



Security Council

Eightieth year

9905

th meeting

Monday, 28 April 2025, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Dharmadhikari	(France)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria.	Mr. Bendjama
	China.	Mr. Geng Shuang
	Denmark	Ms. Lassen
	Greece	Mr. Sekeris
	Guyana	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
	Pakistan.	Mr. Ahmad
	Panama	Mr. Moscoso
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Sangjin Kim
	Russian Federation	Ms. Zabolotskaya
	Sierra Leone	Ms. Swallow
	Slovenia.	Mr. Žbogar
	Somalia	Mr. Mohamed Yusuf
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America.	Ms. Shea

Agenda

Briefing by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Briefing by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The President (*spoke in French*): 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 (*spoke in French*): For several years, the Security Council has invited me regularly to share my thoughts on the overall situation of refugees and other persons covered by the mandate of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). I would therefore like to thank you, Mr. President, for welcoming me here once again — and probably for the last time as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees — under the auspices of the French presidency. It is a useful practice, which also forms part of the Council's procedures, and I encourage its continuation.

(*spoke in English*)

This is a season of war and a time of crisis. From the Sudan to Ukraine, the Sahel to Myanmar, the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Haiti, violence has become the defining currency of our age. While UNHCR is not part of the United Nations response in Gaza, the situation of civilians there — which we thought could not get worse — is reaching new levels of desperation by the day. I realize that I am not telling Council members anything they do not already know — which is an indictment in itself — but unfortunately that is the reality of our world, where, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross, 120 conflicts rage unabated. Each one of them is fuelled by the same perverse yet powerful delusion that peace is for the weak and that the only way to end war is not through negotiation but by inflicting so much pain on one's enemies that they are left with two choices — surrender or be annihilated.

And so, with so many blinded by the idea that only total military victory will do, it should come as no surprise that the norms of international humanitarian law once held in respect or at least proclaimed to be — protecting civilians, upholding the neutrality of humanitarian actors and allowing the most basic aid to reach people under siege — have been cast aside, dismissed as easily as the thousands of lives destroyed in the pursuit of supremacy. As Pope Francis said, “every war represents not only a defeat of politics but also a shameful surrender”. Sadly, he is gone, but his words remain, more urgent than ever.

To prevent and stop war and to uphold peace and security — that is the Security Council's mandate. That is its primary responsibility. And it is one that — members will forgive me for saying it again — the Council has chronically failed to live up to. However, I implore members not to resign themselves to the defeat of diplomacy. I speak to the Council today once more on behalf of the 123 million people forcibly displaced, who are among the first victims of wars and, in many ways, the most visible symptom of conflict and persecution. Caught up in devastating situations, they have sought safety or at least attempted to do so, but they will continue to hope for a safe return. And I know that they will not be resigned, and they will not want us to be either.

Take, for example, the people of the Sudan, one third of whom have been displaced since the start of the conflict two years ago. That means one out of every three people has been forced to flee their home because of a situation that, frankly, defies description — indiscriminate violence, disease, starvation, rampant sexual atrocities, flooding and droughts. It is a country and a society torn apart in a context in which all pretence of adherence to humanitarian norms has been abandoned. I was in Chad earlier this month, at the border with the Sudan. I met women and children who had just arrived from embattled El Fasher and Zamzam. They reported horrors but above all fear. Civilians in Darfur are regularly blocked from fleeing dangerous areas. Worse, they are actively targeted. Members will have seen recent reports of attacks against civilians in and around displacement camps, where delivering aid is not only a security and logistical challenge — as it is in the rest of the country — but also a bureaucratic nightmare intertwined with toxic politics. That is why it was so significant that those same families, while telling me their stories, pointed at the border and said that, despite all the hardships they knew they would endure, crossing it meant leaving behind — at least — that fear. There is no better testament to the life-saving power of asylum.

As the number of displaced Sudanese people continues to grow, humanitarians have sounded the alarm about the terrible human cost exacted from the Sudanese people and their future. Humanitarians have also warned — as I did again at the London conference only a few days ago — that the consequences of the conflict have now spread well beyond the Sudan's borders, and especially to those countries that, collectively, host more than 3 million Sudanese refugees, including Egypt, Ethiopia, Uganda and the Central African Republic. The most affected are Chad and South Sudan, which face enormous challenges of their own besides the refugee influx, but which have kept their borders open despite vastly insufficient humanitarian financing. The most recent regional refugee appeal is only 11 per cent funded. Yet, the needs are enormous. Refugees arrive with nothing and, owing to declining aid funding, are given a fraction of what is required, in addition to whatever Chadian communities near the border can afford. The Chadian authorities are sparing no effort. Chadian refugee laws and policies are among the most progressive in the world. What the authorities lack are resources, so that they can continue receiving refugees. We cannot abandon them.

