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The global food crisis and the rise of starvation and the weaponization of food go hand in hand. Both are the result of systemic violation of the right to food. We must remember that hunger and famine are always political problems. That means that hunger is not a matter of producing more food or responding to humanitarian crisis, this is about fully realizing the right to food. The right to food as defined in human rights treaties, as defined in the FAO constitution, and in the vision statement of the CFS, is about freedom. Freedom from oppression, freedom from exploitation, freedom from occupation. These are the root causes of hunger, starvation and malnutrition.

Madame Chairperson, I appeared before the CFS exactly one year ago and raised the alarm for the risk of genocide and starvation against the Palestinian people by Israel. Unfortunately, the language from the CFS was not strong enough to stop Israel's genocidal starvation campaign against the Palestinian people. The SOFI report highlights that in 2023, of all the people in the world facing starvation and famine 80% were in one place, Gaza. What the world has learned, is that no amount of facts and figures, no degree of horror, no amount of death and pain is enough to trigger a global response to starvation and genocide. The entire UN system is at an existential crisis over Palestinian human rights.

I just returned from the UN General Assembly, where I delivered my report on "[Starvation and the right to food, with an emphasis on Palestinian people's food sovereignty](#)." The report was well received by the majority of the world's governments. I can tell you, there is a global consensus that the only way to respond to Israel's starvation campaign is a ceasefire and sanctions. But there is also growing consensus that Israel and its allies must be held accountable and responsible and must pay for the full realization of the Palestinian people's right to food, in terms of recovery, restitution and justice.

We have heard several times today that conflict is the leading trigger of hunger, malnutrition and famine. Hunger often leads to armed conflicts, and armed conflicts always leads to hunger. But it is important to understand that this vicious cycle of hunger and conflict doesn't happen overnight. To use the language and framework of the CFS itself, conflict and hunger always arise from a protracted crisis that unfolds over decades. So, whether we are talking about a food crisis, or the risk of starvation, again we are talking about the right to food and its root causes: oppression, exploitation and occupation. Collaborative governance has never been so important.

Some people ask me why I focused on Palestine, in my report that I delivered to the General Assembly. This is the wrong question. The question is: why have we seen millions of people mobilize in unprecedented ways, in solidarity with the Palestinian people. Why has almost every international social movement in the world stood up for Palestinian human rights. And why are millions of people calling for a free Palestine, in a way that we have not seen for decades. From a right to food and food sovereignty perspective, oppressed people of the world look at Palestine and immediately recognize their own struggle and their own food system. Whether its land grabs and occupation; commodification of seeds; the attack against peasants and fisheries, and pastoralists; or gender-based violence. The Palestinian people face almost every form of oppression, exploitation and occupation imaginable and in most accelerated and vicious form and have done so for over 75 years.

From a geopolitical perspective what is at stake, in Israel's genocidal starvation campaign against the Palestinians is US power and European unity. The UN itself has been attacked by Israel, within the halls of the UN but also we see a record number of UN staff killed by Israel more than we've seen in any war. Now Israel is shooting at UNIFIL peacekeepers in Lebanon. How the world responds to Israel's occupation and attempt to erase the Palestinian people will determine the character of global governance and international law for decades into the future. How the CFS responds to Palestine will determine its relevance and credibility in the eyes of the world.