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Protection of civilians in armed conflict

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the request in the statement by the President of the Security Council of 21 September 2018 ([S/PRST/2018/18](#)). It also responds to the Council's requests for reporting on specific themes in resolutions [2286 \(2016\)](#), [2417 \(2018\)](#), [2474 \(2019\)](#), [2475 \(2019\)](#) and [2573 \(2021\)](#).

2. With over 100 armed conflicts worldwide and an average conflict duration of more than 30 years, civilians have continued to endure profound and lasting hardship.¹ In 2022, as in previous years, armed conflict led to death, injury, enforced disappearance, torture, rape and other suffering and loss. The destruction of critical infrastructure had far-reaching consequences, including disruptions to electricity, health care, water and sanitation services, and deprived many of the essentials to live. Health-care personnel and facilities were targeted, leaving thousands without care. The use of explosive weapons in populated areas had devastating effects well beyond their intended targets. The rise in prices of food, fuel and fertilizers, combined with the effects of climate change, further intensified civilians' needs. The number of people forcibly displaced reached new highs. Humanitarian organizations faced a variety of obstacles in their efforts to alleviate suffering, including violence, bureaucratic impediments and shortages of vital supplies such as food and medicine. Section II of the present report provides an assessment of the state of the protection of civilians in 2022.

3. Four years after the adoption by the Security Council of resolution [2417 \(2018\)](#), armed conflict continued to be a primary driver of hunger. Valuable farming equipment was stolen, agricultural land was littered with explosive ordnance, and livestock and crops were destroyed. Conflict also disrupted agriculture and trade, leading to a shortage of basic supplies and agricultural products. This, coupled with additional factors such as the armed conflict in Ukraine, led to higher food prices and reduced access to necessary supplies for food preparation and distribution. Furthermore, the destruction of vital infrastructure, shortages of electricity and fuel, and extreme weather events all contributed to the scarcity of water. In section III of

¹ International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), "Humanitarian needs to deepen in dozens of conflict zones as world's attention wanes", 29 November 2022; and ICRC, "Protracted conflict and humanitarian action: some recent ICRC experiences", 2016.



the present report, the impact of armed conflict on the availability of food and water is examined.

II. Global state of the protection of civilians in armed conflict

A. Widespread civilian harm

4. Throughout 2022, armed conflict exacted a massive human toll, eroding resilience and straining what remained of essential infrastructure and services. Civilian death and injury, enforced disappearance, torture, rape and ill-treatment were reported across many armed conflicts.

5. In 2022, the United Nations recorded at least 16,988 civilian deaths across 12 armed conflicts, a 53 per cent increase compared with 2021. In Ukraine, the United Nations recorded 7,957 civilians killed and 12,560 injured, although actual figures are likely higher. Older people were disproportionately affected, as many would not or could not leave areas of hostilities, thus increasing their risk of death and injury and depriving them of access to food, water, health care, shelter and social networks. In Somalia, 710 civilians were killed and 1,148 injured, 60 per cent more than in 2021 and the highest number since 2017. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 2022 was the deadliest year for Palestinian civilians in the West Bank since the United Nations started systematically recording fatalities in 2005.

6. In some contexts, however, civilian casualty rates declined. In the Syrian Arab Republic, civilian casualties decreased by 38 per cent. In Yemen, a six-month truce resulted in a 60 per cent reduction in civilian casualties.

7. When used in populated areas, explosive weapons continued to wreak harm far beyond their targets and long after their use, with reverberating effects on essential services. In 2022, 2,399 incidents involving the use of explosive weapons in populated areas were recorded in 17 countries and territories affected by conflict, resulting in 18,163 victims. Of those, nearly 94 per cent were civilians. The highest numbers of civilian victims of explosive weapons in populated areas were reported in Ukraine, followed by Afghanistan, Somalia and the Syrian Arab Republic.² In Ukraine, explosive weapons with wide area effects caused 92.5 per cent of all civilian casualties recorded by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the majority in populated areas.

8. In Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, Myanmar, Ukraine and elsewhere, the toll of conflict was also characterized by the cumulative destruction, damage or looting of homes, shops, schools, camps for internally displaced persons, and places of worship. Consistent with the concerns reflected in resolution 2573 (2021), critical infrastructure, including for the provision of electricity, health care, water and sanitation, was damaged, and access to these services disrupted. Across Ukraine, fighting, including multiple strikes on water systems, electrical plants and substations, interrupted power, heating, health care, drinking water supply and sewage facilities, as well as mobile and Internet communications. More than 700 critical infrastructure facilities were reportedly damaged, including gas pipelines and power facilities. Cyberoperations also affected electricity, Internet and transportation services. Hostilities near nuclear power plants raised the terrifying spectre of a nuclear catastrophe. In particular, the Zaporizhzhia

² Action on Armed Violence figures. All Action on Armed Violence (<https://aoav.org.uk/>) and Insecurity Insight (<https://insecurityinsight.org/>) figures based on currently available data.

nuclear power plant suffered shelling and repeated power cuts that threatened its cooling system and jeopardized the plant's safety.

9. In the Syrian Arab Republic, a gas plant and power transmission stations were struck during hostilities, leaving thousands of civilians without electricity, heat or water. Overall, access to State-generated electricity was at approximately 15 per cent of 2010 levels. This affected health and education facilities, food production, irrigation and other aspects of life. In northern Ethiopia, damage to critical infrastructure, as well as lack of access to electricity, telecommunications and banking services in many areas, greatly disrupted livelihoods and basic services such as health, water and education.

10. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar and elsewhere, places of worship also came under attack. In Ukraine, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization verified damage to religious sites, museums, buildings of historical and/or artistic interest, monuments and libraries.

11. In 2022, the use of anti-personnel mines was reported in the Central African Republic, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, Ukraine and Yemen. Cluster munitions use was also reported in Ukraine. Landmines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war posed a grave danger to civilians, hampered access to essential services and livelihoods and stalled recovery. Overall, mines, improvised explosive devices and explosive remnants of war were responsible for at least 6,738 civilian casualties in 25 countries and territories. The highest numbers were observed in the Syrian Arab Republic, followed by Somalia.