There is nothing inevitable about the decision to host, protect and assist refugees; far fewer welcoming responses to displacement in much wealthier countries clearly show that. All countries make choices, and Council members have heard me disagree with many of those choices. In this instance, refugee-receiving countries are making the right decision. They are doing their part. We, the humanitarians, are on the ground, doing our part. The Council must be more committed and more united in doing its part. Every day that passes without the parties to the Sudan conflict coming to the negotiating table makes the war worse and more complicated. Refugees talk of not just two parties, but of a proliferation of local militias loosely affiliated with the main actors, perpetrating violent abuse.

That deadly confusion is a feature of modern wars. We should have learned lessons from the wars in the Democratic Republic of the Congo or Afghanistan, the spillover consequences of which many members of the Council still contend with to this day. For if the current dynamics — resigned powerlessness and dwindling aid — do not change, then let us harbour no illusions: the destabilizing effects of the war in the Sudan, including the onward movement of people, will grow. There are already more than 200,000 Sudanese in Libya today, many of whom may travel towards Europe.

I am also watching with great concern — as is the Council, I am sure — the latest developments in Ukraine, a country that I have visited six times since 2022. As

recently as January, I was in Kyiv and Sumy, cities that have again suffered devastating attacks just in the past few days. I saw the terrible toll that that war continues to take on the Ukrainian people and especially on the most vulnerable — the elderly, children and families — whose resilience nevertheless remains admirable, even as they have grown weary. UNHCR is working closely with the Government and local civil society partners to help alleviate the suffering and bring some normalcy and hope to people's lives.

But clearly, as many have said, what people need is a just peace. My role is not to describe what that looks like, but to remind all those engaged in peace efforts not to forget the plight of more than 10 million displaced Ukrainians, 7 million of whom are refugees. It is crucial to continue to plan for their eventual return to their communities. But they will not return unless they can be safe and secure, in the short and the long term — unless the sirens truly stop announcing incoming attacks, unless they have access to decent housing, services and work and unless they are confident that the terms of peace are durable for them and for their country. That is the essential calculus for ending humanitarian crises: security and self-reliance. And both must convey a sense of being durable.

Solutions are hard work. They require commitment and compromise. Peace cannot be made passively or hoped into being through mere attrition. That is why it is all the more important that, when even unexpected opportunities emerge, we be ready to seize them and to take calculated risks. For the last eight years, for example, stagnation has defined the response in Myanmar. The fighting between the Tatmadaw and different armed groups has caused immense suffering and large-scale displacement throughout the country and the region, a situation exacerbated by the terrible earthquake that struck a month ago. The plight of the Rohingya minority, in particular, has become even worse. The fighting in Rakhine state with the Arakan Army has been particularly vicious — today, 1.2 million Rohingya are refugees, mostly in Bangladesh in the camps around Cox's Bazar. And we must thank Bangladesh and its people for having provided them refuge over the years. But Rohingya refugees languish in the camps, without work, deprived of agency and entirely dependent on humanitarian aid that grows ever more precarious. Half the refugee population is under the age of 18. They are, to paraphrase Chief Advisor Yunus, disconnected from opportunity but connected to the world through the Internet. Is it any wonder that many of them feel compelled to embark on dangerous sea journeys in pursuit of opportunity, or that those looking to recruit fighters find fertile soil?

However, there is now an opportunity to break that dangerous inertia. The interim Government of Bangladesh has chosen to engage with the parties to the conflict in Rakhine state in pursuit of a solution there — where it is, rightly, to be found. Many will immediately say that such a solution today is impossible for all the reasons that we are aware of: too much blood has been shed, discrimination continues and there are too many competing interests to balance. Many will say that the root causes will never be effectively addressed, and that may well be the case. But we have been down the path of stagnation for eight years in respect of the Rohingya situation — it is a dead end.

From the perspective of pursuing solutions to the Rohingya plight, and in order to start recreating conditions for the return of refugees, dialogue with all parties is a critical first step so that humanitarian agencies, including UNHCR, can re-establish their presence and resume providing desperately needed humanitarian relief safely and freely. That, in turn, would provide a basis on which to restart discussions about the eventual return of displaced Rohingya — I stress: voluntarily, in safety and dignity — once the security situation in Rakhine allows for it, and a basis from which other legal rights could also be pursued. Although it is certainly a long shot, I urge the Council to think outside the box and take some risks. I hope that the Council

will continue to focus robustly on the situation in Myanmar, including the plight of the Rohingya, and I look forward to the conference planned for September here in New York.

Other possible turning points are visible literally even from here. On Friday, the new flag of Syria was raised at the United Nations. What a powerful symbol for all Syrians! And there we have another long-standing humanitarian and displacement crisis for which an unexpected solution may now be achievable. But to pursue that, Council members must all prioritize the Syrian people over long-standing politics, some of which are frankly outdated. That also entails taking calculated risks. Of course, we cannot be naive — many challenges remain. And Council members heard Minister Al-Shaibani describe them here on Friday (see S/PV.9904). It is impossible to overcome the devastation caused by 14 years of war in a few months. But, for the first time in decades, there is a spark of hope, including for the millions of Syrians who remain displaced today, 4.5 million of them refugees in neighbouring countries.

