



Food Insecurity and Violent Conflict: Causes, Consequences, and Addressing the Challenges

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Abstract

This paper provides an overview of the link between food insecurity and violent conflict, addressing both traditional and emerging threats to security and political stability. It discusses the effects of food insecurity on several types of conflict, and the political, social, and demographic factors that may exacerbate these effects. It then discusses the interventions that can break the link between food security and conflict, focusing on mechanisms that can shield consumers and producers from food price shocks. Finally, it discusses ways in which the international community can assist in breaking this link and build peace.

Food insecurity – especially when caused by a rise in food prices – is a threat and impact multiplier for violent conflict. It might not be a direct cause and rarely the only cause, but combined with other factors, for example in the political or economic spheres, it could be the factor that determines whether and when violent conflicts will erupt. Changes in food security, rather than levels of food insecurity, are probably most influential. Food insecurity is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for violent conflict. Food price stabilization measures and safety nets are critical instruments to prevent violent conflict. Food assistance can contribute to peacebuilding, restore trust in governments and rebuild social capital.

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Food Insecurity as a Cause of Violence	5
<i>Civil Conflict</i>	5
<i>Interstate War</i>	6
<i>Democratic and Authoritarian Breakdowns</i>	6
<i>Protest and Rioting</i>	7
<i>Communal Violence</i>	8
<i>Context Matters: Demographic, Social, Political, and Economic Mediators</i>	8
3. Food Prices and Fragile States	11
<i>Focus on Fragile States</i>	11
<i>Violent Conflict as a Source of Higher Prices</i>	12
4. Breaking the Food Insecurity – Conflict Link	13
<i>Fragile States and Political Capacity</i>	13
<i>Policy Interventions in Times of High Prices</i>	13
<i>Social Protection and Safety Nets: Taking the Longer View</i>	14
5. The International Community: Answering the Call, Promoting Peace	15
<i>Food Assistance and Peacebuilding</i>	15
<i>Food Assistance and Social Capital</i>	17
<i>Transitions from Relief to Recovery</i>	18
<i>Getting Aid Sequencing Right</i>	18
6. Conclusions	20
<i>Figure 1. Food Prices and Rioting, 2007-2008</i>	7
<i>Table 1. Global factors causing high food prices</i>	11
<i>Table 2. Shares of food imports in food consumption and of food in total household consumption expenditures</i>	12
<i>Box: A comparison of Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania</i>	9
<i>Box: Transitioning school feeding in El Salvador</i>	15
<i>Box: School meals as a safety net that contributes to peacebuilding</i>	16
<i>Box: Food assistance for conflict-affected populations in Mindanao, the Philippines: Peacebuilding before peace</i>	17
<i>Box: WFP and IDPs in Côte d'Ivoire: Rebuilding social cohesion</i>	18
References	21
Annex: Responses of Fragile States to High Food Prices in 2007-08	26

1. Introduction

Rising food prices contribute to food insecurity, which is a clear and serious threat to human security. Interest in food security as a catalyst for political instability and conflict has grown rapidly since 2007–2008, when food protests and riots broke out in 48 countries as a result of record world prices. In February 2011, the food price index of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) reached a new historic peak, and the rise in food prices contributed to the wave of protests across North Africa and the Middle East that toppled Tunisian president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak.

Among major development organizations, the unchallenged consensus is that war and conflict are development issues: conflict ravages local economies, often leading to forced migration, refugee populations, disease, a collapse of social trust, and acute food insecurity. But is food insecurity itself a cause of conflict? Based on a review of recent research, the answer is a highly qualified yes. Food insecurity, especially when caused by higher food prices, heightens the risk of democratic breakdown, civil conflict, protest, rioting, and communal conflict. The evidence linking food insecurity to interstate conflict is less strong, though there is some historical evidence linking declining agricultural yields to periods of regional conflict in Europe and Asia.

These links are highly context-specific: they are contingent on existing political institutions, levels of economic development, social safety nets and demographic pressures. Food insecurity is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for acute political

violence and conflict. Generally, the risk of violent conflict is higher where political regimes intermingle democratic and authoritarian institutions or when a youth bulge, low levels of development, deteriorating economic conditions, or high inequalities among groups are present.

Fragile states (which have a high share of food imports), and the households within them (who must spend a large share of their income on food), are particularly vulnerable to higher food prices. Moreover, this vulnerability has increased over time. On the other hand, violent conflicts have also contributed to higher food prices and food insecurity, contributing to a vicious cycle.

While the situation seems bleak, the contingent nature of food insecurity's effect on conflict suggests that governments, international organizations (IOs), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can take positive steps to reduce food insecurity and break the relationship between food insecurity and conflict. Governments can act to shield their citizens from higher prices and volatility in world markets by initiating measures to stabilize food prices and by establishing social protection systems that mitigate the impact of high food prices on vulnerable groups. Unfortunately, the capacity of fragile states to do that is limited. The World Food Programme and NGOs can assist in times of acute crisis to provide relief. Finally, governments, IOs and NGOs can work to make food security a part of the post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction process. The challenges are great, but the potential social, economic, and political costs of inaction are even greater.

2. Food Insecurity as a Cause of Violence

The traditional security paradigm focuses on military threats to sovereign states. The absence of war, however, does not equal peace and stability. Between 1990 and 2009, Kenya experienced neither interstate nor intrastate war, yet political and social violence, including election-related rioting, communal conflict and cattle raiding caused over 4,700 deaths (Salehyan et al., 2011). Civil conflict and interstate war are merely the most obvious manifestations of political violence; other types of conflict may pose similarly grave threats to human security.

The Roman poet Juvenal recognized in 100 CE that the provision of “bread and circuses” was an effective mechanism for garnering public support and preventing the populace from expressing discontent. Contemporary observers note that it is not only the level of insecurity that matters, but also how this insecurity is distributed. Relative deprivation, rather than absolute deprivation, generates grievances that motivate violent behavior. Thus, many of the studies linking economic grievances to conflict look at both the average level of food insecurity and at whether that food insecurity is widely experienced or concentrated in certain groups (Reenock, Bernhard and Sobek, 2007; Østby, 2008).

Most of the types of political violence addressed here are more prevalent in societies with higher levels of chronic food insecurity. There is a correlation between food insecurity and political conflict in part because both are symptoms of low development (Collier et al., 2003). Nevertheless, a growing body of research makes both direct links and indirect links – as proxied by environmental scarcity or access to water resources – between food scarcity and various types of conflict.

The causal arguments linking food insecurity to political violence lack microfoundational evidence – evidence based on actions of individuals – to explain how the mechanism works, but there are plenty of theories. The theories tend to rest either on the perspective of motivation, emphasizing the effect of food insecurity on economic and social grievances; or on the perspective of the opportunity cost, emphasizing the perceived costs and benefits of participating in violence relative to other means of securing income or food (Gurr, 1970; Tilly, 1978; Humphreys and Weinstein, 2008; Blattman and

Miguel, 2010). These arguments are most valid with respect to participation in civil war and rebellion, where participation is better explained by a mixture of grievances – which provide motivation – and selective incentives – protection from violence and opportunities to engage in predation or to receive food, clothing, shelter and other material benefits – rather than grievances alone (Berman, 2009). A study of demobilized combatants in Sierra Leone found that poverty, lack of educational access and material rewards were associated with participation in the civil war (Humphreys and Weinstein, 2008). Interestingly, in Liberia, women were more likely than men to fight for material benefits (Hill et al., 2008). Thus, grievances are important, but so are motivations related to that individual’s economic and opportunistic considerations.

