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Civil 7 Communiqué 2024

PRINCIPLED HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

PREAMBLE

As the year 2030 looms and just six years remain to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the world is still facing a number of critical structural and systemic challenges with large groups of population such as women, children and youth and the most marginalised carrying the heaviest burden of the current polycrisis.

The G7 can be part of the problem, if it unilaterally promotes the interests of the most developed economies, or part of the solution, if it champions human rights and the common interests of humanity and the planet for a more peaceful, just, sustainable and secure future.

The compounding impacts of climate change, economic shocks, the consequences of the pandemic and the alarming increase of conflicts and wars, have been exacerbating the already unacceptable social and economic inequalities. Gender inequalities are magnified, food security and even famine are increasing, fostering forced migratory flows and driving humanitarian needs to record levels. The prolonged public-private indebtedness is at the same time a consequence and a further cause of the crisis. This complex situation, as a comprehensive result, is slowing and even reversing previous progress in leaving no one behind.

The prevalence of war is growing. Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine has now reached its third year, with deep consequences on the state of the population and the environment, and no perspectives of solutions seem close. In the Middle East, following the horrific attacks and hostage-taking on 7th October, the actions of the Israeli government and army are starving and killing the population of Gaza, without distinction or proportionality. In this context, the lack of initiative of the G7 and other countries becomes, de facto, a complicity. Words and actions of peace are needed and urgent, to avoid the escalation of the crisis.

In multiple protracted and often forgotten crises, blatant attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, demonstrating clear violations of and lack of respect for International Humanitarian Law and humanitarian principles, coupled with a sustained lack of political commitment to address the drivers of humanitarian needs, are leading people to make horrific choices simply to survive.

The international civil society gathered in the Civil 7 (C7) believes it is necessary to recognise the critical relevance of the present moment, and the responsibility of all actors, including the G7 and its Presidency to treat the current situation with utmost importance. The threats to the planet's and humankind's health need political initiative, ambition and accountability. The fragility of global peace, poverty, inequalities, injustice, their drivers and root causes, while violence is perpetrated with impunity on a catastrophic scale, demand the utmost urgency, and concrete and bold action.

As a constituency, we cannot fail to remember how these processes have been marked since their beginnings by recommendations that asked global leadership to introduce a paradigm shift in development, with democratic processes to address the root causes of the current polycrisis.

We have chosen to move the C7 and C20 process forward in synergy, counting on the participation of over 700 civil society organisations from all over the world involved in seven C7 Working Groups: Climate, Energy Transformation and Environmental Justice; Economic Justice and Transformation; Global Health; Principled Humanitarian Assistance; Peace, Common Security and Nuclear Disarmament; Human Mobility and Migration; Food Justice and Food Systems Transformation. They are set to tackle the different drivers and root causes of poverty, inequalities and injustice.

Therefore, leveraging on its locally and globally linked experience and expertise from such different perspectives, the global civil society gathered in the C7 process is active in putting forward proposals and approaches based on human rights with a gender transformative lens, suggesting alternative visions and concrete recommendations, upholding transparency in decision-making, building on voices of those who are most excluded, the most vulnerable, and bringing them to the centre of the policy debate.

The C7 policy positions and recommendations are therefore collectively developed thanks to a vibrant and inclusive process to nourish the contribution to ensuring respect for human rights for every human being and to stubbornly promoting peace.

The multi-layered crisis requires **common resolve, strong international solidarity, centrality of human rights, International Humanitarian Law and UN-centred multilateral process** to firmly advance on the pathway towards sustainability, to address systemic issues, aiming at building open and resilient societies, bridging emergency solutions with a long-term vision, stimulating change.

We urge the G7 to play a constructive and ambitious role in building consensus and strengthening the UN multilateral spaces to promote a global just transition capable of fighting inequalities, providing climate justice, equal treatment for women and men, decent work for all and protection of the most vulnerable, using all available political, legal and technical opportunities, including the ones available in the perspective of new digital technologies and artificial intelligence, in a responsible way.

