ports, water systems, hospitals and educational facilities, inherently weakens food systems and creates cascading rights violations. Beyond incidental damage, the infrastructure sustaining

[15] Isa Álvarez Vispo, "El reto de los cuidados en la transición agroecológica", in Sandra Ezquerra, Marina Di Masso Tarditti and Marta G. Rivera Ferre, eds., *Comunes reproductivos: cercamientos y descercamientos contemporáneos en los cuidados y la agroecología* (Madrid, Los Libros de la Catarata, 2022).

[16] Nancy Fraser, *Cannibal Capitalism: How Our System Is Devouring Democracy, Care, and the Planet – and What We Can Do about It* (London, Verso, 2022).

agricultural production and fishing, including irrigation systems, fields, trees, water points for livestock, storage facilities, fishing boats and equipment, and markets, has been deliberately targeted in numerous armed conflicts. Such destruction is not incidental but intentional, constituting a direct assault on the right to food. Moreover, preceding systemic violations of the right to food and structural conditions such as land dispossession, exploitative working conditions, and environmental destruction make populations vulnerable to famine.[17]

52. Starvation in armed conflicts is one form of weaponizing food, but there are others. In some countries, extreme food insecurity known as "starvation punishment" and severe water rationing persist as a widespread and systematic State practice, operating as an instrument of dehumanization, control and collective punishment against people in State custody. Likewise, unilateral coercive measures, including in the form of economic sanctions and embargoes, which are likely to result in shortages of essential goods such as foodstuffs, seeds, animal feed and medicine, agricultural machinery, fertilizers or fuel for transport and distribution of food, have a direct impact on civilians, especially the most vulnerable groups, and may amount to collective punishment.[18]

53. This hostile climate is exacerbated by the actions of powerful nations that are actively defunding the United Nations and its agencies while withdrawing from various multilateral forums and commitments.[19] Consequently, international cooperation has ground to a halt, making it impossible to reach the ambitious agreements necessary for the structural transformations required to reshape framework conditions for food systems in areas such as finances, trade, and climate policies, among others. Only the lowest common denominator can now be achieved, which renders global governance dysfunctional and fundamentally unable to address critical regulatory gaps.

54. Likewise, horrendous crimes continue being committed in rampant impunity. The international community has not been able to bring those responsible to account or to deter and prevent further crimes.[20]

55. Compounding this institutional paralysis, many countries are weakening the rule of law and eroding their own systems for observing constitutional and fundamental rights, as well as their obligations under international human rights law. These trends are dangerously amplified by surveillance technologies that confer unprecedented powers to Governments seeking to crush dissent. Instead of fostering progress, these same new technologies are being used to amplify racism, xenophobia and misogyny, while simultaneously fuelling violent conflicts and repression around the world.[21]

IV. Legacy of the mandate and persisting structural challenges

A. Building on living knowledge

56. Over the past 25 years, the Special Rapporteurs on the right to food identified the structural and acute challenges to the realization of the right to food and shared their analyses and recommendations, many of which remain valid today. They contributed to the conceptual and normative developments that fostered a common

[17] See A/HRC/52/40.
[18] See resolution 79/7.
[19] See https://ishr.ch/toolbox/resources/report-how-states-try-to-defund-human-rights-at-the-un/; and www.globalpolicy.org/en/news/2026-02-10/how-un-funding-crisis-will-worsen-2026.
[20] See resolution ES-10/27; and A/HRC/61/77.
[21] See A/80/341.

understanding of the right to food, including the history and definition of the right to food, State obligations, duty bearers and rights holders, accountability and justiciability, the food-nutrition-health nexus, the indivisibility of human rights, extraterritorial obligations, and obligations of international organizations.[22] The current mandate holder will build on this living knowledge.

57. The mandate has put special attention on the lived realities and agency of rights holders, including the landless, peasants and smallholder farmers, women, children, gender-diverse persons, fisherfolk, agricultural, food, fish and informal workers, people living in conflict and war, refugees, pastoralists, Indigenous Peoples, migrant communities, consumers, persons with disabilities and the urban food-insecure. Key questions from this perspective were: the obstacles they face in realizing their rights, particularly their right to food; and their experiences and practice of resilience, resistance and creating alternatives, and their knowledge and proposals for advancing the realization of the right to food and other human rights.[23]

58. In addition to analyses of structural causes, systemic failures and key drivers leading to violations of the right to food, previous Special Rapporteurs provided assessments of measures effectively leading to the progressive realization of the right to food.

