CHAPTER 14

Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts: Disruptions, Governance Failures, and Resilience Strategies

Fasiha Batool[1,*], Abdullah Hammad[1] & Zamah Bukhari[1]
[1]The University of Faisalabad, Faisalabad, Pakistan
Corresponding authors' email: fasihabatool.NBS@tuf.edu.pk

Abstract

Food security in fragile and conflict-affected contexts (FCACs) has emerged as one of the defining development and humanitarian challenges of the twenty-first century. In these environments, the interaction of armed conflict, political instability, economic crises, climate change, forced displacement, and weak governance creates complex and persistent vulnerabilities that undermine the four pillars of food security: availability, access, utilization, and stability. This chapter critically examines the multidimensional nature of food insecurity in FCACs through a systems-based and resilience-oriented perspective, integrating contemporary literature, conceptual frameworks, and global case studies from regions such as Yemen, Sudan, Syria, and the broader Middle East. The discussion highlights how conflict disrupts agricultural production, fragments markets, weakens institutions, and intensifies dependence on humanitarian assistance, while climate change and global supply chain disruptions further amplify existing risks. The chapter also explores the limitations of conventional emergency responses and argues for a transition from short-term humanitarian interventions toward long-term resilience-building strategies that strengthen local food systems, governance, climate-smart agriculture, social protection, and economic recovery. Emphasis is placed on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and the importance of inclusive, locally driven approaches that enhance adaptive capacity and reduce structural dependence on external assistance. The chapter concludes that sustainable food security in FCACs cannot be achieved through food aid alone; rather, it requires integrated policies that address the root causes of fragility while promoting peace, institutional effectiveness, and resilient food systems capable of withstanding future shocks.

https://doi.org/10.66529/book.9786277945039.2026.ch14
Received: 16-April 2026 Revised: 22-June 2026 Accepted: 30 June 2026

Keywords: Food Security; Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts (FCACs); Food System Resilience; Climate Change and Conflict; Humanitarian–Development–Peace Nexus

1. Introduction

Food security has emerged as one of the most critical global challenges of the twenty-first century, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected contexts (FCACs). These settings are not only marked by political instability and weak governance but are also characterized by deep-rooted structural vulnerabilities that leave communities highly exposed to a wide range of shocks. Such shocks may be anthropogenic, including armed conflict and economic crises, or environmental, such as climate change, droughts, and floods. Within these complex and overlapping conditions, ensuring that populations have consistent access to safe, sufficient, and nutritious food becomes an increasingly difficult task.

According to the *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* (FAO *et al*., 2025), more than 735 million people worldwide experience chronic food insecurity, with a substantial proportion living in fragile and unstable regions. The strong association between instability and hunger suggests that contemporary food crises are not merely temporary disruptions but manifestations of deeper structural weaknesses that become entrenched within fragile systems.

The growing recognition of the relationship between nutrition and health has also reshaped contemporary debates on food security. The theme *Food as Medicine*, highlighted during the American Public Health Association symposium held in Washington, D.C., in November 2025, reflects an increasing appreciation of

nutrition as an integral component of disease prevention and treatment. The rapid rise in the use of weight-loss medications has further encouraged the integration of nutrition into pharmacotherapy and broader healthcare strategies aimed at preventing and managing diet-related chronic diseases. The well-known Hippocratic principle, *"Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food,"* has gained renewed relevance in public health discourse. Yet, as Naumova (2026) argues, these ideas can appear detached from reality when millions of low-income citizens struggle to obtain basic food assistance, particularly during periods of severe institutional and economic disruption such as the longest government shutdown in United States history (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2024).

Global demographic and socioeconomic trends further intensify these concerns. Although the Green Revolution substantially increased agricultural production, nearly three billion people worldwide still cannot afford a healthy diet. Armed conflicts alone were responsible for 20 major food crises during the past year, affecting an estimated 140 million people, including populations experiencing famine conditions in Sudan and Gaza. During 2023–2024, the number of people facing the highest levels of food insecurity more than doubled, reversing much of the progress achieved in reducing hunger since 2000.

Naumova (2026) emphasizes that food security extends far beyond the production of adequate quantities of food. It is a multidimensional concept encompassing availability, access, affordability, utilization, and long-term stability. In fragile settings, these dimensions are deeply interconnected and often deteriorate simultaneously. Conflict may destroy agricultural infrastructure, economic crises reduce household purchasing power, and climate-related events undermine agricultural productivity. Consequently, food insecurity in FCACs cannot be understood or addressed through isolated interventions; rather, it requires an integrated and systems-based perspective.

