



UNHCR 75th Executive Committee

14-18 October 2024

Agenda item 3: High-level segment on statelessness and general debate

Statement by the EU and its Member States

Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The candidate countries Albania, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

1. We thank the High Commissioner for his statement. We share your analysis of forced displacement globally. We express our sincere appreciation for the work of UNHCR staff and its partner humanitarian organisations on the ground. It is crucial that UNHCR remains able to deliver life-saving protection and assistance.
2. It is with great concern that we look at UNHCR's **projected number of 140 million forcibly displaced and stateless persons** in 2025. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the increasingly catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza, Sudan and now Lebanon, and the conflicts and ongoing crises in Myanmar in Syria, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yemen, the Sahel or the Americas have resulted in millions of persons being forced to flee their homes.
3. Parties to conflicts blatantly **violate International Humanitarian Law**, often triggering additional forced displacement. Calling for compliance with International Humanitarian Law

and accountability for its violations, ensuring the protection of civilians and facilitating humanitarian access must be at the heart of our collective action. In the case of the recent events in the Middle East, we urge all actors to exercise restraint, prevent further escalation and engage in international diplomatic efforts and we call on all parties to take all feasible precautions to avoid harm to civilians, humanitarian workers and facilities, in line with their obligations under international humanitarian law. The European Union reiterates its unwavering commitment to lasting and sustainable peace in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council, on the basis of the two-state solution.

4. We welcome UNHCR's commitment to apply a **whole-of-route**, protection-oriented, rights-based and comprehensive **approach**. This is key to address the challenges of mixed movements. We underline the need for UNHCR to work in close partnership with both states and other organisations – not least **jointly with IOM**. The recently adopted EU Pact on Migration and Asylum is based on a 'whole of route' framework and we stand ready to work together on applying this approach.
5. We are concerned about **UNHCR's funding gap** and welcome your efficiency and prioritisation efforts.
6. We appreciate UNHCR's **sustainable programming** approach, promoting inclusion, self-reliance, and resilience for displaced people and host communities. A model centred on host government policies with strong development actor engagement is key for long-term solutions. International financial institutions and development agencies must take a more active role from the outset of displacement crises to support host countries and alleviate the burden of emergency actors like UNHCR. UNHCR plays an essential coordination and catalytic role towards governments, donors and humanitarian and development agencies and is a key actor to facilitate private sector investments in displacement contexts.
7. The new **Global Alliance to End Statelessness** presents an important opportunity to address this pressing issue. Working towards ending statelessness is an objective that we share. Our collaboration on this matter is already well-established, including through the recently adopted joint programme by the European Commission and Your Office High Commissioner, serving as a concrete example of the implementation of EU's Global Refugee Forum pledges. The EU

Pact on Migration and Asylum also includes provisions facilitating the identification of statelessness.

8. We express our unwavering support to providing **protection** to forcibly displaced persons globally and reiterate our commitment to the right to seek and enjoy asylum as well as international refugee law, including the principle of *non-refoulement*. Due to growing challenges we need collective efforts to **strengthen our asylum systems globally**. The new EU Pact on Migration and Asylum contains provisions towards this purpose.
9. We welcome the pledges made at the second **Global Refugee Forum**. We will continue our collective engagement to accompany efforts of host countries and ensure the implementation of our pledges.
10. Since the start of Russia's unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine, the EU and its Member States have provided **temporary protection** to over 4 million people who have fled Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The possibility to provide temporary protection under the temporary protection directive providing access to accommodation or means to obtain housing, education for children, labour market medical assistance, and social welfare assistance – has recently been extended until March 2026.
11. In 2023, the EU received approximately 1.1 million asylum applications, of which a significant amount were granted, highlighting the growing demand on asylum systems across member states.
12. The EU and its Member States endeavour to offer **safe and legal pathways** to protection in line with national competencies and priorities. The newly adopted Union Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Framework Regulation provided for a permanent framework and harmonised procedure. We continue efforts to promote complementary pathways in forums such as the Global Task Force on Refugee Labour Mobility. We call upon other countries to also provide resettlement opportunities.
13. The EU and its Member States condemn any attempts to instrumentalise migrants and asylum seekers for political motives by orchestrating their flow across EU external borders. We are

furthermore concerned that implementation of these attempts can lead to serious human rights violations.

14. We welcome the consensual adoption of this year's **ExCom Conclusions** on durable solutions and complementary pathways under the rapporteur's guidance.
15. Finally, the EU and its Member States appreciate UNHCR's efforts to foster and promote an inclusive response for all persons under UNHCR's mandate. In this regard, the EU and its Member States acknowledge the contribution of the DEI strategic framework prepared and implemented by UNHCR to promote an inclusive workplace for its staff.

Thank you.