59. This practical guidance and advice points to specific achievements, such as the incorporation of the right to food into constitutions, framework laws and specific legislation; consistent human rights approaches for national public policies and programmes; establishment of monitoring and accountability mechanisms; access to justice and justiciability; intersectoral governance with social participation; recognition and institutionalized dialogues with the diversity of rights holders; effective policies of recognition, representation and redistribution for overcoming inequalities; limitation and regulation of corporate power to protect the right to adequate food; and incorporation and implementation of a consistent human rights approach in United Nations institutions, among others.[24]

B. Persisting structural challenges

60. An essential legacy of this mandate is the deep understanding of the right to adequate food as constitutional for human dignity and intrinsically connected with nature as the basis of life. From this perspective, a change of paradigm has become visible, shifting away from an agro-industrial model of nature commodification, profit maximization through globalized markets and corporate concentration towards food systems rooted in people's rights and self-determination, caring communities, healthy diets, agroecological practices, territorial markets, food sovereignty and social participation in political decision-making from the local to the global level; a shift away from neoliberal exploitation, authoritarian oppression, patriarchal domination, colonial racism and neo-imperialist wars towards full respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, where the right to adequate food of everyone is prioritized and protected and perpetrators of violations are held accountable.

[22] See A/56/210, A/60/350, A/71/282, A/75/219, A/HRC/10/5, A/HRC/19/59, A/HRC/28/65, E/CN.4/2001/53, E/CN.4/2002/58, E/CN.4/2003/54, E/CN.4/2004/10, E/CN.4/2005/47 and E/CN.4/2006/44.

[23] See A/59/385, A/73/164, A/77/177, A/79/171, A/HRC/4/30, A/HRC/7/5, A/HRC/22/50, A/HRC/31/51 and A/HRC/40/56.

[24] See A/68/288, A/74/164, A/76/237, A/HRC/9/23, A/HRC/25/57, A/HRC/43/44 and A/HRC/58/48.

61. Reality is far away from this suggested paradigm shift. Many of the structural causes and key drivers leading to violations of the right to food persist and generate new variations. The following overview is not complete but provides a snapshot of long-standing and persisting threats to the right to food, as well as proposed approaches to address them.

1. Concentration and commodification of nature – land, seeds, water and fisheries

62. Land, water and seeds are fundamental to life. Their essential meaning for the realization of the right to food has been highlighted in several reports of previous Special Rapporteurs. [25] Commodification, financialization and concentration of natural goods have further increased.

63. The 2026 Global Land Observatory report found extreme land inequalities, with the largest farms (over 1,000 ha) managing more than half of the world's farmland, even though they represent just 0.1 per cent of all farms. On average, the largest 10 per cent of landholders manage 56 per cent of land. The aggregated global estimate points to their control of about 89 per cent of land. Globally, 400 million agricultural holdings (85 per cent of all farms) are smaller than 2 ha and account for only about 9 per cent of total farmland.[26] Forced displacement and land and resource grabbing are widespread and unabated, and a small group of transnational landowners has managed to control huge amounts of land around the world.[27]

64. Significant gender gaps in land tenure persist. Women continue to face severe barriers to owning, inheriting and controlling land due to discriminatory social norms, unequal power relations within households and communities, gaps in legal protections and weak implementation of existing laws. The Final Declaration of the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development 2026, held in Colombia, explicitly recognized that these challenges are often compounded for women experiencing intersecting forms of marginalization and discrimination, including Indigenous women, Afrodescendent women, migrant and displaced women, widows, elderly women, young women and women with disabilities.[28]

65. Redistributive tenure reforms are therefore indispensable. Peasant and landless movements have called for a new concept of agrarian reform as "a process of transforming production and power relations" which needs to be "inclusive, emancipatory, and rooted in the diversity of rural life in all the regions of the world", should "protect complex tenure and livelihood systems, traditional production systems, and native and Indigenous seeds", must be "feminist and intergenerational" and shall "promote agroecology, social justice, solidarity, and coexistence of rights holders".[29]

66. The corporate sector continues to focus on genetically modified crops, promoting new genomic techniques such as gene editing and cisgenesis, among others. Instead of applying the precautionary principle, some States are promoting these new techniques without subjecting them to mandatory risk assessments, traceability, and label requirements.