Civil Conflict

Civil conflict is the prevalent type of armed conflict in the world today (Harbom and Wallerstein, 2010). It is almost exclusively a phenomenon of countries with low levels of economic development and high levels of food insecurity. Sixty-five percent of the world’s food-insecure people live in seven countries: India, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and Ethiopia (FAO, 2010), of which all but China have experienced civil conflict in the past decade, with DRC, Ethiopia, India and Pakistan currently embroiled in civil conflicts.

Pinstrup-Andersen and Shimokawa (2008) find that poor health and nutrition are associated with greater probability of civil conflict, though their findings are based on small sample sizes. Countries with lower per capita caloric intake are more prone to experience civil conflict, even accounting for their levels of economic development (Sobek and Boehmer, 2009). This relationship is stronger in those states where primary commodities make up a large proportion of their export profile. Some of the countries most plagued by conflict in the past 20 years are commodity-rich countries characterized by widespread hunger, such as Angola, DRC, Papua New Guinea and Sierra Leone. The mixture of hunger – which creates grievances – and the availability of valuable commodities – which can

provide opportunities for rebel funding – is a volatile combination.

World commodity prices can trigger conflict, as higher prices, especially for food, increase affected groups' willingness to fight. Timothy Besley and Torsten Persson (2008) find that as a country's import prices increase, thereby eroding real incomes, the risk of conflict increases. Oeindrila Dube and Juan F. Vargas (2008) arrive at similar conclusions when looking at Colombia, where higher export prices for coffee (which is labour intensive and a source of rural income) reduced violence in coffee-producing areas while higher export prices for oil (which is capital intensive and a source of income for rebels and paramilitary groups) increased violence in regions with oil reserves and pipelines.

Other research links transitory weather shocks to civil conflict. In these studies, weather shocks – like drought and excess rainfall – are thought to fuel conflict by causing crops to fail and reducing agricultural employment opportunities, thus increasing food insecurity both in terms of food availability and food access (ability to pay). The people most likely to participate in armed conflict – young men from rural areas with limited education and economic prospects – are likely to seek work in the agricultural sector. As that work dries up, fighting looks more attractive. However, the empirical link between transitory weather shocks and civil conflict is still ambiguous. Some studies find that civil conflict is more likely to begin following years of negative growth in rainfall (Miguel, Satyanath and Sergenti, 2004; Hendrix and Glaser, 2007), suggesting that drought and decreased agricultural productivity expand the pool of potential combatants and give rise to more broadly held grievances. However, approaches that look at levels of rainfall, rather than growth in rainfall from year to year, find tenuous, or in fact positive relationships, between rainfall abundance and the onset of conflict (Burke et al., 2009; Buhaug, 2010; Hendrix and Salehyan, 2010; Ciccone, forthcoming). Some case-based research, however, links drought to conflict – though mediated by the government's response to the crisis. For example, during the Tuareg rebellion in northern Mali, drought – aggravated by the government's embezzlement of drought relief supplies and food aid – was a significant source of grievance that motivated young men and women to take up arms (Benjaminsen, 2008).

Recently, warmer temperatures have been linked to an increase in civil conflict, though this finding has

been challenged (Burke et al., 2009; Buhaug, 2010). Civil war is also more likely in the aftermath of quick-onset natural disasters, such as earthquakes, major volcanic eruptions, floods, and cyclonic storms (Brancati, 2007; Nel and Righarts, 2008). The relationship between disaster and conflict is strongest in countries with high levels of inequality and slow economic growth; food insecurity and resource scarcity are among the more plausible explanations for this correlation.

Interstate War

The links between food insecurity and interstate war are less direct. While countries often go to war over territory, previous research has not focused directly on access to food or productive agricultural land as a major driver of conflict (Hensel, 2000). However, wars have been waged to reduce demographic pressures arising from the scarcity of arable land, the clearest examples being the move to acquire *Lebensraum* (“living space”) that motivated Nazi Germany's aggression toward Poland and Eastern Europe (Hillgruber, 1981) and Japan's invasion of China and Indochina (Natsios and Doley, 2009). Water, for drinking and for agriculture, is also a cause of conflict (Klare, 2002). Countries that share river basins are more likely to go to war than are other countries that border one another (Toset et al., 2000; Gleditsch et al., 2006). This relationship is strongest in countries with low levels of economic development. Institutions that manage conflicts over water and monitor and enforce agreements can significantly reduce the risk of war (Postel and Wolf, 2001).

Jared Diamond (1997) has argued that for centuries military power was built on agricultural production. Zhang et al. (2007) show that long-term fluctuations in the prevalence of war followed cycles of temperature change over the period 1400–1900 CE, with more war during periods of relatively cooler temperatures and thus lower agricultural productivity and greater competition for resources. Similar findings linking cooler periods with more war have been established for Europe between 1000 and 1750 CE (Tol and Wagner, 2008).

Democratic and Authoritarian Breakdowns

Democratic breakdowns occur when leaders are deposed and replaced by officials who come to power without regard for elections, legal rules, and

institutions. Not all breakdowns are violent – “bloodless” coups account for 67 percent of all coups and coup attempts – but many have been very bloody, and the autocratic regimes and instability that follow democratic breakdowns are more likely to lead to the abuse of human rights, in some cases leading to mass state killing (Poe and Tate, 1994; Harff, 2003).