This chapter critically examines food security in fragile and conflict-affected contexts through an exploration of its conceptual foundations, major drivers, systemic interconnections, illustrative case studies, and policy pathways for building long-term resilience.

Food security remains central to the global sustainable development agenda yet achieving it has become increasingly challenging in FCACs. Recent global assessments (FAO & WFP, 2025) indicate that ongoing conflicts and political instability, particularly across the Middle East, are likely to generate far-reaching humanitarian and economic consequences that extend well beyond the affected regions. Such uncertainty threatens food production, market stability, and international supply chains, thereby intensifying the risk of global food crises. The *Global Report on Food Crises* by FSIN and GNAFC (2025) estimated that nearly 295 million people experienced acute food insecurity in 2024, with conflict identified as the principal underlying driver. By weakening institutions, disrupting markets, and restricting access to essential resources, fragility significantly amplifies vulnerability.

The Middle East currently represents one of the world's most critical food security hotspots. Ongoing conflicts have disrupted food distribution networks and constrained humanitarian access, placing millions of people at risk of hunger in countries such as Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, and the Palestinian territories.

Historical experience also reminds us that food shortages often result not only from inadequate production but also from failures in governance and distribution. Families that endured the famines of the 1930s and the hardships of the Second World War frequently recall rationing systems for staple goods such as bread, sugar, and butter. Such experiences underscore an enduring lesson: scarcity is often a consequence of mismanagement as much as of insufficient supply. In contemporary industrial societies, the affordability of food has become a growing concern, prompting a reassessment of food security within the broader context of global nutritional transitions, widening social inequalities, and accelerating climate change.

 | https://doi.org/10.66529/book.9786277945039.2026.ch14

2. Conceptual Framework for Food Security

2.1. The Four Pillars of Food Security

Food security is founded on four interrelated pillars, each of which plays a fundamental role in ensuring that populations can obtain adequate and nutritious food. In fragile and conflict-affected settings, however, each of these pillars is subject to significant disruption.

Food Availability

Food availability refers to the physical presence of sufficient food within a country or region. It depends on domestic agricultural production, food imports, and, where necessary, humanitarian food assistance. Under stable conditions, efficient farming systems and well-functioning supply chains help maintain adequate food supplies. In fragile settings, however, agricultural production is frequently interrupted.

For example, ongoing conflicts in countries such as Sudan and Syria have destroyed farmland, irrigation networks, and storage facilities. Persistent insecurity often forces farmers to abandon their land, resulting in substantial declines in agricultural output (FAO, 2023). At the same time, disruptions to supply chains and economic restrictions limit access to essential agricultural inputs, including seeds, fertilizers, and machinery. As a result, many fragile states become increasingly dependent on food imports and humanitarian assistance, leaving them highly exposed to fluctuations in global markets and external supply conditions.

Food Access

Food access concerns the ability of individuals and households to obtain food both economically and physically. Even when food is available in local markets, many people may lack the financial means or safe physical access required to acquire it.

Inflation and unemployment present major barriers in fragile economies. During periods of economic instability, food prices often rise more rapidly than household incomes, significantly reducing purchasing power. The World Bank (2024) reports that households in fragile states may spend more than 60% of their total income on food, leaving limited resources for other essential needs such as healthcare and education.

Physical access to food is also constrained in conflict zones. Damaged roads, destroyed infrastructure, and security threats often prevent people from reaching markets. In some areas, including Gaza, blockades and military restrictions further limit the movement and availability of essential food supplies.

Food Utilization

Food utilization refers to the body's ability to effectively use consumed food, a process influenced by food quality and safety, nutritional diversity, water and sanitation conditions, and access to healthcare. In fragile contexts, poor living conditions severely undermine this pillar.

Limited access to clean water and adequate sanitation increases the incidence of diseases such as diarrheal infections, which impair nutrient absorption. Simultaneously, weak healthcare systems reduce the capacity to diagnose and treat malnutrition. Diets in conflict-affected regions are frequently dominated by staple foods such as wheat or rice and often lack the diversity required to meet micronutrient needs. Consequently, deficiencies in essential vitamins and minerals are common.