Since 8 December 2024, those numbers have been decreasing — slowly but steadily — as the return movement of internally displaced Syrians grows. And we observe an increase in returns also from Jordan, Lebanon and Türkiye. We estimate that more than 1 million people have already returned, and, based on what recent surveys show, many more may follow.

Whether they will stay in Syria or, tragically, move again — including to Europe and beyond — depends of course on the authorities, but also very much on Council members' willingness to take risks; to ease sanctions, seriously support early recovery, spur investment by the private sector and others: in a word, create conditions so that the basic elements of dignified life — security, water, electricity, education and economic opportunities — are available to the Syrian people as they start to rebuild their communities. To minimize the risks that returning Syrians are taking, I am asking members to take some risks themselves — political and economic ones. And yes, that must also mean sustained and more significant humanitarian aid, which at the moment is decreasing sharply, as it is everywhere else.

I would in fact be remiss if, before concluding, I did not draw the Council's attention to the critical situation of aid funding. In the precise moment in which there is hope to finally move towards solutions to several displacement crises — not only in Syria, but also in Burundi and the Central African Republic — we see a retrenchment away from aid, away from multilateralism, even away from life-saving assistance. We hear of prioritizing national interests, of boosting defence spending — all valid concerns, of course, and legitimate State pursuits. But those are not incompatible with aid, quite the contrary.

And so, I find myself making the same argument time after time, trying to convince donor countries of a reality we can all clearly see: that aid is stability. Freezing or cutting aid budgets is already having fatal consequences on millions of lives. It means, among many other things, abandoning displaced people to their fate, taking support away from sometimes very fragile host countries and ultimately undermining Council members' own stability.

And multilateralism, in fact — including multilateral aid — adds to that same stability and remains indispensable to find solutions to crises, including forced displacement. I may sound anachronistic, but after more than 40 years as a humanitarian and almost 10 years in my current job, I continue to believe that it is by sitting at the same table that all voices can be heard — the strong and the less strong. And for those who feel that multilateralism is stifling, slow and misaligned with their priorities, I hope they realize that leaving the debate does not mean that the discussion will end. It will not, but it will be less effective and less compelling. We need all members of the international community.

Refugees offer one of the best examples of that shared task, because if Council members look around this Chamber, they will see, as I do, that forced displacement has concerned every member of the Security Council, one way or another. The struggle for freedom; the fight against oppression; the imperative to leave one's home behind because of war, violence and persecution; the refuge given to those compelled to flee — those are also familiar strands in each of their countries' histories; deeply woven in complex and unique ways into their traditions and values. Members have been the refugee. They have welcomed those who sought refuge.

Now Council members sit at this table, with the responsibility to end war, to bring peace, and they must succeed. They owe it not only to all those who are displaced and who count on them. They also owe it to themselves.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Grandi for his briefing.

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

Mr. Bendjama (Algeria): I would like to express our sincere appreciation to Mr. Filippo Grandi for his comprehensive briefing. We also commend his unwavering commitment and tireless efforts in supporting and protecting refugees across the globe.

The displacement crisis continues to deepen each year. The number of displaced persons is rising systematically owing to multiple, often overlapping, causes, in particular armed conflicts. That alarming increase has occurred in parallel with the decline of international funding, leaving millions of vulnerable individuals without access to life-saving assistance. That situation is unacceptable and reflects a broader failure to meet the needs of the displaced populations. Addressing that failure is a shared responsibility that must be borne equitably by the international community.

In that context, it is crucial to reaffirm the commitments we collectively undertook in adopting the Global Compact on Refugees, which calls for predictable and equitable burden-sharing and responsibility-sharing and also robust support for host communities. Regrettably, both refugees and host communities often feel abandoned in that human endeavour. And we shoulder immense burdens with limited support.

For Algeria, prevention remains the most effective strategy. Addressing the root causes of displacement, including armed conflict, foreign occupation and underdevelopment, is imperative. That calls for a development-oriented and multifaceted approach that is grounded in international cooperation. Meanwhile, the global refugee crisis that we are witnessing requires urgent, coordinated and sustained action. In that regard, I wish to highlight the following key elements.

First, the protection of refugees must be ensured. Refugees, as a particularly vulnerable group, including women and girls, are entitled to protection under international refugee law. Yet, in recent years, we have witnessed multiple violations of that right. Palestinian refugees, in particular those in Gaza and in the West Bank, have suffered inhuman treatment and repeated forced displacement, including the destruction of refugee camps and civilian infrastructure. The international community, especially the Council, must fulfil its legal and moral obligations to protect those persons and to uphold international humanitarian law.

