



## **C7 Statement to the G7 Foreign Ministers**

**ahead of the G7 Ministerial Meeting on Foreign Affairs, 17 - 19 April 2024**

*14 April 2024*

The world is experiencing a threatening series of interlinked crises - conflict, climate, hunger - whose structural causes remain unaddressed. 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, and secure future**.

Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine has now entered its third year with no end in sight and no encouraging signs of progress towards a resolution. While the G7 has highlighted its support for Ukraine's self-defence and Zelensky's 10-Point Peace Plan, the human and environmental toll continues to grow. At the same time, the lack of action of the G7 and other States paves the way for a silent complicity that enables the continued devastation of Israel's warfare against the population of Gaza without distinction, proportionality and precaution that has so far killed nearly 34,000 Palestinian people, including over 13,000 children, while the Israeli hostages taken by Hamas, in its horrific action of 7th October, have not been returned. Iran's attack in the last few hours exacerbates an already intolerable situation and increases the risk of escalation in the Middle East. The war between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces has killed 14,000 people, with over 8 million people displaced, many facing acute food insecurity. The number of countries experiencing armed conflicts has risen to 56, and many existing conflicts have gone on for decades without a true resolution. In addition, tensions between nations who are not officially at war continue to rise, in particular in the South China/West Philippines Sea, the Korean Peninsula, and South and West Asia as well as in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region.

The **fragility of global peace**, the **persistence of armed conflict**, and the **heightened risk of nuclear weapons' use demand the utmost urgency and concrete action**.

Moreover, we are 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 these crises**. The failure of state-led climate action to mitigate impacts is driving hunger, starvation and famine. In multiple protracted and often forgotten crises, a sustained lack of political commitment to implement sustainable solutions to address the drivers of humanitarian needs is leading people to make horrific choices simply to survive.

**As C7, we urge G7 Foreign Affairs Ministers and governments to promote systemic, transformative and generative changes in international policies through the multilateral system.** The G7 can play a useful role in building consensus on accelerating the action needed to prevent the multi-layered crisis from reaching catastrophic levels and advance the agenda for sustainable development. This is possible by strengthening the UN multilateral spaces, within the **framework of Human Rights** that makes possible a common effort toward a just transition capable of fighting inequalities, providing climate justice, equal treatment for women and men, decent work for all and protection of the vulnerable.

We call upon the **G7 Foreign Affairs Ministers to be proactive and ready to find compromise and preserve dialogue** despite strategic differences, highlighting four main areas of action.

### ***Peace, Common Security and Nuclear Disarmament***

While we reaffirm diplomacy as the only solution for current wars, we call to bridge the gap between conflict resolution and **long-term peace building strategies addressing persistent structural challenges at the basis of conflicts**. Those strategies need investments in people-to-people cooperation and networking between civil societies



across borders reaching the grassroots level by actively involving civil society organisations and grassroots peacebuilders in peacebuilding activities.

Focusing resources and attention on diplomacy and human security and on addressing the root causes of violence and conflict – including but not limited to economic and social exploitation, repression, and injustice as well as addressing the interlinked nature of war, militarism, climate change, and environmental degradation - is critical. This implies recognising that further militarisation and military spending do not create greater security for people in society.

We therefore urge the G7 to take actions as follows:

- **Reaffirm support for and building on the global and regional peace architecture**, including but not limited to the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the African Union (AU), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). Recognizing their vital role in the peaceful resolution of disputes and promotion of common security and utilising relevant institutions for conflict prevention and resolution is essential.
- **Express support for the UNSG's New Agenda for Peace** including reforms to the UN Security Council, revitalization of the UNGA, and elevating the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.
- **Act swiftly to expand international, multilateral treaties on emerging military technologies** including artificial intelligence, cyber warfare, space weaponry and unmanned vehicles or drones.
- **Strengthen policies on preventing arms transfers** into conflict-prone and active conflict zones in particular where human rights and/or international law have been violated.
- **Firmly reaffirm the G7 position that the use or threat of nuclear weapons** use by any actor is unacceptable. Acknowledge the risks that come with nuclear deterrence and the power imbalances that come from their possession. Commit to a no first use policy. Reinvigorate strategic stability talks between the USA and Russia and dialogue with China for immediate and severe restrictions on nuclear weapons with a clearly outlined timeline and benchmarks toward the complete elimination of nuclear weapons strengthening this way the Meetings of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) process.

On May 19, 2023, following G7 leaders' visit to Hiroshima, the *Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament* proclaimed a "commitment to achieving a world without nuclear weapons with undiminished security for all." As anxieties over global crises continue to grow, the pursuit of undiminished common or collective security has never been so necessary.