We call upon the G7 members to take clear responsibility at the domestic and international levels and be proactive and ready to find compromise and preserve dialogue despite strategic differences, highlighting main areas of common action. The current critical time requires a **systemic revision of the narrative for action** and the political approach determined to leave no one behind. The global challenges require **policy coherence between national and international dimensions, and among sectors**, to link together the future of the planet and of all human beings and to renew a bold promotion of global peacebuilding.





PRINCIPLED HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

CONTEXT: CHALLENGES TO ADDRESS

What has happened to the G7 resolve to protect humanity? The humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence, enshrined in international law, are foundational to creating an enabling and protected space for humanitarian action. They underpin the work of local, national and international civil society actors who are delivering assistance in times of crises because all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

C7 and all the humanitarian actors are alarmed that the very foundation upon which principled humanitarian action is based is in danger of collapse. Human suffering is observed by political actors through distorted lenses, where geopolitical interests apply double standards to human lives. A growing lack of trust in multilateralism and respect for international norms, agreements and laws, including International Humanitarian Law (IHL) exposes deep and dangerous divisions in a world struggling to uphold a functional international system.

The world is increasingly one of widespread, preventable suffering. Civilians are being killed, forcibly displaced, and driven to the extremes of hunger while violence with impunity is carried out on a catastrophic scale. Weapons produced and supplied by states - including G7 members - are being used to indiscriminately kill or target civilians, their infrastructure and the humanitarian workers trying to assist them. Moreover, the failure of state-led climate action to mitigate impacts is driving hunger, starvation and famine.

Lack of political will to resolve the many protracted and often forgotten crises driving humanitarian need is leading people to make horrific choices simply to survive.

Humanitarian actors face immense challenges, by working in insecure and hard to reach environments, and increasingly from constraints imposed by G7 members and other donors. The burden of compliance with sanctions, counterterrorism, reporting and vetting requirements is undermining humanitarian principles, and challenging humanitarian organisations' ability to safely deliver with sufficient quality and accountability to crisis-affected people. Never-sufficient funding means humanitarian actors are forced to overstretch international efforts, this year trying to assist 181 million people impacted by conflict and climate-related emergencies across 72 countries. Local civil society and community-based actors at the frontline of crises are working to assist many millions more.

C7 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

G7 members have the moral, ethical and legal responsibility to act – for the sake of humanity.

Therefore, we urge G7 members to promote systemic, transformative and generative changes in international policies and to:

- Issue a joint, public statement and implement policy to firmly and clearly **place humanity and the right to life with dignity back at the centre of the multilateral humanitarian agenda** and to affirm the humanitarian imperative - that action must be taken to prevent or alleviate human suffering arising out of disaster or conflict, and that nothing should override this.
- **Review** all G7 States international **aid funding policies** in consultation with civil society and take action to address **donor conditions** which impede rather than enable the delivery of equitable and impartial assistance to those most in need.



Protection of Civilians

This year the world celebrates seventy-five years since the 1949 Geneva Conventions were adopted, yet **every day there are flagrant and unpunished violations of IHL** in conflicts all around the world. As ever, it is **innocent civilians who are suffering** - precisely those whom the Geneva Conventions, other international instruments and customary humanitarian law are meant to protect.

Warfare today focuses on terror over civilians, with a shocking disregard for humanity. Large-scale killing and maiming of civilians, destruction of vital civilian infrastructure, sexual and gender-based violence, forced displacement of whole populations, targeting of humanitarian workers, as well as intentional blocking of humanitarian aid and access to food, water, electricity, and health services have become weapons of war turned against children and adults alike.

Parties to armed conflict - and their backers - are responsible for allowing these shocking IHL violations in times of war.

We urge G7 members to:

- **Respect and ensure respect for IHL and its principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution**, no matter the context, including to unequivocally and without ambiguity condemning all violations of IHL by any actor in every conflict and war, regardless of their political status or affiliations.
- **Ensure compliance with all UN Security Council resolutions on the protection of civilians**, including resolutions 1894¹ on protection of civilians in armed conflicts, 2175² on protection of humanitarian personnel and UN and associated personnel in armed conflict, 2286³ on protection of the wounded and sick, medical personnel and humanitarian personnel in armed conflict, 2601⁴ on children and armed conflict, and 2417⁵ condemning the starving of civilians as a method of warfare, as well as resolutions on women, peace and security, sexual violence in armed conflict, protection of education in armed conflict, and protection of persons with disabilities in conflict.