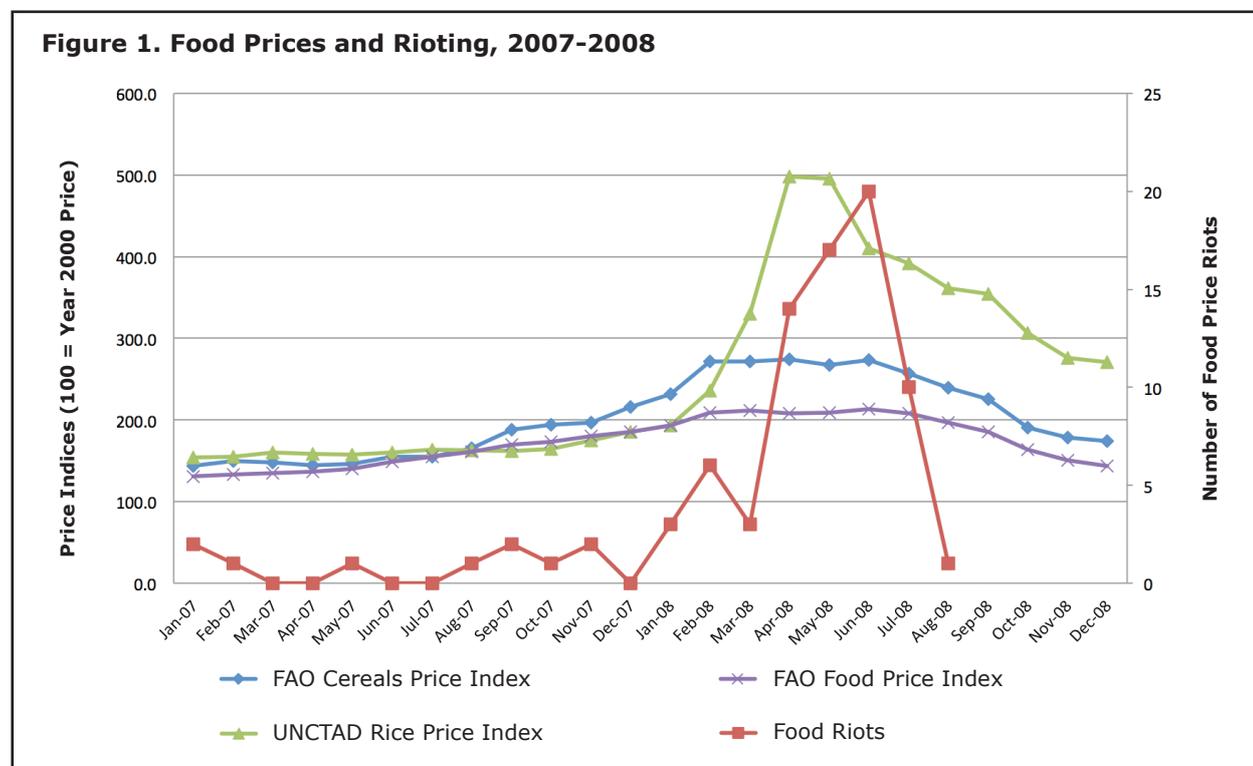
Food insecurity, proxied by low availability of calories for consumption per capita, makes democratic breakdown more likely, especially in higher-income countries, where people expect there to be larger social surpluses that could be invested to reduce food insecurity (Reenock, Bernhard and Sobek, 2007).

Though statistical evidence is lacking, rising food prices have been implicated in the wave of demonstrations and transitions from authoritarian rule to fledgling democracy in some countries across North Africa and the Middle East in 2011. There are some historical precedents for this: a bad harvest in 1788 led to high food prices in France, which caused rioting and contributed to the French revolution in 1789; and the wave of political upheaval that swept

Europe in 1848 was at least in part a response to food scarcity, coming after three below-average harvests across the continent (Berger and Spoerer 2001).

Protest and Rioting

Throughout history higher food prices have contributed to or triggered violent riots. Protests and rioting occurred in response to sharp increases in world food prices in the 1970s and 1980s (Walton and Seddon, 1994). Record-high world food prices triggered protest and violent rioting in 48 countries in 2007/08 (see Figure 1). The ratio of violent to non-violent protest was higher in low-income countries and in countries with lower government effectiveness (von Braun, 2008). Recent research links higher world food prices for the three main staple grains (wheat, rice and maize) to more numerous protests and riots in developing countries, though this relationship can be mitigated by policy interventions designed to shield consumers from higher prices (Arezki and Brückner, 2011; Bates, 2011).



Source: Authors, based on WFP data (on riots) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (price indices)

International market prices are not the only source of food-related protests. The lifting of government subsidies can lead to rioting as well. Until recently, the biggest demonstrations in modern Egyptian history were the three-day “bread riots” in 1977 that killed over 800 people, which were a response to the Egyptian government’s removal of state subsidies for basic foodstuffs, as mandated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (AFP, 2007). “IMF riots” can be traced to popular grievances over withdrawn food and energy subsidies (Walton and Seddon, 1994; Abouharb and Cingranelli, 2007). However, the relationship between “IMF riots” and food insecurity is more complicated. Generalized food and energy subsidies are regressive, meaning that wealthy and middle-class households generally capture more of the benefits. As such, it may be real income erosion, rather than acute food insecurity, that is driving participation in protest.

Communal Violence

Competition over scarce resources, particularly land and water, often causes or exacerbates communal conflict (Homer-Dixon, 1999; Kahl, 2006; Ban, 2007). Communal conflict involves groups with permanent or semi-permanent armed militias but does not involve the government. However, it can escalate to include government forces, as in the massacres in Darfur, Rwanda and Burundi. These conflicts have the potential to escalate to civil war when the government is perceived to be supporting, tacitly or otherwise, one communal group at the expense of the other (Kahl, 2006). While the conflict in Darfur began as a communal conflict over land and water, its impact escalated to devastating proportions following the government’s support for Janjaweed militias in their fight against the Sudan People’s Liberation Army/Movement and Justice and Equality Movement rebels.

Communal conflicts are common in the Sahel, the zone of transition between the Sahara desert and the savanna, particularly in years of extremely high and low rainfall (Hendrix and Salehyan, 2010). Recurrent, long-lasting droughts in the Sahel have undermined cooperative relationships between migratory herders and sedentary farmers, leading to food insecurity and increased competition for water and land between farmers and herders, but also within herding and farming groups. As a pastoralist in the Sudan noted: “When there is food, there is no cattle raiding.” (quoted in Schomerus and Allen, 2010). Once violence begins, conflict escalates and persists because of security dilemmas (fear of future

attacks leads to preemptive attacks – see Posen, 1993) and lack of alternative dispute mechanisms between groups and effective policing within groups (Fearon and Laitin, 1996).

These conflicts have been particularly lethal in Kenya, Nigeria, the Sudan and Uganda. Repeated clashes between Fulani herders and Tarok farmers in Nigeria’s Plateau State killed 843 people in 2004. Similar clashes between Rizeigat Abbala and Terjam herders in the Sudan killed 382 in 2007. Cattle raiding in the Karamoja Cluster, a cross-border region of Ethiopian, Kenyan and Ugandan territory, resulted in more than 600 deaths and the loss of 40,000 heads of livestock in 2004 alone (Meier, Bond and Bond, 2007). These conflicts tend to occur in politically marginalized territories far from the capital (Raleigh, 2010).

Context Matters: Demographic, Social, Political, and Economic Mediators

Food insecurity is a clear contributor to political instability and conflict. But neither hunger nor conflict exist in a vacuum: other aspects of the political, economic and social environment affect the degree to which food insecurity, and grievances more generally, are expressed violently (Tilly, 1978).

Demographic and Social Factors

In general, countries with proportionately larger numbers of 15–24 year olds experience more protest and rioting, civil conflict and terrorist attacks (Urdal, 2006). Especially in developing countries where job opportunities are few, many youths engage in black- and grey-market activities or participate in gangs, paramilitary groups and insurgent forces. Kenya’s Mungiki, the Kikuyu street gang/paramilitary organization based in Nairobi’s Mathare slum, has attracted many landless, unemployed Kikuyu youths. Mungiki government violence claimed at least 195 lives from 2007 to 2009 (Salehyan et al., 2011).