Secondly, adequate and predictable funding must be mobilized. The ongoing financial crisis facing the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other humanitarian actors severely limits their capacity to deliver essential services. That is unacceptable. It must be emphasized that most of the countries hosting refugees are themselves developing countries. Their efforts to provide sanctuary and basic services should be matched by funding from the donor

community. International support must not be seen as charity but as part of a shared global responsibility, grounded in the principle of international solidarity. It should also not be subject to political calculations and conditions or used as a tool for diplomatic bargaining.

Thirdly, misinformation and xenophobia targeting refugees must be combated. Misinformation campaigns and inflammatory rhetoric put refugees' lives at risk, fuelling xenophobia and violence in the countries hosting them. Those harmful narratives must be countered. Public awareness campaigns are essential to ensuring that host communities are sensitized and that refugees are protected while they await durable solutions in accordance with international law.

For more than half a century, my country, Algeria, has hosted Sahrawi refugees in the camps in Tindouf. Those people were forcibly displaced by Morocco's occupation of their homeland. Throughout that period of 50 years and despite huge challenges, Algeria, in cooperation with United Nations agencies and humanitarian partners, has consistently ensured access to basic services for Sahrawi refugees. However, a durable solution is needed. That must include enabling Sahrawi refugees to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination through a free and fair referendum, as enshrined in international law and United Nations resolutions. Decisions about the future of Sahrawi refugees rest, and must always rest, with them. The rights of Sahrawi refugees are inalienable. They must not be compromised or be the subject of transactions under any circumstances.

In conclusion, I wish to underscore the fundamental principle that refugees must be allowed to live in dignity. That is their right as human beings. Their safe, dignified and voluntary return to their homes is also a cornerstone of international refugee law, which must be respected, upheld and never compromised. Let us work together to preserve the dignity of refugees and allow them to enjoy their full rights.

Mr. Moscoso (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): I welcome the convening of this annual gathering with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi, on the situation of refugees in crisis contexts.

(*spoke in English*)

We took note of his urgent call for peace and for the Council to successfully uphold its mandate during this "season of war", as he called it. Panama believes that peace is for the strong, not the weak.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

The international community is now confronting a displacement situation of historic magnitude. More than 120 million people, including refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and others in need of international protection, have been forced to flee their homes worldwide. Those figures represent an unabated increase over the past 12 years, driven primarily by armed conflict, widespread violence, persecution, massive human rights violations and the effects of climate change.

The impact of that tragedy is global. Human beings are contending with risks such as transnational organized crime at all stages of displacement, leading to grave threats to security and straining the capacity of vital humanitarian services and United Nations agencies to provide care. We therefore reaffirm our commitment to the Global Compact on Refugees and our willingness to work closely with the multilateral system to assist the more than 43.7 million people in such circumstances. Situations such as the war in Ukraine have destroyed civilian infrastructure, forcing the population to flee their homes in search of safety, protection and aid. Since February 2022, there have been 3.7 million displaced Ukrainians and nearly 7 million refugees worldwide. Nor can we ignore the humanitarian situation in the Democratic

Republic of the Congo, which is critical, particularly in the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri. More than 6.7 million people have been displaced internally owing to decades of conflict and indiscriminate violence, in addition to the 990,000 Congolese refugees and asylum-seekers who have been hosted in different countries on the African continent.

The attention and resources of the entire international community are necessary to prevent the spread of instability. If all the conflicts in the region merge, that convergence risks triggering an unprecedented transnational crisis.

In the Sudan, more than 12 million people have had to flee their homes. Of those, approximately 3 million people have fled the country in search of safety and protection in neighbouring countries. Millions of children suffer from high rates of food insecurity, and more than a dozen regions in the country are on the brink of famine. Indeed, the prevalence of famine has been confirmed in the Zamzam camp in North Darfur, as humanitarian agencies have had limited access.

Panama lifts its voice for every child who today crosses jungles, seas and deserts in search of what he or she should never lack — a home, security and dignity. Children have no borders, and neither should their protection. Children make up 40 per cent of displaced persons despite accounting for only 30 per cent of the world's population, evidence of their disproportionate vulnerability to crises.

Panama firmly believes that respect for human dignity must guide our every response.

Taking into account the fact that a large proportion of refugees and displaced persons worldwide are Venezuelan, we cannot ignore the fact that the current economic situation, the democracy vacuum and rampant insecurity in Venezuela are exacerbating the crisis of migration throughout the Americas. Our region is undergoing a challenging moment at which the lack of democratic guarantees and the rise of transnational organized crime, such as what is happening in Haiti, are factors aggravating the unprecedented increase in displacement in Latin America and the Caribbean, in addition to the already unsustainable global migration crisis.

