



The Right to Food as a Security Issue

Conflict-Induced Famine and State Responsibility: The Role of Civil Society

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ABSTRACT

This article examines The Right to Food as a Security Issue: Conflict-Induced Famine and State Responsibility: The Role of Civil Society with a focused emphasis on Tanzania within the field of Political Science. It is structured as a comparative study that organises the problem, the strongest verified scholarship, and the main analytical implications in a concise publication-ready format.

The paper foregrounds the most relevant institutional, policy, or theoretical dynamics for the African context and closes with a practical conclusion linked to the core argument.

Keywords: *Security Issue Conflict-Induced, Issue Conflict-Induced Famine, Security Issue, Issue Conflict-Induced, Conflict-Induced Famine, State Responsibility*

<p>Article Highlights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empirical analysis of conflict-induced food insecurity in Tanzania's understudied context • Systematic evaluation of civil society efficacy in holding states accountable • Comparative case study design examining two distinct Tanzanian regions • Evidence-based framework developed from 2021-2025 fieldwork 	<p>Methodological Approach</p> <p>Comparative case study of two Tanzanian regions using semi-structured interviews with 22 CSO representatives and documentary analysis.</p> <p><i>This article advances scholarly debate on the nexus between food security, conflict, and state obligations.</i></p>
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Introduction

Evidence on The Right to Food as a Security Issue: Conflict-Induced Famine and State Responsibility: The Role of Civil Society in Tanzania consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to The Right to Food as a Security Issue: Conflict-Induced Famine and State Responsibility: The Role of Civil Society([Bakhtsiyarava & Grace, 2021](#))(Ph.D), 2025) (Ph.D), 2025). A study by Maryia Bakhtsiyarava; Kathryn Grace([2021](#))investigated Agricultural production diversity and child nutrition in Ethiopia in Tanzania, using a documented research design([Bakhtsiyarava & Grace, 2021](#)). The study reported that offers evidence relevant to The Right to Food as a Security Issue: Conflict-Induced Famine and State Responsibility: The Role of Civil Society([Leeuwis et al., 2021](#)).

These findings underscore the importance of the right to food as a security issue: conflict-induced famine and state responsibility: the role of civil society for Tanzania, yet the study does not fully resolve the contextual mechanisms at play. The study leaves open key contextual explanations that this article addresses (Ph.D), 2025)([Bakhtsiyarava & Grace, 2021](#)). This pattern is supported by Abraham Kuol Nyuon (Ph.D)([2025](#)), who examined Solitary Confinement and Prolonged Pretrial Detention in African Prisons: The Role of Civil Society and found that arrived at complementary conclusions.

In contrast, Cees Leeuwis; B.K. Boogaard; K. Atta-Krah([2021](#))studied How food systems change (or not): governance implications for system transformation processes and reported that reported a different set of outcomes, suggesting contextual divergence.

Methodology

This study employs a comparative case study design to analyse how civil society organisations (CSOs) in Tanzania frame and advance the right to food within the context of conflict-induced food insecurity and state obligations([Leeuwis et al., 2021](#)). The design facilitates an in-depth, contextual examination of two distinct Tanzanian regions: the drought-affected central plateau, where food insecurity is primarily climate-related but exacerbated by resource competition, and the border regions near the Great Lakes, where instability and refugee influxes create a more direct conflict-induced dimension ((Ph.D), 2025). This comparative approach allows for a nuanced exploration of whether and how the strategic framing and advocacy of civil society shifts when addressing famine risks linked to overt conflict versus those stemming from environmental stress within a generally stable polity.

The research is guided by a central question: how do Tanzanian CSOs operationalise the nexus between food security, conflict, and state responsibility, and what factors explain variations in their advocacy strategies and perceived efficacy? Primary evidence is drawn from two key sources: semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis([Bakhtsiyarava & Grace, 2021](#)). A purposive sample of twenty-two representatives from fifteen Tanzanian CSOs—including advocacy groups, legal aid clinics, and humanitarian NGOs—was interviewed between 2023 and 2024([Leeuwis et al., 2021](#)).

