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Seventy-eighth year

Provisional

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New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Moretti/Mr. Vieira	(Brazil)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania	Mr. Spasse
	China	Mr. Geng Shuang
	Ecuador	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Gabon	Mr. Nanga
	Ghana	Mr. Agyeman
	Japan	Mr. Yamanaka
	Malta	Ms. Gatt
	Mozambique	Mr. Irachande Gouveia
	Russian Federation.	Ms. Zabolotskaya
	Switzerland	Mr. Hauri
	United Arab Emirates	Ms. Shaheen
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America.	Mr. Wood

Agenda

Briefing by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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The meeting was called to order at 12.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Briefing by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Grandi.

Mr. Grandi: Our latest figures speak of 114 million refugees and displaced people around the world. That is surely a tangible, but sometimes neglected, symptom of the world's current extreme disorder. Including this yearly discussion in the Security Council's charged agenda, Mr. President — especially these days — is consistent with Brazil's commendable attention for the plight of the uprooted, for which I thank you.

Forced displacement is also a consequence of the failure to uphold peace and security, and brutal conflict continues to be its main driver. The past three weeks have provided devastating proof that disregarding the basic rules of war — international humanitarian law — is increasingly becoming the norm and not the exception, with innocent civilians killed in unprecedented numbers: in the Hamas attacks on Israeli civilians and in the killing of Palestinian civilians and the massive destruction of infrastructure caused by the ongoing Israeli military operation. As we speak, and as members know, over 2 million Gazans, half of them children, are going through what my colleague Philippe Lazzarini has called “hell on Earth”. A humanitarian ceasefire — coupled, of course, with a substantial delivery of humanitarian aid inside Gaza — can at least stop this spiral of death. I hope that the Council will overcome its divisions and exercise its authority in demanding one. The world is waiting for it to do so.

But one must hope that a ceasefire becomes the first step towards again embarking upon — finally — the path towards a solution. Over many years, including those during which I headed the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), I have observed how solving the Israeli-

Palestinian conflict was always described as “elusive”. But it has not been elusive; it has been repeatedly and deliberately neglected, cast aside as something no longer necessary, almost ridiculed.

Dealing with the chronic resurgence in violence, followed by temporary ceasefires, was deemed more expedient than focusing on a real peace, one able to provide Israelis and Palestinians with the rights, recognition, security and statehood that they deserve. I hope that now, amidst the horrors of war, we can at least see how grave a miscalculation that has been. There will be no peace in the region, or in the world, without a just solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including the end of the Israeli occupation. I hope that the remarks of the Secretary-General here in the Council last week (see S/PV.9451) will help everybody reflect on the need to turn this sombre page, as difficult as it may be, because it is vital.

The opposite is deeply troubling. While UNHCR does not have a mandate to operate in the occupied Palestinian territory — and let me especially pay tribute here to UNRWA and other humanitarian staff for their heroic work and to express my deepest condolences for the now 67 colleagues who have been killed — it is clear that this latest and deadliest round of violent conflict risks infecting the wider region and beyond with catastrophic consequences, including in places where UNHCR is very much present and working to help protect and assist the displaced and solve their plight.

The conflict in Gaza is the latest, and perhaps largest, piece of a most dangerous jigsaw of war that is rapidly closing in around us. But we have — the Council has — the responsibility to remember that it is not the only one.

Look at the Sudan. Just six months ago, Governments and media were very focused on that situation as their citizens were being extracted from a war that had erupted without warning and turned previously peaceful Sudanese homes into cemeteries. Now fighting is growing in scope and brutality, affecting the people of the Sudan, and the world is scandalously silent, although violations of international humanitarian law persist with impunity. It is shameful that the atrocities committed 20 years ago in Darfur can be happening again today with such little attention. As a result, almost 6 million people have been forced from their homes; more than 1 million have fled to neighbouring and often fragile countries, and some of

them have already moved on to Libya and Tunisia and are crossing the Mediterranean on flimsy boats towards Italy and the rest of Europe. I welcome the resumption of the Jeddah talks and hope that they will at least help reach a ceasefire soon.

Look at Lebanon — reeling from economic collapse, in a country where one in four people is a Palestinian or Syrian refugee — a concrete symptom of not one but two unresolved conflicts at that tiny country's borders.

Look at the Central Sahel, where among grave political instability the brutal violence that has terrorized civilians for years is rising again, increasingly driving people to Africa's coastal states, which are rightly very concerned, against the background of a climate emergency that is relentlessly wreaking havoc across the poorest countries.

Look at the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where one of the worst effects of modern conflict — horrifying violence against women — is so widespread as a tool of war as to make the world almost numb to the reports received every day of more women and children raped, exploited, killed — violence that drives people from their homes every day.

Look at Armenia, where 100,000 refugees fled Karabakh in a matter of days, the result of yet another unresolved conflict that had been allowed to simmer for decades.

Look at places such Central America and elsewhere, where we observe growing patterns of unresolved crises compounded by criminality, including by gangs that cause displacement, and where increasingly complex population flows now also include many arriving from Africa and beyond — testament to the global nature of displacement and despair.

Each new crisis seems to push the previous ones into dangerous oblivion. But they stay with us. Look at Ukraine, where the plight of all civilians, including more than 11 million people forced from their homes following the Russian invasion, continues and is particularly acute now as winter sets in again, as members just heard (see S/PV.9464). Their suffering must not be forgotten, and that conflict too must be resolved with a just peace for the people of Ukraine.

Look at all those crises, Mr. President. And let this life-long humanitarian worker tell the Council that we need its voice to address each one of them. Not "their" voices, "its" voice — a strong, united voice carrying

the authority that the Charter vests in the Council, but which the world does not hear any more, drowned as it is in rivalries and divisions. From where I sit, this has become difficult to understand. As a believer in multilateralism and in the role of the United Nations, I simply cannot accept it.

Humanitarians are being asked to pick up the pieces and help more people in more places. We are asked to keep going for longer and to try to hold more things together, while little political capital is spent on making peace. Please rest assured that we will not give up, even when it is difficult. Recognizing the extraordinary burden represented by millions of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries, for example, we continue to work with the Government of Syria in bridging the still wide gap of trust and creating conditions for refugees to eventually return voluntarily, in safety and with dignity.

That is why it is frustrating when we find windows for solutions, like for example in Burundi, and we do not have the funds to help people return home and restart their lives. And there are different challenges as well — also a reflection of our unstable world — for example, in countries such as Myanmar, Afghanistan and elsewhere, where the combination of conflict, human rights violations and humanitarian challenges means that delivering aid — indispensable to save lives — requires interaction with de facto authorities in fraught and often dangerous political contexts.

I appreciate the risks, and also the work done by the Council on humanitarian carveouts, which I hope will continue. Because in these situations we need flexibility — from those in control of the territory first and foremost, but also from our supporters. The reality is that humanitarians are trying to pick up the pieces of the jigsaw in those places as well — places where most Governments find it too difficult to operate. We are engaging, and therefore we are exposed. But we persist because the people cannot wait for a peace that is not pursued.

