



Fostering Strategic Partnerships | Building Political Will | Creating Global Connections

Hunger is an International Security Issue

Hunger and poverty contribute to instability at the local, national and international levels and pose national security risks for the United States and the international community. Programs which build food security and reduce poverty help create vital, stable and resilient communities here and abroad.

Hunger Contributes to International Instability

Support to sustainable development overseas and ending hunger and poverty is an important part of our national security strategy and expresses our nation's values and interests. Alliance members carry out programs on several continents which collaborate with and complement US government contributions to this effort. As former Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates stated, "[T]he work performed by diplomatic and development professionals helps build the foundation for more stable, democratic and prosperous societies. These are places where the potential for conflict can be minimized, if not completely avoided, by State and USAID programs."

Without sustained progress, recurring price volatility and food shortages will contribute to political instability as witnessed by food riots and related events since 2008. Malnutrition likely will lead to mass migration and intensifying health issues. Diplomatic efforts to maintain peace will be far more difficult wherever food shortages contribute to extremism and conflict. United States interests related to economic development in low- and middle-income countries will continually be frustrated if populations are unable to feed themselves.

- From 2007 to 2008, the period when global food prices spiked, there were major riots in over 30 countries.ⁱ
- Recent research suggests that an earlier drought was a key spark leading to the uprising against the Assad regime in Syria.^{ii,iii}
- Today a number of countries, even entire regions, face a triple threat of conflict, climate change and vulnerability to natural disasters which threatens the food security and income stability of millions.^{iv}
- Lack of food security – whether caused by lack of jobs and income, natural disaster or conflict – contributes to political instability and the reverse is also true.^v
- Food insecurity and political instability together can lead to displacement of people and ungoverned spaces that U.S. national security strategy seeks to prevent.^{vi,vii}

For additional information please contact the Alliance to End Hunger at info@alliancetoendhunger.org or visit our website at www.alliancetoendhunger.org

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ⁱ ECC Platform Library, 2016. <https://library.ecc-platform.org/>

ⁱⁱ Hurley, D., "A Sequential Relationship: Drought's Contribution to the Onset of the Syrian Civil War," 2018. <http://www.sirjournal.org/research/2018/12/12/a-sequential-relationship-droughts-contribution-to-the-onset-of-the-syrian-civil-war>

ⁱⁱⁱ Kelley, et al., "Climate change in the Fertile Crescent and implications of the recent Syrian drought," 2015.

^{iv} Speckhard, D., "An ounce of prevention," 2015. <https://www.devex.com/news/an-ounce-of-prevention-85582>

^v IFPRI, "Conflict and Migration," 2019. <http://www.ifpri.org/topic/conflict-and-migration>

^{vi} IFPRI, "Conflict and Migration," 2019. <http://www.ifpri.org/topic/conflict-and-migration>

^{vii} Speckhard, D., "Global Food Security Act a Critical Step Forward in Ending Hunger," 2015. <https://www.rollcall.com/news/global-food-security-act-critical-step-forward-ending-hunger-commentary>