

STATEMENT

**By H.E. Mrs Zhanar Aitzhanova,
Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the UN Office and other
international organizations in Geneva,
at the Global Refugee Forum
(17-18 December 2019)**

Dear High Commissioner,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of Kazakhstan's delegation let me to express my warm greetings to all the participants of the first Global Refugee Forum and our gratitude to co-conveners of this important event.

Starting from 2011 with the assistance of the UNHCR and IOM 18 countries have been participating in the Almaty Process on Refugee Protection and International Migration.

With the objective to support regional efforts of the United Nations, the UN regional hub was inaugurated in Almaty this year. 16 agencies and regional offices, including UNHCR, are housed under the same roof in a building provided by the Government of Kazakhstan, in order to streamline their work and promote coordination of technical and humanitarian assistance to Central Asian states.

Mr High Commissioner,

Taking into account that Kazakhstan is a country of both transit and destination, we have been working with the UNHCR on building effective national mechanisms on providing assistance to refugees.

The number of refugees and stateless persons have been constantly decreasing during the last five years.

Kazakhstan places a special emphasis on creating necessary conditions for well-being of refugees by giving them access to education, public health services and providing job opportunities.

In 2014, we launched together with the UNHCR "I belong" campaign aimed to end statelessness by 2024 and "Seeds for solutions" program to identify, register, provide legal assistance and facilitate the acquisition of identity documentation to stateless persons.

By June 2019 Kazakhstan granted citizenship to more than 7,000 stateless persons and assisted 1,400 individuals of undetermined nationality to resolve their status.

In September 2019, Kazakhstan hosted a regional conference “Leaving no one behind at birth”, which resulted in reaffirmed commitments of Central Asian states to address childhood statelessness.

During the UNHCR Executive Committee meeting in October, Kazakhstan pledged to address the problem of registration children at birth, whose mothers do not have identification documents, and providing them with birth certificates. Subsequently, at the end of November, Kazakhstan adopted the law that provides such opportunity for all children.

Mr High Commissioner,

As part of our ongoing cooperation with the UNHCR, the Government of Kazakhstan pledges to issue ICAO standard machine-readable travel documents for refugees residing in our country.

In conclusion let me mention the operation “Zhusan”, which resulted in repatriation of 595 Kazakh nationals from Syria, including 406 children. Recently, thanks to cooperation with Iraqi authorities, 14 children were brought back to Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan’s Government and civil society institutions are working together on rehabilitation and re-integration of returnees. We are ready to share our experience and learn from other countries’ best practices.

Thank you for your attention!