12. In the Syrian Arab Republic, approximately one in three communities was estimated to be contaminated by explosive ordnance. Iraq was one of the countries most contaminated by explosive ordnance in the world, with explosive remnants of war causing one third of civilian casualties. Afghanistan still counted 4,295 hazardous areas, affecting at least 1,528 communities. Months after the fighting ended, areas of Tigray, Amhara and Afar in Ethiopia remained littered with explosive remnants of war. All 14 states and regions of Myanmar were believed to be contaminated with explosive ordnance, causing around 30 per cent of conflict-related deaths and injuries.

13. The psychological wounds of conflict may have been less obvious but were no less devastating. In armed conflict, one in five people lived with a mental health condition and people were three times more likely to suffer from a mental health condition but less likely to get help. Some 40 per cent of households in Gaza reported at least one family member showing signs of psychosocial distress or trauma in the past year.

Positive developments and good practice to protect civilians

14. In a milestone achievement, the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas was adopted and endorsed by 83 States in November 2022. In the document, the States declared that they would ensure that their armed forces adopt and implement policies and practices to avoid civilian harm, including by restricting or refraining from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, where such weapons may be expected to cause civilian harm, noting that the risks to civilians increase depending on a weapon's explosive power, its accuracy and the use of multiple munitions. The States concerned also declared that they would ensure that their armed forces take into account the direct and indirect effects of their operations on civilians and civilian objects and ensure assistance to victims. Implementing the Declaration must mark a departure from the business-as-usual approach and go towards further reducing harm to civilians.

15. Some positive developments were also seen at the domestic level. In August 2022, the United States Department of Defense released the Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response Action Plan. Implementation entails updating the doctrine, guidance and procedures of the United States of America and increasing capabilities to mitigate and respond to civilian harm in United States operations and multinational operations led by the United States and in security partnerships.

16. In Ukraine, the Government approved a procedure to place markings on key civilian infrastructure, buildings and vehicles, including cultural property, medical units and transports, objects used for the supply of water, sanitation, heat, gas and electricity, and food, nuclear power plants and other objects containing dangerous forces.

17. Mozambique established the Interministerial Commission on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law to identify treaties to join and opportunities for training, and to promote and monitor progress on human rights and international humanitarian law issues.

B. Aggravated suffering

Medical care

18. Violence against medical personnel and facilities persisted, causing additional death and suffering by leaving thousands without care. According to data in 17 countries and territories affected by conflict in 2022, 174 health-care workers were killed, 301 were injured, 220 were kidnapped, and 55 were assaulted. Ukraine had the highest number of deaths of health-care workers. The largest numbers of injured health-care workers were in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Ukraine and Afghanistan. The kidnapping of medical personnel was most prevalent in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nigeria.³

19. In the same 17 countries and territories, 627 health-care facilities were damaged or destroyed. The World Health Organization also recorded incidents harming patients, transports, facilities and supplies. In the Niger, 94 health facilities were closed following attacks. In Cameroon, an attack on Mada district hospital, which provided care to thousands in the region, caused its closure for several months. This forced people with severe medical conditions to seek care hundreds of kilometres away and led to the death of some pregnant women who were unable to reach birth services. In Somalia, an attack damaged the main hospital of Beledweyne, and fighters occupied a hospital, ordering the removal of patients to make space for wounded fighters.

20. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, major hospitals and health centres were attacked and medical personnel targeted. A health centre in North Kivu serving over 21,000 people was looted and set on fire. Medical supplies and equipment were looted from pharmacies. General violence in Ituri also led to the suspension of services in five health centres and a general hospital serving around 120,000 people. In Colombia, patients and health workers were killed, health workers threatened, ambulances held up at checkpoints and patients forcibly removed from ambulances. The detonation of explosive devices near health facilities and the confinement of communities prevented patients from accessing care.⁴ In Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, health facilities were destroyed and damaged and services disrupted. As a result, around 29 per cent of women gave birth at home without medical assistance because health facilities were too far, unsafe, or closed.

³ Insecurity Insight figures.

⁴ ICRC, “Colombia: humanitarian challenges 2023”, 8 March 2023.

21. In Ukraine between 24 February and 31 December 2022, 707 attacks reportedly affected the health-care system, including personnel, hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, blood centres and ambulances, killing and injuring health-care workers and damaging or destroying 218 hospitals and clinics. Hospitals ran out of critical medical supplies, and health-care personnel and patients were relocated to improvised shelters. Fighting impeded access to treatment for chronic and infectious diseases. Health services also suffered from ageing and ill-maintained equipment, shortages and rising costs of medicines, and displacement of health-care personnel.

22. In many other conflicts, insecurity also drove health-care staff to flee, further exacerbating shortages. In Cameroon, insecurity prompted some health-care personnel to leave, generating heavier loads for remaining staff and reducing or cutting off community-based services. In Ituri, Democratic Republic of the Congo, threats prompted the departure of health-care personnel from six health centres, in turn affecting health care for 300,000 people. In south-eastern Central African Republic, one third of households reported having no access to health services because health-care personnel had fled.

23. Health care also remained in disrepair. In Afghanistan, many damaged and destroyed health facilities have yet to be rebuilt. In the Syrian Arab Republic, only 53 per cent of health centres were operational. In Yemen, access to health care continued to be hampered by a shortage of functional facilities, as well as long distances and an inability to afford services. Across the country, only 51 per cent of health facilities were fully functional. In Ukraine, before 24 February 2022, 20 medical service delivery points and maternity hospitals were providing assistance to survivors of gender-based violence, but only 9 were operational less than two months later because of damage from hostilities and staffing shortages.