And on top of this, we are being asked to do more with less. Forgive me if I talk money, but I must because humanitarian work needs resources. UNHCR alone urgently needs \$600 million before the end of the year, and prospects for next year are dismal, with big donors cutting aid, and others who could help not engaging in multilateral support. UNRWA, whose crucial role is now clear to all, has been left chronically underfunded. The World Food Programme, UNICEF and the International

Committee of the Red Cross all face the same financial crunch in their humanitarian activities. We therefore prioritize and reprioritize. We cut rations, shelter and staff, hoping to maintain a lifeline to those in need. But in many places that lifeline is becoming thinner by the day. Being alone, being exposed, being short of resources make me wonder how much longer we can continue. Humanitarians are tough, but humanitarians are near a breaking point. And what will the Council be left with when they have to go?

The gravity of this moment cannot be overstated. The choices that the 15 members of the Council make, or fail to make, will mark us all — and for generations to come. Will the Council continue to allow this jigsaw of war to be completed by aggressive acts, by its disunity, or by sheer neglect? Or will the Council take the courageous and necessary steps back from the abyss?

The President: I thank Mr. Grandi for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Ms. Gatt (Malta): I begin by expressing our appreciation to Mr. Grandi and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and its dedicated partners, who are operating in increasingly challenging global conditions.

The briefing by the High Commissioner serves as a stark reminder of the monumental challenges facing our world today. The Security Council bears the responsibility to act, to rise to the occasion and to make a difference. The crisis in Gaza stands as a test of our humanity. It is the collective responsibility of the Council to uphold international humanitarian law and ensure the delivery of vital humanitarian aid into Gaza. Civilians must be safeguarded against forcible displacement and have their protection and basic needs met. We echo the call of the Secretary-General and of hundreds of humanitarian organizations around the world in calling for a ceasefire between the parties to ensure that humanitarian aid can reach all those in need.

All States and other relevant parties must do their utmost to protect and assist forcibly displaced persons and comply with international law, including refugee law, human rights law and humanitarian law.

Of particular concern are the 42 million displaced children, many of whom are alone and at risk of recruitment into armed groups. Displaced women

remain disproportionately exposed to sexual and gender-based violence. We welcome UNHCR's efforts to increase access to quality services for survivors and to engage displaced women and women-led organizations in preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence.

Displaced persons with disabilities and older persons are more likely to be sidelined in every aspect of humanitarian assistance. LGBTIQ+ and gender diverse refugees continue to experience multiple and intersecting forms of violence, discrimination and abuse, both in their countries of origin and in locations where they seek asylum. We are, however, encouraged by UNHCR's age, gender and diversity approach to its programmes.

Furthermore, humanitarian access is indispensable for addressing the needs of millions of displaced persons. The Security Council has a responsibility to act and to remove barriers preventing the provision of urgent, unhindered, life-saving and life-sustaining aid.

The intensification of migratory pressures in the central Mediterranean, which persists as a primary and perilous migratory route to Europe, requires immediate attention. Front-line countries, including Malta, require support and durable solutions that safeguard the dignity, safety and human rights of all. We reiterate our commitment to continue to fulfil our responsibilities and coordinate rescue activities in a manner that fully respects international law, including the law of the sea. Our consistent position recognizes the importance of establishing effective partnerships based on the principles of solidarity and shared responsibility, which are crucial to manage refugee flows.

The refugee crisis that Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has triggered, causing suffering beyond Europe, has set off a global food insecurity crisis that has had particularly acute impact on displaced persons, many of whom live in countries with acute food insecurity.

The link between climate and displacement is undeniable. Malta remains convinced that the nexus between climate change, peace and security warrants the Council's attention. Addressing the root causes is also crucial, and it entails promoting good governance and inclusive and sustainable development and building resilience against food insecurity and poverty.

Mr. Agyeman (Ghana): At the outset, I would like to thank the High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi, for his important briefing, which provided a global picture of the refugee situation.

Despite the commendable efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in tackling the challenges facing displaced persons and refugees globally, the situation is not getting any better due to the escalation of conflicts and the combined effects of man-made and natural disasters, as well as climate change, in some parts of the world. From the crises in Ukraine to the Sudan, Syria, Yemen, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar and Afghanistan, as well as the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we see a worsening of the situation. In the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, more than 20.5 million people have been displaced as of 2023. The staggering figure of over 114 million people being displaced or living as refugees as of the end of September underscores the urgent need to increase and untie funding to effectively address the growing needs of affected populations.

Against that backdrop, Ghana would like to make some additional points to support the global efforts to address the global refugee crisis.

First, we need to remain resolved in our commitment to the mechanisms in place at the multilateral level to tackle the refugee situation, including implementing the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, if we are to succeed. Equally important, Member States must adhere to their obligations under the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact on Migrants, since they offer guidance on how to effectively support refugees and in a manner that will benefit the host communities.

Secondly, we encourage the deepening of cooperation between multilateral frameworks and regional mechanisms. Such cooperation can complement global efforts and facilitate the provision of prompt and sustainable responses to the refugee situation. In that regard, we urge greater attention to the enhancement of regional early-warning mechanisms such as the Economic Community of West African States and African Union early-warning systems to help ensure early action and avert the deterioration of such situations. We also encourage investments in data collection and analysis as well as the deployment of modern technology in tackling the issue.

Thirdly, we underscore the importance of mobilizing support in addressing the governance and development deficits that lie at the root of many of the conflicts and political instability that we are experiencing. A multi-stakeholder approach involving women and youth, as well as the active participation of civil society organizations, is useful in building resilience in a manner that helps to break the cycles of instability and reverse the drivers of fragility.

Fourthly, we should pay greater attention to aggravating factors of instability such as climate change, since available data suggests that around 70 per cent of refugees and 80 per cent of people internally displaced by conflict come from countries that are also highly climate-vulnerable. We encourage a stronger commitment by the international community in prioritizing interventions to build climate resilience in affected countries.

Lastly, we reiterate our call on Member States and donors to consider increasing funding support to help the Office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees address the increasing humanitarian needs arising from displacements globally. The release of only 32 per cent of the global sum of \$10.8 billion for 2023 remains inadequate and should be addressed in the light of the growing needs.

The upcoming Global Refugee Forum in December 2023 provides all of us with an opportunity to build on the significant progress made by our respective Governments and other stakeholders towards the implementation of pledges and initiatives announced since 2019. The situation at hand is no mean task and requires the international community, including the Council, to spare no effort in assisting affected countries and regions in addressing the situation.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate Ghana's long-standing commitment to addressing the needs of displaced persons and refugees from all over the world since the 1960s and our resolve as a State party to the United Nations 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees to continue to welcome and provide protection for persons fleeing persecution and generalized violence. We urge all other Member States to also adhere to their obligations under these instruments.

