

**United States - UNHCR 73rd ExCom Plenary Statement
October 10, 2022**

Excellencies. Before I give our national statement, I rise to condemn today's missile and rocket attacks by Russia against multiple civilian targets in Ukraine, which killed at least 5 civilians, injured 12 more, and destroyed civilian infrastructure. In the context of our discussions here, it's important to emphasize that targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure is inconsistent with international humanitarian law.

Now I will turn to the themes of the Executive Committee session. As we face unprecedented levels of global displacement, my government's commitment to supporting and protecting refugees and those forcibly displaced has never been stronger. We must all be more effective, more efficient, and more generous than ever before.

Many of us gathered here were in New York two weeks ago at the UN General Assembly. We saw many reasons for hope that week, including pledges for urgent action to avert hunger and famine at President Biden's Global Food Security Summit. But it was also clear that the humanitarian community is struggling to respond adequately to a long and growing list of protracted and emerging crises.

The U.S. government has responded decisively to these new crises – including Russia’s illegal, unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. At the same time, we have maintained robust humanitarian assistance and diplomatic efforts everywhere else. In the Sahel, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Venezuela, and elsewhere, we are working with UNHCR and other partners to deliver life-saving aid while also advocating for durable solutions. Just this year, the United States provided more than \$17 billion in humanitarian assistance globally, continuing our long tradition of humanitarian leadership. The nearly \$2.2 billion we provided to UNHCR this year was our largest-ever annual contribution – a testament to our enduring and invaluable partnership.

I would like to highlight three U.S. humanitarian policy priorities.

First, we are expanding our refugee resettlement program and encouraging others to do the same. In fiscal year 2022, the United States doubled our 2021 refugee resettlement arrival numbers while also welcoming over 82,000 Afghans forced to flee the Taliban. But the United States can’t meet refugee resettlement needs alone. So, we are exploring new avenues to expand resettlement capacity around the world, like the Resettlement Diplomacy Network we proposed on the margins of the General Assembly, to drive collective action on resettlement.

Second, we are redoubling our commitment to refugee inclusion – lifting up both refugees and the communities hosting them. We are fulfilling the commitment we made at last December’s High-Level Officials meeting to support at least 10 refugee inclusion and self-reliance pledges over the next two years.

Third, we are enhancing protection for particularly vulnerable groups and individuals. These include people facing food insecurity, women, children, members of the LGBTQI+ community, those with disabilities, the stateless, and others whose identity or circumstances give rise to increased protection needs.

Mr. Chairperson, our fidelity with the world in responding to the historic humanitarian need is enduring. Our commitment to those who serve tirelessly in the global response is unshakeable. And our promotion of the solutions that allow people to live in freedom, without fear, and with dignity, is everlasting.

As proof of our dedication to elevating refugee voices, I would like to turn the microphone over briefly to one of our delegates, Basma Alawee. Basma, originally a refugee from Iraq, is now an American citizen. She represents an organization which helps our nation welcome refugees and immigrants to the United States.

Thank you.

Basma Alawee, USDEL Refugee Representative
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My name is Basma Alawee, and I'm here today in my capacity as one of eight Advisors serving on the United States Refugee Advisory Board (USRAB), a new and innovative initiative that harnesses the lived experiences and professional expertise of a diverse group of formerly displaced people, to measurably engage across global policy-making arenas. We believe that engaging and empowering those with lived experience in displacement will lead to better and more effective humanitarian protection programs and solutions.

Being a former refugee from Iraq, it is critically important for me personally, that no other refugee endures the same challenges that my family faced over the course of our displacement journey. I hope my participation today inspires the collective will of this body, to create similar opportunities for meaningful engagement and partnership for refugee leaders across the world. And I look forward to working together with all of you – the global humanitarian community – in the years to come.