

Committee: Human Rights Council

Issue: Siege warfare and the starvation of civilians as a weapon of war

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INTRODUCTION

From the earliest times, countries have waged war so as to settle disagreements and promote their interests. Today, we still live in a war-torn world where millions of innocent people suffer unspeakable atrocities due to armed conflicts. Belligerents tend to systematically violate the laws of war while they fail to respect fundamental human rights. Warfare employs an ample variety of weapons and methods that make civilians their primary target. Those methods of warfare include siege warfare and starvation of civilians, typically characterized by low intensity and prolonged duration.

Sieges have been a common practice in times of war for centuries and are still used in contemporary conflicts. They may either target military objectives or civilian objects. In the former, the attackers seek to bottle operational forces or create a strategic distraction, rather than cause suffering to noncombatants. In the latter, a humanitarian disaster takes place. Armed forces cut off access to a populated area, blocking the entry of food and medicine and eventually leading the civilians to starvation. They prevent the free movement of civilians into or out of the area, including those in need of medical attention. Electricity and water supplies to the besieged areas are usually cut off while the inhabitants are prone to various violent attacks.



Figure 1 People walk past a damaged site after an airstrike in the besieged town of Douma, eastern Ghouta in Damascus, Syria.

Food deprivation as a weapon of war is as old as the history of warfare itself. It constitutes an atrocious act since it openly targets defenseless civilians. Starvation of civilians

in time of war is usually perceived as the outcome of an extended siege. However, other situations such as but not limited to blockades and diplomatic, economic or military sanctions may lead to shortage of foodstuffs.

When examining incidents of siege warfare and starvation of civilians as a weapon of war, it is important to view several aspects including the motives and consequences, the parties involved and the circumstances under which they take place. The assessment of such incidents needs to take place in accordance with relevant provisions of national and international law and humanitarian values.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Siege Warfare

This is a method of warfare characterized by the encirclement of a locality or area, leading to its isolation and followed by attacks to crush its resistance.¹

Starvation

The term “starvation” indicates death, punishment or severe suffering from hunger. It may also refer to the action of forcing a person or a group of people to some condition or action by hunger.²

Civilians

A “civilian” is “any person who is not a member of armed forces”. The term “civilian population” is used to refer to “all people who are civilians”.³

International Humanitarian Law

The International Humanitarian Law (IHL), also known as the law of war or the law of armed conflict, is a part of international law. It seeks to “limit the effects of armed conflicts” and “minimize human suffering”. It consists of rules that “restrict and regulate the means and methods of warfare” while “protecting individuals who are not or are no longer taking part in

¹ Siege. *The Practical Guide to Humanitarian Law*. N.p., n.d. Web. 8 June 2017. <<http://guide-humanitarian-law.org/content/article/3/siege-1/>>.

² "Starve." Def. 1, 2, 8. *Dictionary.com*. N.p., n.d. Web. 8 June 2017. <<http://www.dictionary.com/browse/starve>>.

³ "Customary IHL - Rule 5. Definition Of Civilians". *Ihl-databases.icrc.org*. N. p., 2017. Web. 8 June 2017. <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule5>.

hostilities". These rules derive from a number of international treaties including the Geneva Conventions (GC) and the Additional Protocols (AP).

The term "customary international humanitarian law" is used to describe the "unwritten rules, principles and customs that regulate conduct in time of war"⁴.

War Crimes

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court offers an explicit and widely accepted definition of war crimes. According to it, "grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949", such as the taking of hostages, as well as "other serious violations of the laws and customs applicable in national and international armed conflict, within the established framework of national and international law", such as pillaging, constitute war crimes. Other examples of war crimes include attacks against the civilian population, the usage of poisoned weapons, sexual violence and the involvement of children in hostilities.

Smuggling

Smuggling is the act of "importing or exporting goods secretly and illegally especially to avoid paying duties or to evade enforcement of laws"⁵.

