

G7 leaders can and must prevent manmade famine

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Statement by Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator

(New York, 12 June 2024) As the powerful Group of Seven (G7) meets in Italy tomorrow, conflicts in Sudan, Gaza and beyond are raging out of control. War is pushing millions of people to the brink of starvation. Only technicalities prevent famines from being declared, as people are already dying of hunger.

Famine in the 21st century is a preventable scourge. G7 leaders can and must wield their influence to help stop it. Waiting for an official declaration of famine before acting would be a death sentence for hundreds of thousands of people and a moral outrage.

Conflict is fueling hunger in too many corners of the world – from Mali to Myanmar – but nowhere is the choice between inaction and oblivion so clear as in Gaza and Sudan.

In Gaza, half of the population – more than one million people – is expected to face death and starvation by the middle of July.

In Sudan, at least 5 million people are also teetering on the brink of starvation. Communities in more than 40 hunger hotspots are at high risk of slipping into famine in the coming month, including in war-torn parts of Aj Jazirah, Darfur, Khartoum and Kordofan.

And in both Gaza and Sudan, intense fighting, unacceptable restrictions and meagre funding are preventing aid workers from delivering food, water, seeds, health care and other lifesaving assistance at anywhere near the scale necessary to prevent mass starvation. This must change – we cannot afford to lose even a minute.

Though we will continue to do our part to save lives where we can, ultimately, humanitarian aid is not the solution to the conflicts robbing millions of people of the lives they deserve.

Countries in the G7 must immediately bring their substantial political leverage and financial resources to bear so that aid organizations can reach all people in need. We must move large amounts of humanitarian assistance across borders and battle lines today – and mobilize considerable funding to keep the response going tomorrow.

But more than anything, the world must stop feeding the war machines that are starving the civilians of Gaza and Sudan. It is time instead to prioritize the diplomacy that will give people back their futures – and tomorrow, the G7 is at the helm.