- Uphold the commitments of the 2021 **G7 famine prevention and humanitarian crises compact**⁶ on respect for IHL and protection of civilians and use all political, legal, economic and humanitarian diplomacy avenues to advocate with states including the G20 to make similar, public commitments.

Accountability to Affected People (AAP) & Inclusion of All in Humanitarian Action

It is crucial to acknowledge the diverse individuals within the affected population, and how they experience the crisis differently. Negative impacts are felt most by women and girls, children and youth, racial and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, older people, displaced persons, migrants, persons with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics, indigenous peoples, persons living in detention, the urban poor and rural communities.

Humanitarian crises compound **structural issues that result from current and historical neglect, marginalisation, discrimination, stigmatisation and deeply rooted inequalities**. Yet we know that people develop resilience, coping skills and capacities during conflicts and crises and continue to play valuable roles within their communities. Delivering principled, needs-based assistance requires **identifying the most marginalised people**, understanding their needs and priorities, and ensuring their inclusion, meaningful participation and equitable access to protection, services and assistance, while at the same time **ensuring that their own capacities and perspectives are recognised and listened to**.

We urge G7 members to:

- Demonstrate true **Accountability to Affected People**, through leadership to advocate for a stronger focus on inclusion within the international humanitarian system, and require **regular monitoring and public reporting on humanitarian assistance** responding to specific needs of the most-at-risk, marginalised groups, ensuring data is disaggregated at least by age, gender, and disability.

- Increase funding to **civil society organisations that have the expertise** to ensure an equitable needs-based approach to quality programming and assistance, including multi-purpose cash, and in line with age, gender, and disability sensitive approaches;
- Implement policies that support and encourage the **involvement of local communities and civil society organisations**, including women's organisations, organisations for people with disabilities, older peoples' organisations, and childrens organisations to ensure their meaningful participation to address the specific needs of individuals within the community.

Humanitarian Access

Safely ensuring the most at risk can access adequate, timely and quality assistance requires an enabling environment. Host governments, non-state-armed groups as well as humanitarian donor states all have a responsibility to facilitate humanitarian access in crises and conflict settings. Insecurity, conflicts, politicisation of aid, intentional or unnecessary restrictions of movement and bureaucratic impediments are massive obstacles for humanitarian aid and for people to access assistance. The secondary impacts of international and national sanction regimes and counter-terrorism measures create additional obstacles for principled life-saving aid in line with humanity and impartiality.

More than ever before, there is a need for humanitarians to dedicate time and resources to build trust with local communities, authorities and all conflict stakeholders. Humanitarians need the support of states to **depoliticise aid**, and ensure that **humanitarian action is not linked to taking sides in conflict**, but that assistance is purely guided by the assessed, identified needs and reaches wherever the need is greatest.

We call on the G7 members to:

- Safeguard the ability of humanitarian organisations to **operate independently and impartially**, free from political interference or reprisals and recognise the importance of local organisations as

vital in understanding the needs of people requiring assistance and ensuring humanitarian access, and provide financial support to enable their effective response;

- Support and facilitate organisations in **engaging with all stakeholders, including states, non-state armed groups, and de-facto authorities, in negotiating access to reach the populations in need** and overcoming bureaucratic and administrative impediments, in line with the commitments of the G7 famine prevention and humanitarian crises compact⁷ and the Call for Humanitarian Action⁸;
- **Ensure humanitarian exemptions in all national and regional counter-terrorism and sanctions regimes** including alignment of policies among states, provision of clear guidance on sanctions frameworks, engagement with the private sector to prevent overcompliance and de-risking, and avoid any criminalisation of legitimate humanitarian organisations, to ensure complete implementation of UNSCR 2664⁹ on humanitarian exemptions to asset freeze measures imposed by UN sanctions regimes, and support the transposition of the resolution into national regulations in countries of humanitarian interventions, UN and G7 member regimes.

