Viewpoint: Sustainable food and biotechnology innovations are cornerstones of global food security threatened by armed conflict

While there are multiple causes of food insecurity on the planet, one is predominant: armed conflict. This year, with 20 countries or territories plunged into violence or war, nearly 140 million people are made vulnerable to food crisis. Hunger is a weapon of mass destruction that threatens global political instability.

Nearly 300 million people in 60 countries — most of them suffering from armed conflict — suffered acute hunger last year. This as the world’s governments together spent more than $2.4 trillion on weapons, equipment and military personnel.

The increase in hunger also reflects disruptions in the fertiliser trade following the outbreak of war in Eastern Europe, which accelerated cost increases to both farmers and consumers almost everywhere. Conflicts disrupted critical farming and food systems supply chains extending suffering beyond directly impacted borders.

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This vulnerability feeds back into conflict and instability. For this reason, efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger require strategies to maintain and strengthen the adaptive capacity of small farmers to extreme weather events and to work resolutely to recover and maintain peace.

It is time to look at rural territories as areas of opportunity and social progress. This requires appropriate institutional designs, a new generation of public policies for family farming and the facilitation of access to digital technologies and other advancements so farmers have better yields and incomes.

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