### ***Principled Humanitarian Assistance***

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 already struggling to uphold a rules-based international order. Civilians are being killed, forcibly displaced, and driven to the extremes of hunger while violence with impunity is carried out on a catastrophic scale. Today, in front of the eyes of the world, 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. The growing lack of respect for IHL by conflict parties is fuelling insecurity for both the population in need and humanitarian organisations, who are experiencing frequent attacks in their efforts to provide assistance.

As a result, humanitarian needs continue to rise, while the funding trends in recent years continue to decrease, and the funding situation in 2024 looks bleak. The humanitarian system has already been forced to undertake a radical prioritisation of actions in Humanitarian Response Plans, partly caused by 2023 funding shortfalls. Although 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, and humanitarian, climate, development and conflict actors scale up their complementary actions in full collaboration. Now more than ever we need the G7 countries to act coherently matching their discourse with financial resources, and moral obligation to urgently support protracted crises. Therefore, the G7 has a key role in influencing global leaders to uphold their humanitarian commitments and take actions as follows:

- **Respect and ensure respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL)**, including principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution, no matter the context, including to unequivocally and without ambiguity condemn all violations of IHL by any actor in every conflict and war, regardless of their political status or affiliations.
- **Firmly and clearly place humanity and the right to life with dignity back at the centre of the multilateral and humanitarian agenda** and affirm the primacy of 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. We witness a bleak world where humanitarian actors are repeatedly being forced to overstretch their efforts to deliver principled humanitarian assistance to those most at risk. G7 members have the moral, ethical and legal responsibility to act for the sake of humanity
- **Ensure compliance with all UN Security Council resolutions on the protection of civilians**, including resolutions 1894, 2175, 2286, resolution 2417 condemning the starving of civilians as a method of warfare, as well as resolutions on children and armed conflict, women, peace and security, sexual violence in armed conflict, protection of education in armed conflict, and protection of persons with disabilities in conflict.
- **Demonstrate true Accountability to Affected People**, through leadership to advocate for a stronger focus on inclusion within the international humanitarian system, proactively recognising and responding to the rights and needs of women, children, people with disabilities and all at-risk groups.
- **Ensure humanitarian access** and provide financial support to enable humanitarian organisations' effective response assistance, overcoming bureaucratic and administrative impediments, in line with the commitments of the 2021 G7 famine prevention and humanitarian crises compact and the Call for Humanitarian Action. 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 so that the most at risk can access adequate, timely and quality assistance.
- **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 stakeholders in understanding the needs of people requiring assistance.
- **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.

### ***Food Justice and Food Systems Transformation***

Food systems are central to ecosystem health, social justice and well-being, food and nutrition security, culture and landscape protection, and planetary rights. The current model of industrialised agriculture is posing critical challenges regarding biodiversity loss, overconsumption of water, greenhouse gas emissions, groundwater pollution, and antibiotic resistance phenomena, with very serious implications for human, animal and environmental health.

Food systems are in the grip of financial speculation and corporate concentration and are exposed to the serious weaknesses of global supply chains. Food inequality and poverty, aggravated by armed conflicts and related insecurity conditions, continue to grow or to remain at unacceptably high levels. The crisis is not one of global availability, but of unequal and inequitable access to food. The **causes are structural** and addressing them requires **a deep transformation of our food systems**.



We call the G7 to act on several priorities:

- **Support democratic participation in decision-making processes rooted in a human rights framework.** The role of the **UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS)** must be recognized and fostered as the leading international, multi-actor, and intergovernmental policy platform on food security and nutrition, together with its High-Level Panel of Experts and the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples Mechanism.
- **Reformulate trade agreements, market regulations and investments to support food justice.** The G7 commitment to monitor agricultural markets should be maintained. Transparency and market regulations are needed to ensure fair prices for small-scale food producers, promoting local food production and local and global food security. Low income, food import dependent countries should be granted policy space to block imports that undercut local products and adopt measures such as food reserves. Investments promoting industrialised agriculture and export-oriented supply chains that impede people's access to land, water and seeds should be banned. Infrastructure investment, in the framework of PGII, should be oriented to promote the role of farmers, with transparent public participation in the decision-making process, engaging local communities, promoting territorial markets and prioritising public partnership with family farmers.
- **Sustain the agroecological transition and territorial food systems.** Contribute to building resilient food systems, with local communities, farmers, indigenous peoples, and all marginalised communities. This can be achieved by co-planning agroecological transition and food system transformation pathways at the UN level with a view to subsidiarity. Policies should be strengthened to support the agroecological transition and the role of farmers in managing the rural environment and biodiversity. Repurpose the agricultural **subsidy system**, with a balanced approach that enables farmers to manage the transition phase to sustainable agriculture, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other climate impacts, supporting climate adaptation efforts, protecting biodiversity and accelerating the adoption of the Global Biodiversity Framework. Protecting smallholder farmers' seeds, water and land rights is crucial.
- **Respect policy coherence for development.** Ensure that G7 countries' policies and practices **do not harm the food security** of any partner countries. This applies specifically to areas such as debt, climate, trade, agriculture, fishery policies, and corporate human rights due diligence. Special care is needed to use food security and agroecological transition as a lens to shape international agreements on trade, debt, IDA replenishments etc.
- **Support for gender justice.** Protect and widen **women's** access to resources, services and land rights. Increase investments and programs for agroecological transition in food systems that recognize and enhance the role of women in all aspects of the supply chain. It is important to adequately consider and support the role of women and **indigenous knowledge** in food systems, biodiversity conservation, as well as climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- **Prevent food crises.** Strengthen the 2021 G7 Pact on Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Crises for **anticipatory action**, recognizing the centrality of the **Integrated Phase Classification (IPC)**. Humanitarian diplomacy must be combined with funding for hunger-related programs. Special care is needed to **prevent the use of hunger as a weapon of war**. Additionally, a more effective and reformed food aid system can help anticipate and prepare for disasters, provide access to land for displaced people and marginalised communities in fragile contexts, and invest in cost-effective approaches.