Children and pregnant women are particularly vulnerable. According to (United Nations Children's Fund, 2023; United Nations Development Program, 2024), millions of children living in fragile contexts experience wasting and stunting, conditions that have profound and lasting effects on physical growth, cognitive development, and future economic productivity.

 | https://doi.org/10.66529/book.9786277945039.2026.ch14

Food Stability

Food stability refers to the ability of food systems to provide reliable access to adequate food over time. In fragile settings, this stability is repeatedly undermined by conflict, economic crises, and environmental shocks.

A region may enjoy sufficient food supplies during one season only to face severe shortages in the next because of drought, armed conflict, or market disruption. Such uncertainty creates chronic food insecurity, where households cannot rely on stable or predictable access to food and remain perpetually vulnerable to sudden crises.

2.2. Expanding the Concept: Agency and Sustainability

Contemporary understandings of food security have evolved beyond the traditional four-pillar framework to include two additional dimensions: agency and sustainability (HLPE, 2020).

Agency refers to the capacity of individuals and communities to make informed choices about the production, acquisition, and consumption of food. In fragile contexts, this capacity is often severely constrained. Many households become heavily dependent on humanitarian assistance and have limited control over their own food systems and livelihoods.

Sustainability concerns the ability of food systems to meet present needs without compromising the capacity of future generations to meet theirs. In FCACs, however, immediate survival frequently takes precedence over long-term sustainability. This can encourage unsustainable practices, including overexploitation of land, depletion of natural resources, and environmentally damaging coping strategies that further undermine future resilience.

3. Understanding Fragility and Conflict-Affected Contexts

Fragility is a multidimensional concept that extends well beyond the presence of armed conflict. It reflects systemic weaknesses across political, economic, social, and environmental domains that reduce a society's ability to manage risks and respond effectively to crises.

3.1. Political Fragility

Political fragility is characterized by weak governance, limited institutional capacity, and corruption. In many fragile states, governments lack the ability to formulate and implement effective food security policies or regulate markets efficiently.

Weak governance often results in unequal food distribution, leaving certain regions or population groups underserved. Corruption can further divert scarce resources away from vulnerable communities, compounding existing food insecurity and weakening public trust in institutions.

3.2. Economic Fragility

Economic instability is a major contributor to food insecurity. High inflation, unemployment, and currency depreciation reduce household purchasing power and limit access to necessities. In periods of hyperinflation, the prices of staple food commodities can increase dramatically within a short period, making them unaffordable for large segments of the population and pushing vulnerable households deeper into poverty.

3.3. Social Fragility

Social fragility encompasses inequality, social exclusion, marginalization, and the absence of effective social protection systems. The impacts are often unevenly distributed, with women, children, and rural populations bearing a disproportionate share of the burden. Women, for example, frequently face barriers to land ownership, credit, and productive resources, reducing both their capacity to produce food and their ability to secure adequate nutrition for their households.

 | https://doi.org/10.66529/book.9786277945039.2026.ch14

3.4. Environmental Fragility

Environmental fragility reflects the susceptibility of ecosystems and livelihoods to climate-related stocks such as droughts, floods, desertification, and other forms of environmental degradation. The World Bank (2025) notes that fragile states are among those most severely affected by climate change, despite contributing the least to global greenhouse gas emissions.

The interaction between environmental stress and existing political and economic vulnerabilities further intensifies food insecurity, highlighting the need for integrated approaches that address both climate resilience and broader development challenges.

4. Drivers of Food Insecurity in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts

4.1. Armed Conflict and Violence

Armed conflict remains the single most significant driver of food insecurity in fragile and conflict-affected contexts (FCACs). Its effects extend across the entire food system, disrupting production, processing, transportation, markets, and household consumption. In conflict zones, insecurity often forces farmers to abandon agricultural land, reducing cultivated areas and lowering food output. Damage to roads, irrigation infrastructure, storage facilities, and local markets interrupts supply chains and limits the movement of agricultural goods. In many cases, conflict also results in the destruction or looting of crops, livestock, and farming equipment, further undermining rural livelihoods.

Beyond these direct impacts, prolonged insecurity discourages investment in agriculture and market development, contributing to declining productivity and rising food prices. According to the FAO & WFP (2025), nearly 70% of the world's hungry population is affected by conflict, highlighting the close relationship between violence and chronic food insecurity.