24. In northern Ethiopia, the widespread damage, destruction and looting of health facilities that had taken place prior to 2022 continued to impede health care. Few health facilities in Tigray were fully functioning while supplies ran out, resulting in reduced treatment for non-communicable diseases, limited maternal and child health services, and more complications and deaths. Similarly, many health facilities in Afar and Amhara were rendered non- or partially functional. In much of Tigray and parts of Amhara and Afar, health services were cut off from humanitarian assistance, the usual supply and maintenance arrangements, and commercial markets, severely reducing the availability of medicine such as insulin, antibiotics and intravenous fluids, medical supplies and fuel for generators and ambulances. Diseases such as measles, tetanus and whooping cough were on the rise in Tigray after vaccination rates dropped owing to supply shortages, electricity cuts disrupting cold chains, and the inability of rural inhabitants to access health facilities. Banking interruptions prevented the payment of health workers, electricity restrictions impaired health services and equipment, and communications shutdowns affected referrals and other activities.

25. As one illustration of good practice, in Mali the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad signed the Deed of Commitment under Geneva Call for the Protection of Health Care in Armed Conflict, pledging to respect and protect health-care personnel and facilities, medical transports, and the wounded and sick.

The natural environment and climate change

26. The environment continued to suffer lasting destruction and degradation as a result of conflict. In Gaza, the destruction of infrastructure, such as water and sewage systems, continued to cause water pollution and other environmental hazards. Ukraine faced landmines in and destruction of forests, soil contamination with heavy metals and poison leaks, fuel and toxic chemical-polluted groundwater, degraded and

endangered ecosystems, and the release of toxic pollutants and millions of tons of greenhouse gases, including from industrial, forest and agricultural fires and oil burning in storage depots. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, conflict enabled the illegal exploitation of natural resources, including forests, wildlife and minerals.

27. Climate change exacerbated vulnerabilities in places where civilians' access to key resources already suffered because of armed conflict. Among the 25 countries said to be most vulnerable to climate change and least ready to adapt, most were also facing armed conflict.⁵ As the Sahel was struck by the worst drought in over a decade, Burkina Faso suffered the compounding effects of climate change and conflict, including a food crisis and a health-care system on the brink. In Somalia, decades of armed conflict and a cycle of droughts and floods have left people little opportunity to adapt and exacerbated dire needs. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the interplay of conflict and climate change – manifested by droughts, floods and sea level rise – has also compounded difficulties for civilians. For instance, restrictions on movement and access to land and other resources made it difficult for farmers to adapt to changing weather patterns, which in turn led to food insecurity. In the Central African Republic, flooding exacerbated the vulnerabilities of conflict-affected populations, while fighting inhibited humanitarian access to them.

28. In a welcome step addressing long-standing concerns about the impact of conflict on the environment, the General Assembly, in its resolution 77/104, took note of the 27 legal principles developed by the International Law Commission on protection of the environment in relation to armed conflicts and encouraged their widest possible dissemination.

Forced displacement

29. The number of people forcibly displaced as a result of conflict, violence, human rights violations and abuses, and persecution exceeded an alarming 100 million,⁶ with Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Myanmar and Ukraine facing some of the fastest-growing displacement crises. Within and across borders, conflict-related displacement also persisted in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Mali, the Niger, Nigeria, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and elsewhere. Climate-related crises accelerated and prolonged displacement in many places.

30. Ukraine saw one of the fastest and largest displacements. By the end of 2022, an estimated 13.5 million people, or some 33 per cent of the population, had fled their homes, including 5.6 million within the country and over 7.9 million to other countries in Europe.

31. In the Syrian Arab Republic, the total number of internally displaced persons remained the highest in the world, at 6.8 million, 80 per cent of whom were displaced for more than five years. Some 55,000 displaced Syrians, Iraqis and other third-country nationals remained in camps in the north-eastern part of the country, where violence, exploitation and abuse were rampant. An increasing number of States repatriated women and children, but the vast majority remained, with little sign of progress.

32. Once displaced, people were still not safe. In Yemen, displaced persons faced poor and hazardous living conditions, limited access to essential goods and services,

⁵ “The triple threat of climate change, conflict, and health emergencies: a deadly mix for the most vulnerable in fragile settings”, joint statement of Médecins sans frontières and ICRC, 4 November 2022.

⁶ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “Mid-year trends 2022”, 27 October 2022.

and a high risk of further displacement due to climate events such as floods. In north-east Nigeria, the closure of camps for internally displaced persons led to secondary displacement, new exposure to explosive ordnance and risks of attack by armed actors. Internally displaced persons and refugees in the Democratic Republic of the Congo faced violence, hazards posed by mines and explosive remnants of war, and lack of access to basic services. In the Central African Republic, internally displaced persons, principally in camps, were also subjected to violence, as well as arbitrary arrest and detention and forced recruitment of children. In Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan and elsewhere, internally displaced persons were also exposed to the dangers of explosive ordnance, which also deterred returns in Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic and beyond.

33. In Ukraine, countries in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel, and elsewhere, forcibly displaced women and girls continued to face a heightened risk of gender-based violence. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, more than 1,000 displaced persons were killed while sheltering in camps or attempting to return home.

34. The lack of civil documentation of internally displaced persons posed a range of challenges, including in gaining access to health care and education, participation in elections and inclusion in restitution or reconstruction programmes. In Iraq, 28 per cent of internally displaced persons in camps, 25 per cent of internally displaced persons in urban settings, and 16 per cent of returning internally displaced persons lacked at least one core document.

35. Forced returns, relocations and evictions of internally displaced persons were particularly prominent in the Central African Republic, Somalia and Yemen. In Mozambique, ongoing displacements notwithstanding, voluntary returns increased significantly, principally because of improvements in safety and living conditions, family reunification and access to homes, land and other property, as well as the opportunity to farm, and, at times, government assistance.

36. In June 2022, the Secretary-General launched his Action Agenda on Internal Displacement. Building on the 2021 report of the High-level Panel on Internal Displacement and consultations with Member States, non-governmental organizations and communities of internally displaced persons, the Action Agenda outlined 31 United Nations commitments, including to work with Governments, communities and development stakeholders to find durable solutions to internal displacement, address the root causes of displacement, advocate for policies and measures to promote the protection of civilians and reduce displacement risks, and promote a holistic understanding of displacement and risk intersections, including the intersection of conflict and the impact of climate change.

