

**Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises Monitoring
Session**

UN Committee on World Food Security Session 47 (9/2/2021)

Speech by Ahmad Sourani

Representative of

Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSM) of the UN-CFS

Arab Network for Food Sovereignty (ANFS)

Gaza Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture Platform (GUPAP)

Dear colleagues,

My invitation to take part in this session today gives hope to the people living under protracted crises, especially wars, conflicts and occupation. I would like to thank the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSM) for giving me this opportunity.

For more than a decade now, we have been facing a steady increase in the number of protracted crises, leading to continuously higher levels of displacement and severe breakdowns in food systems, with unprecedented levels of malnutrition and hunger. There are currently 60 million more people suffering from malnutrition compared to 2014, and that is primarily due to the increasing number of conflicts.

For many years, community organisations in conflict regions have been mobilising to focus on this vital issue. For instance, the International Working Group on Conflict was formed through an initiative by representatives of communities suffering from such circumstances. In 2012, the CFS adopted this priority, which was considered a victory for the CSM and the Protracted Crises Working Group, which played a central role in the final version of the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises.

The FFA, which is based on the human rights framework, is unique in that it focusses on addressing and preventing the root causes behind protracted crises, food insecurity and malnutrition. Humanitarian law is also essential to achieve the FFA's goals and to ensure accountability and compensation for those affected by crises. Equally important is the fact that the FFA recognises that resilience-building must increase people's ability to *prevent* crises, not only to *prepare* for them, *understand* them and *adapt* to them. Rather, people must be supported to prevent the reoccurrence of crises, thereby achieving full recovery and ensuring the food sovereignty of societies.

The FFA was developed before the interlinkage between humanitarian action, development and peace-building (also known as the "triple nexus") emerged in other policy platforms. This triple nexus, however, does not clearly address the root causes of crises or human rights

commitments. Meanwhile, the protracted crises framework still holds a key advantage in this regard, as it provides clear instructions on how to achieve consistency between humanitarian, development and peace-building efforts.

The CFS must work in partnership with other policy platforms in order to promote the protracted crises framework as a basis for discussing and identifying comprehensive and consistent responses for resolving conflicts and building just and sustainable peace.

We must identify the “pillars of peace” in order to go beyond limited conceptions of peace that define it as short-term stability or the lack of violence, and we must design peace-building efforts to support the rights of people affected by crises, including the right to justice. Only then would peace become sustainable and would achieve true reconciliation, social cohesion and development.

Despite the importance of this Framework and its establishment more than five years ago, it has yet to be effectively implemented. A distinguished team from the two working groups on protracted crises and monitoring the CSM detailed the challenges facing the implementation of the FFA and submitted key strategic recommendations in an independent report that can be accessed through the CSM platform.

A key finding of this report is that despite efforts made by civil society organisations (CSOs) to raise awareness of and align policy and programming with the FFA, there is still widespread lack of familiarity with the Framework and its principles among all actors. This points to a need for the CFS, its members and its participants to disseminate the FFA and advocate for its use more actively and comprehensively.

Additionally, a lack of guidance remains on the translation of the FFA principles into an implementation plan. There have not been sufficient multi-actor discussions on the distribution of roles and responsibilities, collaboration processes and coordination structures, which has left CSOs pondering on how to align their classic role with this new approach, particularly in terms of implementing the peace dimension of the FFA.

Discussions between the multiple actors concerned with implementing the FFA or other, similar frameworks must pose the following questions: *Are actors only expected to align their work with the principles of the FFA, or also to expand the scope of their tasks and their abilities to include new aspects? Are they expected to integrate organisations that are specialised in conflict response? Lastly, should they undertake all of these tasks to varying degrees in order to jointly ensure that an integrated and comprehensive response is provided?*

The report’s key recommendations include:

- Increase the dissemination and reach of the FFA to strategic actors and platforms, including through sufficient funding, capacity-building, supplementary materials and research into best practices;

- Elaborate the distribution of roles and collaboration processes necessary through a participatory, high-level dialogue;
- Create and strengthen local and national multi-actor platforms to ensure alignment with the FFA, ensuring the inclusion of affected communities and those working on root cause remediation;
- Develop a methodology or tool that would allow for consistent monitoring of the FFA use and alignment;
- Support CSOs and affected communities in their efforts to advance the FFA; and
- Encourage actors' self-assessments of alignment and solidarity with and between affected communities.

The West Asia and North Africa (WANA) region is suffering from multiple, ongoing futile conflicts, occupation and blockades that impede any true development, as in the case of Palestine, Yemen, Syria, Libya, Iraq and Lebanon. The Arab Network for Food Sovereignty (ANFS) stresses that many local, regional and international actors are not aligned with the values and principles of the FFA, which has led to the deterioration of food security levels in the region.

The ANFS stresses the importance of supporting local food systems that strengthen food sovereignty and encourages actors to work in alignment with national priorities identified through participatory and consultative processes. The ANFS also discourages the use of food as a weapon against peoples and believes in the importance of establishing local independent platforms to promote reconciliation, with the participation of affected communities. It is of utmost importance to grant people their basic rights, without which just peace cannot be attained and true development cannot be achieved for any of the region's peoples.

My country, Palestine, has been suffering from occupation, apartheid, displacement, the confiscation of lands and water, the uprooting of trees, environmental destruction and blockade for decades. This has wreaked havoc on food and agricultural systems, whereby nearly 33% of Palestinians – and 70% of the population of the Gaza Strip – suffer from food insecurity.

Palestinians are constantly denied access to their own resources. In the West Bank, 42% of Palestinian lands are under occupation, not to mention that nearly 8.5% of lands have been confiscated to build the apartheid wall. The situation is not much different in Gaza, as Israel classified 30% of Gaza's fertile lands as a military "buffer zone" in which farmers and fishermen are fired upon when they attempt to use their regional waters guaranteed by law. For the past 13 years, Gaza has been under an Israeli blockade that restricts the import of food and agricultural inputs. 82% of refugees in Gaza rely on food aid from the UNRWA alone.

Finally, communities affected by protracted crises realise that implementation plans, commitments and laws do not make any real impact or change in their circumstances if they are not coupled with extensive, organised and continuous pressure to mobilise political will. Let us, then, begin to make such pressure.

Thank you.

Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSM) of the UN-CFS

Arab Network for Food Sovereignty (ANFS)

Gaza Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture Platform (GUPAP)