4.2. Geopolitical Tensions and Global Food Markets

In an increasingly interconnected world, the consequences of regional conflicts often extend far beyond national borders. Modern geopolitical crises disrupt global commodity markets, alter trade flows, and expose the vulnerabilities of import-dependent countries.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict offers a clear example of these cascading effects. As two of the world's major exporters of wheat, sunflower oil, and fertilizers, disruptions in production and exports from the region have contributed to higher food prices and supply shortages across international markets. Countries in Africa and the Middle East, which rely heavily on imported cereals, have been particularly affected. Similarly, the humanitarian emergencies in Gaza and Sudan illustrate how localized conflicts can trigger wider regional food crises, demonstrating the global implications of political instability.

4.3. Climate Change as a Threat Multiplier

Climate change does not act in isolation; rather, it amplifies existing social, economic, and political vulnerabilities. Rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, prolonged droughts, and increasingly frequent floods reduce agricultural productivity and intensify food insecurity in already fragile settings.

Prolonged droughts across East Africa have caused widespread crop failures and livestock losses, while recurrent flooding in South Asia has destroyed agricultural land and displaced millions of people. These climate-induced disruptions reduce food availability, increase market prices, and deepen livelihood insecurity, particularly for populations that depend directly on agriculture for income and subsistence.

4.4. Economic Shocks and Inflation

Economic instability represents another major challenge to food security in FCACs. Global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with inflationary pressures and disruptions in international trade, have significantly increased the cost of food. Rising prices disproportionately affect low-income households, which often spend the largest share of their income on food. As purchasing power declines, vulnerable

 | https://doi.org/10.66529/book.9786277945039.2026.ch14

populations are forced to reduce both the quantity and quality of their diets, increasing the risk of malnutrition and poverty.

4.5. Forced Displacement and Livelihood Loss

Conflict and environmental disasters frequently result in large-scale displacement, serving people from their land, employment, and traditional livelihood systems. Refugees and internally displaced people often have limited opportunities for formal employment and become heavily dependent on humanitarian assistance for survival. Displacement not only weakens household resilience but also places additional pressure on host communities and local food systems.

4.6. Weak Governance and Institutional Failure

Institutional weakness and poor governance significantly constrain the ability of states to prevent or respond effectively to food crises. Limited administrative capacity, corruption, weak policy implementation, and inadequate disaster preparedness often result in inefficient resource allocation and delayed interventions. In many FCACs, governance failures magnify the impacts of conflict and climate shocks, leaving vulnerable populations with limited access to essential support.

5. Systemic Vulnerabilities and Human Development Impacts

Food insecurity in fragile settings emerges from the interaction of multiple interconnected risks rather than from a single cause. Climate change may trigger droughts that reduce agricultural production, which in turn raises food prices and contributes to economic hardship and social unrest. Conflict further disrupts markets and agricultural activities, creating a reinforcing cycle of instability and vulnerability.

The consequences extend well beyond hunger. Food insecurity undermines several dimensions of human development:

- **Health:** Increased malnutrition, disease burden, and poor physical and cognitive development.
- **Education:** Reduced school attendance and learning outcomes as children are forced to work or households cannot meet educational expenses.
- **Economic Development:** Declining productivity, loss of livelihoods, and rising poverty.
- **Gender Equality:** Women and girls often bear a disproportionate burden through unequal access to resources, increased caregiving responsibilities, and reduced economic opportunities.

6. Case Studies from Fragile Contexts

Yemen

Years of protracted conflict have created one of the world's most severe humanitarian emergencies. Agricultural production and food distribution systems have been severely disrupted, leaving millions of people dependent on humanitarian food assistance.

Sudan

Continuing violence and political instability have undermined farming activities and rural livelihoods. Population displacement and market disruption have contributed to escalating levels of acute food insecurity.

Syria

The combined effects of prolonged armed conflict and recurrent drought have devastated agricultural production and weakened food supply chains, creating persistent food insecurity across the country.

 | https://doi.org/10.66529/book.9786277945039.2026.ch14

7. Global Food System Interdependencies

Contemporary food systems are deeply interconnected, meaning that disruptions in one region can have significant consequences elsewhere. Fragile and conflict-affected countries are particularly vulnerable because many depend heavily on imported staple commodities rather than domestic production.