C. Specific vulnerabilities

Children

37. In Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, Somalia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Yemen, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and elsewhere, thousands of children were killed and injured, including as a result of landmines, explosive remnants of war, improvised explosive devices and the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. In Burkina Faso, three times more children were killed during the first nine months of 2022 than in the same period in 2021. In Somalia, children accounted for 95 per cent of casualties from explosive remnants of war. Between

January 2018 and November 2022, child casualties from landmines and unexploded ordnance in Yemen increased from one every five days to one every two days.⁷

38. Child abductions were recorded in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Mozambique, Nigeria, Somalia, the Lake Chad basin and elsewhere. Children continued to be recruited into armed forces or non-State armed groups and used in fighting and support roles in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, Somalia and elsewhere, with increases in Burkina Faso, Libya, Mali, Nigeria and the Syrian Arab Republic. In the Central African Republic, children were recruited and used for sexual purposes, fighting, operating checkpoints and other roles. In Colombia, children were recruited by abduction, threat, sexual exploitation and the promise of material compensation. In Yemen, poverty, unemployment and inaccessible education drove child recruitment, often the sole source of family income.

39. In Iraq, Israel, Libya, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and elsewhere, children were detained for their alleged ties to non-State armed groups. In the Syrian Arab Republic, hundreds of children remained deprived of their liberty for this reason, while 35,000 children languished in dire conditions in camps in the north-east, unable to leave. In Cameroon, some children formerly associated with armed groups struggled to reintegrate into communities.

40. In Ukraine, there were reports of forced deportations and transfers of unaccompanied children, including from orphanages and children's care homes. In Cameroon, the Central African Republic and other conflicts, children faced family separation during displacement, with Mozambique registering 3,935 unaccompanied and separated children.

41. Conflict violently interrupted children's education. Attacks harming teachers and schools persisted in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, Somalia, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Central Sahel and elsewhere. Throughout 2022, at least 118 educators were killed, injured or kidnapped across 13 countries and territories.⁸ In Colombia, attacks on schools and their military use, threats to teachers, and explosive ordnance near schools hampered children's education. In the Central African Republic, 18 per cent of schools were closed, owing principally to the displacement of teachers.

42. In the Tigray, Afar and Amhara regions of Ethiopia, the United Nations documented the destruction of 2,140 schools. In the Central Sahel, teachers were threatened, abducted or executed, and schools burned and looted. More than 8,300 schools had closed in Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger because of attacks or because parents were too afraid to send their children or had fled with them. In Burkina Faso, almost 24 per cent of schools were closed owing to insecurity, depriving more than 1 million children of an education. In the Niger, 890 schools were closed because of attacks and threats against teachers and schools and the displacement of children, while schools were also destroyed by floods or used as alternative housing for flood victims. In Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Myanmar, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and elsewhere, parties also used schools for military purposes. School disruptions limited children's future opportunities and exposed them to an increased risk of recruitment into armed forces or groups and use in hostilities, abduction, and sexual violence.

⁷ Save the Children, "Watching our every step: the deadly legacy of explosive ordnance for children in Yemen", 2023.

⁸ Insecurity Insight figures.

43. In a significant step, Burkina Faso and Nigeria each signed a handover protocol with the United Nations to prevent and reduce the State's detention of children allegedly associated with armed groups and ensure their community reintegration.

Sexual violence

44. Hundreds of cases of conflict-related sexual violence against women, girls, men and boys continued to be reported in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Somalia, the Sudan, Ukraine and elsewhere. As elaborated in a separate report, women and girls accounted for at least 95 per cent of victims of documented sexual violence. A significant proportion of survivors were displaced persons.

45. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, incidents occurred while women and girls were going to fields, while they were collecting firewood, during livelihood activities, as reprisals after hostilities and in other circumstances. In the Central African Republic and north-east Nigeria, incidents arose while people were fleeing, in fields or forests. Across conflicts, sexual violence remained chronically underreported, owing to long-standing barriers to reporting, stigma, and fear of retaliation. Moreover, survivors' access to life-saving medical and psychosocial support was curtailed, while weakened institutions and survivors' lack of trust in judicial processes slowed the pace of justice.

46. A 2022 report on male perceptions of sexual violence in South Sudan and the Central African Republic revealed that conceptions of gender and power socialized at a young age were at the root of sexual violence. On a positive note, male community leaders were willing to learn from strategies used elsewhere to move away from gender stereotypes, and to increase accountability for individual behaviour.⁹

47. In June 2022, the Central African Republic national strategic committee on conflict-related sexual violence adopted a national action plan with a focus on documenting such violence, related legislative and judicial initiatives, multisectoral assistance to survivors, and coordination and institutional support to reach those goals. In December 2022, the Democratic Republic of the Congo adopted legislation on protection and reparations for victims of conflict-related sexual violence.

Persons with disabilities

48. Armed conflicts were even more perilous for persons with physical and intellectual disabilities. In Cameroon, Myanmar, Ukraine and elsewhere, persons with disabilities were often trapped in hostilities, unable to leave because of limited mobility and inaccessible transport, shelters, emergency warnings or information on evacuations and safety measures.

49. A 2022 report on children with disabilities in north-east and north-west Syrian Arab Republic documented barriers in fleeing hostilities and accessing health-care services and schools. The conflict also degraded support systems and made therapy and assistive devices even less available or affordable.¹⁰ In six communes in the Tillabéri and Diffa departments of the Niger, 61 per cent of persons with disabilities who were interviewed had difficulty accessing health services, 43 per cent had difficult or no access to latrines, and 54 per cent had difficult or no access to drinking

⁹ ICRC, "‘My father and cows will go to court, not me’: male perceptions of sexual violence in South Sudan and the Central African Republic", 2022.

¹⁰ Human Rights Watch, *"It Was Really Hard to Protect Myself": Impact of the Armed Conflict in Syria on Children with Disabilities* (2022).

water.¹¹ In Mozambique, their access to water collection, sanitation, health care and markets was hindered. In Ukraine, some persons with disabilities were unable to access any available food, medical services, psychological assistance or shelters adapted to their needs. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, their access to humanitarian aid was impeded by poor infrastructure, social stigma, a lack of information, and other barriers. In parts of Cameroon, in Yemen and elsewhere, children with disabilities were unable to access school.