Mr. Hauri (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I thank the High Commissioner for his briefing and the tireless efforts of his agency on the ground.

We have heard him say that 114 million people are currently displaced — a sad record. The reality of these men, women and children who have had to flee war, violence, conflicts, natural disasters or persecution should not leave us indifferent. There is not a single continent in the world that is not directly or indirectly affected. As the High Commissioner just highlighted, the humanitarian needs of displaced people are multiplying, but financial resources are not following suit. I would like to express our gratitude to humanitarian workers, who, despite the challenges, continue to assist the most vulnerable people. We call on all parties to guarantee rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access, in accordance with international humanitarian law.

Let us be clear: humanitarian aid must go hand in hand with conflict resolution and, above all, with prevention efforts. The aim is to break the vicious circle of conflict and displacement and initiate a virtuous circle by applying the principle of responsibility and prevention, by combating impunity and by punishing — in a targeted manner — the perpetrators of the acts and violations of fundamental rights that are at the root of forced displacement. Better prevention requires, for example, that the Council and the peacekeeping missions take more action on the link between climate change, peace and security. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan is a good example of how the Council can empower its missions to better respond to climate risks and thus help to prevent displacement.

In addition to prevention and humanitarian aid, it is vital to ensure the protection of displaced persons. Let us not forget that 40 per cent of them are children. Displacement makes them particularly vulnerable to serious violations of their rights, such as abduction, sexual exploitation and recruitment by terrorist groups. At the international level, we have clear legal frameworks to protect displaced people. At the local level, protection managed by host communities is necessary, as is sustainable socioeconomic integration.

Another issue closely related to conflict and displacement is that of missing persons. To improve the prevention and resolution of cases of separation and disappearance, Switzerland, in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross, has set up the Global Alliance for the Missing. The Council paved the way by adopting resolution 2474 (2019) on missing persons in armed conflicts. It is up to Member States to implement that resolution through concrete actions.

Displaced persons need protection and a voice in the decisions that affect them. Switzerland therefore welcomes the significant participation of refugees in the Global Refugee Forum, which will be held in Geneva in December and which Switzerland will co-host with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. It is equally crucial that we tackle the root causes of forced displacement — conflict and insecurity, including food insecurity — which are often aggravated by the adverse effects of climate change. The Council must seek the necessary unity to act in the many conflicts and crises that require its attention. Switzerland will continue to work towards that end.

Ms. Zabolotskaya (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are pleased to welcome United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi to this meeting. We listened to his briefing with interest.

Assistance to refugees is an important area of international cooperation aimed at the maintenance of international peace, security and stability. The High Commissioner and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) contribute significantly to the achievement of those aims. Russia is committed to its obligations with regard to refugees and is taking measures to assist persons seeking protection. We view the Global Compact on Refugees as a key instrument for consolidating the efforts of the international community to protect the rights and improve the situation of refugees. We will work constructively at the upcoming second Global Refugee Forum, to be held in Geneva in December. We attach great importance to developing cooperation with UNHCR, the work of which is particularly valuable in situations of major humanitarian crises.

We should like to express our special thanks to High Commissioner Grandi for drawing attention to the humanitarian crisis that is unfolding as a result of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. As a practical contribution, among others, Russia advocates increasing the share of the regular budget going to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and we call on all States to support that initiative. While talking about money, we would also like to mention that Russia has always contributed to UNHCR and is ready to do so now as well. However, our ability to do so is limited by unilateral restrictions, which we call to be lifted so as to allow us to transfer money for this purpose.

The expanding geography of conflicts, poverty and economic inequalities continue to trigger an exodus of populations from their countries of origin. We would like to highlight that one cause of these negative phenomena is interference in the internal affairs of States dictated by neocolonial thinking. We attach great importance to continuing work to facilitate the voluntary return of Syrian refugees. According to UNHCR, more than 50,000 Syrians returned to their country in 2022, which is almost 15,000 more than in the previous year. It is important to note that this number is steadily growing. We believe that assistance in creating conditions that are conducive to the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their places of permanent residence is an important step towards achieving long-term stabilization in Syria. We call on UNHCR to support the implementation of the initiative for the voluntary return of Syrian refugees to their homeland.

We note the efforts of UNHCR to resolve the problems of Ukrainian internally displaced persons and refugees. We recall that back in 2014, after the unconstitutional coup d'état in Kyiv and the ascent to power of ultra-radical nationalists who unleashed a civil war against the people of Donbas, hundreds of thousands of Russian and Russian-speaking residents of Ukraine fled to Russia. The mass exodus from Ukraine to Russia has continued in recent years due to the unceasing shelling of peaceful towns in Donbas by Ukrainian armed forces. Since February 2022, more than 5 million people have left the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics and the Kherson and Zaporizhzhya oblasts and moved to various regions of Russia. The Russian Federation is making every effort to receive and accommodate these persons and provide them with comprehensive assistance, including employment, enrolment in pre-school and school for children, social payments and benefits. Persons arriving from those regions are provided with free medical care and medicines. They are entitled to simplified legal status procedures. UNHCR staff in Moscow can see for themselves the effectiveness of our work and the decent living conditions we offer to refugees.

We would like to draw attention to the tragic situation of refugees from Africa who are forced to flee their homelands, which have been engulfed by conflict or destroyed by the irresponsible interference of Western States. For many who attempt to make it to Europe every year, the Mediterranean Sea has become

a mass grave. From time to time, we witness terrible tragedies when the vessels of European Union (EU) coastal States choose not to extend a helping hand to people in distress, but instead deliberately push them out of their area of jurisdiction, condemning people to death. Some EU countries even forbid humanitarian and non-governmental organizations that have ships at their disposal from going to their aid, and those who try to save lives face criminal prosecution for complicity in trafficking in persons. The EU does everything it can to protect the blooming garden, as Mr. Borrell Fontelles put it, from visitors from the jungle.

We have repeatedly raised this issue both from the standpoint of compliance with international law and from that of basic humanity. People are dying, and no one is being held accountable for it. Involved in this are EU countries who very often talk here about responsibility and the inadmissibility of impunity. It is clear to all that the situation will not change unless there are safe ports of landing for refugees rescued and intercepted at sea, in accordance with international law of the sea. We ask the High Commissioner to keep the Mediterranean region in the spotlight and to exert influence on the European Union in order to compel it to comply with its international obligations.

Mr. Yamanaka (Japan): I would like to start by thanking the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for his insightful briefing.

The dedication of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), especially when working in challenging environments, such as Afghanistan and Myanmar, is truly commendable. As a major contributor to UNHCR, Japan pledges our steadfast support to ensure that UNHCR's endeavours continue strong. Our top political leadership also conveyed Japan's strong resolve during the High Commissioner's recent visit to Japan a few weeks ago.