Many low-income and fragile states rely on imports of wheat, rice, and maize, creating structural dependence on international markets. Consequently, global supply disruptions or sudden price increases can rapidly translate into domestic food shortages. The Russia-Ukraine conflict demonstrated this vulnerability, as interruptions in exports of wheat, sunflower oil, and fertilizers generated substantial price increases across North Africa and the Middle East.

Economic fragility further compounds these challenges. Many FCACs possess limited foreign exchange reserves, restricting their capacity to finance food imports during periods of economic stress. Currency depreciation raises import costs even further, creating a situation where food may be available globally but remains inaccessible to vulnerable populations.

Dependence on international supply chains also exposes these countries to external shocks such as pandemics, trade restrictions, or maritime disruptions. Weak infrastructure, including inadequate storage facilities, transport networks, and port systems, limits their capacity to absorb such shocks. Ultimately, excessive reliance on external markets reduces food sovereignty and underscores the importance of strengthening local agricultural production and domestic food systems.

8. Humanitarian Response: Opportunities and Limitations

Humanitarian interventions play an indispensable role in addressing food crises in fragile contexts, particularly during emergencies. Food assistance programs, including direct food distribution and cash-based transfers, provide immediate relief and help prevent famine and starvation. In countries such as Yemen, large-scale humanitarian operations have enabled millions of people to survive despite ongoing conflict.

Cash transfer programs have gained increasing attention because they provide households with greater flexibility while simultaneously supporting local markets and businesses. Nevertheless, humanitarian interventions alone cannot provide a durable solution to chronic food insecurity.

Long-term dependence on aid may weaken local agricultural systems and create reliance on external assistance. Funding shortfalls continue to undermine the effectiveness of humanitarian programs, leaving many vulnerable populations underserved. In conflict zones, political barriers, insecurity, and logistical constraints often prevent aid from reaching those most in need, as observed in Gaza and Sudan.

Recent policy thinking increasingly emphasizes a transition from emergency response toward resilience building. This approach prioritizes investment in local agriculture, infrastructure, livelihood restoration, and institutional strengthening to reduce long-term dependence on humanitarian assistance. Achieving this transition, however, requires coordinated efforts among governments, international organizations, and local communities.

9. Building Resilient Food Systems: Policy and Strategic Responses

Addressing food insecurity in fragile settings requires a multidimensional strategy that combines immediate humanitarian support with long-term structural reforms.

9.1. Climate-Smart Agriculture

Climate-smart agriculture promotes farming practices that enhance productivity while improving resilience to environmental stress. The adoption of drought-tolerant crop varieties, efficient irrigation technologies, and sustainable land management practices can help maintain agricultural output under changing climatic conditions. In drought-prone regions of Africa, for example, farmers are increasingly adopting crops that require less water and are better adapted to climatic variability.

 | https://doi.org/10.66529/book.9786277945039.2026.ch14

9.2. Strengthening Governance and Institutions

Strong institutions are essential for effective food system management. Governments must establish policies that support agricultural development, regulate markets, and ensure equitable food distribution. Measures aimed at reducing corruption and improving transparency are equally important, as institutional accountability directly influences the success of food security interventions.

9.3. Economic Stability and Livelihood Support

Food security and economic resilience are closely linked. Policies that promote employment, stabilize inflation, and strengthen household incomes improve people's ability to access food. Livelihood restoration programs and vocational training initiatives can help displaced populations rebuild economic security while reducing dependence on external aid.

9.4. Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution

Sustainable food security cannot be achieved without peace. Armed conflict disrupts every component of the food system, from agricultural production to market access. Efforts to resolve conflicts, strengthen political stability, and promote inclusive governance are therefore fundamental to restoring resilient food systems.

9.5. Social Protection Systems

Social protection measures, including cash transfers, food subsidies, and school feeding programs, provide an essential safety net for vulnerable populations. Beyond improving nutrition, school feeding initiatives contribute to higher school attendance and generate long-term benefits for human capital development.

10. Towards Sustainable and Resilient Food Systems

Transforming food systems in FCACs requires moving beyond reactive crisis management toward proactive, resilience-oriented strategies. A sustainable food system not only ensures food security but also protects environmental resources and promotes social equity.

Key priorities include expanding local food production, reducing excessive dependence on imports, promoting sustainable agricultural practices, and strengthening community participation in food system governance. Investments in rural infrastructure, such as roads, irrigation networks, and storage facilities, can reduce post-harvest losses and improve market access. Equally important is empowering local farmers and communities to participate actively in the design and implementation of food security initiatives.