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[25] A/57/356, A/64/170, A/65/281, A/HRC/49/43, A/HRC/61/51 and E/CN.4/2003/54.

[26] FAO, International Land Coalition and Centre for International Cooperation in Agronomic Research for Development (CIRAD), *The Status of Land Tenure and Governance* (Rome and Paris, 2026). Available at https://doi.org/10.4060/cd8473en.

[27] See https://www.fian.org/files/is/htdocs/wp11102127_GNIAANVR7U/www/files/Lords_Land_Fian_20250602_fin.pdf.

[28] See www.fao.org/tenure/news-articles/icarrd-20-putting-womens-land-rights-back-on-the-agrarian-reform-agenda/en/.

[29] See www.foodsovereignty.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/EN-ICARRD20-Forum-Declaration-FINAL.pdf.

67. Main challenges for peasant and farmers organizations have been defending seed sovereignty and farmers' rights against biopiracy and monopolization of plant varieties, pushing back on implementation of the 1991 International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants, particularly in the global South, and countering the massive introduction of genetically modified seeds, which pose serious threats to the right to food and food sovereignty of local communities.[30]

68. Industrial fishing fleets and the ongoing privatization of water bodies and fishing rights have heavily affected the existence, livelihoods and perspectives of small-scale fisher people, as several reports of Special Rapporteurs have documented.[31] Regulatory measures imposed by Governments without meaningful consultation with fishing communities can generate hunger, as the mandate holder heard: "Women and communities are experiencing severe hunger and report financial distress because their income has been taken away."[32] Fisherfolk movements observe that the rise of blue foods – commodity-focused aquatic products linked to the blue economy – together with aquaculture, is accelerating the industrial exploitation of marine ecosystems, deepening inequalities and undermining ecosystems and rural livelihoods.[33]

69. Issues significantly affecting the rights and livelihoods of fisherfolk have repeatedly been raised but have not received the full attention they deserve. These include proposals to protect water sources as a common good, not as a commodity; recognize the significant contribution of artisanal fisheries to the right to food and support them against the threats of industrial fishing and extractivism; and implement national binding frameworks guided by the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication.[34]

2. Biodiversity loss, climate change, land degradation and role of pesticides

70. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services noted: "Biodiversity is declining in all regions of the world and at all spatial scales, impacting ecosystem functioning, water availability and quality, food security and nutrition, human, plant and animal health and resilience to the impacts of climate change."[35]

71. The High-level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security concluded: "Climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation collectively undermine food systems, disproportionately affecting marginalized communities…. Successful examples [of positive action and policy change] also show that the right to food can be a powerful driver of uptake and efficiency of climate action, biodiversity conservation and land restoration, environmental measures and policies."[36]

72. As youth climate justice movements have consistently emphasized, the obstacle to progress is not a lack of knowledge but the absence of decisive political action for

[30] Consultations with civil society organizations on 11 and 18 June 2026.
[31] A/59/385, A/67/268, A/HRC/40/56 and A/HRC/55/49.
[32] Consultation with civil society organizations on 18 June 2026.
[33] See https://nyeleniglobalforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/EN-Nyeleni_Common_Political_Agenda_2026-2.pdf.
[34] Consultation with civil society organizations on 18 June 2026; see https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/edfffbfc-81e5-4208-a36f-334ff81ac10f/content.
[35] See https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13850289.
[36] See www.fao.org/docs/devhlpelibraries/default-document-library/hlpe_climate-change_en.pdf?sfvrsn=ae3cf737_19.

transformational change. The impact on the right to food is severe for affected communities. Specific examples of interlinkages between extreme poverty, climate change, aggravated hunger and migration, combined with a lack of public policy response mechanisms to droughts and other emergencies, were shared during consultations.