Ethnic and religious diversity do not necessarily make a society more prone to conflict: the United Republic of Tanzania, one of the world’s most ethnically diverse countries, has been peaceful for decades (see box on Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania). However, when ethnic groups are made the basis for exclusionary patterns of rule, as in South Africa under apartheid, conflict is more likely (Langer, 2005; Nafziger et al., 2000; Østby, 2008; Østby, Nordås and Rød, 2009; Cederman, Weidmann and Gleditsch, forthcoming).

A comparison of Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania

Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania have much in common. Both are former British colonies that gained independence in the early 1960s, with comparable populations, levels of economic development and Human Development Index scores. Both are experiencing rapid population growth, have large youth populations and are among the most ethnically diverse in the world. Until 2002, hegemonic political parties that faced little opposition governed both countries. Finally, both are characterized by significant food insecurity (the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), 2009; WFP, 2009a).

Despite these similarities, conflict is much more prevalent in Kenya. Since independence, Kenya has experienced only one brief episode of civil conflict (an attempted coup in 1982 that left 159 people dead). But social conflict has caused over 4,700 reported deaths since 1990 (Salehyan et al., 2011), over 1,700 of which have been associated with competition among ethnic groups for land, water and animal resources. In contrast, the United Republic of Tanzania has had virtually no internal political violence. Since 1990, political violence has been responsible for only 116 reported deaths, of which only 31 are attributed to communal clashes between farmers and pastoralists.

Explanations for this divergence are varied. Economic growth rates have been higher and less variable in the United Republic of Tanzania than in Kenya, and higher rates of economic growth are associated with lower incidences of popular unrest. Kenya also has higher income inequality. Kenya has made more progress toward democracy, and democratization is associated with an increase in political violence and contestation in lower-income countries (Collier and Rohner, 2008). While both countries are ethnically diverse, Kenya is composed of fewer, comparatively larger ethnic groups, and these ethnic divisions are the main basis of political competition. The United Republic of Tanzania is home to over 120 ethnic groups, but these have not formed the basis for political divisions; national identity is much stronger.

The differences may be attributable also to the trajectory of state- and nation-building in the post-independence period. Under President Julius Nyerere, the government of Tanzania instituted educational and language policies designed to promote a Tanzanian identity. Moreover, Tanzania overhauled local government institutions, creating elected village and district councils that enjoyed broad legitimacy across ethnic lines. Conversely, Kenyan politics were marked by fewer attempts to create a national identity, and successive Kenyan presidents have pursued educational and language policies that reinforce, rather than mitigate, ethnic identities and divisions. Finally, central government resources were distributed much more equitably in Tanzania than in Kenya, thus decreasing incentives to compete over political and economic spoils (Miguel, 2004).

Finally, urbanization has crosscutting impacts on political violence that interact with food insecurity in complex ways. When rural populations move to the city, they increase the ratio of food consumers to producers and it is more difficult for them to turn to subsistence farming as a coping mechanism for dealing with higher food prices. However, urban populations are more easily served by food distribution networks and safety nets and tend to receive more attention from political actors because of their capacity for collective protest (Bates, 1981; Stasavage, 2005).

Political Institutions

The type of political regime – whether a country is democratic, autocratic, or intermingles democratic

and autocratic institutions – has complex effects on political violence. Highly repressive authoritarian regimes may create incentives for clandestine action such as insurgency or revolution, but these regimes are generally well positioned to deter and repress public protest (Goodwin, 2001; Hendrix, Haggard, and Magaloni, 2009). Peaceful protest should be more common where citizens are either legally allowed to engage in demonstrations, as in democracies, or where authoritarian governments choose to tolerate such acts of dissent, as in “semi-authoritarian” or hybrid regimes (Magaloni, 2008). Democratic institutions give politicians incentives to address societal concerns, which may diminish the grievances that motivate protest and rebellion (Natsios and Doley, 2009).

The level of a country's economic development mediates the relationship between political violence and political regime type (Collier and Rohner, 2008). While political democracy provides accountability mechanisms that may reduce grievances, it also diminishes the government's capacity to repress violent actors; the accommodative or repressive effect may dominate at different levels of economic development. At higher levels of economic development, democracies experience fewer civil conflicts, riots, political strikes and demonstrations than autocratic regimes. At lower levels of economic development, democracies experience more.

Economic Factors

In the twenty-first century, violent conflicts are overwhelmingly a phenomenon of countries with low income per capita, which often also suffer from food insecurity (Blattman and Miguel, 2010; Collier et al., 2003; Fearon and Laitin, 2003). Rates of development matter as well as levels of development. Civil conflict, protest, rioting and social conflict are all more prevalent during periods of slow or negative economic growth (Miguel, Satyanath and Sergenti, 2004; Blattman and Miguel, 2010).

Societies with greater economic inequality experience more civil conflict, though the type of inequality matters. *Vertical inequality* – inequality across households – has not been robustly linked to political conflict (Cramer, 2003; Hegre and Sambanis, 2006), though there is some evidence to suggest that vertical inequality makes civil and guerrilla wars more likely when a country's wealth is in the form of immobile assets such as natural resources (Boix, 2008). *Horizontal inequality* – across groups, where groups are defined by region, ethnicity, class, religion or other political divisions – may be more closely associated with the expression of group grievances and mobilization for violence.

Economic shocks are strongly correlated with civil conflict: Blattman and Miguel (2010) identify this as among the most robust findings in the literature. Economic shocks redistribute incomes and political power and can create incentives for rebellion, while reducing the capacity of governments to repress or accommodate potential challengers.

3. Food Prices and Fragile States

Food prices are inherently volatile because there is little elasticity in demand for food, and small changes in supply can have large effects on prices. Table 1 identifies a number of factors that drive both long- and short-term price volatility. Exchange rates can move suddenly, neighbouring countries can impose export restrictions overnight or natural disasters can affect food prices quickly. Policy measures can mitigate some of these effects.

Food prices are expected to remain high and volatile for the foreseeable future. Global population growth, and surging economies in emerging markets are driving demand higher, as are the use of foodgrains for biofuels, the increased penetration of food markets by institutional investors and the effects of climate change (see Brinkman and Hendrix, 2010).

	Demand factors	Supply factors
Structural or slowly evolving factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher incomes and changing demand • Population growth • Demand for biofuels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low investments in agriculture and low productivity growth • Low stocks
Temporary or sudden-onset factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low US\$ exchange rate • Institutional investment (speculation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy prices: fertilizer, mechanization, transport • Low US\$ exchange rate • Weather-related shocks • Export restrictions • Violent conflict

Source: Adapted from WFP (2009a)

Focus on Fragile States

Higher international prices do not necessarily mean higher domestic prices. Whether they do depends on structural factors such as how dependent the country is on food imports, transportation costs and market competitiveness; and on policy measures including trade barriers, taxes and subsidies, and government interventions (WFP, 2009a).

Households in fragile states¹ are particularly vulnerable to higher food prices. Fragile and conflict-affected states often suffer from a lack of infrastructure, in particular passable roads, markets with few buying or selling offers and a lack of entrepreneurs, leading to less competitive markets and higher transportation costs. They also import a

large share of their food and have fewer means to stabilize food prices and mitigate the impact of higher food prices on the population.