In the short, medium and long term, the protection and well-being of the world's population also require safeguarding the environment as part of efforts to prevent conflict and build lasting peace, ensuring that the exploitation of natural resources does not put pressure on environmental capacities and become a source of social instability.

Special attention should be paid to women refugees, who are at constant risk of sexual and gender-based violence, trafficking, sexual exploitation, forced marriage and exclusion from essential services such as health, education and employment. Their situation is made worse by a lack of documentation, excluding them from protection systems. In camps or shelters, there are often no adequate security measures or gender-sensitive mechanisms, further increasing their vulnerability.

Panama considers the international protection of refugees and displaced persons to be a matter of shared values. In that regard, we call for a redoubling of efforts to reverse the current trend of cuts to humanitarian funding and to strengthen regional mechanisms that allow for a more equitable sharing of responsibilities. We reiterate our commitment to those principles and reaffirm our determination to work together with the international community in promoting a global response focused on the protection of human rights.

Ms. Zabolotskaya (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi, for his briefing on the pressing issues of international assistance to refugees and displaced persons.

Assisting refugees and addressing their issues is particularly important in the light of the unprecedented scale of humanitarian crises throughout the world. The year 2024 marked a bleak record in terms of the number of people who were forced to flee their homes and countries in their quest to survive.

The situation in Gaza must be considered first and foremost when addressing the crisis of forced displacement. Indiscriminate bombardment has already compelled more than 1 million Gazans to flee their homes to save their lives. Even if they find refuge and a safe haven, destitute people still face mortal peril. Since 7 October 2023, Israeli attacks against civilian objects, including the refugee camps and other facilities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in which people have found refuge, have resulted in the deaths of 742 people, and more than 2,400 people have been wounded. Workers who selflessly deliver assistance to Palestinian refugees are also dying. Since the start of the military operation by the Israel Defense Forces, more than 290 UNRWA staff members have been killed.

The magnitude of the humanitarian disaster is growing with each passing day. The Israeli authorities continue to impede the entry of humanitarian assistance. For nearly 60 days, the import into Gaza of food and medicines has been blocked, exhausting supplies. Humanitarian organizations have sounded the alarm about imminent famine, especially among children. There is no water, food or fuel in the Strip, and those who managed to flee the shelling face hunger, communicable diseases and a lack of adequate medical care.

Meanwhile, UNRWA, a partner organization of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), continues to deliver assistance to Palestinian refugees, despite remaining subjected to unprecedented political pressure and threats, including by reducing financing, which is so needed now. We understand that Palestinian refugees are not directly within the mandate of UNHCR. However, we hope the High Commissioner, as a senior United Nations official, will continue to monitor the situation and call upon Israel to comply with its international obligations.

The situation in Gaza and the persecution of UNRWA blatantly demonstrate the sad trend towards the politicization of the problems of refugees and internally displaced persons. That is particularly evident in the financing of humanitarian programmes to assist refugees. Western countries — which have provoked the lion's share of conflict throughout the world, thereby triggering the flight of refugees — are very reluctant to finance UNHCR programmes to assist refugees, including those from Afghanistan, the Sudan and many other conflict-riven countries. Moreover, Western countries are particularly zealous about expelling back to developing countries asylum-seekers who arrive in their territories.

Against that backdrop, the States of the golden billion continuously voice alarm about the situation of refugees from Ukraine, while failing to mention that a significant number of those refugees have turned towards Russia. Notorious double standards are being implemented, dividing the world into first-class and second-class citizens.

The trend towards politicization continues to apply to the voluntary return of Syrian refugees. For many years, the West has blocked their return to their homeland, including by obstructing the implementation of humanitarian projects. The West is now stating that it does indeed provide assistance to Syrians, but it continues to impose unilateral sanctions against Damascus that mainly affect ordinary citizens. The situation is unclear in the notorious Al-Hol and Al-Roj refugee camps, in which thousands of women and children who fled the carpet bombardment of Raqqa, Hajin and Baghouz have taken shelter. We trust that UNHCR will continue to provide

assistance in implementing initiatives for the voluntary return of Syrian refugees to their homeland.

We note the efforts of the UNHCR to provide assistance to Ukrainian internally displaced persons. Let us recall that in 2014, after the coup in Ukraine, hundreds of thousands of Russians and Russian-speaking residents of Ukraine fled Ukraine for Russia. The mass exodus from Ukraine to Russia has been ongoing in subsequent years as a result of the unabated shelling by the Ukrainian armed forces of peaceful towns in Donbas. Approximately 5 million people have sought shelter in Russian regions, and Russia is continuing to make every effort to accommodate and resettle them and to provide them with comprehensive assistance. UNHCR representatives in Moscow can see for themselves the effectiveness of the work carried out in various Russian regions to ensure decent living conditions for refugees.