Black Market

The black market is an "illegal free market which flourishes in economies where consumer goods are scarce or are heavily taxed"⁶. In the first case, which is commonly found in besieged communities, the commodities are sold in highly inflated prices.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At this point it is necessary to clearly establish the connection between sieges and the starvation of the civilian population. As mentioned earlier, starvation of civilians constitutes a common occurrence in beleaguered areas and is in most cases among the main goals of the besiegers. However, the nature of sieges can change depending on the intentions of the besiegers and other external factors. Subsequently, the results are diverse, including war crimes or criminal offences, while they may or may not be punishable under international

⁴ International Committee of the Red Cross. Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law. What Is International Humanitarian Law? International Committee of the Red Cross. N.p., July 2004. Web. 18 June 2017. <https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/what_is_ihl.pdf>.

⁵ "Smuggle." *Merriam-Webster.com*. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 5 Aug. 2017. <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/smuggle#legalDictionary>>.

⁶ "Black Market." *BusinessDictionary.com*. WebFinance Inc., n.d. Web. 5 Aug. 2017. <<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/black-market.html>>.

legislation. On the other hand, using starvation as a weapon, which is a prohibited practice, can be achieved in ways other than siege warfare. Henceforth, the two situations will be examined separately.

Historical Background

Siege warfare can be used to achieve a multitude of vital military objectives of either offensive or defensive nature. In the former case, the aggressors occupy a locality and potentially employ other means, such as the starvation of civilians, until the besieged party is lead to surrender. In the latter, forces that are significantly outnumbered might attempt to increase their chances of successfully defending themselves in a fortified area. This immense strategic value of siege warfare has been recognized for ages. In fact, the first recorded cases date back to 3000 BC. Relevant operations were actualized in Mesopotamia, ancient Greece, Egypt and China to name a few. They remained common through the Medieval Period and the early modern era.

Although siege warfare is sometimes perceived as an outdated practice, it has been revived by the advancements and proliferation of firepower. Thus, there were several incidents in the 20th and 21st century. During the World Wars, they were critical to the turn of the events. In World War I (WWI), siege warfare was put into action in the city of Verdun in France, the city of Przemyśl in Austria-Hungary (present day Poland), as well as in other areas in Belgium, Italy and Serbia. Moreover, many of the techniques of siege warfare were integrated in trench warfare, a well-known feature of WWI. In World War II (WWII), the historical sieges of Leningrad and Sevastopol took place while particularly powerful siege engines were used. During the Vietnam War siege warfare took further steps towards its current form and the belligerents' priorities shifted. Besiegers could no longer take the siege to a conclusion, given the defenders' increased ability to resist, so they used the siege as a tool to weaken the enemy's military or as a strategic distraction. Similarly, siege warfare played an important role in the Yugoslav Wars, during which Sarajevo was besieged, as well as in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and multiple civil wars worldwide. Currently, siege warfare is employed by the belligerents in the Syrian Civil war.

Legality of sieges in modern warfare

The use of sieges as a tactic of war is not always condemned. Sieges are tolerated under international humanitarian law as long as they are in compliance with all applicable regulations and their purpose is to achieve a military objective, such as the capture of an

uninhabited enemy-controlled area. However, a siege should not target civilian objects or cause any damage to the civilian population.

In fact, individuals taking no active part in hostilities should always receive humane treatment. To that end, there are some IHL rules that need to be respected in siege warfare in order for it to be permissible. The wounded and the sick must evacuate the area and be cared for (GCI Art. 12-14, GCIV Art. 14, 16). Diplomats and citizens of neutral States residing in a besieged area must be granted the right to leave. Moreover, the parties of the conflict must abide by the provisions of the international human rights law such as but not limited to the right to life, the prohibition on the infliction of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, the right to the freedom of movement, the right to adequate standard of living including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to essential primary health care, including essential medicine. It is important to allow the free passage of relief supplies to besieged zones (GCIV Art. 23) and their distribution by impartial humanitarian organizations. Also, medical and religious personnel needs to be granted a safe passage to such areas (GCI Art. 24).

Life under siege

In most cases the besieging forces show no respect for the laws of war or the civilians. As a result, the latter suffer greatly; this is contradicted to the main goal of the international community, which is to avoid any unnecessary pain. Besieged communities exhibit a variety of characteristics reflecting their atrocious situation. As a result civilians in the besieged regions have trouble surviving. Electricity and running water are typically cut off and there is restricted, if any, access to food, fuel, and medical supplies. People lose their lives due to malnutrition, dehydration, diseases or injuries left untreated and the adverse weather conditions.

