

## **Embargoed 2022 Global Trends Report press briefing**

### **Palais des Nations, Geneva**

#### **UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi**

Look, I know that this is about last year and all that, but I think I'll give you an update about what's happening now. It's more interesting for you, most likely. First of all, yes. As you will expect, or maybe you already know, last year, I think we announced a figure of 103 million people displaced and refugees. We have reached now 110 million. So the figure has gone up again. I don't know how many years. Tarek knows these statistics better than me, but I think it's been seven, eight years or even more, in which every year this figure has been rising for all the reasons that you know. Of the 110 million – which is a little bit more of an estimate because it includes also in particular the large displacement of Sudanese people since the 15th of April – of this figure, roughly one third-two thirds is the proportion between refugees and those that are still refugees but in their own countries, so internally displaced people. So, 35 million refugees and about 60 to 63 million displaced people.

The drivers of this further – unfortunately further – increase have been the ones you can expect. But in particular, of course, last year was the situation in Ukraine that displaced millions both inside and outside the country, and this year has been the situation in Sudan. The latest, latest figures of Sudanese refugees – sorry, I should say of people that have left Sudan – mostly Sudanese nationals, but also some refugees in Sudan from other countries that go back to their country because they lose support in Sudan, South Sudanese, for example, and a few third country nationals. That figure is in excess of 450,000. I'm pretty sure that it will reach, unfortunately, half a million in the space of a couple of days maximum if the trends continue, which unfortunately they do. And of course, you have almost – not yet, about 1.4 million – but almost one and a half million people newly displaced inside Sudan. Now, it's much more difficult to estimate the figure inside because access is patchy. So you have almost 2 million people now, new people that are adding themselves. That's why I think the official figure for 2022 is about 108 million. Then if you add the Sudanese and, you know, give or take a few others, you reach 110 million. But I would say this is where we stand today.

We have 110 million people that have fled because of conflict, persecution, discrimination, violence, often mixed with other motives, in particular the impact of climate change. So, you have quite a package – the usual, I would say package – of causes that have caused the further increase. You may recall just a couple of years ago, or maybe last year, when we announced that for the first time we had gone over 100 million displaced people. Well, already 10 per cent more have been added to this figure. It's quite an indictment on the state of our world, if I may say, to have to report that.

Some of the trends continue. The majority of the people that flee flee not to rich countries, but to countries that are either poor or middle income – low or middle income – countries, about 76 per cent. And you know, I highlight this – I've highlighted this – I think every time in the past few years. But I think it's quite important to recall that, to remind ourselves, because I think the prevailing rhetoric is still that all the refugees go to the rich countries. This is actually wrong. It's quite the opposite. 70 per cent of the refugees, meaning of those 35 million, actually flee to the country next to their country. Most of them actually want to go back home. So there is a lot in these figures that seem a bit dry that tell a story that is so different from what we constantly hear, especially from some politicians.

And of course, few people have returned. Only about 350,000 are reported in this current report; refugees. Although a larger number of people, about 5 million, have returned among the internally displaced, which is interesting, it means that there is scope there for solutions. You know, there is now an office here in the Palais that deals with solutions for internally displaced people. So I hope they'll take note, I'm sure they'll take note, of this figure because it means that there is a space there maybe to work on some solutions.

I'll go back to that in a moment. I want to make four reflections. The first one is that I hope everybody realizes that we live in a world, the world which I have partly described in my initial opening remarks, in which we are constantly confronted with emergencies. If you look at the trend, you know, we have a mechanism in UNHCR and in the U.N. to classify situations as emergencies in different ways. I looked at trends in the past. We used to do this 8 to 10 times a year. Last year we did it 35 times. 35 times we had to declare that the certain situation was either an emergency or a renewed emergency in a situation where maybe things have quietened down and picked up again in a crisis form. Yet of these emergencies, very few make your headlines. Very few make your headlines. And Sudan, I think, is a very good case in point. I told you the figures. This is a very major emergency. Now, of course, not everything is as big as Ukraine, even in terms of impacted people, sure. But to have almost 2 million people on the move in the space of less than two months since 15 April, just because you have two military leaders fighting for supremacy basically, is quite a dramatic situation. And yet – and this is not a criticism of you, I know you're here in Geneva, you do your best – but frankly, this was a headline everywhere until there were Western citizens to be evacuated. Once that was done, it disappeared, almost disappeared. So please help us. Talk about this emergency situation, because the fact that it has such little visibility makes it much harder for us to mobilize resources.

The Sudan crisis has generated two funding appeals by the U.N., one for inside Sudan, 16 per cent funded 2 months into the crisis, and one for the refugee hosting countries which UNHCR coordinates, 13 per cent funded. I remind you that four weeks into the Ukraine emergency, all our appeals were 25 per cent funded already four weeks. We're now at almost eight weeks, I think. So, sorry, but there is a discrepancy here that needs to be addressed. There is an injustice that needs to be addressed. And, of course, you know, more visibility for this crisis ensures also that we can argue more convincingly, from a stronger point of view, about protection for all the people who flee. So that is also important, this is my first point.