The dependency of fragile states on imports has accelerated over time, especially relative to other developing countries. Imported food as a share of total food consumption is higher in fragile states than in other developing countries, increasing the vulnerability of fragile states to international price movements (see Table 2, where lower numbers mean higher import dependency). FAO data show that households in fragile states devote on average 57.5 percent of their expenditures to food (up from 57 percent in the 1990s; see Table 2), while in other developing countries the average is 49.4 percent (down from 55 percent in earlier years).

¹ We use the World Bank's list of fragile states, which is based on its Country Policy and Institutional Assessments (CPIA) ratings.

Table 2. Shares of food imports in food consumption and of food in total household consumption expenditures

	Food net import dependency, 2003–2005	Change in food net import dependency between 1990–1992 and 2003–2005	Average % household expenditures spent on food, 2000–2007	Change in average % household expenditures spent on food between 1990s and 2000–2007
Fragile states	2.4	-10%	57.5	+1%
Other developing countries	2.9	+1%	49.4	-10%

Source: Authors' calculation based on FAO data.²

Violent Conflict as a Source of Higher Prices

Violent conflict itself has historically been an important factor behind high food prices and severe food insecurity. Following World War II, countries particularly affected include Angola (early 1980s), Cambodia (1979–1980), Ethiopia (1984–1985), Mozambique (1980s), Nigeria (1967–1969), Somalia (1992) and the Sudan (1987–1991) (Drèze and Sen, 1989; Ó Gráda, 2007; United Nations, 1993).

Conflict typically brings increased military spending and the domestic use of military force, both of which have contributed to food security and child hunger (Scanlan and Jenkins, 2001). Conflict often affects the ability to produce, trade and access food (United Nations, 1993). Violent conflict causes death, disease and displacement, destroys physical and social capital, damages the environment, decreases school attendance and discourages investment. It crowds out normal economic activity such as food production, destroys infrastructure and cuts off access to food supplies, with blocking of food access often used as a tool of political terror (Messer, Cohen and Marchione, 2002; Collier et al., 2003).

The effects of conflict-induced food insecurity are both immediate and long-term. Children in Burundi

and Zimbabwe who experienced violent conflict were significantly shorter (stunted) than others, affecting their health, education and productivity throughout their lives (Alderman, Hoddinott and Kinsey, 2006; Blattman and Miguel, 2010).

Refugees and internally displaced persons fleeing violence often experience the most acute insecurity. The civil war in Southern Sudan left an estimated 2.6 million people in need of emergency food aid by 2000; since the conflict in Darfur broke out in 2003, roughly 2 million people have been displaced. WFP has had to provide monthly food rations to nearly all of those people. More recently, Somali pirates have targeted food-carrying vessels, driving up prices of staples like wheat and rice by up to 22 percent (IRIN, 2010).

Political instability and conflict push food prices higher in both local and international markets. The 2011 protests across North Africa and the Middle East were in part a response to higher food and fuel prices, but the instability they have sown has in turn roiled commodity markets, including markets for oil, a key agricultural input.

² FAO calculates the share of net food imports in total food consumption by subtracting the amount of food imports from the amount of food exports based on kilocalories and then divides the countries into categories. A value of 2 is assigned when net food imports account for -25 to -50 percent of food consumption. A value of 3 is assigned when net food imports account for 0 to -25 percent of food consumption. A lower number thus indicates higher dependency. Averages and changes only include countries where at least two data points were available.

4. Breaking the Food Insecurity – Conflict Link

Though food insecurity contributes to violent conflict and political instability, food insecurity is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for it.

Governments, IOs and NGOs can help reduce food insecurity and break the food insecurity–conflict link.

Fragile States and Political Capacity

Fragile states have weak capacities to design, implement and monitor policies and programmes. They have less capacity to stabilize food prices – in part because they lack the capacity to analyse markets – and to mitigate the impact of volatile and high food prices, which would require the capacity to design, target, implement and monitor safety nets. Many fragile states don't have the various capacities required by cash-based programmes, nor the weather stations and analytical and implementation capacity required for weather-based index insurance. Food reserves can be looted when security is weak; and fiscal capacity is often severely reduced.

Many fragile countries have experienced recurrent fiscal crises since the early 1980s that have severely curtailed their ability to intervene in domestic markets and ensure food security. Moreover, chronic problems of macroeconomic instability, high external debts and policy conditionality make it prohibitively costly for many countries to borrow in tough times and ensure domestic consumption and food security by engaging in counter-cyclical social spending (Wibbels, 2006).

These structural weaknesses are exacerbated during conflicts. Governments have less capacity to operate social protection systems and have great difficulty in mobilizing revenue or collecting taxes. Moreover, conflict leads governments to divert funds from the social sectors to the military and security sectors. In El Salvador between 1988 and 1990, military spending accounted for 20 percent of the government's expenditure, while expenditures for education and health were only 2 percent and 1 percent, respectively (Del Castillo, 2001). In Mozambique, the government's pre-war expenditure on education of 12.1 percent of total expenditures dropped to 4.4 percent by 1987. During the war in Liberia "the state provided virtually no services, it

did not pay its employees [...] police and army provided predation and almost no protection, schools barely functioned, and medical services were provided almost exclusively by non-governmental organizations" (McGovern, 2008: 337).

Policy Interventions in Times of High Prices

Even governments in fragile states have some means to limit the impact of higher international prices on domestic food prices, including by:

- reducing import tariffs to lower prices;
- lowering import quotas and imposing export restrictions to increase availability;
- lowering taxes and increasing subsidies to reduce prices;
- imposing price controls to keep prices stable; and
- releasing food reserves to increase supplies.

In 2007 and early 2008, 84 percent of 77 developing countries surveyed had taken some policy measures to control food prices (FAO, 2008a; von Braun, 2008; World Bank, 2008a and 2009). About half of the countries reduced import taxes and more than half applied price controls and subsidies. About a quarter imposed export restrictions; a similar number released food from a reserve (FAO, 2008b).

Some of these measures are easier to design and implement than others and depend, of course, on previous actions: food cannot be released from a reserve, or taxes reduced, if they were not there in the first place. Reducing taxes and tariffs is fairly easy to implement, although it does have fiscal implications that need to be managed. Managing, storing, rotating and timely releasing of food stocks is more complicated – and food stocks are often targets of looting and theft. Price controls are difficult in a conflict-affected country because the likelihood of evasion is very high when government capacity and control are weak. Such difficulties mean that in fragile states, if any action at all is taken to control food prices, the most common measure is a reduction of taxes (see Annex).

From an economic point of view, there is an order of preference for the actions countries should take to

stabilize prices. The World Bank (2008a), for example, gave a green light to reducing taxes on food grains, raised some concerns about the use of food stocks, argued against price controls and consumer subsidies, and strongly discouraged export restrictions. From a political point of view, however, policymakers may make choices based on domestic political calculus. China, India and Indonesia did not follow conventional economic wisdom in 2007–2008 yet were largely able to insulate their societies from international price pressures. Each country followed a different set of policies and achieved relative stable food prices, with advantageous political results: the incumbents in India and Indonesia were both re-elected in 2009, partly because of their success in keeping food prices stable (Timmer, 2010; see also FAO, 2009c for the case of China). These efforts at domestic price stabilization did, however, increase prices and volatility on international markets, with disproportionate costs for fragile states, which are more dependent on food imports and have less ability to meet these costs.