Most of the beleaguered areas are subject to violent attacks by the besieging forces. In addition to conventional weapons and methods, such as sniping and the use of explosives, there have been several recorded cases where internationally banned weapons such as landmines, cluster munitions and chemical weapons were employed with devastating effects.



Figure 2 A child's drawing of a besieged area in Syria

It is evident that civilians in those areas are also tormented by several economy-wise difficulties. The war deprives local economies from their ability to function properly. Thus, they are led to collapse and are, eventually, replaced by ill-functioning “siege economies”. It is either the local production, if there is any, or illicit activities such as smuggling and bribery that allow a limited number of transactions to take place in besieged communities. Instability and profiteering are two key features of economic activities in such economies. Moreover, it is a usual practice for besieging forces to take economic advantage of the sieges. They permit a minimal flow of goods in the besieged area and they take a share of the profits as soon as they are sold. Needless to say that the prices of the said goods are unduly high while their quantity is inadequate and their quality is questionable. Economic activities in an area under siege also include civilians disbursing their life savings as a bribe to smugglers or the besiegers themselves so as to flee the region. The abovementioned economic situation doesn't only further harrow the civilian population but it also provides the besieging forces with financial resources.

It is not a rare occurrence for the parties to the conflict to view the male population of the besieged communities as a major recruitment pool. The living conditions are dreadful, the unemployment rates are high, the civilians are deprived from their right to a well-rounded education and they are overwhelmed by feelings of helplessness and despair. As a result, they are very prone to indoctrination and manipulation by the besiegers' propaganda. Furthermore, the besieging forces do not hesitate to use other means of pressure, such as threats and blackmail, to which the civilians succumb out of fear.

Starvation of civilians as a weapon in modern warfare

Conventional and customary IHL takes into account the fact that food can be used as a weapon or a means of pressure in warfare and therefore makes certain relevant provisions. “Starvation of civilians as a method of combat is prohibited. It is prohibited to attack, destroy, remove or render useless, for that purpose, objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, such as foodstuffs, agricultural areas for the production of foodstuffs, crops, livestock, drinking water installations and supplies and irrigation works” (APII Art. 14). No exceptions are made concerning this prohibition, the violation of which constitutes a war crime. It is important to bear in mind that causing suffering to the population is adequate proof of a violation and needs to be addressed before the civilians starve to death.

Normally, acts that are known to cause a shortage of food supplies in a region, such as sieges, naval or aerial blockades and economic sanctions, are regulated by the international

law. The parties are under the obligation to permit the free passage of relief supplies. As long as the parties manage to meet this obligation, the starvation of civilians is rather improbable. However, in most cases, relief actions do not manage to reach the war zones and deliver goods to the civilian population.

It should be noted that humanitarian relief provided to war-torn areas is not limited to food supplies. According to the relevant provisions of IHL, foodstuffs, whether in the form of food supplies or crops and livestock, as well as drinking water installations and supplies, irrigation works, medicine and medical supplies, objects necessary for religious worship, clothing, bedding and means of shelter are considered to be “objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population” (APII Art. 14).

The situation in Syria

The Syrian conflict is without a shadow of a doubt one of the most horrific wars of the 21st century. Siege warfare, largely employed by multiple parties to the conflict, constitutes one of its most despicable elements.

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), “For the purposes of the Syrian conflict, a ‘besieged area’ is an area surrounded by armed actors with the sustained effect that humanitarian assistance cannot regularly enter, and civilians, the sick and wounded cannot regularly exit the area.”