50. Persons with disabilities also faced stigma and a greater risk of sexual violence among women and girls. According to a 2022 report, civilians with physical and other disabilities in Yemen faced social stigma and psychological harm from the economic and social impact of their disability.¹² In addition, the conflict continued to disrupt access to services and support for persons with disabilities.

51. In a positive vein, Greece reported that Hellenic Air Force Command and Staff College courses emphasized the importance of providing specific protection and consideration to persons with disabilities at an operational level (see [A/77/203](#)).

Journalists

52. In 2022, 25 out of 87 journalist killings recorded by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization occurred in the following States and territories affected by armed conflict: Colombia (4), Democratic Republic of the Congo (1), Myanmar (2), Somalia (2), Syrian Arab Republic (2), Ukraine (10), Yemen (2) and Occupied Palestinian Territory (2). Most of these killings appeared to be in connection with the hostilities.

Missing persons

53. In 2022, ICRC registered more than 29,000 new missing persons cases and was following more than 190,900 cases, the majority of which were related to armed conflict. This was about 60 per cent more than five years ago, and the total number of missing persons resulting from armed conflict was estimated to be far higher.

54. In Colombia, more than 99,000 people had been reported missing in connection with armed conflict. In 2022, the national Victims Unit recorded 246 cases of enforced disappearance. Since 24 February 2022, the Government of Ukraine has registered thousands of cases of missing persons. Bodies were found abandoned, mutilated or buried in mass graves, making their identification more difficult. As at 16 September 2022, more than 15,202 persons remained missing in Ukraine, including 4,259 civilians. In March 2022, Ukraine established the National Information Bureau to account for prisoners of war and interned civilians and to register and track down missing persons, including its own nationals.

55. Around the world, national and coordinated search mechanisms sought to clarify the fate and whereabouts of missing persons and address the needs of their families. In the Syrian Arab Republic, civil society, survivor and family associations had collected information on more than 100,000 missing persons. Acknowledging the systematic challenges to knowing the fate and whereabouts of missing persons in the country, the Secretary-General presented a framework to improve existing

¹¹ Humanity & Inclusion, “Étude des barrières d’accès des personnes handicapées à l’assistance humanitaire dans les communes de Dessa, Gothèye, Torodi, Diffa, Mainé-Soroa et Gueskérou (Niger)”, October 2022.

¹² Mwatana for Human Rights, “Civilians with disabilities caused by the armed conflict in Yemen: evaluating the impact of disability and related accessibility problems through documented field cases”, February 2022.

mechanisms and create an institution that would clarify the fate and whereabouts of missing persons and provide support to victims, survivors and families (see [A/76/890](#)).

D. Efforts to provide assistance, protect civilians and seek accountability

Humanitarian action

56. Humanitarian action faced overlapping impediments including violence, bureaucratic hurdles, sanctions and counter-terrorism measures, and shortages and rising costs of essentials, such as food, medicine and fuel.

57. In 2022, 79 humanitarian workers were killed, 43 were injured and 113 were kidnapped in 17 conflict contexts.¹³ National staff represented 97 per cent of those affected. In Burkina Faso, humanitarian personnel were intimidated, abducted and arrested, including on suspicion of collaborating with armed groups. In Nigeria, humanitarian personnel were abducted and killed and supplies came under attack. The imposition of military escorts on certain routes undermined perceptions of humanitarian organizations' independence, neutrality and impartiality. In Yemen, aid workers were killed, injured, kidnapped, threatened, intimidated and detained. Even after the truce, humanitarian access was impeded in front-line areas where fighting continued. In Ethiopia, humanitarian workers were killed and injured; others were arrested, harassed or intimidated.

58. In South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and other conflicts, explosive ordnance hindered humanitarian access to communities. In western Central African Republic, it impeded assistance to at least 30,000 people.

59. In Ukraine, no inter-agency humanitarian convoy was able to cross the front line into areas under the temporary military control of the Russian Federation. In parts of Ethiopia, violence limited the ability to deliver assistance. Following extended disruptions throughout the year, relief convoys into Tigray resumed through Afar and three new corridors from Amhara in November, following the signing of the cessation of hostilities agreement.

60. Misinformation and disinformation discrediting humanitarian actors affected public perception, undermined trust, created security risks and hindered humanitarians' ability to assist people in need. In Ethiopia, politicization and instrumentalization of humanitarian aid and disinformation on some organizations undermined trust in their neutrality, impartiality and independence.

61. Bureaucratic and administrative procedures significantly delayed and impeded humanitarian operations. In Afghanistan, the decision banning women from working for non-governmental organizations had immediate life-threatening consequences across the country, preventing needs assessments and assistance to women and severely harming the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian action. The subsequent ban in April 2023 on Afghan women working for the United Nations also had a severe impact on United Nations humanitarian operations and put lives in jeopardy. Additional measures including attempts to influence the selection of beneficiaries and implementing partners and staff recruitment, demands to share sensitive data, and movement restrictions interfered with and delayed humanitarian action. In some parts of Yemen, requirements that a close male relative accompany female Yemeni aid workers constrained humanitarian operations, delaying and

¹³ Humanitarian Outcomes, "2022", Aid Worker Security Database, available at <https://aidworkersecurity.org/>.

suspending critical missions and programmes and limiting access to the most vulnerable, especially women and girls.

62. In Mali, Myanmar, the Sudan and elsewhere, movement restrictions and checkpoints impeded humanitarian access to affected populations. In Cameroon, bureaucratic requirements to obtain written authorizations and visa procedures and the lack of United Nations Humanitarian Air Service flight clearances over several months impaired humanitarian operations. In Myanmar, humanitarians faced administrative bottlenecks in obtaining travel authorizations, while local authorities severely limited or denied access to certain areas. In parts of Ethiopia, administrative measures played a part in halting humanitarian operations for several months at a time.

