Journal of Nutrition and Food Security
Shahid Sadoughi University of Medical Sciences
School of Public Health
Department of Nutrition
Shahid Sadoughi University of Medical Sciences
School of Public Health
eISSN: 2476-7425 pISSN: 2476-7417 JNFS 2026; 11(4): 515-516 Website: jnfs.ssu.ac.ir

Warning of the Dangers of War, Economic Blockade, Food Security and Hygiene in the Spread of Parasitic and Infectious Disease

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ARTICLE INFO

EDITORIAL ARTICLE

Article history:
Received: 5 Sep 2026
Revised: 6 Sep 2026
Accepted: 6 Sep 2026

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We are writing to express our deep concern about the devastating and often overlooked synergy between geopolitical conflicts and disease outbreaks. While the immediate toll of war and economic sanctions is regularly reported, silent killers, parasitic, and infectious diseases thrive in the shadow of instability, and we must sound the alarm before these secondary crises take even more lives. Studies show that in times of conflict, the infrastructure of civilization: clean water, sanitation, and health care, are often the first casualties. War and economic blockades do not just destroy buildings; they dismantle the systems that keep populations healthy (Jafarvand *et al.*, 2022, Marou *et al.*, 2024).

When water treatment plants are bombed, pipelines cut, or chlorine imports restricted by sanctions, civilians are forced to drink contaminated water. This creates fertile ground for waterborne pathogens such as cholera, parasitic intestinal diseases and dysentery. The lack of basic sanitation, resulting from the lack of soap and clean water, allows these infectious diseases to spread like wildfire through displaced populations and crowded shelters. Furthermore, the intersection of food security and parasitism is a crisis of enormous proportions. Economic blockade often leads to severe food shortages and malnutrition. Malnutrition is not simply starvation; it is an immunological catastrophe. A malnourished body lacks the defenses to fight diseases that a healthy person would easily overcome. Moreover, parasitic infections, often transmitted through contaminated food or soil, are much more severe in a malnourished host. A simple intestinal worm that is manageable in a healthy child can lead to severe anemia, stunted growth, and death in a child weakened by famine; this creates a vicious cycle: war creates famine; famine forces people to consume unsafe food and water; weakened immune systems succumb to parasites; and populations infected with disease are unable to work, farm, or

This paper should be cited as: Fattahi Bafghi A, Mozaffari-Khosravi H. ***Warning of the Dangers of War, Economic Blockade, Food Security and Hygiene in the Spread of Parasitic and Infectious Disease.*** *Journal of Nutrition and Food Security (JNFS)*, 2026; 11(4): 515-516.

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[DOI: 10.18502/jnfs.v11i4.23062]

rebuild their communities.

This is not a natural disaster; it is a man-made public health emergency. The international community and policymakers must be called upon to recognize that the public health consequences of war and sieges are not “collateral damage” but a predictable and preventable disaster. There must be immediate and unhindered access to medical supplies, water purification tablets, and food aid, and the reconstruction of health infrastructure must be prioritized as a humanitarian emergency (FAO *et al.*, 2022, Firdous *et al.*, 2025).

We cannot claim to value human rights while ignoring the biological weapons of hunger and disease. There is a moral imperative to break this cycle before preventable diseases become the ultimate executioners of vulnerable populations.

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[DOI: 10.18502/jnfs.v11i4.23062]

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