This military tactic has been applied systematically mainly by the Syrian government but also rebel groups and the Islamic State against civilian populations and in various degrees of severity. The classification of sieges by severity seeks to demonstrate the variations of some factors that determine living conditions in besieged areas. One of these factors is the presence of alternative food sources in the besieged area, such as local agricultural production. Such sources cannot be found in sieges of high intensity, but they might be available to civilians who live under a siege of low or moderate intensity. Similarly, in a siege of low or moderate intensity, one can potentially smuggle in limited amounts of supplies or buy them on the black market for elevated prices. In a siege of high intensity, such attempts are rather difficult and infrequent while the quantities that can be bought or smuggled in are significantly smaller. The United Nations (UN) and other humanitarian organizations may take initiatives for any besieged community in need of humanitarian aid. However, in most cases, any humanitarian aid that reaches its destination proves to be insufficient. In fact, the more intense the siege is, the more difficult it is for them to negotiate with the besieging forces and to carry through with the conveyance of aid deliveries and supplies. Given the abovementioned circumstances,

and while a population that lives under a siege of low or moderate intensity is at some risk as well, it is the civilians that live under a siege of high intensity that face a grave and immediate risk of malnourishment or dehydration and denial of medical care. Regular attacks launched by the besieging forces aggravate the situation in sieges of high intensity. These attacks are only sporadic in less intense sieges.

For the combatants siege warfare is a convenient way to take over a region controlled by the enemy. Given the above described circumstances, the civilians are faced with the dilemma to either admit defeat and surrender or starve to death. The civilian population is weakened and offers no resistance. They are usually led to a so-called forcible surrender. In other cases, a forced displacement of the civilians takes place in order for the besiegers to eventually occupy the area, while it is not rare for the belligerents to employ sieges and starve the civilians as a form of collective punishment. Additionally, besieged areas in Syria are regularly subjected to cruel violent attacks, even during ceasefire. They are even targets of attacks using internationally banned weapons.

Since this crisis is physically contained, not many people in the outside world have knowledge of the fact that these sieges are being conducted. As a matter of fact, monitoring the situation of besieged areas in Syria with accuracy is challenging even for the organs of the international community. The latest UN report states that more than 600,000 individuals are living under siege in Syria while other

sources state that the number could reach 900,000. Most of them are inhabitants of Damascus, Rural Damascus, Homs, Aleppo, Deir Ezzor and Idlib governorates. An undetermined number of civilians live in siege-like situations, suffering from starvation, denial of access to medical care and the extreme use of violence. The UN along with partners respond to the situation with humanitarian aid convoys or airdrops

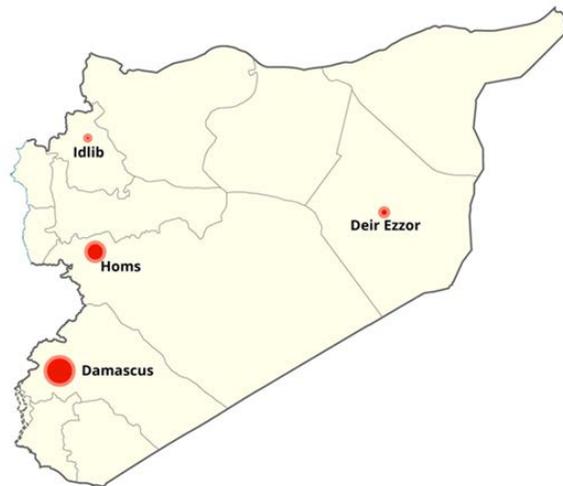


Figure 3 Besieged localities in Syria by Province

to the affected regions. Moreover, multiple independent humanitarian organizations have decided to provide the besieged areas with relief supplies. However, their efforts are obstructed by the instability in the area as well as deliberate interference and restrictions by the parties to the conflict.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Syrian Arab Republic

The government of Syria and pro-government forces are responsible for the vast majority of sieges taking place in the region. The regime employs violence and coercion as well as depopulation and starvation of civilians in its efforts to subdue besieged communities. The Syrian government, however, does not accept the terms “siege” and “besieged” to describe the situation in its territories while it expresses its reservations concerning reports indicating such incidents. Moreover, it has voiced its opposition to actions taken by the international community, including the UN, claiming that they interfere in the internal affairs of a sovereign state.

