

**UNHCR Executive Committee 73rd session
Item 3. General debate**

Statement delivered by H.E. Mr. Péter Szijjártó, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary

Thank you, Madame Chair, dear Commissioner, dear High Representatives and dear colleagues, We are meeting here during a critical period. Given the fact that the European Union and the European continent is being faced with very severe security-related challenges which are more serious than any other security challenge which has taken place since the conclusion of the Second World War. We Hungarians are neighbours to Ukraine. That's why the impacts of the war are absolutely immediate and serious on us. That makes us super interested in creating peace as soon as possible. That's why I would like to take this opportunity to call for an immediate cease-fire and peace talks to be established as soon as possible, and we call on the international community to concentrate on peace instead of escalation in the upcoming period of time. I understand that the situation in and around Ukraine might look differently from thousands or hundreds of kilometres away, and those who are living there might feel less the risks of the war but I have to tell you that from the neighbourhood we understand very clearly that we are already in the 25th hour and if you are not able to turn around the tide we will be faced with unimaginably serious problems in the future.

Dear High Representatives,

Since the war has broken out in Ukraine, Hungary has been carrying out its largest humanitarian operation ever in our history. Already 1.5 million refugees have arrived to Hungary from Ukraine, and for those who stay in our territory, we provide jobs, we provide equal access to education and healthcare and at the beginning of September, more than 4,000 refugee kids from Ukraine have started their studies in 1247 Hungarian schools and kindergartens. Since we made a very clear decision based on which we do not deliver weapons to Ukraine, we offer safe circumstances for the operation of the international humanitarian organisations, ICRC, International Committee of Red Cross has taken to advantage of the situation and established its regional operational centre in Hungary from where they coordinate their efforts to help people in Ukraine. But in the meantime, I have to tell you that Hungary given its geographic location has been under double pressure recently. While for the refugees from Ukraine we are the first safe country, we definitely and unconditionally accept them in Hungary and we help them all according to their needs. But in the meantime, our southern border is under siege by the illegal migrants, the number of whom is now almost at the level where it used to be back in 2015, at the peak of the European crisis of migration. This year, only this year up to this morning we had to stop more than 200,000 illegal migrants at our southern border. I have to report to you that there is a totally new dimension when it comes to aggression. Migrants are holding weapons and they do attack and they do shoot on each other, and they do attack and do shoot on our border guards. And I would like to remind all of us, all of ourselves to international law which says very clearly that if one is forced to

leave his or her home, then he or she is entitled to stay temporarily on the territory of the first safe country. And those migrants who arrive to the southern border cross at least five or six safe countries. International law speaks clearly that no one has the right to violate the border between two safe countries. So, this is not a humanitarian issue. This is a legal one. Violating a border is a crime. We have to speak openly about that. Violating a border between peaceful and safe countries is a crime, and shooting at border guards is a crime as well. Our commitment, dear colleagues, Hungary's commitment is crystal clear in this regard. We allow everybody from Ukraine to enter the territory of Hungary and we help all of them, but in meantime we protect our security and the security of Europe by keeping out all aggressive violent illegal migrants.

I have to tell you that if this war continues and further escalates, the number of both refugees and migrants will increase very rapidly, and the number of migrants will increase for a lot of reasons among them, the crisis of the global food supply. So in conclusion, Madame Chair, I would like to reiterate that in case this war in Ukraine is going to be continued and escalated, that will lead to severe global security challenges which I guess none of us would like to experience. So we from Hungary strongly urge all members of the international community to refrain from measures which would escalate further the war, and to concentrate on making peace in Ukraine. Thank you for your kind attention.