



Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the
United Nations Office and other international organizations

Statement

By

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**Madam Chair,
High Commissioner,
Excellencies,**

It is my honor to attend the seventy-fourth meeting of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner for Refugees.

At the outset, I feel compelled to express my profound concern regarding the escalated repression and tragic loss of innocent lives in the Gaza Strip, particularly among children, women, and the elderly. The nation, currently witnessing the devastating destruction of its homes due to relentless bombardment, will also witness a tragic displacement for the next years. The recent events in Gaza are deeply connected to the decades-long displacement endured by a nation whose homes have been forcibly occupied by a certain regime.

Madam Chair,



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Our region has been witnessing various crises, most importantly military and irresponsible foreign interventions, which have led the Islamic Republic of Iran to host millions of refugees and foreign displaced persons over the past four decades, without any role in forging these crises. This is while the lack of international aid on the one hand and the massive influx of these refugees on the other hand, has forced the Islamic Republic of Iran to host them in cities rather than in camps, which is an unprecedented record globally.

Evidently, Iran has so far participated far more than its fair share in protecting refugees and seeking a fair share of the international responsibility. In this regard, the access of all refugees and externally displaced nationals, to health and medical services, education, livelihood and other social and public services are part of the extensive services provided by the Islamic Republic of Iran regardless of their residential status; such as the registration of more than 700 thousand students in the current academic year in public schools, free health insurance coverage for 130 thousand vulnerable refugees in 2023, education of more than 52 thousand illiterates through holding literacy courses.

Moreover, free access to basic health services, providing free medical services, especially to foreign nationals with special and incurable diseases, free vaccination against contagious and non-contagious diseases, particularly in severe years of Covid-19 pandemic, holding various technical and vocational courses for professional training, are among other eminent services of my country. In addition, protecting household women and girls, supporting refugee athletes to participate in local and international competitions, granting citizenship to children from marriages with non-Iranian men, providing education for Afghan university students, and generally benefiting all refugees and foreign nationals from direct and indirect subsidies, are all testament to the inclusive humanitarian approach of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

While appreciating collaboration of donors and international organizations, notably UNHCR, it should be underlined that the Islamic Republic of Iran has mostly relied on our own national resources to protect the people in the move.

Distinguished delegates,



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Decades of hosting refugees and migrants have imposed huge economic, social, cultural, and even security costs on my country. Meanwhile, despite the importance of a humanitarian and non-political approach towards refugees, the US-made unilateral coercive measures are actively undermining Iran's hosting capacity. However, Iran has continued to support refugees mainly by spending its own limited domestic resources.

Iranian local infrastructure is not sufficient to accommodate both needs of externally displaced people and local communities and we must spend our limited resources on the domestic priorities. Hence it is very hard to keep on this path and would result in revising our immigration hosting policies. Against this backdrop and considering the inclination of foreign residents in Iran to migrate to European countries, the lack of necessary support in hosting will undoubtedly lead them to move to such countries.

Madam Chair

According to the IOM report 69% of displaced population of Afghanistan flowed into Iran by December 2022. Following the U.S. withdrawal and the internal situation in Afghanistan, the mass influx of Afghan refugees towards Iran, caused severe damages to the Local Host Communities, especially in the border provinces. The extra pressure on the infrastructure of health-treatment, education, employment, energy, water, etc. has negatively impacted on the quality of services to the Local Host Community and brought about dissatisfaction and protests.

Double standards towards refugees and the political considerations of some donor communities are not acceptable and should be seriously avoided. So, the issue of Afghanistan and their vast presence in the neighboring countries are not ignorable.

Based on latest national estimates, almost less than 1% of the current costs of refugees and foreign displaced individuals in Iran are provided by international resources. This is while the cost of hosting refugees, just in a handful of essential areas amounts to 7 billion dollars per year. Therefore, the international contributions to addressing the needs of refugees and other people on the move in Iran must be scaled up commensurate with their population's magnitude.



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Once again, I appreciate the cooperation and support of the High Commissioner for Refugees and Donor Communities.

I thank you for your attention.