73. A number of United Nations human rights experts have persistently pointed to the negative impacts of the current agricultural model and industrial food systems on climate change, to the urgency to adopt a human rights approach as a means of achieving climate justice, and to the need for a consistent and comprehensive agroecological transition of food systems.[37] Agroecology has indeed become one of the key collective and cross-platform priorities of civil society organizations in addressing biodiversity loss, climate change and land degradation in global forums.[38]

74. The Special Rapporteurs on the right to food and on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes have underlined that "the rights to adequate food and to health provide clear protections for all people against excessive or inappropriate use of pesticides" and observed: "Corporations have the responsibility to ensure that the chemicals they produce and sell do not pose threats to these rights. There continues to be a general lack of awareness of the dangers posed by certain pesticides, a condition exacerbated by industry efforts to downplay the harm being done". Structurally, they emphasized: "While efforts to ban and appropriately regulate the use of pesticides are a necessary step in the right direction, the most effective, long-term method to reduce exposure to these toxic chemicals is to move away from industrial agriculture."[39]

3. Corporate power in food systems

75. Deep concerns about the growing corporate control of food systems have been shared with the Special Rapporteur from South-East Asia, South Asia, Southern Africa, West Africa, North America, Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe. Those who focus on the right to food precisely to promote accessible, nutritious and healthy food for people are facing aggressive campaigns and threats from companies that make huge profits from marketing unhealthy, sweetened beverages and ultra-processed foods.[40]

76. The power of giant agribusiness firms was already a matter of concern over a century ago. All previous Special Rapporteurs have extensively worked on the growing corporate power, the related threats to small-scale food producers, the overexploitation of workers, the increasing unaffordability of food, the lasting costs of monotonous diets and ultra-processed foods for people's health, the spread of noncommunicable diseases and consequences for public health budgets, and the lack of corporate accountability.[41]

77. Back in 2003, the Special Rapporteur warned that "transnational corporations now have unprecedented control over the food system, yet there is no coherent system of accountability to ensure that they do not abuse this power".[42] Since then, corporate consolidation has grown. In most segments of the agrifood system today, just a few

[37] See A/70/287, A/73/164 and A/HRC/16/49.
[38] See https://nyeleniglobalforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/EN-Nyeleni_Common_Political_Agenda_2026-2.pdf.
[39] See A/HRC/34/48.
[40] Consultations with civil society organizations on 11 and 18 June 2026.
[41] See A/58/330, A/62/289, A/66/262, A/80/213, A/HRC/13/33 and A/HRC/34/48.
[42] See A/58/330.

corporate players dominate markets – from the agricultural inputs industry to global food trade, to food processing, to grocery retail.[43]

78. Since 2014, negotiations have been ongoing to develop a binding United Nations treaty on transnational corporations and human rights. Experts have proposed to develop a United Nations-wide corporate accountability framework to keep the United Nations free of undue corporate interference and to hold corporations accountable for the impacts of their activities.[44] Simultaneously, social and solidarity economy, territorial markets, local food systems and public procurement policies to foster smallholder economies emerged as elements of an alternative paradigm.[45]

4. Conflicts, wars, and systemic violence in food systems

79. These are times of powerful actors prioritizing war and short-term interests over human life and the common good, leading to escalations of violence in food systems. According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, famine was confirmed in Gaza Governorate in August 2025. Some 1.6 million people continued to face high levels of acute food insecurity, with the situation projected to remain severe until April 2026.[46] These findings were corroborated by first-hand accounts shared during consultations, describing how people in Gaza are facing the catastrophic collapse of local food systems under the ongoing genocide, where agricultural land, water systems and food infrastructure have been deliberately destroyed. Palestinian farmers and agricultural livelihoods in the West Bank are under attack as part of the Israeli annexation campaign. People in South Lebanon have seen large-scale devastation of their agricultural lands and crops. Targeting food systems and life has become a tool to control, dispossess and erase communities.[47]

80. The Sudan represents the largest food insecurity crisis in the world today. Nearly 19.5 million people, or approximately 41 per cent of the country's population, continue to face high levels of acute food insecurity.[48] Food is being used as a weapon by different parties to the conflict, which are closing routes for movement of supplies, targeting food production and harassing the merchants moving food supplies across different areas in the Sudan. Extreme food insecurity is especially affecting women, children, displaced persons and refugees.[49]

81. Protecting the right to food in armed conflicts has been a topic addressed by several Special Rapporteurs since 2001. More recent reports provide profound analyses on systemic violence in food systems, genocide and the use of starvation as a method of warfare, and why a closer connection between human rights and international humanitarian law is urgently needed to protect the right to food and human dignity.[50] Deep concerns about the impact of conflicts and the use of unilateral coercive measures on the realization of the right to food were brought to the attention of the Special Rapporteur by Member States.