63. In the Central African Republic, the Syrian Arab Republic and elsewhere, fuel disruptions and shortages hindered humanitarian operations, compelling organizations to reduce, delay or even cancel field visits, distributions and projects. Mobilization of aid within Tigray and parts of Afar and Amhara remained challenging owing to shortages of fuel, cash and other supplies. In the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria and other conflicts, humanitarian activities were confronted with rising medicine, food and fuel costs.

64. Amid these heavy impediments, some good practices emerged. In Colombia, new legislation overcame previous limitations and allowed impartial humanitarian organizations to have contact with organized armed groups for exclusively humanitarian purposes. In March 2022, Ukraine simplified customs procedures for importing humanitarian aid, expedited import approvals by pre-approving a list of items recognized as humanitarian aid, deferred customs payment for food, medicine and other essentials and adopted a procedure for the temporary exemption from conscription of drivers delivering humanitarian aid. In Mozambique, an amended decree facilitated the issuance of visas for humanitarian personnel, while in Cameroon coordination mechanisms were established between authorities and humanitarians to help address administrative issues.

65. Sanctions and counter-terrorism measures continued to pose challenges to impartial humanitarian activities, including by impeding certain payments of fees, purchases of commodities or supplies of goods. Nevertheless, there was steady progress in overcoming some of these unintended effects. Most significantly, the Security Council adopted resolution [2664 \(2022\)](#), exempting from all its current and future asset freezes the provision, processing or payment of funds, other financial assets or economic resources or the provision of goods and services necessary to ensure the timely delivery of humanitarian assistance or to support other activities that support basic human needs, by a wide range of organizations. States implemented domestic and regional measures to give full effect to the resolution. Some States also adopted similar humanitarian carveouts under their own financial sanctions.

Peacekeeping and special political missions

66. Protection of civilians mandates in United Nations peacekeeping were implemented amid increasingly volatile contexts, weakened cooperation from host Governments, and the presence of foreign forces. In the Central African Republic and Mali, explosive ordnance threatened civilians and hampered the mobility of peacekeepers. Peacekeeping missions have adapted to address challenges and protect civilians more effectively. Missions are testing digital technology solutions to enhance situational awareness and inform mission analysis, early warning and rapid response systems to better anticipate, prevent and respond to violence against civilians. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic adopted a more robust and mobile approach to respond to threat alerts in a more proactive manner and began implementing mitigating

measures when closing temporary operating bases. Missions also continued to support host States in fulfilling their responsibility to protect civilians. This included support, consistent with their mandates, to the implementation of the Malian politically led strategy for central Mali, to specialized courts in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to traditional leaders in South Sudan on local conflict management. United Nations peacekeeping also enhanced civilian harm mitigation efforts to prevent and address potential harm to civilians resulting from its military and police operations, building on its 2022 review and expert feedback across United Nations peacekeeping missions, national militaries and civil society.

67. Misinformation and disinformation about the United Nations endangered the safety and security of United Nations personnel and negatively affected missions' ability to fulfil their protection of civilians mandates. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, such narratives contributed to violent protests against the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in July 2022, resulting in the deaths of multiple civilians and three peacekeepers and a decline in public confidence. Peacekeeping missions have begun to develop strategies to address mis- and disinformation, such as responding to specific false narratives, fact-checking social media posts and proactively reaching out to communities, civil society and journalists to help build capacities in addressing this challenge.

68. Special political missions worked to advance the protection of civilians by engaging to help prevent and resolve conflict and promote human rights and the rule of law. In the Sudan, the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) and the United Nations country team continued to support the Government in the implementation of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians. The Permanent Ceasefire Committee in Darfur, chaired by UNITAMS, became fully operational in 2022, working to de-escalate tensions, resolve disputes and undertake capacity-building activities with local authorities. UNITAMS also provided technical assistance to strengthen the National Mechanism for the Protection of Civilians and state-level protection of civilians committees and to train personnel deployed with the Joint Security-Keeping Force in Darfur. The outbreak of fighting in the Sudan in April 2023 is, however, liable to have a significant impact on the Mission's existing work. UNITAMS will re-evaluate its current approach, depending on how the situation evolves.

Accountability for international crimes

69. Although allegations of serious violations of international humanitarian law still outpaced their investigation and prosecution, some important progress was made in the pursuit of criminal accountability. In the Central African Republic, the Special Criminal Court issued its first verdict, convicting three former members of an armed group of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in 2019. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a mobile military court convicted nine militia members of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, torture, rape and pillage, committed in 2017. In Guatemala, five former paramilitary fighters were convicted of sexual violence committed during the conflict in the early 1980s. Established under the 2016 Colombia peace agreement, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace held its first hearing, during which retired military officials and one civilian admitted to orchestrating the killing of 120 civilians between 2007 and 2008.

70. Several States also exercised broad or universal jurisdiction, helping to fill accountability gaps. In connection with the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, a German court convicted a Syrian former intelligence officer for murder, rape and other crimes. Separately, a German court convicted a Da'esh member of war crimes, crimes against humanity and aiding and abetting genocide against the Yazidi community. In France, a Liberian former commander of an armed group was

convicted of serious crimes, including torture and complicity in crimes against humanity, committed between 1993 and 1994. In the United States, the Justice for Victims of War Crimes Act was adopted to allow the prosecution of war crimes committed abroad regardless of the perpetrator's or victim's nationality.

71. The International Criminal Court also faced its most active period. In April 2022, the Court began its first trial in relation to the situation in Darfur, which was also the first trial following a Security Council referral. Proceedings also began or continued against individuals accused of international crimes in the Central African Republic and Mali. In March, the Prosecutor of the Court announced an investigation into the situation in Ukraine since 21 November 2013, based on State party referrals.

III. Impact of conflict on food and water availability

72. Since the adoption of resolution [2417 \(2018\)](#), in which the Security Council reiterated its commitment to address conflict-induced food insecurity, high levels of conflict-induced hunger have persisted. In 2022, more than a quarter of a billion people faced acute hunger in 58 countries and territories, many of them in armed conflict.