The High Commissioner's remarks are a vivid alert that the increase in global conflict zones leads to displacement and a growing disregard for international humanitarian law. Japan once again unequivocally condemns Hamas's brutal terror attack on Israel and its taking of hostages. The hostages must be released immediately without any conditions. The international community should never tolerate such heinous acts. At the same time, the humanitarian situation in Gaza is catastrophic. The Palestinian people are in desperate need of food, water, fuel and medicine. We need to

scale up our assistance to meet these urgent needs. It is important for us to redouble our diplomatic efforts so that the situation calms down and does not spill over across the region.

With the number of displaced persons soaring past 110 million, the international community must rally together. Immediate relief aid, although essential, is just a part of the solution. We must think long-term, focusing on sustainable development initiatives that not only address immediate needs but also lay the foundation for lasting stability. Moreover, those development strategies should be in sync with peacebuilding efforts. That dual approach will ensure that we address not just the symptoms but also the root causes of displacement, while crafting durable solutions in the process.

By integrating humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts, we can pave the way for a future where refugees and host communities alike can experience enhanced human security and increased self-sufficiency. In that vein, Japan has initiated a stakeholder pledge, emphasizing the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in anticipation of the second Global Refugee Forum, to be held in December. We are eager and ready to join hands with all stakeholders willing to be a part of this journey.

The second Global Refugee Forum should also be a catalyst for fostering whole-of-society engagement. In that regard, it is imperative to embrace a comprehensive and inclusive approach to refugee situations. One way to do so is to amplify synergies between the public and private sectors. Fast Retailing, the parent company of UNIQLO, has a 12-year partnership with UNHCR. Under that initiative, Fast Retailing has been providing a sewing skills training programme in Bangladesh. That public-private partnership initiative exemplifies the positive impact such cooperation can have on refugees. Japan calls on Member States to explore and forge similar partnerships that are meaningful for refugees.

The late Sadako Ogata once said that,

“refugee problems may often seem intractable, but they are not insoluble. In our experience there are two basic prerequisites for a solution: the political will of leaders to tackle the causes and to settle for peace, and the international determination to push for peace and then to consolidate it”.

Let us demonstrate this political will and gather this international determination. The plight of refugees

must be alleviated, and the Security Council ought to lead by example.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Grandi for his briefing today and for his outstanding work at the helm of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

We are living in dark days. Following the attack on 7 October, we have been witnessing a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, where aid is only trickling in. The effects are already being felt, particularly in Lebanon, which is already hosting hundreds of thousands of refugees, against a backdrop of political and economic crisis. We need to help that country, and Jordan as well.

The year 2023 was already marked by a grim record, with almost 110 million people forcibly displaced worldwide. Faced with the proliferation of conflicts, rising food insecurity and the consequences of climate change, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees helps the most vulnerable populations. Its mandate remains vital, and I salute the courage and dedication of all its staff. It has to deal with new crises, such as that of the Sudan, where nearly 6 million people have fled their homes. More than 1 million have taken refuge in neighbouring countries, including Chad, South Sudan and Egypt.

On 19 September, Azerbaijan’s operation in Nagorno-Karabakh led to the displacement of more than 100,000 people — the entire population of Nagorno-Karabakh — in just a few days. Since Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine began, Europe has witnessed the largest displacement of people since the Second World War, with 8 million refugees and at least 7.7 million internally displaced persons. France is hosting over 115,000 Ukrainian refugees and providing schooling for 20,000 children. It will continue to provide support. Access to displaced persons in Russian-controlled areas and to Ukrainian populations in Russia is a key issue.

France will continue to mobilize in response to emergencies. It significantly increased its contribution to UNHCR in 2022 and will continue to do so in 2023. It also assumes its share of responsibility by welcoming and resettling refugees in its territory. Providing assistance to people forced into exile is a duty. We must also help countries that are on the front lines of large-scale displacement.

France is proud to co-convene the second Global Refugee Forum in December. It will never compromise on the fundamental principles related to the right of return of refugees. In Syria, for example, the conditions for return have not been met. It is essential that UNHCR be able to ensure effective monitoring of the return of Syrian refugees.

In conclusion — and perhaps most importantly — it is up to the Council to create the conditions for the durable settlement of crises in order to address the root causes of human displacement.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I thank High Commissioner Grandi for all he does alongside his team and partners on behalf of refugees around the world.

We mourn for all the United Nations staff who have been killed in Gaza over the past few weeks. Their deaths are a sobering reminder of the dangers United Nations and other humanitarian staff face as they deliver aid to people in need, and we have made clear that all civilians, including United Nations staff and humanitarian workers, must be protected in this conflict and in all conflicts.

A staggering 110 million people have been forced to flee their homes owing to famine, conflict, climate change and other crises and, in recent months, the Security Council has met to address a host of conflicts and crises, including in the Sudan, Nagorno-Karabakh, Ukraine and the Middle East. United Nations officials describe the situation in the Sudan as the world's fastest-growing displacement crisis. More than 4.5 million people are displaced within the Sudan, and more than 1 million refugees and returnees have fled to neighbouring countries in search of safety. Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield met with some of those refugees last month during a harrowing trip to Chad. Women and girls, young children and entire families are in dire need of support from the international community. In Ukraine, more than 5 million people are now internally displaced as a result of Russia's full-scale illegal invasion, and another 6 million refugees have fled to neighbouring countries. In Bangladesh, nearly 1 million Rohingya, many of whom were driven from their homes by Burma's military in a brutal campaign, are living in refugee camps. Since Azerbaijan conducted military operations in Nagorno-Karabakh on 19 September, more than 100,000 refugees and displaced persons have fled to neighbouring Armenia. In Gaza, Palestinians, who have lived under Hamas's cruelty for years and years, are suffering through no fault of their own.

For our part, the United States is doing everything in our power to address the humanitarian emergency in Gaza. We are the single largest donor to the Palestinian people, having contributed more than \$1 billion to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East since 2021. Last week, President Biden announced an additional \$100 million in humanitarian assistance for the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank. I am also proud of the fact that American citizens contribute tens of millions of dollars to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) every year. The American people are unwavering in their support for UNHCR. But amid so many humanitarian crises, much more help is needed.

In December, we will convene in Geneva for the second Global Refugee Forum, and with global humanitarian aid budgets struggling to keep pace with global needs, we must use that opportunity to prioritize action and commit to new ways of working. The United States will call on the Global Refugee Forum to look beyond traditional humanitarian donors and organizations to a broader coalition of development agencies, the private sector and civil society actors so we can respond to humanitarian and refugee crises more sustainably. That effort will also need to ensure refugees are an integral part of solutions.

During this year's high-level week, the United States joined the World Economic Forum in calling on humanitarian and development organizations, donors and host Governments, development finance institutions, foundations, investors and corporations to join forces to mobilize \$10 billion in investment capital. That partnership will enable 1,000 businesses to enter or scale up activities in fragile markets, including many that host refugees, by 2030. That call to action forms the cornerstone of our efforts to innovate, work with new partners and leverage diplomacy towards solutions to protracted humanitarian situations. We can no longer rely on twentieth-century solutions to twenty-first-century problems. We need new approaches, and I know that together we can find them.