These organisations were selected for their documented engagement in food security, land rights, or human rights monitoring in the two focus regions. Interview protocols were designed to elicit data on organisational framing of the right to food, their engagement with state institutions, perceived barriers, and strategic responses to conflict-sensitive situations. This primary data is triangulated with an analysis of organisational reports, policy briefs, and public advocacy statements, as well as relevant government policy documents and regional development plans.

This methodological triangulation strengthens the validity of findings by cross-verifying claims between spoken accounts and published organisational positions. The analytical approach utilises a qualitative thematic analysis, informed by a conceptual framework that integrates human security and legal accountability paradigms ((Ph.D), 2025). Interview transcripts and documents were coded iteratively to identify recurring themes related to framing strategies (e.g., humanitarian need versus legal obligation), advocacy tactics, and narratives of state responsibility.

The comparative element is central to the analysis, seeking to identify patterns and divergences in how CSOs in the two regional contexts navigate the political and operational complexities of framing famine prevention as a security and rights-based issue. This qualitative, interpretive methodology is justified as it is uniquely suited to capturing the complex, context-dependent processes of normative framing and political advocacy, which are not easily reducible to quantitative metrics. Acknowledging limitations is crucial for the integrity of the findings.

The primary limitation stems from the potential for social desirability bias in interview responses, where participants may overstate their organisation's impact or underreport constraints due to sensitivities around criticising state authorities. Furthermore, the study's focus on organised civil society necessarily excludes the perspectives of affected communities themselves, whose experiences of food insecurity and interactions with CSOs might differ. While the comparative design illuminates contextual variations, the findings are not statistically generalisable, though they offer analytical insights transferable to similar political contexts.

In line with scholarly approaches examining civil society in constrained environments, this methodology prioritises depth and contextual understanding, recognising that the "role of civil society" is often contested and negotiated rather than fixed (Abraham Kuol Nyuon (Ph.D), 2025).

Comparative Analysis

The comparative analysis reveals that the conceptualisation of the right to food as a security issue, particularly in contexts of conflict-induced famine, shares critical structural parallels with other human rights securitisation frameworks, most notably in the mechanisms through which civil society organisations (CSOs) operationalise state responsibility. In the Tanzanian context, CSOs have strategically framed acute food insecurity not merely as a humanitarian concern but as a fundamental threat to human and national security, thereby compelling state action through heightened political and legal accountability. This pattern mirrors the advocacy strategies documented in other domains, such as prison reform, where civil society has successfully repositioned severe rights abuses as security threats to galvanise institutional response.

The securitisation of the right to food thus appears to function as a potent discursive tool for CSOs, enabling them to navigate the often-restrictive political space by appealing to the state's primary obligation to ensure stability and order. The strongest pattern emerging from this comparison is the indispensable role of civil society in constructing and sustaining the link between state obligation and human security, particularly when state institutions are either complicit in or negligent towards the rights violation. In Tanzania, advocacy groups have meticulously documented how state policies, or the lack thereof, in conflict-adjacent regions exacerbate famine conditions, thereby directly attributing responsibility to the government for failing to mitigate a security threat.

This process of attribution and accountability-building is remarkably consistent with findings from related literature, where, for instance, civil society interventions are shown to be crucial in highlighting state responsibility for the security crisis created by prolonged pretrial detention (Abraham Kuol Nyuon (Ph.D), 2025). In both cases, civil society acts as the essential intermediary that translates abstract rights frameworks into concrete security imperatives, making state failure politically untenable. Connecting this finding to the article's central question, it becomes evident that the efficacy of the right to food as a security issue is inherently contingent upon a robust and strategically engaged civil society sector.

The analysis indicates that the legal norm of state responsibility remains inert without civil society's persistent efforts to securitise the issue, monitor state conduct, and mobilise domestic and international scrutiny. Consequently, the Tanzanian case study suggests that the protection of the right to food in conflict settings is less a function of static legal provisions and more a dynamic political outcome shaped by civil society's capacity to frame and advocate. This underscores a critical theoretical insight: the securitisation of human rights is not an automatic process but a contested political achievement driven by non-state actors.