73. Conflict and insecurity were the most significant drivers of high levels of acute food insecurity for around 117 million people in 19 countries and territories, including in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and the Central Sahel. Pursuant to resolution [2417 \(2018\)](#), the Security Council was alerted to the risk of conflict-induced famine and widespread food insecurity in parts of Ethiopia, north-east Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen, where an estimated 648,000 people in total were projected to face catastrophic levels of food insecurity.

74. Across these and many other conflicts, civilian infrastructure and assets essential to people's livelihoods, food security and survival were damaged, destroyed or rendered unusable by explosive ordnance. Agricultural production, storage, transportation and distribution systems, including markets, were disrupted, causing food shortages and price spikes. Crops and livestock were abandoned, and farmers were unable to sell their goods. The displacement of farmers exacerbated food insecurity, while displaced persons had difficulty accessing food, including from a lack of livelihood opportunities. In some cases, civilian populations' access to food and supplies on which they relied was deliberately impeded. Access of impartial humanitarian organizations to people in need was also impeded, including as a result of attacks on humanitarian workers and assets. These patterns of conduct were observed across several conflicts.

75. Conflict also triggered and aggravated water scarcity. The destruction, damage and disruption – sometimes deliberate – of water services, combined with the impact of climate change and years of disrepair, left millions without safe water, causing contamination, the outbreak of deadly infectious diseases and the risk of malnutrition.

76. Other important factors compounded hunger. As Ukraine and the Russian Federation are among the leading global suppliers of foodstuffs and the Russian Federation is also a top exporter of fertilizers, many countries, including Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Somalia and Yemen, depended on both countries to meet their needs. Trade disruptions due to the armed conflict in Ukraine contributed to historically high food and fertilizer prices, aggravating food insecurity across the globe. Climate change, manifested in droughts, heavy rainfall and floods, also exacerbated hunger in several conflicts.

77. In Ethiopia, Mali, the Niger, Yemen and elsewhere, food insecurity increased civilians' susceptibility to gender-based violence, exploitation and child, early and forced marriage. In resettlement centres in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, water scarcity meant that women and girls faced greater risks of sexual violence as they walked long distances in the dark to fetch water. In Burkina Faso and Mali, food scarcity compelled children to drop out of school and parents to ration and resort to less nutritious food. Hunger also caused and aggravated health problems such as anaemia, poor pregnancy outcomes, depression and anxiety.

Direct harm to food and water sources

78. In Ukraine, the agriculture sector suffered the destruction of or damage to machinery and equipment, storage facilities, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture, and crops, as well as theft of inputs and outputs. A poultry farm was hit, while another lost nearly 4 million chickens to thirst and starvation. Landmines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war littered agricultural land, exposing farmers to death and injury and suspending several planting seasons. Damage to water and sanitation infrastructure, including dams and water treatment and wastewater systems, and the cutting off of freshwater intake points disrupted the supply of safe water and increased the risk of disease.

79. In Ménaka, Mali, crops were destroyed and livestock stolen, driving people to leave their land. In Somalia, commercial vehicles carrying food and livestock, farm machinery and crops were burned, and the destruction of the Shabelle riverbank caused vast flooding and the destruction of agricultural areas. In the Amhara, Tigray and Afar regions of Ethiopia, foodstuffs, storage facilities, irrigation works, crops and agricultural land were heavily damaged or destroyed. In Gaza, hostilities damaged dozens of agricultural areas, greenhouses, livestock and poultry farms, while explosive ordnance stemming from hostilities in 2021 remained lodged in farmland. In the West Bank, 343 agricultural facilities were demolished, disrupting livelihoods and fuelling food insecurity.

80. In South Sudan, an estimated 16.1 km² were contaminated with explosive ordnance, spoiling fertile agricultural land, mainly in southern greater Equatoria. In Yemen, landmines in farmland and agricultural areas severely disrupted livelihoods reliant on agricultural production. Similar patterns were seen in Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, the Sudan and elsewhere.

81. The supply of water was also forced to a halt. In Burkina Faso, 58 water points were disrupted in 2022, including through cut power lines, destroyed generators or electrical panels, damaged water pumps and storage facilities, and poison. Electricity pylons were also damaged, disrupting the water supply in seven locations. As a result of these acts, more than 830,000 people lost access to safe drinking water. In Yemen, an attack severely damaged the main reservoir in Sahar District, disrupting water supply to approximately 130,000 people. Landmines in water systems prevented adequate irrigation of land, causing long-term damage to arable land. In Idlib, Syrian Arab Republic, the Arshani water pumping station serving around 200,000 people came under attack. An estimated two thirds of the country's water treatment plants, half of its pumping stations and a third of its water towers have been damaged since 2011.

Impediments to food and water production, delivery and access

82. A number of factors, such as violence, movement restrictions, and electricity and fuel shortages, exacerbated the scarcity of food and water. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, violence disrupted agriculture and trade, decreasing the

availability of basic supplies and agricultural products and affecting prices. In Mali, villages were encircled and freedom of movement was restricted, causing civilians to lose access to food and their livelihoods. In Somalia, parties' control over rural areas and main supply routes severely restricted the movement of people and commercial goods and the delivery of humanitarian assistance, driving up prices of essential commodities. In Burkina Faso, parties' control over main roads significantly slowed the supply of household staples, such as millet, oil, sugar and sorghum. In Colombia, confinement lasting up to three months prevented communities from tending to their crops and trading with neighbouring municipalities, while curfews and other restrictions prevented night fishing. In Ethiopia, the lack of cash, fuel and commercial goods into Tigray and parts of Afar and Amhara limited the production and availability of food. Services began to resume, however, at the end of 2022.