Governments or governing elites have played a role in stabilizing prices for millennia. In ancient Greece and Rome, public interventions prevented frequent food crises from developing into famines, which were rare (Ó Gráda, 2009: 197). The leadership at times had a sense of moral obligation, but the possibility of civil unrest and the spread of disease, which affected leaders' survival, played a role as well. Governments and elites also recognized that the likelihood of riots and protests is largest at the time hunger increases, but is small when starvation and famine is entrenched and apathy and exhaustion take over (Dirks, 1980; Ó Gráda, 2009: 55). Historically, the most common means to stabilize prices were storage of reserves (often at the municipal level) and export restrictions. The Ch'ing Dynasty (1644–1911) administered a nationwide granary system (Wright, 2009). Price controls also have a long history – going back at least to AD 362–363 when they were imposed by Emperor Julian – and were often combined with clampdowns on traders accused of hoarding and profiteering (Ó Gráda, 2009).

Social Protection and Safety Nets: Taking the Longer View

Attempts at stabilizing prices are rarely completely successful because they need to be combined with safety nets and other social protection measures to mitigate the impact of higher food prices and to help prevent violent conflicts. In the past, safety nets relied heavily on public works, but in recent years,

the range of instruments has multiplied to include the following (World Bank, 2008a, 2008b; WFP 2009a):

- conditional or unconditional transfers of food, cash or vouchers;
- school meals, including breakfast, mid-morning snack or lunch and take-home rations, ideally complemented by other health and nutrition interventions;
- cash- or food-for-work programmes that create assets such as roads, dams or irrigation systems;
- general or targeted food subsidies; and
- weather-based index insurance.

Guaranteeing stable support over time may decrease the risks households perceive they face, thereby reducing negative risk management and coping strategies and fostering entrepreneurship.

There are several ways social protection measures both lower food insecurity and directly weaken its link to conflict: by mitigating the impact of high food prices or other shocks, they reduce the risk of violent protests; by contributing to growth and reducing inequality, they often address root causes of conflicts; and by delivering social services, they can undermine the organizing principles of insurgent or terrorist organizations (Berman, 2009).

Violent conflicts can be an important instigator for social protection. Both World Wars, for example, triggered a consensus around social policy issues that contributed significantly to the formation of the welfare state in Europe (Thane, 1982). Moreover, Bismarck used social protection in a newly unified Germany to maintain social harmony and state control (Thane, 1982).

There is a need to overcome the policy and capacity constraints that prevent the most vulnerable and food-insecure countries from introducing and scaling up formal social protection systems (Chronic Poverty Research Center, 2008; WFP, 2004b). The choice of instruments is more limited for fragile states however, partly because of their limited capacity and partly because some of these measures require stronger institutions. For example, cash-based programmes are complicated to implement and monitor and are vulnerable to corruption, bring additional security concerns and require financial institutions and functioning markets (WFP, 2008; World Bank, 2008b). There have been fragile-state situations where they have been used, as when informal remittance systems were used for cash transfers in Afghanistan and Somalia (Harvey, 2007, 2009).

5. The International Community: Answering the Call, Promoting Peace

There is a reciprocal relationship between service delivery and fragility (OECD, 2008) that also applies to food assistance. Improving food security can reduce tensions and contribute to more stable environments, but food assistance can also become a source of conflict (Anderson, 1998; Berdal and Malone, 2000; Deng and Minear, 1992) and can undermine investment in local food production and the development of local capacity. But if done right, the vicious cycle of food insecurity and conflict can be transformed into a virtuous cycle of food security and stability that provides peace dividends, rebuilds social trust and promotes human and economic development.

Food and nutrition assistance are critical for development – of individuals and societies. The cost of hunger amounts to as much as 11 percent of GDP (CEPAL and WFP, 2007). If children do not get the right nutrition between conception and 24 months they are likely to be stunted at 2 years of age, with life-long consequences for their health, education and productivity (Hoddinott et al., 2008; Victora et al., 2008). In this sense, there is no gap between humanitarian relief and development: food and nutrition assistance is development.

Food Assistance and Peacebuilding

Food assistance also offers valuable peace dividends. Because post-conflict situations are fragile and vulnerable to reversals, it is important that food assistance benefits are delivered early, equitably, broadly and for a considerable amount of time. Areas affected by violence or neglected during the conflict should need particular attention.

Provided they are founded on equity and accountability, international efforts to improve food security can increase the legitimacy of the state, which is often undermined during the conflict (OECD, 2008; Shearer, 2000). For example, if horizontal inequalities in access to public services were a cause of conflict, a broad, equitable distribution of food assistance is critical for peacebuilding.

Government capacity to improve food security must develop alongside the actual improvement of food security. The role played by non-state actors and the international community must be clearly defined and reduced over time, with the state increasingly taking responsibility. This can be a long process (see box on El Salvador).

Transitioning school feeding in El Salvador

In El Salvador, a school-feeding programme was started during the civil war in 1984 and went through three distinct phases. In 1984, the programme reached 200,000 students and completely relied upon WFP for funding and implementation. During the first phase, which lasted until 1995, WFP assisted with the building of the institutional framework for school feeding, including the creation of a technical and steering committee and a designated unit in the Ministry of Education.

The second phase (1996–2005), began with the insertion of the programme into the national school health programme. A hand-over strategy was adopted in 1997, oversight was strengthened and the government explored alternative funding. In 2000, the government and other donors joined WFP in funding the programme.

In the final phase (2006–2009), the government added a line to its annual budget for school feeding and the official hand-over took place at the end of 2007. By 2008 all costs for the programme, which included feeding 870,000 children aged 5–15 years, were covered by the government. WFP continues to assist with logistics, procurement, redesigning of the food basket, targeting and training.

One of the lessons learned is that transition takes time and requires a significant amount of planning and resources. The government slowly built capacity, with WFP withdrawing first from the less vulnerable regions and then from all regions.

Source: World Bank/WFP (2009)

School meals as a safety net that contributes to peacebuilding

Some form of school feeding exists in 155 countries, including dozens of fragile and conflict-affected states, where it can play an essential role, often as one of the few safety nets. School feeding can address various objectives related to education, gender, nutrition, peacebuilding and the wider economy, and can provide an important foundation for recovery and development (World Bank-WFP, 2009).

Education during conflicts can provide a sense of structure and normalcy – along with protection from harm, abduction and recruitment into armed groups (Penson and Tomlinson, 2009). School feeding and community involvement in school committees can play a key role in terms of peacebuilding to establish normalcy, enhance equity, help reconciliation and rebuild social capital, cohesion and trust after a conflict (see WFP, 2009b for the case of Liberia).

The school system can provide an effective way to scale up existing safety nets and prevent negative coping strategies, averting negative effects for millions of vulnerable children and households.

In 2008 and 2009, WFP school feeding programmes were implemented in six conflict-affected states: Afghanistan, Haiti, Pakistan, the Philippines, Somalia and the Sudan, with clear impacts on stability and peacebuilding.