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[43] Jennifer Clapp, *Titans of Industrial Agriculture: How a Few Giant Corporations Came to Dominate the Farm Sector and Why It Matters* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 2025).

[44] See https://ipes-food.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/tippingthescales.pdf.

[45] See resolution 77/281 on promoting the social and solidarity economy for sustainable development.

[46] See https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/en/?country=PSE.

[47] Consultations with civil society organizations on 11 and 18 June 2026.

[48] See https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1163315/?iso3=SDN.

[49] Consultation with civil society organizations on 18 June 2026.

[50] A/56/210, A/72/188, A/79/171, A/HRC/7/5 and A/HRC/52/40.

5. International cooperation for the realization of the right to food: food security, debt, trade, and humanitarian assistance

82. The World Food Summit in 1996 established that the right to food should become the cornerstone of FAO work towards food security, nutrition and freedom from hunger. Since then, important steps have been taken, including the development of the Guidelines on the Right to Food and the support to Member States in national implementation. After several years of being sidelined, the right to food has regained momentum in FAO since 2024. The decision of the FAO Conference in 2025 to mainstream the right to food throughout the FAO programme of work gives a clear mandate to management to make the principles and dimensions of the right to food transversal to all relevant actions and decisions of FAO.

83. The Committee on World Food Security was reformed in 2009 and has since served as the foremost inclusive intergovernmental and international governance platform on food security and nutrition, with the explicit mandate to promote the progressive realization of the right to food. It has developed and adopted crucial policy instruments and has served as the core platform to address structural challenges and emerging food crises. However, several duplicate and fragmented initiatives have undermined its impact. The Rome-based agencies have a key role in providing reliable political and financial support to the Committee and to the uptake of its policy guidance instruments.

84. The negative impact of debt on the right to food, as already described in paragraph 35, has been consistently raised by Member States and civil society organizations.[51] Debt relief is needed on an unprecedented scale, as are reforms of the global finance architecture.[52] The ongoing negotiations on the United Nations framework convention on international tax cooperation[53] and the initiatives towards a sovereign debt convention are critical to address these long-standing problems of failing financial systems. In addition, there is an urgent need to redirect finance flows from subsidizing climate-damaging industrial agriculture into policies supporting agroecology and national right to food action plans.[54]

85. Major tensions between trade policies and the right to food arise from the failure of global governance mechanisms to tackle the lack of coordination between human rights obligations and trade commitments, as previous Special Rapporteurs observed. Hence, trade policies have primarily focused on economic frameworks and either ignored or marginalized people's human rights concerns.[55] The Special Rapporteur reaffirms that trade policy agreements must respect the right to food and human rights accountability, with Member States complying with their binding obligations as States Parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.[56]

86. Recent cuts in humanitarian assistance have come at a time when needs are higher than ever due to increasing conflicts, natural disasters, climate emergencies and food crises. The Special Rapporteur heard that funding cuts across the humanitarian sector in the Sudan in the past years have significantly contributed to the worsening situation of access to food, especially for women, girls and persons

[51] Consultations with Member States on 23 June 2026 and with civil society organizations on 11 and 18 June 2026.

[52] International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems, "Breaking the cycle of unsustainable food systems, hunger, and debt", March 2023.

[53] See https://financing.desa.un.org/unfcitc.

[54] See A/HRC/58/48.

[55] See A/75/219 and A/HRC/10/5/Add.2.

[56] See A/60/350, A/75/219, A/HRC/10/5, A/HRC/10/5/Add.2, A/HRC/22/50/Add.3 and E/CN.4/2005/47.

with disabilities.[57] In 2025, humanitarian funding saw its greatest contraction in a decade, despite the prevalence of acute hunger doubling since then.[58] Previous mandate holders suggested establishing more effective early warning systems to warn of imminent famine conditions, and better coordinated global policy responses to food crises under the auspices of the Committee on World Food Security.[59]

6. Structural inequalities and intersecting forms of discrimination, patriarchy, racism and colonialism

87. Former Special Rapporteurs have identified multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, patriarchy, racism, colonialism, exclusion, exploitation and other forms of inequalities and inequities as major and mutually reinforcing drivers of violations of the right to food and other human rights, emphasizing the interrelationships between the right to food and women's rights, rights of gender-diverse persons, workers' rights, peasants' rights, Indigenous Peoples' rights, the rights of persons with disabilities and children's rights.