83. A survey by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre showed how displaced persons faced greater difficulties accessing food. In Cameroon, 87 per cent of respondents displaced by conflict and violence reported difficulties, compared with about 20 per cent of non-displaced respondents in the same areas. In Mali, 61 per cent of internally displaced persons reported difficulties accessing food, three times more than before their displacement and significantly more than non-displaced persons. Repeated displacement made things even worse: 85 per cent of respondents who had been displaced twice reported difficulties accessing food, compared with 57 per cent of those who had been displaced once.¹⁴

84. In the Syrian Arab Republic, water pumping stations were severely hampered by electricity blackouts and a lack of fuel. In addition, drought caused low water levels in the Euphrates River, impeding power generation in hydroelectric dams and further aggravating water scarcity. Uluk water station, a primary source of water for over 460,000 people in the north-east of the country, stopped functioning several times, with some interruptions lasting months. About 500,000 people dependent on water for agriculture, food production and other livelihoods were also affected. Poor water quality led to thousands of suspected cases of cholera across the country. Overall, the Syrian Arab Republic faced a 40 per cent reduction in drinking water since the beginning of the conflict.

85. Armed conflict, often in combination with other factors, also caused an increase in food prices and a decrease in access to supplies needed for food preparation and distribution, including water and fuel. The armed conflict in Ukraine contributed to a sharp increase in fuel, fertilizer and food prices and supply chain disruptions globally, with its impacts felt in a number of other situations of conflict, including in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Somalia and Yemen.

86. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, protracted conflict, economic stagnation, restrictions on trade and access to resources, high unemployment and poverty rates, and global supply chain disruptions meant that civilians, especially in Gaza, could not afford healthy food. In the Syrian Arab Republic, the price of food, water, fuel and electricity became unreachable to many, while the fuel crisis, inflation and weather events exacerbated the situation. Farmers had less money to plant fields and spent more to irrigate crops and transport their harvests to markets. In many countries facing conflict, such as Myanmar, inflation, currency devaluation and international market disruptions exacerbated vulnerability to food insecurity.

87. In July 2022, in the face of spiralling food prices and deepening food insecurity globally, the signing of the Initiative on the Safe Transportation of Grain and

¹⁴ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2023* (Geneva, 2023).

Foodstuffs from Ukrainian Ports (Black Sea Initiative), alongside the Memorandum of Understanding on promoting Russian food products and fertilizers to the world markets, provided a beacon of hope. Together, they yielded important benefits for global food security. Prices of critical food commodities and price volatility came down, and markets stabilized. The Initiative enabled the safe export of more than 15 million tons of food in 2022, including 380,000 tons of wheat transported by the World Food Programme to support humanitarian operations in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Somalia and Yemen. Although global food prices fell after March 2022, by the end of 2022 they remained 45 per cent above the average of the past 20 years and fertilizer prices were more than 200 per cent higher than in 2019. Full implementation of the Initiative and the Memorandum of Understanding would allow continued contribution to global food security.

88. Extreme weather events, whether drought or heavy rains, compounded food insecurity in many conflicts, including in Colombia, Somalia and the Central Sahel. In the Syrian Arab Republic, the worst drought in 70 years contributed to greatly diminished harvests. In Yemen, increasingly common droughts and flooding, combined with damage to infrastructure and the environment and a deteriorating economy, aggravated the scarcity of food and water.¹⁵ In Mozambique, inconsistent and insufficient rainfall, combined with unusually high temperatures, impeded agriculture.

89. Far more must be done to prevent and address hunger in armed conflict. In November 2022, the Secretary-General announced the appointment of the United Nations Famine Prevention and Response Coordinator to lead and organize a cohesive system-wide response to rising food insecurity, as well as drought and famine, in the Horn of Africa and beyond.

IV. Recommendations

90. Across all the themes in the present report, protecting civilians depends on adherence to the applicable rules of international humanitarian and human rights law and the adoption of policies and practices to strengthen such protection. States and non-State armed groups, as appropriate, should:

(a) Ratify or accede to relevant treaties and incorporate their international humanitarian and human rights law treaty obligations into national laws, military manuals, codes of conduct, rules of engagement and training;

(b) Review policies and practices relating to civilian harm mitigation and revise them, as necessary, and join the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas without delay and translate its commitments into meaningful action;

(c) Redouble efforts to advance the pursuit of solutions for internally displaced persons, including through government-led solutions strategies that are anchored in the national development plans and strategies of Governments and the development cooperation frameworks of their development partners;

(d) Put in place legal, policy and institutional frameworks that account for protected persons in their custody and ensure the effective search for and identification of missing persons and the proper management of the dead;

¹⁵ Centre for Civilians in Conflict, “Risking the future: climate change, environmental destruction, and conflict in Yemen”, October 2022.

(e) Shield humanitarian operations from the political dynamics of conflict, support humanitarian engagement with all parties to conflict, including non-State armed groups, and take steps to facilitate impartial humanitarian activities;

(f) Exclude impartial humanitarian and medical activities from the scope of application of counter-terrorism and sanctions measures and fully implement Security Council resolution [2664 \(2022\)](#);

(g) Give full effect to resolutions [2417 \(2018\)](#) and [2573 \(2021\)](#), including by protecting objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, taking constant care to spare civilians and civilian objects, and by facilitating the rapid and unimpeded passage of impartial humanitarian relief to all those in need;

(h) In order to break the cycle between armed conflict and food insecurity, find political solutions to conflict, support vulnerable countries' economies and safeguard livelihoods, scale up support for humanitarian operations, and support integrated responses to address the multiple drivers of acute food insecurity in armed conflict;

(i) Ensure respect for international humanitarian and human rights law, including through political dialogue, training and dissemination, joint operational planning, and conditioning arms exports on compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law;

(j) Investigate alleged war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes of genocide, prosecute perpetrators, ensure reparations for victims and guarantees of non-repetition, strengthen States' capacity and resources to investigate and prosecute, and, as appropriate, become a party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and cooperate fully with the Court and other investigative and judicial mechanisms.

V. Conclusion

91. The situation on the ground again demonstrated that, across armed conflicts, there is a dire need for the strengthened protection of civilians and, to this end, strengthened compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law. The international legal framework governing conduct in armed conflict has benefited from more than 150 years of development. The tools and strategies to implement them are well established and must be put in place without delay. This demands far greater political will on the part of all parties to armed conflict and of all States and other relevant stakeholders. They must spare no effort in exerting their influence and taking concrete action to enhance compliance and reduce human suffering in armed conflict.