Republic of Iraq

In June 2014, Islamic State forces captured the country’s second-largest city, Mosul. Three years later, in mid-July 2017, an internationally led coalition of Iraqi forces declared that, after a prolonged siege, it had managed to regain control of the area and eliminate the presence of IS fighters. However, the battle for Mosul went along with an immense humanitarian disaster. Human rights and the laws of war were violated not only by the IS fighters but also by the Iraqi forces and their allies. Both sides are responsible for several executions of civilians. Other incidents include but are not limited to unlawful detention, the use of torture, the recruitment of child soldiers, the use of human shields and the use of landmines and toxic weapons. More than 900,000 civilians were forced to flee the city and are now internally displaced, while tens of thousands of noncombatants were trapped in the midst of the conflict. Eventually, civilian casualties surpassed 40,000. In January 2014, the city of Fallujah was taken over by the Islamic State. In February 2016, Iraqi government forces completely besieged the area and managed to recapture it after approximately four months. Roughly 90,000 civilians lived under siege in the city of Fallujah and 140 out of them are known to have died of starvation. Many others were executed by the Islamic forces. Sieges also took place during the Iraq war of 2003-2011.

Republic of Philippines

There have been recorded cases of sieges in the Philippines. The most recent one concerns the city of Marawi. In May 2017, IS-linked militants seized parts of Marawi. Military troops battling to retake control of them. As of August 2017, there are 119 civilians reported

dead. A significant number of those casualties was caused by diseases and dehydration among the thousands of civilians that were displaced from the city. Another siege that took place in the country was the siege of Lamitan in 2001. The city of Lamitan, a Christian community in a predominately Muslim province, was taken over by an Islamist militant group. The siege, which left several civilians killed and wounded while it forced thousands of others flee the region, was concluded within a day when the besiegers managed to escape the government forces. They used their hostages as human shields, a tactic considered to be a war crime, to secure their getaway.

Republic of Liberia

The Second Liberian Civil War was marked by the siege of the country's capital, Monrovia. The city was taken over by rebels from mid-July to mid-August 2003. Approximately 1,000 civilians lost their lives during that period of time and several thousands were displaced. Following the Liberian president's resignation, the siege was lifted and peacekeeping forces were deployed to the region.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is the body responsible for the UN's response to complex emergency situations. Its mandate is to facilitate the access to regions under emergency for the prompt provision of humanitarian assistance and the supervision of such operations. The duties of UNOCHA include managing the humanitarian impact of armed conflicts. When sieges occur it is UNOCHA that needs to take action, in order to provide the civilian population with help and eventually lift the siege. For example, it needs to provide for the civilians that are deliberately deprived from food as a method of warfare.



Figure 4 A humanitarian relief convoy reaches the besieged Madaya

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

The International Committee of the Red Cross is part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement. It classifies as a private humanitarian organization. Its mandate, as dictated by the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977 and 2005, is to help those affected by armed conflict and promote compliance with the laws

of war. Apart from its significant contribution in delivering humanitarian aid in besieged areas, the work of ICRC includes the codification of customary IHL.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of Event
1948	The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is adopted
1949	The Geneva Conventions are adopted
1972	The Convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of bacteriological (biological) and toxic weapons and on their destruction is adopted
1977	The Additional Protocols I and II to the Geneva Conventions are adopted
1980	The Convention on prohibitions or restrictions on the use of certain conventional weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects is adopted
1993	The Convention on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and on their destruction is adopted
2000	The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the rights of the child on the involvement of children in armed conflict is adopted
	The Additional Protocol III to the Geneva Conventions is adopted
	The ICRC presents a Study on Customary International Humanitarian Law
2011	The Syrian conflict begins
2014	Resolutions 2139, 2165 and 2191 are adopted by the Security Council
2015	Resolutions 2254 and 2258 are adopted by the Security Council
	Resolution 2332 is adopted by the Security Council
	Resolutions 71/191 and 71/248 are adopted by the General Assembly
2017	Approximately 900,000 people live under siege in Syria

UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

The actions undertaken by the UN so as to deal with siege warfare and the starvation of civilians as a weapon of war derive from its firm commitment to “maintain international peace and security, uphold international law, protect human rights and deliver humanitarian aid when needed.”⁷ For practical purposes, they can be separated in two distinct categories.

⁷ "What We Do." *United Nations*. United Nations, n.d. Web. 05 Aug. 2017. <<http://www.un.org/en/sections/what-we-do/>>.