88. The Special Rapporteur was alerted to many cases illustrating huge structural challenges, both in the global South and the global North. Food insecurity is rising in wealthy but unequal societies in North America and Western Europe, affecting lower-income people, including seniors, women, single parents, children, migrants, informal workers and ethnic minorities. Funding cuts to nutrition assistance and public health coverage by several Governments have caused millions of people losing access to anti-hunger programmes. In several countries, initiatives have been started to incorporate the right to food in domestic legislation or to include food social security in national policies and programmes, making food part of social protection and public infrastructure.[60]

89. Structural inequalities and intersecting forms of discrimination go hand in hand with people's struggles for human dignity and indivisible human rights. Afrodescendent women in Latin America demand that their territorial rights and knowledge systems be recognized. Women agricultural workers in Northern Africa demand decent working contracts with social security within a context of patriarchy and exploitation. Anti-hunger groups in Southern Africa fight, after centuries of slavery, colonialism and apartheid, against the "normalization" of Black hunger.[61]

90. The High-level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition report entitled *Reducing Inequalities for Food Security and Nutrition* presented the conceptual framework of an "engine of equity" driven by recognition, representation and redistribution.[62]

91. For the right to food and other human rights, this strategy is key: people, especially the marginalized, must be recognized in their existence, agency, needs and rights and be represented through their participation in political decision-making processes on topics of concern to them. Institutionalized social participation in food governance mechanisms at the local, national and global levels is essential to address these structural inequalities and intersecting forms of discrimination, with the potential for changing power dynamics, triggering redistributive measures and

[57] Consultation with civil society organizations on 18 June 2026.
[58] See https://humanitarianaction.info/document/global-humanitarian-overview-2026/article/under-fire-and-under-pressure-what-happens-when-humanitarian-action-hindered.
[59] See A/72/188 and A/78/202.
[60] Consultation with civil society organizations on 11 and 18 June 2026.
[61] Ibid.
[62] See https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/3b32bc6c-b4e8-46b3-bdae-acc32afe222f/content.

supporting policies and programmes that effectively ensure the realization of the right to food.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

92. **The realization of the right to food remains an urgent and unfinished challenge. Despite decades of normative development, institutional engagement, and advocacy, far too many people continue to be denied the right to food adequate for a life in dignity.**

93. **Structural inequalities, emerging threats and the growing fragility of global food systems demand a rigorous response, deeply rooted in the lived experiences of those whose rights are at stake. It is through a collective, inclusive and sustained engagement, which places dignity at its core, that lasting progress can be achieved.**

94. **The Special Rapporteur calls upon Member States, civil society organizations, grass-roots communities, international organizations, academics and experts to engage meaningfully and constructively with her mandate. She firmly believes that the right to food can be realized for all only through genuine dialogue, courageous acknowledgement of structural shortcomings, and the collective will to pursue sustainable, rights-based solutions.**

95. **To conclude, the Special Rapporteur makes several recommendations, which are of paramount importance to her vision of the realization of her mandate.**

96. **The Special Rapporteur, recalling that the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family are the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world:**

(a) **Urges Member States to stop all wars and occupations and dismantle the related mechanisms of war economies, including the mobilization of material and financial resources for coercion; to stop economic warfare through unilateral coercive measures, blockades and the weaponization of trade and financial flows; and to denounce a normative order that legitimizes imposing hardship, including deprivation of basic needs and starvation;**

(b) **Urges Member States and international actors to engage in a fundamental rethinking of international financial architecture, one that prioritizes debt relief, restructuring mechanisms, and concessional financing for food system transformation and that links international cooperation not to conditionalities that exacerbate inequality but to the shared commitment to realizing the right to food for all;**

(c) **Urges Member States to reorient economic policies around the right to food, recognizing human dignity and its inextricable connection to nature as foundational. This entails transitioning from agro-industrial commodification and corporate-driven profit maximization to food systems grounded in people's rights, self-determination, dignified working conditions, community resilience, agroecology, territorial markets, food sovereignty, participatory governance at all levels and solidarity. It further requires overcoming authoritarian, patriarchal, racist and neo-imperialist structures, while fully upholding human rights and international humanitarian law – prioritizing the right to adequate food for all and ensuring accountability for violations.**