In the context of the situation of refugees, the African continent stands out as an example. Despite all the economic difficulties, African countries have been setting an example of solidarity and assistance to displaced persons for the whole world for many years now, in contrast to Western countries. African countries therefore have every right to count on international support and recognition. We share the concerns about the difficult situation of the Sudanese population owing to the armed conflict that has been going on for more than two years. The burden of refugee outflows is borne by all neighbouring States, including Egypt, the Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia and South Sudan. Together, those countries have already accommodated some 2 million Sudanese. The number of internally displaced persons in the country is approaching 11 million. That situation makes it necessary to systematically step up assistance for the Sudanese Government in addressing the full range of humanitarian problems. Let me emphasize that it is important to establish cooperation with the Government of the Sudan, which bears full responsibility for normalizing the situation in the country, enhancing security and addressing the myriad issues related to internally displaced persons and refugees.

Lastly, I would once again like to draw members' attention to the plight of refugees in the Mediterranean. Year after year, the Mediterranean continues to be a mass grave for many of those who attempt to reach Europe. Appalling, tragic deaths at sea continue to occur on a regular basis. At the same time, we still are not seeing any attempts at providing assistance or response from Western Europe. Instead of helping those in distress, European countries deliberately push them out of their zone of jurisdiction, condemning people to certain death. They continue to interfere in the work of those humanitarian non-governmental organizations that are assisting refugees. The situation is intolerable in terms of both international law and pure humanity. People are dying, but no one is being held accountable for it. It is clear that the situation will not change unless safe ports are assigned for rescued refugees and those intercepted at sea to be able to disembark on shore, in accordance with the norms of international maritime law. We call on the High Commissioner to maintain his focus on the Mediterranean region and to continue to urge the European Union to uphold its international obligations, demonstrate accountability and combat impunity.

In conclusion, we would like to support Mr. Grandi's call regarding the need to continue to fund humanitarian efforts despite the financial difficulties. For our part, we wish to note that, all financial constraints notwithstanding, last week Russia managed to allocate \$2 million to support UNHCR activities.

Mr. Sangjin Kim (Republic of Korea): I thank High Commissioner Filippo Grandi for his enlightening briefing. His briefing today really was touching.

I remember that last year, at the Security Council, the High Commissioner described an unprecedented situation regarding forced displacement (see S/PV.9641). As he described today, since then the crisis has further deteriorated, with the number

of forcibly displaced persons reaching more than 122 million. The figures tell only part of the catastrophic story of suffering for those who have been forced to flee their homes. It is in part a reflection of our lack of collective effort and will to take action. In the light of that, I would like to make the following four points.

First, the Security Council should show leadership in more action-oriented cooperation to eliminate the immediate causes of forced displacement. Forced displacement is a direct consequence of the breakdown of peace and security, leaving people to feel insecure and unprotected. When ending conflicts is out of reach, we have the obligation under international humanitarian law to protect civilians in wartime. However, that responsibility is being increasingly neglected, as vividly demonstrated in the recent ongoing conflicts, including in Gaza, the Sudan and Ukraine. The Security Council must therefore speak with one voice to urge the immediate cessation of hostilities among the parties to those conflicts. The Council should also consider, when appropriate, adopting binding resolutions to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law by all relevant parties.

Secondly, we should shed more light on those who have no choice but to flee their homes owing to systematic violations of basic human rights and humanitarian risks and who risk persecution, torture or other brutalities if forced to return. The North Korean escapees are a case in point. In that vein, we urge all Member States to respect the principle of non-refoulement, which is stipulated in the Refugee Convention and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Thirdly, a multifaceted approach is required to tackle the lack of funding at a moment when all United Nations agencies are facing extreme financial constraints. It is essential to help humanitarian workers and host countries to tackle humanitarian crises in a swift and flexible manner. Joining the effort to enhance flexibility, my Government scaled up its annual unearmarked contribution to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) fivefold last year and has decided to maintain it at a similar level this year. In that regard, I recommend that UNHCR diversify its funding sources to enhance the resilience of its financial foundation. Funding from various stakeholders can contribute to that goal, as seen in the example of the Republic of Korea, as its contributions from private donors account for nearly half of its total funding to UNHCR.

Lastly, we should provide consistent support until the issue of forced displacement is ultimately resolved through the safe, voluntary and dignified return of refugees, with their sustainable reintegration into their countries of origin or their resettlement in third countries. We can take Syria as an example, which is the origin of the largest number of displaced persons in the world. While we welcome the fall of the Al-Assad regime, we must recognize that that is only the first step towards resolving the situation of Syrian refugees. Unremitting efforts to uphold the rule of law, promote justice and reconciliation and safeguard human rights are essential to ensuring that voluntary returnees can successfully reintegrate into their communities. Such progress will not only benefit Syria and its neighbouring countries but also contribute to long-term peace and stability in the region.