The first category includes initiatives that seek to establish a framework of reference for pertinent situations by providing the guidelines for proper treatment of human beings in time of conflict or otherwise. The cornerstone of these guidelines is without a doubt the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the UN General Assembly on the 10th of December 1948. Article 25 affirms that “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”

In the same spirit, resolution 71/191 adopted in December 2016 by the General Assembly is the most recent resolution promoting and protecting the right to food.

The second category includes any specific approaches aimed at the control and repression of troubling situations that emerge overtime. In the 21st century, it is the question of the Syrian conflict that needs to be thoroughly examined when it comes to siege warfare and the starvation of civilians as a weapon of war. The Security Council’s resolutions 2139, 2165 and 2191 (2014), 2254 and 2258 (2015) as well as 2332 (2016) are indicative of the UN’s efforts to minimize cruelty in the war zone. The aforementioned resolutions draw attention to the terrible situation of besieged regions in Syria and the difficulties in providing humanitarian aid to the affected areas. They authorize cross-border humanitarian access to relevant agencies and coordinate humanitarian operations.

Moreover, it is made clear that the parties to the conflict must comply with their obligations under IHL. Resolution 71/248 adopted by the General Assembly in December 2016 seeks “to ensure accountability for crimes involving violations of international law, in particular of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, some of which may constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity, committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 through appropriate, fair and independent investigations and prosecutions at the domestic or international level”. This resolution serves mainly as a response to the atrocities taking place in the Syrian conflict. However, it is also a notable example of the international community taking action to tackle and ensure accountability over violations of international humanitarian law committed in times of conflict.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Although in most cases sieges are lifted and the use of starvation as a weapon of war comes to an end as soon as the parties to the conflict reach an agreement, it is important to minimize human suffering in armed conflicts.

The international community has taken several steps to this end, apart from the UN involvement in the matter, with the establishment of international humanitarian law being the most significant among them. The four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977 and 2005 are the main instruments of IHL and their purpose is to diminish the cruelty of armed conflict. Out of the nearly 600 articles they contain in total, it is the common Article 3 that holds particular significance. The article, common to all four Geneva Conventions, summarizes their key provisions and makes them pertinent to non-international armed conflicts. It requires 'humane treatment for all persons in enemy hands, without any adverse distinction'. It specifically prohibits 'murder, mutilation, torture, cruel, humiliating and degrading treatment, the taking of hostages and unfair trial'. It requires that 'the wounded, sick and shipwrecked be collected and cared for'. It grants the ICRC the right to 'offer its services to the parties to the conflict'. Other relevant articles require protection for the wounded and sick (GCI Art. 12-14, GCIV Art. 14, 16), but also for medical and religious personnel, medical units and medical transports (GCI Art. 24). Article 23 of GCIV protects the population's right to access without obstruction medical supplies, food and clothing. Articles 31, 32 and 34 of GCIV prohibit the use of coercion, corporal punishment, torture and the taking of hostages.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Given the complexity of circumstances in time of war, the measures seeking to address the question of siege warfare and the starvation of civilians as a weapon of war need to be manifold as well as feasible. The first step to effectively handle the issue is to have sufficient and reliable facts concerning the situation. When it comes to besieged areas or war zones where the civilians are starved, it is important to collect and analyze relevant data in a transparent and impartial manner so as to assess the gravity of the problem and act accordingly. As soon as adequate information is collected, lifting the sieges and restoring order in the area should become a priority. At the same time, humanitarian aid should be distributed to the affected regions so as to cover the population's basic needs. Distribution of humanitarian aid should also take place while a siege is conducted and raising it is not a

feasible scenario. In addition, it is imperative that those responsible for violations of international law be held accountable for their actions.

The UN has a pivotal role in the implementation of the above. Other than endeavoring to avoid armed conflicts whatsoever, safeguarding human rights and making sure that the laws of war are being respected, it needs to be the one providing the international community with information impartially reflecting reality in war zones. Furthermore, it is the most suitable entity to oversee and guarantee transparency, fairness and law-abidance in negotiation processes attempting to end hostilities as well as the distribution of humanitarian aid.

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