Humanitarian Financing, Development, Anticipatory Action and Disaster Risk Reduction

The **funding situation in 2024 is bleak** and the humanitarian system has been forced to undertake a radical prioritisation of actions in Humanitarian Response Plans, effectively providing aid to some, while denying it to others, potentially leaving millions exposed to hunger, diseases, protection risks and lack of access to essential services. Although humanitarian funding is badly needed, **closing the humanitarian funding gap is not enough**, as addressing humanitarian problems on their own will not deliver the impact to create long-lasting changes, unless factors that drive communal/societal vulnerability are tackled. It is paramount for development,



humanitarian, conflict/peace, and climate actors to **work in full collaboration**, understanding their specific but complementary roles, and proactively bring substantive and sustainable resources to work strategically to reduce needs over time, including with investments to Disaster Risk Reduction and Early and Anticipatory action.

Strengthening of resilience at local and regional levels to manage risk, prevent, respond and recover more effectively from crises is vital, especially in addressing the compounding effects of growing climate-related hazards that impact lives and livelihoods. **Early and anticipatory action and using available technologies to better understand crisis risks, are key** for the delivery of more proactive, faster and dignified aid. However, there is still a lack of political will to mainstream and significantly scale up these approaches.

We urge G7 members to:

- **Increase predictable, flexible and unearmarked, multi-year humanitarian funding**, based on needs and free from political agendas, including for protracted and often forgotten crises, leading by example and advocating collectively and individually with other states, including the G20, for increased humanitarian funding;
- Encourage development and climate actors to engage in **strategic collaboration with humanitarian actors**, including civil society organisations, to enable humanitarian action to remain focused, including, for example, to advocate for reallocating part of the funds from the Green Climate Fund toward anticipatory action and humanitarian responses related to climate change impacts, given the urgent levels of need and the slow disbursement of the Fund for its original purpose;
- Expand the provision of **direct and indirect quality funding to local and national NGOs and CSOs, who are trusted first responders on the ground**, and implement meaningful dialogue directly between humanitarian donors and local actors.

"G7 must recognize today's increasing attacks on IHL and humanitarian principles, that must be free from geopolitical interests. As signatories to Geneva conventions, G7 States must reaffirm their commitment to IHL and humanitarian principles, and promote humanity as the central value that must be protected in all conflicts."

Miro Modrusan, C7 WG Coordinator, INTERSOS

"As Civil Society we must continue to demand G7 members, and all States, uphold their responsibilities and enable us to fulfil the humanitarian imperative to prevent or alleviate suffering wherever needed."

Jeremy Wellard, C7 WG Coordinator, ICVA

Note

¹ [Resolution 1894 \(2009\)](#)

² [Resolution 2175 \(2014\)](#)

³ [Resolution 2286 \(2016\)](#)

⁴ [Resolution 2601 \(2021\)](#)

⁵ [Resolution 2417 \(2018\)](#)

⁶ [G7 famine prevention and humanitarian crises compact - G7 2021](#)

⁷ [G7 famine prevention and humanitarian crises compact - G7 2021](#)

⁸ [The Call for Humanitarian Action](#)

⁹ [Resolution 2664 \(2022\)](#)



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The Civil 7 (C7) is one of the official Engagement Groups of the G7.

It provides a platform for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to bring forth proposals and demands aimed at protecting the environment and promoting social and economic development and well-being for all, ensuring healthy lives, gender equality, Human Rights and the principle of *leaving no one behind*, in order to stimulate a constructive dialogue with the G7.

The C7 gathers the voice of more than 700 organizations from around 70 countries and in 2024 has established seven thematic working groups.

The C7 Communiqué, as all C7 policy positions and recommendations, is developed collectively as the result of a vibrant and inclusive process, representing a coral voice of civil society.

The C7 process under Italian Presidency is coordinated by the coalition GCAP Italy (Global Call to Action against Poverty) with the widest representation of the Italian Civil Society Organizations.

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