### ***Human Mobility and Migration***

Ensuring that people migrate safely across the world has been a long-lasting challenge for many governments. Migration impacts countries of origin, transit and destination in different ways and, when not facilitated by adequate policies, it jeopardises people's ability to experience and enjoy their human rights.



The world must take a cooperative long-term perspective on migration, approaching it as a stable part of States' policies rather than a crisis. For this reason, in order to improve migration governance, the G7 vision should be to shift the focus on human mobility from an emergency approach to an encompassing and long-term one, developing predictable, safe, regular and manageable migration channels.

In the framework of the multilateral action and in true partnership with the Global South and with diaspora groups, the Italian G7 Presidency should work towards the adoption of an approach to manage migration based on the concept of human mobility, enshrined in the efforts encompassed by the 2030 Agenda and the Global Compacts. This is needed to broaden and rebalance the perceptions of the migration phenomenon, reflecting a complex and highly variable reality, thus applying a human development approach. This implies shifting the focus from an emergency approach to one based on joint responsibilities for shared benefits, and establishing true partnerships between countries of origin, transit, and destination, to ensure safe, orderly and mutually beneficial human mobility based on human rights.

Safe and regular human mobility can indeed benefit origin, transit and destination countries in terms of economic prosperity and development (this is particularly true, for example, for ageing societies, in terms of sustainability of social security systems, but also in terms of contribution to poverty eradication).

This approach could induce G7 countries to take action in the following areas.

- **Ensuring safe and regular migration channels** in order to promote the protection of human rights and sustainable development of origin, transit and destination countries. Regular and safe migration paths would have positive impacts for all parties involved. To this end, it would be important to protect migrant workers, also outlaw unethical recruitment practices, and to integrate climate mobility into national and global policies.
- **Establishing cooperative migration governance**, according to the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches across migration corridors and expressing commitment to share burdens. Replacing migration policy approaches that externalise borders with human-rights-centred cooperation in support of migrants and host communities' wellbeing. Better financing and interventions to support the reception and the integration of migrants enable their capacities to flourish together with those of host communities for the sustainable development of the destination country as well as the country of origin.
- **Investing in countries of origin and transit**, on the basis of specific partnership agreements, financing sustainable projects identified together with the partner country, involving CSOs and diasporas on the basis of the principle of local ownership, to pursue high social and economic impact – consistently with the implementation of the SDGs. Avoiding the instrumentalisation of ODA to reduce migration through measures that are detrimental to human rights.
- **Development cooperation** must pursue its **fundamental objectives: fighting poverty and inequality**, supporting the resilience of communities. The narrative of addressing the root causes of migration to reduce flows is misleading and fails to consider how development leads to increased migration in the short to medium term, for which safe and regular channels must be provided. Fighting inequality and other structural issues is essential to affirm the right to stay, but this means transforming unjust economic and financial systems.
- **Ensuring the protection of persons at heightened risk of abuse and gender-based violence**, including but not limited to women and children, with particular attention to people who experience trafficking or other forms of modern slavery. Ensuring access to protection and basic services, such as public health, with particular attention to sexual and reproductive services, education, and child-sensitive assistance.
- **Valuing the positive aspects of human mobility for all parties** (destination, transit, origin countries, and migrants themselves), by promoting integration and social inclusion of migrants and refugees in the host countries, and by adopting effective measures to ensure access to protection mechanisms and basic social and health services, national education systems, and overcoming barriers to labour market integration.