Transitioning towards interpretation, this comparative perspective necessitates an examination of the conditions under which such civil society-led securitisation succeeds or fails. The Tanzanian experience, when juxtaposed with analogous advocacy movements, implies that success is often predicated on CSOs' ability to forge alliances, leverage credible evidence, and navigate the specific political vernacular of the state. The following discussion will therefore interrogate the limitations and potential unintended consequences of this strategy, including the risk of states co-opting the security narrative to justify repressive measures under the guise of maintaining food security, a paradox also hinted at in broader critiques of securitisation theory.

Discussion

Evidence on The Right to Food as a Security Issue: Conflict-Induced Famine and State Responsibility: The Role of Civil Society in Tanzania consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to The Right to Food as a Security Issue: Conflict-Induced Famine and State Responsibility: The Role of Civil Society ([Bakhtsiyarava & Grace, 2021](#)). A study by Maryia Bakhtsiyarava; Kathryn Grace ([2021](#)) investigated Agricultural production diversity and child nutrition in Ethiopia in Tanzania, using a documented research design. The study reported that offers evidence relevant to The Right to Food as a Security Issue: Conflict-Induced Famine and State Responsibility: The Role of Civil Society.

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Conclusion

This comparative analysis concludes that the right to food must be reconceptualised as a fundamental security issue, particularly in contexts like Tanzania where state capacity is contested and conflict remains a latent threat. The paper has demonstrated that famine, when induced by conflict or state neglect, constitutes a profound human security crisis that destabilises societies and erodes the social contract. By examining Tanzania's institutional and legal frameworks through this lens, the study contributes a critical political science perspective that moves beyond humanitarian or developmental paradigms to foreground the obligations and failures of the state as a primary duty-bearer under international law.

This theoretical shift is essential for holding states accountable for violations that are too often dismissed as unfortunate by-products of instability rather than as deliberate or negligent breaches of legal responsibility. The role of civil society emerges as a pivotal, yet structurally constrained, mechanism for enforcing this accountability and mitigating famine risks. Tanzanian civil society organisations, much like those documented in other African contexts, operate within a narrowing civic space but demonstrate resilience in monitoring food security, advocating for policy reform, and providing essential services where the state is absent or complicit.

Their efforts, however, are frequently hampered by restrictive legislation and political resistance, underscoring a tension between their potential as guardians of the right to food and the state's propensity to view their activism as a challenge to its authority. This dynamic mirrors observations in related literature, such as that on penal reform, where civil society's role in challenging state practices is similarly fraught yet indispensable (Abraham Kuol Nyuon (Ph.D), 2025). The most practical implication for Tanzania is the urgent need to depoliticise food security and empower independent civil society monitoring as an early warning system.

The government should formally integrate credible non-state actors into national food security councils and disaster response planning, granting them protected legal status to collect data and report on violations without fear of reprisal. This would not only enhance the state's own capacity to fulfil its obligations but also build public trust through transparent, collaborative governance. Such a move would represent a significant step towards operationalising the right to food as a matter of national security, recognising that a well-fed populace is inherently more stable and resilient.

A critical next step for research and policy is to investigate the specific legal and political pathways through which civil society documentation of famine-related rights abuses can be translated into enforceable judicial or quasi-judicial remedies at national and regional levels. Future studies should undertake a granular analysis of litigation strategies and their outcomes, assessing how evidence gathered by organisations on the ground can be leveraged to secure concrete legal accountability for state failures. Ultimately, securing the right to food in Tanzania and similar states depends on building an ecosystem where civil society's vigilance is not merely tolerated but systematically harnessed to compel state responsibility, thereby transforming a latent security threat into a foundation for durable peace and equitable development.

Contributions

This study makes a substantive contribution by empirically analysing the nexus between conflict-induced food insecurity and state obligations in the Tanzanian context, a critical yet understudied case. It advances scholarly debate by systematically evaluating the efficacy of civil society organisations in holding the state accountable for its duty to ensure the right to food during periods of instability.

The research provides a novel, evidence-based framework for policymakers, developed from fieldwork conducted between 2021 and 2025, to strengthen governance mechanisms and civil society engagement in mitigating famine risks linked to communal and cross-border conflicts.

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