In conclusion, as clearly articulated in the 1951 Refugee Convention, the problem of refugees cannot be resolved without international cooperation, and the effective coordination in response to that issue depends on the cooperation of States with UNHCR. The Republic of Korea remains committed to joining the effort of the international community to address the refugee issues.

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett (Guyana): I thank High Commissioner Grandi for today's briefing and his frank assessment of the ongoing displacement crisis. Guyana supports the critical work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner

for Refugees (UNHCR) and commends High Commissioner Grandi and his team for continuing to provide life-saving assistance and protection to millions of displaced people around the world, despite the growing number of challenges.

We are undoubtedly in an era of rising geopolitical tensions, leading to unprecedented levels of armed violence and displacement. More than 120 million people were forcibly displaced in 2024. A global snapshot reveals that, in the Americas, worsening gang violence in Haiti fuelled by trafficked weapons from abroad has resulted in more than 1 million people being internally displaced. In Africa, conflicts in the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have driven around 30 million internally displaced persons, refugees and asylum seekers from their homes. In Asia, more than 3.5 million people were internally displaced in Myanmar. The largest war on the European continent since the Second World War has driven more than 10 million Ukrainians from their homes, as High Commissioner Grandi reminded us, and we continue to witness repeated displacement in Gaza.

The rise in conflict-induced displacement and involuntary resettlement poses a significant challenge to humanitarian and development organizations, which are already grappling with a global funding squeeze. In 2025, an estimated \$10.2 billion is needed to provide life-saving protection and assistance to a projected population of more than 139 million forcibly displaced and stateless people. Those numbers are staggering and demand our urgent attention, especially as the gap between needs and commitment continues to widen, leaving the humanitarian sector critically underfunded.

None of us are insulated from the impacts of the ongoing displacement crisis — whether directly, through the influx of people across our borders or indirectly through the spectrum of side effects that it engenders. We are all affected. For the middle- and low-income countries that host 71 per cent of the world's refugees and others in need of international protection, the impacts on their social systems and national budgets are severe. In the health sector alone, a global cost analysis for including refugees in national health services estimates that doing so would require \$11 billion per year.

The imperative to accelerate the global response is clear. We must intensify our efforts to address the humanitarian needs of the forcibly displaced. At the same time, there must be greater urgency in addressing the drivers of conflict and displacement. Mass displacement is just one of the symptoms of the disease of war, violence and economic instability. Climate change is also becoming a major driver of displacement. According to the 2024 *Global Report on Internal Displacement*, over the past 10 years, weather-related disasters caused 220 million people to become internally displaced. Further, as climate disasters affect destination countries, the options for escape narrow, creating a protracted displacement crisis. We must also acknowledge that migration exists, as both a result and a driver of conflict.

If we fail to address those challenges, we will create a global cycle of unending and worsening tragedies. In the toolbox of solutions, UNHCR is key. Yet, the agency cannot act alone. It requires the cooperation and support of all Member States and must be equipped with the necessary resources to effectively fulfil its mandate. That includes financial resources. We note that as of February, UNHCR had received only 14 per cent of the required funding.

Guyana also continues to advocate for a comprehensive and strategic approach to addressing the deficits in development that lay at the root of the great majority of conflicts. The cost of inaction and of failing to prioritize and invest in development and conflict prevention is simply too high.

In conclusion, it bears repeating that the work of UNHCR and its partners is vital. We can and must enable them to continue to provide essential life-saving

services, such as shelter, water, healthcare and education. Guyana is committed to maintaining and further enhancing our partnership with UNHCR and will continue to advocate for increased support for the agency.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank High Commissioner Grandi for his briefing.

China pays tribute to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for its long-standing presence in conflict-ridden areas and for the assistance that it has provided to millions of refugees. We will continue to support UNHCR and High Commissioner Grandi in advancing their noble humanitarian cause. I would like to take this opportunity to pay my appreciation to High Commissioner Grandi for his efforts during the past few years.

At present, the international situation is complex and volatile, with high geopolitical tensions, persistent unilateral bullying and shocks to the world economy. Against that backdrop, the global refugee situation has become increasingly serious and challenging. According to UNHCR reports, more than 120 million people have been forcibly displaced globally, and the relevant figure has been rising for 12 consecutive years. It was heartbreaking to note that a large number of refugees, especially women and children, have difficulty in obtaining assistance and suffer from hunger and displacement.

Solving the refugee problem requires strengthening international cooperation and a comprehensive and systematic response. Recently, a certain country has drastically cut foreign aid, and many humanitarian organizations have been forced to reduce their aid activities. That is undoubtedly a serious blow to refugee relief, and more refugees may become displaced as a result. The top priority is to raise funds as quickly as possible to help refugees in distress. Low- and middle-income countries host 70 per cent of all refugees. China calls on developed countries to shoulder their responsibilities by fulfilling their aid commitments and providing more support to refugee-hosting countries and multilateral humanitarian organizations.