My second point is that all of this increased displacement – that is often the result of brutal violence like in Sudan, and complete disregard for international humanitarian law like in Ukraine, for example – all of this is met increasingly with a more hostile environment, especially when it comes to refugees. I would say actually, almost everywhere in almost every country. Everywhere, I hear increasingly – and let me be very clear, I appreciate this argument. It has some truth, but it cannot always prevail -the considerations made by governments are security based. It's: "We have to think about our security, we have a duty to our people, these big flows threaten that." True, it's true, it's also true sometimes, but it cannot be the only consideration. Or we hear, you know: "Our public opinion is tired. We cannot take more people." Well, you know, leadership is about convincing your public opinion that there are people that deserve international protection and therefore everything needs to be done. But these are difficult discussions. In the past, they've never been easy. Let me be clear. But I think that the challenges increase. So, we see pushbacks. We see tougher and tougher immigration or refugee admission rules. We see in many countries a criminalization of immigrants and refugees, blaming them for everything that has happened and so forth. I do hope that the Global Refugee Forum, which we are going to

convene at the end of the ... year, will be a place where we can talk frankly about some of those issues. I can speak more about the forum if you wish.

The third point I wanted to make – I somehow already made it but let me highlight it – is that solutions to these movements are increasingly difficult to even imagine or even put on the table ... because of all the things you know, we are in a very polarized world where international tensions play out all the way into humanitarian issues. And this is really very, very worrying. But my message here is a little bit more positive: they're not absent. We are not in a world where solutions do not happen. You remember, I think I told you ad nauseum til you were fed up of me saying this, that last year I observed World Refugee Day in Abidjan, in Cote d'Ivoire, because really I think the Ivorians have done a good job to get people back and to solve this problem. Well, I'm pleased to tell you, maybe you know already, but next week I'll be observing World Refugee Day in Kenya. And why will I do that? Because President Ruto has actually told me and told us and told everybody that he wants to look differently at the situation of the half million refugees that they host in their country. And he wants to look at solutions, including – if they have to stay there – how can they ... be integrated in the communities hosting them? [There's a long] way to go, it's a long march towards that, and there will be a lot of need for international resources. But I thought that if the president, if the leader of an important country like Kenya, where the refugee issue has always been very controversial, as you know, makes these statements, it's very important to recognize and support that. So not all is lost. You may be skeptical or less skeptical, but, you know, the fact that the European Union has agreed to some further steps towards a pact on asylum and migration last week is not something to be ignored. We are not yet there. Even the process is not finished. That was only a milestone in the process. But I think it's a positive sign, hopefully. Then you have other signs. Resettlement – you know what is resettlement: moving refugees from one country to a third country, especially people that have specific protection needs – went down dramatically during the Trump administration years because the US almost zeroed out their programme. Now, President Biden, fortunately, decided to beef it up again. They're doing that. So last year ... 114,000 people resettled. It's still a drop in the ocean, let's face it, if you have 35 million refugees, but it's double the figure of the year before. So there is a little ray of hope there. And of course, I also look at other things: the way Ukrainians were received is positive. You know, I will never criticize that, although the fact that they see it contrast with the refugees that have not been received in the same way is not the criticism to the positive reception to the Ukrainians that is very much needed as we see every day. And among those, a very important signal. Remember, we received last year – mostly for Ukraine, but also other situation – more than \$1 billion in private contributions. This we never got before. And this is about a sixth – more, almost 15 per cent, maybe more – of our contributions last year from private sources. That is the translation of a sense of solidarity, which by the way was not only in Europe, was in many, many countries of the world. So I think these are positive [signs]. And again, I hope that the Global Refugee Forum will be a place where we can take stock of this positives and build on them to try to counter the negatives that are all over the place.

My final point – and I, without shame, take advantage of having all of you to say that – we are not in a good financial situation this year. So, my final message is not very good. It's very, very early to tell you. You know, ... we come from a sequence of years in which we were never fully funded. The average was between 50 and 60 per cent of the budget that was presented to our member states. But we were steady in that percentage, which allowed us to programme reasonably well what we could or could not do. We had to prioritize a lot, but we could do quite a lot of work with our partners. This year – it's very early because we are only in June – but we are at 32 per cent of our funding. But we

struggle. We struggle more than in previous years. You all know that aid budgets are under pressure everywhere. It's a combination of the war in Ukraine, post-COVID, economic pressures, inflation. And many times, even the fact that we need to work in such volatile situations like Afghanistan or Burkina Faso or ... Yemen, that this is not very encouraging to donors. They are very worried about where the funds [go], how the funds [are spent]. We keep telling them, you know, you have to take some risks if you want to do humanitarian work in fragile situations. But this is a difficult fundraising argument. And the result of all these combined factors is a very tight. You have certainly been following the financial challenges of our very close partner, ... our ICRC colleagues. ... But we work so closely with them everywhere and we are very worried about their situation. You know, World Food Programme, you've heard many, many organizations. I think it's quite widespread across the humanitarian spectrum. And it's something that, you know, I think we are managing, we try to manage, but I want to flag that it may be a growing challenge also in the years ahead. And the relatively more positive trend of the next two years needs to be restored because the needs are not waiting for these contributions, they're just going up year in and year out. So these are the reflections I wanted to make linked more or less closely to the figures, the 110 million that is really the headline figure here. And thank you again for listening patiently and for your support.