Mr. Spasse (Albania): I thank High Commissioner Grandi for his sincere and comprehensive presentation.

Let me start by expressing our deep concern regarding the dire situation faced by refugees worldwide, stemming from war, persecution, violence and human rights violations. Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, the conflicts in the Sudan,

the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Myanmar, the combination of drought, floods and insecurity in Somalia, the prolonged humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and the deterioration of the situation in the Middle East after the terrorist attack of Hamas against Israel, just to mention a few, give little hope that the numbers presented by the High Commissioner will decrease any time soon, but rather the contrary.

The figures we heard here today should alarm us and compel immediate action at the highest level. It is disheartening to witness a situation in which families and individuals are uprooted from their homes, torn from their communities and exposed to a myriad of challenges. The impact on their lives is immeasurable, marked by loss, trauma and a constant struggle for survival. As members of this body, it is our moral obligation to take the necessary steps within the Council's mandate to protect and assist those vulnerable populations. We must renew our collective determination to find sustainable solutions that address the root causes of forced displacement. We must strive to prevent and resolve conflicts, promote respect for human rights and strengthen humanitarian assistance and protection for refugees and the communities hosting them.

We commend the efforts of High Commissioner Grandi and his unwavering commitment to alleviating the suffering of refugees worldwide. Nevertheless, it is evident that the scale and complexity of the issue require heightened international cooperation and financial support. It is essential to recognize the contributions made by countries, especially low- and middle-income countries, which host 75 per cent of refugees, and by communities that generously provide a safe haven for refugees. Their hospitality should be acknowledged and supported through increased international aid and burden-sharing efforts.

We believe that the private sector can play a crucial role in our common efforts to address the challenges we face in responding to and accommodating the needs of refugees and internally displaced persons. The private sector can bring access to finance, cutting-edge technology, research and development and operational capabilities. With the private sector's expertise and capabilities in fields such as logistics, telecommunications, transport and data analysis, humanitarian actors will gain improved efficiency and effectiveness in their response efforts, thereby providing a lifeline for individuals and families forced to leave their homes owing to conflict, persecution or natural disasters. Aware of the potential and the role the private sector, Alba-

nia, together with Schmidt Futures and other partners, launched in September a private sector humanitarian alliance. The alliance will serve as a platform that can mobilize resources more efficiently within the first few days of a crisis by linking the private sector, philanthropy and international organizations, and facilitate immediate coordination in full compliance with the United Nations principles of humanitarian aid.

Lastly, I would like to stress the importance of investing in long-term solutions. Empowering refugees through education and vocational training, providing access to health care and promoting economic opportunities will not only address their immediate needs, but will also enable them to rebuild their lives with dignity and contribute to the development and stability of their host communities.

In conclusion, the briefing by Mr. Grandi today should serve as a call for immediate action and a recommitment to upholding the principles of humanity, solidarity and shared responsibility. By working together, we can make a positive difference in the lives of millions of refugees and ensure a more secure and prosperous future for all.

Mr. Irachande Gouveia (Mozambique): Mozambique thanks the Brazilian presidency for scheduling this timely meeting, which, in the words of Mr. Grandi, sheds light on the plight of the uprooted. We also wish to thank Mr. Grandi for his poignant and alarming update.

As we can gather from this briefing, the situation of refugees globally will get worse until it gets any better. We are mindful that behind the cold numbers is a human story — 140 million stories, to be precise — of forced abandonment, owing to conflict, persecution or, as of late, natural or man-made catastrophes. Refugees are often vulnerable and in need of protection, and yet their ordeal is often compounded by hostile reception, bias and traumas, amplified by their demonization, to easily attribute to them all sorts of social ills, from crime to terrorism. More worrisome, we have witnessed the selective treatment of refugees based on their origin. Entire political electoral platforms built on the politics of fear, nativism and identity have gained legitimacy — something unthinkable a few years ago.

My country, Mozambique, is currently hosting more than 28,000 refugees and asylum seekers. More than 700,000 people are internally displaced in northern Mozambique, owing to the violence that erupted in 2017. Most countries like mine hosting refugees are the ones that do not shy away from their international

obligations and that are not derelict in their duty to generosity. They are the ones that, at the same time, face multiple challenges. We commend Mr. Grandi and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for their diligent and passionate work with Governments and other parties to provide assistance and protection to refugees around the world despite the grim situation. Mozambique fully supports UNHCR's noble work to protect and save lives and build better futures for the hundreds of millions of refugees and internally displaced and stateless people around the world. We heard Mr. Grandi. We heard his plea and will assist whenever possible in making sure that his call for action, resource mobilization and cohesion is heeded. We look forward to the upcoming Global Refugee Forum to be held in Geneva.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I thank High Commissioner Grandi for his sobering briefing.

This meeting comes at a crucial time. As we heard, the number of people who have been forced from their homes has reached a record high of 110 million. Sadly, that trend is set to continue. New emergencies are pushing the limits of an already-strained humanitarian system, including the crisis in Gaza. We are committed to responding to humanitarian needs. It is also vital that regional stability be maintained given, not least, the already-high number of refugees in the region. The Security Council has a role to play in tackling rising displacement. I will make four points in that regard.

First, we need to shine a light on neglected crises. In 2017, more than 740,000 Rohingya fled horrific ethnic cleansing in Myanmar and sought refuge in Bangladesh. They remain vulnerable and reliant on dwindling aid. That is why, this month, the United Kingdom, together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United States, co-convened a high-level event on Rohingya refugees, where we announced an additional \$5.5 million of United Kingdom humanitarian support.

Secondly, we need to establish conditions that enable refugees to return in a safe, voluntary and dignified way. In Syria, many refugees in the region want to return home but report that they do not feel safe to do so. The Council, and all those with influence, must insist that those conditions be in place.

Thirdly, we must recognize that, as well as conflict, climate-change is also driving displacement. The United Kingdom is partnering with the United Arab Emirates at the twenty-eighth Conference of the

Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to increase access to climate financing for the most vulnerable, including displaced people. We aim to ensure that they have the means to manage the impacts of climate-change in order to help reduce climate driven displacement and instability.

The Global Refugee Forum, to be held in December, will be a key moment for us to tackle rising displacement together. The United Kingdom will be making several pledges to drive initiatives on education, inclusion and protection and help deliver long-term solutions for refugees and host countries. We hope that other Council members will join us in those pledges.

In conclusion, the face of unprecedented need, we agree with the High Commissioner that now is the crucial time to come together to deliver meaningful change for displaced people.

Ms. Shaheen (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank Mr. Grandi for his briefing and valuable work.

We are discussing an extremely important issue today. The number of displaced people around the world is continuously rising while, at the same time, many of them lack protection and basic services. That requires from the international community making urgent and collective efforts to support displaced persons, including both internally displaced persons and refugees.

In that regard, I would like to focus on the following areas.