11. Discussion: Rethinking Food Security in Fragile Contexts

Despite considerable international efforts, food insecurity in fragile and conflict-affected settings continues to worsen, suggesting that current approaches remain insufficient. A major limitation is the continued reliance on humanitarian assistance as the primary response mechanism. While emergency aid is indispensable, it often addresses symptoms rather than the structural causes of food insecurity. Long-term resilience requires sustained investment in local agricultural systems, institutional development, and community capacity building.

The evidence increasingly supports a system-based understanding of food security. Rather than focusing solely on food availability, contemporary scholarship emphasizes the interdependence of access, utilization, stability, resilience, and sustainability (FAO, 2023). Maxwell & Slater (2003) argue that food security should be viewed as a dynamic process shaped by political, economic, environmental, and social forces. In FCACs, instability weakens all four traditional pillars simultaneously, requiring flexible and adaptive policy responses.

Current research consistently identifies conflict as the leading global driver of hunger. As of 2022, approximately 735 million people were experiencing hunger worldwide, representing an increase of 122 million people compared with the pre-pandemic period. According to UNHCR (2024) conflict accounts for

 | https://doi.org/10.66529/book.9786277945039.2026.ch14

69% of global hunger, while approximately 20% of Africa's population faces hunger, with countries such as South Sudan, Burundi, and Malawi among the most severely affected. Forecasts suggest that, if current conflicts continue, global food prices could increase by 15–20% during the first half of 2026.

Recent analyses (FSIN & GNAFC, 2025; World Bank, 2024; 2026) further emphasize that prolonged conflicts create entrenched and chronic food insecurity, making recovery increasingly difficult. Countries such as Yemen, Syria, and Lebanon illustrate how armed conflict, economic instability, and institutional weakness combine to produce long-lasting food crises.

Governance also emerges as a central determinant of resilience. Weak institutional capacity often results in poor policy implementation, corruption, resource misallocation, and inadequate crisis management. According to the World Bank (2024, 2026), strengthening governance structures and institutional effectiveness is fundamental for building resilient food systems and improving the outcomes of both humanitarian and development interventions.

Market disruptions represent another critical challenge. Conflict fragments supply chains, increase transaction costs, and generate price volatility that disproportionately affects poor households. At the same time, humanitarian systems face persistent constraints related to funding gaps, security concerns, and restricted access. Increasingly, literature advocates integrated approaches that combine humanitarian action, long-term development, and peacebuilding within a single policy framework.

Theoretical perspectives such as Systems Theory, Resilience Theory, and the Political Economy of Food Security provide valuable lenses for understanding these complex interactions. These frameworks recognize food systems as interconnected networks in which agricultural production, markets, governance, infrastructure, and social institutions continuously influence one another. Disruptions in any one component, whether through conflict, market failure, governance breakdown, or logistical constraints, can rapidly cascade across the entire system.

The global implications of ongoing conflicts further reinforce the urgency of resilience-based approaches. Disruptions to maritime trade routes, including strategic chokepoints such as the Strait of Hormuz, have increased transportation costs and delayed food imports. It has been estimated that a one-fifth increase in global food prices could push an additional 5 million people in Arab countries into food crisis conditions. Countries such as Yemen and Syria, already heavily dependent on food assistance, remain particularly vulnerable to such external shocks.

The Middle East conflict has also generated broader consequences for developing economies. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO & WFP, 2025), the conflict has increased global food prices by 2.4%, driven largely by rising energy costs and disruptions in fertilizer supplies. The resulting food price inflation, fertilizer shortages, economic instability, and increasing poverty threaten food security across many low-income countries. These trends highlight the need for diversified food import strategies, investments in local climate-resilient agriculture, stronger social safety nets, and greater regional cooperation to stabilize food markets and strengthen resilience.

Ultimately, conventional food security approaches that focus primarily on production and supply are insufficient for FCACs. A broader systems-oriented perspective that integrates governance, resilience, social protection, local capacity building, and sustainable development is required to address the complex realities of food insecurity in fragile environments.

12. Policy Implications

The analysis presented in this chapter suggests several key policy priorities for strengthening food security in fragile and conflict-affected contexts:

1. Invest in long-term resilience-building initiatives alongside emergency humanitarian responses.
2. Strengthen governance structures and institutional capacity to improve policy implementation and crisis management.

 | https://doi.org/10.66529/book.9786277945039.2026.ch14

3. Promote integrated humanitarian-development-peace approaches that address both immediate needs and structural vulnerabilities.