Cash- or food-for-work programmes are more difficult to implement when violence is still widespread, but are very effective after violence subsides. It is demanding for poverty-stricken communities hit by an emergency to dedicate themselves to rebuilding infrastructure because community members are busy securing food. Food- or cash-for-work programmes aim to help people overcome that dilemma. Workers are paid in money or food rations for building vital infrastructure such as dams, roads, swamp reclamation structures, hillside terraces, water facilities and catchment areas. For example, to reduce the cost of transporting food and other humanitarian supplies, WFP has conducted a massive road rehabilitation project in Southern Sudan since 2006. This has improved links in Southern Sudan and with neighbouring countries and helped revitalize trade. The roads built so far have halved the average travel time to markets, schools and health centres and reduced cereal prices in locations with road access.

Such programmes should be initiated as early as possible to create employment and visible peace dividends. They can also accompany reintegration programmes; WFP has offered food assistance as an incentive for former combatants to learn new skills and abandon their weapons.

Food assistance programmes, including food-for-work or food-for-training programmes, not only increase access to food, create jobs and enhance livelihoods, they also often directly build peace. This

comes about partly as a result of working closely with communities in the design and implementation of programmes. In Liberia, for example, the evaluation of a protracted relief and recovery operation found that 90 percent of the 1,200 participants interviewed believed that the short-term jobs provided through the operation had helped to promote peace and reconciliation (WFP, 2009b). This percentage of positive replies was higher than for skills learned or improvements in living conditions. Greater social cohesion can result even from brief exposure to new community-based participatory institutions (Fearon et al., 2009). Focus on youth is essential, given the role that particularly unemployed youth have played in fueling violence. In Sierra Leone, for example, a new programme targets youth by offering them cash- and food-for-work activities that rehabilitate roads, drainage systems, and other community assets.

Despite this, the evidence for the long-term impact on combatants is not always clear. A study of the UN Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) operation in Sierra Leone found no evidence of a relation between participation in an internationally sponsored DDR programme and the likelihood of former combatants cutting ties with their armed factions, holding pro-democratic values, or being reaccepted into their home communities. The only significant effect was to *decrease* the likelihood that the former combatant would be employed (Humphreys and Weinstein, 2007).

Food assistance for conflict-affected populations in Mindanao, the Philippines: Peacebuilding before peace

In 2006, WFP returned to the Philippines to support the peace process in Mindanao. The programme for Mindanao combined immediate interventions to meet humanitarian needs and medium- to longer-term measures to support rehabilitation, recovery, and development. The activities included school meals, mother-and-child health and nutrition (MCHN), food for work and food for training, and assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs). Activities were concentrated in poor municipalities of Mindanao affected by conflict, as identified by the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

WFP commissioned an evaluation of the programme's effectiveness between June 2006 and March 2009, which showed that WFP's activities indirectly supported the peace process. IDPs reported that the international presence gave them hope for the future and assurances for eventual return to their places of origin. Although there was some concern about creating a dependency on food aid, the IDPs stated that they would indeed return as soon as security conditions permitted.

School meals were effective in bringing more children to school and improving food access at the household level. They also increased community participation: parents claimed to have grown closer as a community, and become better able to trust members and be more sensitive to others' needs. School meals also strengthened the opportunities for dialogue between the government and targeted communities.

Food for work or training took place on a limited scale, but had a positive impact on the community. People became more cooperative and took on new projects together. The food-for-work projects did not increase dependence on external support, and provided valuable in-kind support to families. Given the limited period of implementation, it was not possible to assess the effects of the MCHN programme, or measure if malnutrition had been reduced.

It was clear that WFP's presence and activities promoted peacebuilding in the region. Beneficiaries and other stakeholders told the evaluation mission that WFP's presence provided a buffer from hunger and also from hopelessness. WFP activities encouraged communities to work together and had a positive psychological impact. The food assistance programmes provided peace dividends that helped foster a sense of stability among the people most affected by the conflict in Mindanao.

Source: WFP (2009c)

Food Assistance and Social Capital

Food assistance can play an important role in social cohesion and social capital, which refers to the trust, norms and networks that are generated by participation in informal or formal groupings and associations that facilitate interaction and cooperation among people (Collier, 2000). Social capital is often severely damaged by violent conflict. Food assistance can play a role in rebuilding social capital by developing communities, networks and trust. Food assistance can also serve to replace informal safety nets based on social capital with formal forms of social protection.

In Sierra Leone, WFP supported the government's Poverty Reduction Strategy and National

Commission for Social Action. Beneficiaries participated in school feeding management committees and communities decided which WFP projects would take priority. They identified food-for-recovery activities, including for rehabilitating roads and drainage. Participants formed work groups to rehabilitate smallholder plantations, irrigation systems and roads, which strengthened social cohesion. In Côte d'Ivoire, WFP assisted the return of IDPs by promoting self-sufficiency and asset creation through food-for-work projects focused on rural access roads, small bridges, irrigation systems and wells, and food-for-training activities. Communities helped identify the activities, organize the workers, and provide raw materials.

WFP and IDPs in Côte d'Ivoire: Rebuilding social cohesion

WFP worked alongside other humanitarian agencies to facilitate the return of IDPs in the Bolequin area of Côte d'Ivoire. Bitter land disputes erupted as IDPs returned to resettle. The village of Gohogbehi was surrounded by IDP camps; for some time, mutual fear between the IDPs and Gohogbehi residents had brought work on the plantations to a standstill, and the bridges joining the village and the camps were destroyed. Talks between WFP and the two communities led to an agreement whereby the parties would receive a one-month general food distribution followed by three months of food for work in exchange for rehabilitating the bridges. Both communities received their general food distribution at the same location; constructing the bridges together gave them an opportunity to live and work together. Today, the two communities co-exist peacefully, goods and people circulate freely and access to the town is ensured. Food assistance has helped these communities further develop social cohesion.

Transitions from Relief to Recovery

The route to peace is non-linear and full of contradictions (Call, 2008). Humanitarian relief, recovery and development do not happen in smooth sequence. A country may have relief and recovery activities taking place simultaneously in different regions of a country or at seemingly contradictory times (Maier, 2010).

The transition of food assistance instruments over the course of relief to recovery and development is important. Traditionally, general food distributions were eventually replaced by such recovery activities as food-for-work programmes. In recent years, blanket food distributions are used rarely: food assistance is almost always targeted, yet who is targeted and the size of the targeted population changes over time. During the relief phase, food assistance for affected groups is increasingly supplemented by interventions that provide school meals or that focus on such vulnerable groups as pregnant and lactating women and young children. During the recovery phase, the emphasis shifts towards a broader set of instruments that improve food security.

It is often security that determines to what extent activities beyond immediate relief can be launched. In Mindanao, for example, the renewal of conflict in August 2008 led to a concentration on providing food to IDPs (WFP, 2009c). Similarly, in Liberia and Sierra Leone in 2000 and 2001, activities shifted to relief when the conflict again intensified (WFP, 2004a).