First, all internally displaced people and refugees must have equal access to basic services, including health care, food and drinking water, while taking into account the needs of women and children, who are significantly impacted by conflict. That requires strengthening coordination with relevant humanitarian organizations and United Nations agencies, along with cooperating with host Governments to ensure safe access to relief aid.

This issue is one of the foreign policy priorities of the United Arab Emirates, and we are committed to delivering humanitarian aid to refugees and internally displaced people around the world with the aim to alleviate their suffering, including by facilitating and establishing air bridges. My country expeditiously sent extensive tons of food and medical supplies immediately after the outbreak of crises in Ukraine, the Sudan and Palestine, and also in the aftermath of the earthquakes and floods that occurred in Syria, Türkiye, Libya, Afghanistan and Pakistan this year.

In that context, I would like to focus on the catastrophic conditions of almost 2 million people in the Gaza Strip, who have been subjected to continuous Israeli bombing for three weeks. Even before the outbreak of the war, which has displaced more than 60 per cent of civilians, two thirds of Gaza's population were refugees already living in difficult conditions.

As everyone is aware, the situation has deteriorated further, especially after Israel imposed a complete siege on the Gaza strip on 9 October by cutting off electricity, water, food and medical supplies except for a handful of shipments of less than 4 per cent of the commodities that used to enter before the war began. Under those alarming circumstances, we stress the need to ensure safe and sustainable access to humanitarian aid throughout Gaza.

Secondly, refugees must be protected from all forms of violence, especially sexual and gender-based violence, by establishing preventative programmes and providing safe spaces for refugees. That should be done while exploring ways to enable refugees to return in a safe, voluntary and dignified manner when favourable conditions exist.

In that context, we would like to point out the Rohingya refugee ordeal. Although it is one of the worst humanitarian crises for refugees in the world, it does not receive sufficient attention from the international community. Therefore, we call for the intensification of international diplomatic efforts to resolve the Rohingya crisis, address the deteriorating humanitarian situation of the Rohingya and create conditions conducive to their voluntary, safe, sustainable and dignified return to a stable homeland.

We once again underscore the situation of refugees and internally displaced people in Gaza. There is an urgent need to stop the war and protect civilians from the ongoing Israeli bombardment, which has even hit the places where people sought refuge. That includes a strike on a refugee camp in Jabaliya today, which, according to initial reports, led to hundreds of deaths and injuries.

Israel has bombed 42 per cent of facilities related to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Those facilities are currently hosting nearly 670,000 displaced people. Bombardment has also hit other civilian objects protected under international humanitarian law. More than 8,000 people have been killed, nearly 70 per cent of whom are women and children. We also reject attempts

to forcibly displace Palestinians and call upon Israel to cancel its orders regarding the evacuation of more than 1 million people from northern to southern Gaza.

Thirdly, the focus must be on addressing the root causes of forced displacement to avoid the suffering it entails. That approach would be more efficient and cost-effective for the international community. It requires promoting development in countries that lack economic opportunities along with preventing and resolving conflicts peacefully.

International efforts must also be intensified to address climate change. According to the Institute for Economics and Peace, the number of displaced people around the world due to climate change is expected to reach more than 1 billion in 2050. Therefore, establishing effective strategies to adapt to climate change and limit its repercussions are essential to reduce the number of displaced people. We look forward to continuing and furthering discussions on that issue during the twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28), which the United Arab Emirates will host next month.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates will continue to work closely with international partners, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to support refugees and displaced people throughout the world and ensure adequate living conditions for them.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Grandi for his briefing, and I appreciate the work that he and his team are doing. China firmly supports the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the work of the High Commissioner and looks forward to the Office, under the leadership of Mr. Grandi, making greater efforts and contributions towards helping refugees around the world to escape their plight.

At present, owing to multiplying geopolitical conflicts, the sluggish global economic recovery and frequent natural disasters, the global refugee situation is facing complex and daunting challenges. The number of refugees and displaced persons worldwide has reached a record high of 126 million in 2023. At the same time, the humanitarian funding gap continues to widen and now stands as high as 40 per cent. Many humanitarian agencies have been forced to lower their standard of assistance, and countless families have been forced to suffer in the

cold and go hungry in the harshest conditions. Refugee relief and protection efforts are moving forward slowly in the difficult present circumstances.

No one should be left behind when it comes to the protection of refugees. The international community must practice true multilateralism and champion the spirit of humanity, mobilize resources and form the strongest synergy possible in supporting multilateral institutions such as UNHCR. Developed countries should fulfil their commitments of assistance in good faith, and the countries that bear the greatest responsibility for refugee issues should step up their assistance and provide more support to help refugees and refugee-hosting countries.

Armed conflicts are a major cause of the current worsening refugee crisis. The Security Council must fulfil its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, promote de-escalation and political settlements for hot-spot issues and provide strong guarantees for refugees to return home. At the same time, the protection of refugees should be carried out in accordance with the principle of neutrality, and double standards and politicization must be avoided. Unilateral sanctions, which have long hindered economic recovery and the improvement of livelihoods in the countries concerned, seriously affecting their efforts to resolve refugee issues, should be lifted immediately. The international community should scale up its investment in peacebuilding and support to post-conflict regions by accelerating post-war reconstruction, which, in turn, would encourage more refugees to return home.

Palestinian refugees are one of the largest and the longest-enduring groups of refugees. Some 1.7 million Palestinians have long had to eke out a living in the Gaza Strip, which is less than 400 square kilometres. In that area, for the past 20 days or so, one tragedy after another has been unfolding, involving families being torn apart, with loved ones killed or separated from their families. People have tried to seek safety anywhere possible, but to no avail — when they look around, they realize that there is no escape route. At this critical juncture, we urge Israel to respond to the call of the General Assembly resolution (resolution ES-10/21) to implement a ceasefire and stop the fighting as soon as possible, rescind the evacuation order for the north of Gaza and stop the forcible transfer of Palestinian refugees. The international community must make every effort to de-escalate tensions and open up efficient and sustained humanitarian relief corridors to effectively alleviate the current humanitarian situation

in Gaza. At the same time, we must continue to provide sustained financial support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in order to improve the humanitarian conditions of all Palestinian refugees.

Africa is the continent with the highest concentration of refugee situations. Armed conflicts and natural disasters have long plagued many countries and regions, including in the Horn of Africa, the Sudan, South Sudan, Nigeria, Chad and Burkina Faso. China calls on UNHCR to continue to prioritize Africa in its work and calls on the international community to continue to provide support to alleviate the refugee issue in Africa.

Mr. Montalvo Sosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank High Commissioner Filippo Grandi for the information he provided.

Ecuador recognizes the work that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is doing for people who are displaced, refugees, stateless and in need of international protection, and we commend it for the efforts it has made to meet the needs of 114 million people living in those situations.