4. Support localized and climate-resilient food systems that reduce dependence on external supply chains and enhance community self-reliance.

13. Conclusion

Food insecurity in fragile and conflict-affected contexts is not simply the consequence of inadequate food production but the outcome of deeply interconnected political, economic, social, and environmental failures. As this chapter has demonstrated, armed conflict, governance breakdown, market disruptions, climate change, forced displacement, and global economic shocks interact to undermine every dimension of food security, creating cycles of vulnerability that are difficult to reverse. The evidence from countries such as Yemen, Sudan, Syria, and other conflict-affected regions illustrates that prolonged crises weaken agricultural systems, erode livelihoods, disrupt supply chains, and increase dependence on external humanitarian assistance.

A central insight emerging from this analysis is that conventional, production-oriented or emergency-driven approaches are insufficient to address the structural roots of food insecurity in FCACs. While humanitarian aid remains indispensable for saving lives during acute crises, it cannot substitute for long-term investments in resilient local food systems, effective governance, and sustainable livelihoods. Durable solutions require a shift from reactive crisis management toward proactive resilience-building strategies that integrate climate-smart agriculture, social protection mechanisms, institutional strengthening, market stabilization, and peacebuilding initiatives. Equally important is the adoption of a systems-thinking perspective that recognizes the interdependence of food systems, governance structures, environmental conditions, and global supply chains.

Ultimately, rethinking food security in fragile settings demands a paradigm shift from short-term relief to transformative resilience. Strengthening local agricultural capacity, reducing excessive dependence on imports, improving institutional accountability, and fostering international cooperation through the humanitarian-development-peace nexus are essential for sustainable progress. Food security should therefore be viewed not only as a humanitarian imperative but also as a cornerstone of human development, social stability, and lasting peace. Without coordinated global and local action to address the underlying drivers of fragility, the burden of hunger and malnutrition in conflict-affected regions will continue to grow, threatening both regional and global security in the years ahead.

References

FAO. (2023). *The state of food security and nutrition in the world 2023*. Food and Agriculture Organization. https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/1f66b67b-1e45-45d1-b003-86162fd35dab/content

FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP & WHO. (2025). *The state of food security and nutrition in the world 2025: Addressing high food price inflation for food security and nutrition*. Food and Agriculture Organization. https://doi.org/10.4060/cd6008en

FAO & WFP. (2025). *Hunger hotspots: FAO–WFP early warnings on acute food insecurity, November 2025 to May 2026 outlook*. Food and Agriculture Organization. https://doi.org/10.4060/cd7310en

FSIN & GNAFC. (2025). *2025 global report on food crises*. Food Security Information Network, & Global Network Against Food Crises. https://www.fsinplatform.org/grfc2025

HLPE. (2020). *Food security and nutrition: Building a global narrative towards 2030*. High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition. https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/8357b6eb-8010-4254-814a-1493faaf4a93/content

Maxwell, S., & Slater, R. (2003). Food policy old and new. *Development Policy Review*, *21*(5-6), 531-553. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8659.2003.00222.x

Naumova, E. N. (2026). From measurement to meaning: Rethinking food security through resilience-based and systems-oriented approaches. *Journal of Public Health Policy*, 1-6. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41271-025-00609-2

United Nations Children's Fund. (2023). *Child malnutrition estimates*. https://data.unicef.org/resources/jme/

United Nations Development Program. (2024). *Human development report 2023/2024*. https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/global-report-document/hdr2023-24reporten.pdf

 | https://doi.org/10.66529/book.9786277945039.2026.ch14

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2024). *Global trends: Forced displacement in 2024*. https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2025-06/global-trends-report-2024.pdf

World Bank. (2024). *Food security update*. Retrieved June 30, 2026, from https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/agriculture/brief/food-security-update

World Bank. (2025). *Fragility, conflict, and violence report*. https://www.worldbank.org/ext/en/topic/fragility-conflict-and-violence

World Bank. (2026). *Global economic prospects, January 2026*. https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-2267-4

Declaration: AI-assisted tools (LLMs) were used to improve the language and grammar of this chapter. The authors reviewed and approved all content and assume full responsibility for its accuracy.

 | https://doi.org/10.66529/book.9786277945039.2026.ch14