

# Aid organisations call on governments to give a single day's military spending to fight hunger



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Aid organisations call on governments to give a single day's military spending to fight hunger. Only 26 hours of global military spending is enough to cover the \$5.5 billion needed to help most at risk

A year on since the UN warned of “famines of biblical proportions”, rich donors have funded just 5 percent of the UN's \$7.8bn food security appeal for 2021. More than 200 NGOs published an open letter today calling upon all governments to

urgently increase aid to stop over 34 million people, from being pushed to the brink of starvation this year.

The \$5.5bn additional funding recently called for by the UN WFP and FAO is equivalent to less than 26 hours of the \$1.9 trillion that countries spend each year on the military. Yet, as more and more people go to bed hungry, conflict is increasing.

At the end of 2020, the UN estimated that 270 million people were either at high risk of, or already facing, acute levels of hunger. Already 174 million people in 58 countries have reached that level and are at risk of dying from malnutrition or lack of food, and this figure is only likely to rise in the coming months if nothing is done immediately.

Globally, average food prices are now the highest in seven years. Conflict is the biggest driver of global hunger, also exacerbated by climate change and the coronavirus pandemic. From Yemen to Afghanistan, South Sudan and Northern Nigeria, conflicts and violence are forcing millions to

the brink of [starvation](#). Many in conflict zones have shared horrifying stories of hunger.

Fayda from Lahj governorate in Yemen says:

At the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the UN Secretary General called for a global ceasefire to address the pandemic but too few leaders have sought to implement it. Global leaders must support durable and sustainable solutions to conflict, and open pathways for humanitarians to access those in conflict zones to save lives.

Amb. Ahmed Shehu, Regional Coordinator for the Civil Society Network of Lake Chad Basin said:

“The situation here is really dire. Seventy percent of people in this region are farmers but they can’t access their land because of violence, so they can’t produce food. These farmers have been providing food for thousands for years – now they have become beggars themselves. Food production is lost, so jobs are lost, so income is lost, so people cannot buy the food. Then, we as aid workers cannot safely even get to people to help them. Some of our members risked the journey to reach starving communities and were abducted – we don’t know where they are. This has a huge impact on those of us desperate to help.”

Notes to the editors

- The open letter can be found here:

In the first quarter of 2021, donors have provided just 6.1% of the total \$36 billion requested in the UN humanitarian appeals for the year. In the food security sector, donors met only 5.3% or \$415 million of the total \$7.8bn requested. (As of April 7, 2021)

- The military spending figures are based on 2019 report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute which estimated global military spending at \$1.9tn.

- According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO),

world food prices stood at their highest level in seven years in February 2021

● The study by Development Initiatives of the impact of COVID-19 on aid levels, found substantial declines in aid commitments in 2020 for Canada, Germany, the UK and the US, and a small decline for EU institutions. No data are provided on France, Italy and Japan.

● The latest figures on global hunger levels are as of March 2021 from FAO-WFP's Hunger Hotspots report. In December the UN's Global Humanitarian Overview for 2021 warned the number of acutely food insecure people could rise to 270million by the end of 2020. FAO & WFP echoed this estimate in their call to action to avert famine in February 2021.

David Miliband, CEO and President of the International Rescue Committee, said:

“Whether Yemen, Syria or the DRC, funding to respond to the hunger crisis is not materializing. Yet trillions are invested in rescue packages for corporates all over the world. Donors must step up. It is not a matter of affordability; it is a matter of political will. CARE's evidence base tells us that for every dollar women earn, 80 cents go back into the family, compared with 30 cents of every dollar men earn. Gender inequality is a key predictor of the occurrence and recurrence of armed conflict. If we fail to grasp this simple fact, we will fail to prevent or effectively counter famine.

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