

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. _____

Condemning the use of hunger as a weapon of war and recognizing the effect of conflict on global food security and famine.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. THUNE, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. RISCH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Condemning the use of hunger as a weapon of war and recognizing the effect of conflict on global food security and famine.

Whereas in 2020, 155,000,000 people experienced crisis levels of food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification phase 3 or above), with nearly 100,000,000 people living in environments where conflict was the main driver of hunger, and the COVID–19 pandemic has worsened rising global food insecurity;

Whereas conflict acutely impacts vulnerable populations such as women and children, persons with disabilities, refugees, and internally displaced persons;

Whereas armed conflict impacts on food security can be direct, such as displacement from land, destruction of live-

stock grazing areas and fishing grounds, or destruction of food stocks and agricultural assets, or indirect, such as disruptions to food systems, leading to increased food prices or decreased household purchasing power, or decreased access to supplies that are necessary for food preparation, including water and fuel;

Whereas conflict disrupts the distribution and buying and selling of food within a food system due to a shortage of produce, risk, or perceived risk of travel, the formation of illegal distribution channels and markets, and the breakdown of a government's ability to enforce regulations or perform its judiciary functions;

Whereas aerial bombing campaigns targeting agricultural heartlands, scorched earth methods of warfare, and the use of landmines and other explosive devices have direct impacts on the ability of vulnerable populations to feed themselves;

Whereas effective humanitarian response in armed conflict, including in the threat of conflict-induced famine and food insecurity in situations of armed conflict, requires respect for international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict, and allowing and facilitating the rapid and unimpeded movement of humanitarian relief to all those in need;

Whereas efforts to restrict humanitarian aid and the operational integrity and impartiality of humanitarian aid works and distribution efforts, including through blockades, security impediments, or irregular bureaucratic requirements is another means by which combatants employ starvation and food deprivation as a weapon of war; and

Whereas the United States Government has the tools to fight global hunger, protect lifesaving assistance, and promote the prevention of conflict, including through the Global Fragility Act of 2019 (title V of division J of Public Law 116–94), the Global Food Security Act of 2016 (Public Law 114–195), and the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–334), and has the potential to hold accountable those using hunger as a weapon of war through the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (subtitle F of title XII of Public Law 114–328): Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) condemns the use of hunger as a weapon of
3 war through the—

4 (A) starvation of civilians;

5 (B) intentional and reckless destruction,
6 removing, looting, or rendering useless objects
7 necessary for food production and distribution
8 such as farmland, markets, mills, food proc-
9 essing and storage areas, foodstuffs, crops, live-
10 stock, agricultural assets, waterways, water sys-
11 tems, drinking water installations and supplies,
12 and irrigation works;

13 (C) denial of humanitarian access and the
14 deprivation of objects indispensable to people’s
15 survival, such as food supplies and nutrition re-
16 sources; and

1 (D) willful interruption of market systems
2 to affected populations in need in conflict envi-
3 ronments by preventing travel and manipulating
4 currency exchange; and

5 (2) calls on the United States Government to—

6 (A) prioritize diplomatic efforts to call out
7 and address instances where hunger and inten-
8 tional deprivation of food is being utilized as a
9 weapon of war, including efforts to ensure that
10 security operations do not undermine livelihoods
11 of local populations to minimize civilian harm;

12 (B) continue efforts to address severe food
13 insecurity through humanitarian response ef-
14 forts, including in-kind food assistance, vouch-
15 ers, and other flexible modalities;

16 (C) ensure existing interagency strategies,
17 crisis response efforts, and ongoing programs
18 consider, integrate, and adapt to address con-
19 flict by utilizing crisis modifiers in United
20 States Agency for International Development
21 programming to respond to rapid shocks and
22 stress such as the willful targeting of food sys-
23 tems; and

24 (D) ensure that the use of hunger as a
25 weapon of war is considered within the employ-

1 ment of tools to hold individuals, governments,
2 militias, or entities responsible such as the
3 Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability
4 Act (22 U.S.C. 2656), where appropriate, and
5 taking into consideration the need for humani-
6 tarian exemptions and the protection of life-
7 saving assistance.