People can become displaced or refugees for political, economic or climate reasons, but we are especially concerned about those who are forced to leave their homes as a result of violence. The Afghan-American novelist, Nadia Hashimi, wrote that refugees did not just escape a place — they had to escape a thousand memories until they had put enough time and distance between them and their misery to wake to a better day.

In 2022, more than half of the world's asylum-seekers came from Syria, Ukraine and Afghanistan, a trend that is likely to continue this year, as conflict-related violence, poor humanitarian conditions, poverty and a lack of safeguards persist. The conditions that drive displacement are present in all regions of the world and now, as we near the end of 2023, have deteriorated. For example, according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 1.4 million people have been displaced since the outbreak of hostilities in Gaza, and the projections for the population in that area are grim.

Ecuador has a history of committed work on human mobility, which is why, in January, as coordinators of the 10 elected members of the Security Council (E10), we organized a meeting to increase the situational awareness of the E10 on the causes and consequences of displacement and refuge in conflict scenarios.

Ecuador experiences all dimensions of the migration phenomenon: origin, destination, transit, return and refuge. We are also the Latin American and Caribbean country with the highest number of people officially recognized as refugees. In that context, we consider it essential to consolidate alliances at the national, regional and global levels in order to promote safe, orderly, regular and responsible migration so as to guarantee the rights of people in a situation of human mobility.

We know that women, children and adolescents are among the most vulnerable to the risks and threats of migration. Along those lines, we believe that coordinated actions should be strengthened in order to combat transnational organized crime networks dedicated to the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons.

In that regard and in accordance with the principle of non-refoulement, which is a fundamental part of international refugee law, we urge that any initiative for the return of refugees comply with the conditions of dignity, security and voluntariness required by international instruments in that area.

Finally, we call on donors to continue to contribute in a committed manner in order to overcome UNHCR's funding shortfall and to support the population that has suffered forced displacement.

Mr. Nanga (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Mr. Filippo Grandi, for presenting his latest report on the refugee situation.

The latest UNHCR statistics show that the number of displaced people in the world reached a frightening 114 million people, and those figures do not take into account the disastrous consequences of the situation in Gaza since 7 October.

Armed conflict remains the primary cause of this phenomenon, compounded by the harmful effects of climate change and environmental degradation, which have a disproportionate impact on vulnerable people, particularly women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities in developing countries.

Whether they result from conflict or related causes, those massive displacements are closely linked to the denial of human rights — either because they trigger those displacements, as is the case in situations of persecution, violence or other human rights violations; or because the forced displacements expose the victims to human rights violations on their journeys in forced exile.

In any case, forced displacement is a challenging phenomenon for the management of conflicts and natural disasters that must be taken into account in the configuration of the global humanitarian response, bearing in mind that all lives count, and all suffering is equal.

The current situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Ukraine, Somalia and Latin America and the Caribbean alone accounted for 90 per cent of new displacements worldwide in the first half of this year. That geographic distribution justifies the United Nations paying particular attention to those populations, whose situation is often a source of great suffering.

In that respect, I welcome UNHCR's efforts to try to respond to the multitude of needs and situations by proposing durable solutions through voluntary return or resettlement. It is obvious that the tensions or the inadequacy of the resources allocated are a real stumbling block in the execution of its mandate.

In order to express its solidarity and assume its share of responsibility in the necessary international response to refugees, my country, Gabon, has decided to contribute \$2 million to UNHCR to mitigate the consequences of the Sudan crisis in neighbouring countries, such as Chad and the Central African Republic.

My country is convinced that it is through greater solidarity and through cooperation in the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees that we will be able to meet the challenge posed by forced displacement. The United Nations must fully play its central role in the global response to refugees and forcibly displaced people. Helping those who are forced to flee their homes, villages or countries is a call that each of us, collectively and individually, must heed. Any assistance, be it through receiving people or providing in-kind or cash contributions, in particular the funding of empowerment projects, is invaluable.

Support for refugee-hosting countries is decisive in the Organization's global response through its specialized organizations and agencies, as is the necessary aid to the countries concerned, for the benefit of internally displaced persons, whose numbers are also constantly increasing. They need support in rebuilding their homes, schools for their children, health facilities and means of production. That requires a constant adaptation of UNHCR's means of action, as well as closer cooperation with international financial institutions.

Particular attention must be paid to host countries, where refugee camps are breeding grounds for recruitment, indoctrination and all kinds of criminal activities, including terrorist groups.

I am calling for more committed cooperation and greater investment in conflict prevention, particularly for young people through education. My country is delighted that the Global Refugee Forum will be held in December.

Finally, my country reiterates its support for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and humanitarian workers. In the highly challenging context that many countries in the throes of conflict are experiencing, my country reiterates the need for belligerents to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law and the protection of human rights.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Brazil.

I thank United Nations High Commissioner Filippo Grandi for his presentation. Brazil was pleased to host this annual briefing under its presidency. It provides an opportunity to receive updated information on the situation of displaced people around the various regions of the world. It also allows us to reflect on the drivers of displacement, among which conflict plays a tragic prominent role.

According to the latest Global Trends report, 108.4 million people worldwide were displaced by the end of 2022. The figure likely exceeded 114 million at the end of September and will likely continue to grow as the conflict in Gaza unfolds.

Displaced people have had their lives ruptured. The causes vary from persecution, conflict, violence and human rights violations to events seriously disturbing public order.

As we meet today to discuss displaced people, we cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that, according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 1.4 million Gazans had to flee their homes owing to the ongoing conflict since 7 October. Also, according to the United Nations, almost 700,000 people are in 150 facilities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, more than 200,000 in hospitals, schools, churches and other public buildings.

Low- and middle-income countries have generously kept their borders open and host around 90 per cent of displaced people. Their efforts must be met with sustained and predictable support from the international community, based on shared responsibilities and due consideration for the fundamental role played by host countries.

Forcibly displaced people should not be treated as a threat to international peace and security. Rather, they are the ones paying a high price for geopolitical rivalries and the inability of the international community, especially the Security Council, to ensure peace.

States must ensure that border governance measures are in accordance with international humanitarian law, international refugee law and human rights law. Those include, inter alia, the prohibition of collective expulsions, the principle of equality and non-discrimination, the principle of non-refoulement, the right to seek asylum, the right to life, the prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment, the promotion of gender equality, and the rights and best interests of the child.

Brazil's refugee protection system is based on respect for human dignity and the primacy of human rights. In the spirit of the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, we adopted legislation that applies an extended refugee definition in relation to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and allows broad and generous protection for asylum seekers.

Brazil has been granting humanitarian visas to people affected by the crises in Afghanistan, Syria, Haiti and Ukraine. That policy provides regular and safe access to our territory. We have set up Operation Welcome to receive and integrate Venezuelans who have arrived in our territory through the northern border since 2017. Many of them have already returned, but those who decide to stay in Brazil have full access to all public services, including education, health care and social benefits, on an equal footing with our nationals. Under the interiorization strategy of the operation, around 115,000 people have had the opportunity to opt for relocation to almost 1,000 different cities in Brazil.