The transition to complete recovery is a long-term process that can take ten years or more and should

start early – yet it is often inadequately funded and planned. Transition progress cannot be defined by clear benchmarks and programming must allow for activities to be upscaled and downscaled quickly (note for example operations in West Africa described in WFP, 2004a).

A WFP evaluation of livelihood recovery activities concluded that the timeframes are often too short for full recovery to take place, and there is often pressure from donors and host countries to phase out relief and recovery assistance as quickly as possible (WFP, 2009d). But the short duration and limited scale of intervention reduces the impact of the assistance. The evaluation recommended that: the timeframes for livelihood recovery activities be longer; recovery-related activities be implemented earlier and simultaneously with relief; the volume of activities be increased; and that livelihood recovery activities be better connected to other interventions to enable people to build sustainable assets.

Getting Aid Sequencing Right

In the last ten years, it has become increasingly evident that the traditional post-conflict approach of sequencing economic reforms after political stability was achieved was not leading to the desired goal of preventing countries from relapsing into conflict. After estimating a hazard function of post-conflict risks every year for ten years of the post-conflict period, Paul Collier et al. (2006) found that political arrangements of democracy building and elections are not peace enhancing, but can leave a post-conflict country vulnerable to the risk of further conflict. In fact, 40 percent of post-conflict countries have relapsed into conflict (Collier et al., 2003).

This has led many scholars of peacebuilding to reflect on ways to better sequence and prioritize assistance for the future. There is no standard practice or approach to sequencing. Brahim (2007) noted: that “[a] clear understanding of the objective realities in the country concerned is necessary for the international community to establish – in close cooperation with the local partners – the state-building process required, and the type of resources, sequencing and time horizon necessary to rebuild.”

Maier (2010) concludes that a consolidated framework on early recovery is needed to “integrate a multidisciplinary approach covering humanitarian assistance, economic growth and development, peace-building and security, and governance as well as state-building”, but emphasizes that in order to avoid relapsing into conflict, priority should be given to economic policy in early post-conflict recovery. He lists 14 priority areas of early economic recovery, comprising reintegration of ex-combatants, IDPs and refugees; infrastructure; employment; agriculture; education; health; private-sector development and entrepreneurship; economic governance; and reduction of horizontal inequalities.

Especially after the minimal conditions for security are established, an emphasis on social development is important. Through its emphasis on social rather than military issues, the government of a country

emerging from conflict can signal its intention to honor the peace agreement and reduce horizontal inequalities, which in many cases contributed to the original conflict. Providing social services and food assistance can create early peace dividends, help build state institutions, address the root causes of conflicts by reducing horizontal inequalities, contribute to social cohesion and enhance the legitimacy of the government (Brinkman, 2001; Collier et al., 2003; Darcy, 2004; OECD, 2008).

There are many reasons why socio-economic priorities should be supported early and sustained by donors. First, as Darcy (2004) noted: “The provision of social protection (which comes with security and improved economic conditions) is an agenda that can strengthen the legitimacy of the state by allowing it to re-shoulder its responsibilities for ensuring the basic survival of its citizens.” Second, aid disbursements often fail to match commitments (Forman and Patrick, 2000) and flows often decline after an initial period of high media attention. Collier et al. (2003) argued that aid is most effective and capacity to manage it highest during the middle of the first post-conflict decade. Third, the risk of recurrence of a conflict is halved after a decade. It is thus critical that international support for security and socio-economic policy reform are started early and sustained for at least a decade to reduce the risk of renewed conflict.

6. Conclusions

Food insecurity is both a cause and a consequence of violence, contributing to a vicious cycle or “conflict trap”. Food security is critical for political stability. Food insecurity is linked to increased risk of democratic failure, protests and rioting, communal violence and civil conflict. Violent conflicts, in turn, create food insecurity, malnutrition and – in some instances – famine. Thus food insecurity can perpetuate conflict, although its effects depend on the context, with the strongest links evident in states that already have fragile markets and weak political institutions (Collier et al., 2003).

Food price stabilization measures are important tools to prevent food prices from rising and causing unrest. Safety nets are critical instruments that can mitigate the effect of short-term spikes in food prices on food insecurity, helping to prevent violent conflict and contribute to long-term development. Because young men as a group are most in need of livelihoods and also most likely to participate in political violence, income instability among them must be addressed. Safety nets have the added advantage of mitigating horizontal inequalities, which are one cause of conflict.

International food assistance plays an important role both during conflicts and in the post-conflict recovery period. International organizations such as WFP and NGOs are particularly important in these situations because of reduced government capacity

to provide basic services in states experiencing conflict and because of the perceived impartiality of aid workers.

Funding of food and nutrition assistance in post-conflict situations is often problematic, especially in the recovery stage. Food is one of the better-funded areas in relief operations but in the recovery, transitions and early development stages, food is often phased out too quickly, leaving populations at risk and potentially reversing earlier gains in building peace. Transition, peacebuilding, capacity building and the recovery of agriculture are long-term processes; progress is measured in decades, rather than in years (Pritchett and Weijer, 2010). Food plays a critical – but often underemphasized – role in these processes. Recovery activities focusing on improving food access often come too late, last too short a time, are poorly funded and are too small in scale.

After decades of consistent gains in eradicating hunger, food insecurity is once again on the rise. The effects of food insecurity for human security are dire, as are the consequences for political stability and conflict. Though the challenge is great, the international community – and WFP in particular – can play a positive role in addressing hunger and breaking the link between food insecurity and conflict.

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Annex: Responses of Fragile States to High Food Prices in 2007–2008

Country	Economy-wide policies			
	Reduce taxes on food grains	Increase supply using food grain stocks	Export restrictions	Price controls/ Consumer subsidies
Afghanistan	✓			
Angola	✓			✓
Burundi	✓			
Central African Republic				
Chad				
Comoros				
Congo, Republic of			✓	
Côte d'Ivoire				
Democratic Republic of Congo	✓			
Djibouti				
Eritrea			✓	✓
Gambia, The				
Guinea				✓
Guinea-Bissau				✓
Haiti				
Kiribati				
Kosovo			✓	
Liberia				
Myanmar				
Nepal				✓
Papua New Guinea				
São Tomé and Príncipe	✓	✓		
Sierra Leone				
Solomon Islands	✓		✓	
Somalia				
Sudan	✓	✓		
Tajikistan	✓			✓
Timor-Leste		✓	✓	✓
Togo				
Tongo				
Yemen		✓	✓	
Territories				
West Bank & Gaza	✓			✓
Western Sahara				
Blend				
Bosnia & Herzegovina		✓	✓	
Georgia				
Zimbabwe	✓		✓	✓

Existing social protection programmes

Cash transfer	Food for work	Food ration/ stamp	School meals
	✓		
	✓		✓
✓	✓		
	✓		✓
			✓
			✓
✓			
✓			
✓			✓
	✓		✓
	✓		✓
	✓		
✓			
✓		✓	✓
✓			✓

-  Consistent with longer-run policies to improve food security
-  Some concerns relating to longer-run food security
-  Likely to create problems for longer-run food security depending on duration and targeting
-  Highly likely to create problems for longer-run food security and/or create serious problems for neighbouring countries

Source: World Bank (2008a)

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