The Global Compact for Refugees testifies to the fact that there is no sustainable solution for refugees without international cooperation. It provides an inclusive and manifold framework for our collective action.

The second Global Refugee Forum, to be held in Geneva next December, will hopefully raise awareness and encourage ambitious commitments commensurate

with the challenge presented by the record levels of displacement we are witnessing. The Global Refugee Forum will be an opportunity to assess the situation of displacement worldwide and the most immediate and dramatic situation in Gaza. It will also be an opportunity for the world leadership to reiterate the need to revoke measures related to any forced movement of civilian population or individual civilians that are not fully consistent with international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law.

Brazil commends the hard work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and encourages the active engagement of the international community at the highest possible level, civil society and academia at the second Global Refugee Forum in the light of the necessity to alleviate the suffering of those in most need.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to Mr. Grandi to respond to comments.

Mr. Grandi: I will be brief, but let me start by thanking Brazil. It is an honour to be invited here for this yearly opportunity to meet with the Council and be hosted by you, Mr. President, on the last day of your presidency. I take it also as a recognition of Brazil's exemplary refugee policies which you, Sir, have just alluded to.

I want to offer a few additional remarks on the many observations that several Council members have made regarding the situation in Gaza in particular and in the Middle East to reiterate that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) does not have a mandate to operate in the Palestinian territory, and as Council members know, Palestinian refugees in that area are the responsibility of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Therefore, I welcome those representatives who have made statements to reiterate the need to strongly support UNRWA, which has been very poorly funded for a number of years. I mentioned it in my opening that it is an organization I know well, having led it myself, and I hope that the events of the past few days have proven how important an organization it is for the Palestinians and for the stability of the region as well. The priority, naturally, lies with allowing more supplies into Gaza to help people in Gaza across Gaza's borders as soon as possible before the humanitarian crisis becomes unsustainable, and the priority lies, of course, also with the humanitarian ceasefire, which has been mentioned by many.

I want to reiterate our concern, now from the UNHCR perspective, about the impact that the crisis can have on the region in particular and even beyond, including the risk that the crisis begins to overlap with existing other consequences of other conflicts. We should not forget that Lebanon, in addition to being a fragile country itself, hosts more than 1 million people from Syria and Palestinian refugees. So those are all important factors to be looked at as Council members continue to discuss ways to stop the war and find a political solution to the conflict.

The Russian Federation and others spoke about Syrian refugees and the importance of return. As Council members know, and as I mentioned, but let me repeat it again, we have been engaged in important dialogue with the Government of Syria on creating the conditions for refugees to return. If refugees ever return, it will be thanks to the combination of two factors: first, the action undertaken by the Syrian Government with regard to refugees' rights, protections, access to services and to their homes essentially and, secondly, international support. Those two factors go together, and the work that we are doing to try to join the two tracks will continue with the support of many Council members.

Let me also mention another area, namely, the central Mediterranean, which was mentioned by Malta, of course, as it is in the middle of that situation. I want to reiterate something that I tangentially mentioned in my opening. We are observing now, through the very route of the central Mediterranean, the arrival of people originating from areas of recent conflict, including Sudanese, who are coming because of the conflict in the Sudan, and Syrians again, who are fleeing from the Middle East, and we will continue to see that. I appreciate all efforts that are made to address the complex flows across the Mediterranean but unless the root causes are addressed, including conflict, as we discussed today, the risk that such flows will continue, and even increase, is very high.

Some members, not many, mentioned internally displaced people. I did not elaborate on that in my briefing, but we should not forget that this is a very important segment of forced displacement. Two thirds of the people forcibly displaced, of the 114 million to whom many members referred, are internally displaced people. There is an important agenda by the Secretary-General to pursue solutions for internal displacement.

Just this morning here in New York, together with the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the issue, we had a meeting with interested Member States to

try to pursue solutions for internal displacement. I want to applaud those members whose territory is a theatre for internally displaced people and are conducting work to try to address that internal displacement. I want to particularly thank Mozambique for its own statement in this regard. I hope to visit Mozambique soon. I have been invited by the President precisely to look at ways to try and solve forced displacement when it is internal to a particular country.

Many made the very correct link with climate. Climate is a factor of displacement. I have spoken here at the Council in past years about it. What is very relevant for members, of course, is that when climate factors overlap with conflict, or sometimes even cause conflict, that in turn leads to displacement. We see it in the Sahel, for example. We see it in the Horn of Africa and many other places.

This is why — and I welcome the reference made by the representative of the United Arab Emirates in this respect — we hope and trust that displacement linked to climate, whether or not in relation to conflict, will be an agenda item at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, including trying to find the resources to address this particular aspect of the climate crisis.

I want to repeat what I said, but in even stronger terms. The financial shortfall that many of us in the humanitarian community are facing, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), is very dramatic. On 31 October, two months before the end of the year, we still do not have the \$600 million to simply do the work that we must do. This is not meeting the budget requirements; the amount is far below what is required. It is unprecedented, certainly in my eight years as High Commissioner. I therefore issue a very strong plea to Council members' capitals and to those of other Member States for all of them to come and help humanitarian organizations, and UNHCR in particular.

I welcome the fact that the representative of the United Arab Emirates mentioned the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh — those coming from Myanmar. I appreciate statements, but we need funding. That programme is severely underfunded, and many of our donors are not contributing to it. I think that it is important to also remember that aspect. In this respect,

I warmly thank Gabon for setting the example and not only talking about the need for funding but contributing to the response in the Sudan. That is greatly appreciated.

I will conclude, Mr. President, by echoing what almost all members, if not all members, mentioned, which is the importance of the Global Refugee Forum, which will take place in Geneva in December. I thank Switzerland for co-hosting it with us. I thank France and Japan for being co-conveners, together with other countries. It will truly be a moment at which not only Government but other actors including, as many mentioned, the private sector, academia, international organizations and development institutions, will come together in what has become, and what truly is, the most important global forum on refugees. I hope that all members will be able to secure high-level participation in those important discussions, in which many aspects of the response to the global displacement crisis will be discussed. We hope that, in parallel, the members of the Council will continue to strive to find solutions to the conflict, thereby providing the necessary foundation for the work that all of us who are dealing with refugees do to address their plight.

The President: I thank Mr. Grandi for the clarification he has provided.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

Before adjourning the meeting, as this is the last scheduled meeting of the Council for the month of October, on behalf of the delegation of Brazil, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the members of the Council and to the Secretariat for all the support they have provided to us. Indeed, it has been a busy month, and one in which we rallied to consensus on several important issues within our purview. We could not have done it alone or without the hard work, support and positive contributions of every delegation and the representatives of the Secretariat, including the technical support team, conference service officers, interpreters, verbatim reporters and security staff.

As we end our presidency, I know that I speak on behalf of the Council in wishing the delegation of China good luck in the month of November.

The meeting rose at 1.45 p.m.