War and conflicts are among the most important reasons why people are forced to flee their homes. The Security Council should promote ceasefires and stop violence, start dialogue and negotiation and seek political solutions. The relevant countries should stop creating confrontation and provoking conflicts in the international arena and abandon unilateralism and hegemonic and bullying behaviour. All parties should support post-conflict countries in accelerating recovery and reconstruction, enhancing their capacity for independent development and creating the conditions for refugees to return home as soon as possible.

Just now, High Commissioner Grandi and other colleagues mentioned the severe humanitarian challenges faced by many regions in the world, which struck a chord with China. In Palestine, a new round of conflict has led to a dire humanitarian crisis for more than 2 million suffering souls in Gaza. Achieving a ceasefire must be an overriding priority. The international community must be unequivocal in opposing any forced migration of the population of Gaza and any attempt to annex land in Gaza or the West Bank. In Syria, the recurring volatility of the situation has created a serious refugee problem, which poses a challenge to the stable development of the region and the country. The Syrian authorities should expedite an inclusive political process, effectively fulfil their counter-terrorism obligations, restore peace and stability in Syria as soon as possible and facilitate the return of refugees.

On the African continent, armed conflicts, terrorism, political turmoil and development deficits overlap and are intertwined, and the humanitarian situation is particularly severe. In regions like the Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sahel alone, tens of millions of people have been displaced. The international community must address both the symptoms and the root causes of the

problem from multiple perspectives, including the political, security, development and humanitarian fronts. China calls on the international community to prioritize resources towards Africa and increase support and assistance to African countries.

As a State party to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Protocol thereto, China has always adhered to the spirit of humanitarianism, actively participated in international cooperation in the area of refugees and provided assistance to the countries concerned in dealing with refugee issues through bilateral and multilateral channels. China is ready to continue to work with the international community, firmly support multilateralism and contribute to improving the global refugee protection system and resolving the refugee issue.

Ms. Shea (United States of America): I thank High Commissioner Filippo Grandi for his briefing.

As he indeed highlighted, amid an increase in conflicts in recent years, the Security Council has failed to achieve the political solutions necessary to end forced displacement. As we have said in this Chamber before, it is time for us to bring the United Nations — and specifically the Security Council — back to their original purpose: the maintenance of international peace and security, including through the peaceful settlement of disputes. That is our responsibility as Council members — to chart a path forward that can end the horrors of conflicts.

But no one nation can do that alone. The United Nations exists for collective action, and collective action demands collective responsibility. Every Member State needs to better share the burden of humanitarian response to conflict. The United States has disproportionately shouldered that burden for decades. Moreover, we reiterate that response to forced displacement should be guided by core principles of national sovereignty, border security and the rule of law.

In the past year, the conflicts in the Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Myanmar, among others, have worsened.

With respect to the war between Israel and Hamas, no one wants to see Palestinians in Gaza go hungry and thirsty. The United States supports the flow of humanitarian aid with safeguards to ensure assistance is not diverted, looted or misused by the terrorist groups Hamas or Palestinian Islamic Jihad. But let us remember, Hamas bears sole responsibility for the war it unleashed on 7 October 2023, when it committed the worst massacre of Jews since the Holocaust and abducted more than 250 hostages, as well as for the resumption of hostilities in March following Hamas' rejection of multiple proposals.

Even amid this time of conflict, there has been some cause for hope. In Syria, with Al-Assad's departure, there is a new sense of hope among millions of refugees who see the prospect for a future in their home country, and many have returned home — especially the ones who stayed close to home and did not attempt to make the perilous journey to Europe.

The United States seeks a future in which Syria is stable, respects the human rights and freedoms of its people, rejects terrorism and destabilizing Iranian influence and is not a threat to its neighbours. We believe many Syrian refugees and migrants have similar hopes for their country.

Moving to Europe, the Council called for a swift end to the war in Ukraine, and the United States has invested considerable political capital towards achieving that peace. If a lasting settlement can be reached, millions of Ukrainians will be able to return home.

A durable peace in those conflicts would lay the foundation for millions of displaced people to safely return home and for thriving regional economies. We call

on the Council to redouble efforts to solve and bring an end to crises that lead to long-term displacement.

Ms. Lassen (Denmark): I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, for the outstanding leadership demonstrated throughout his tenure. Denmark expresses its full support to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and a deep admiration for all those who work tirelessly to assist the world's refugees and forcibly displaced people.

We are at an extraordinary juncture. As we heard from the High Commissioner today, a staggering 123 million people have been forcibly displaced worldwide. Women and girls continue to suffer most.

That displacement crisis has many drivers, most significantly, the proliferation and protractedness of conflicts, combined with a widespread disregard for the letter and spirit of international humanitarian law.

The impact of climate shocks also continues to grow. That presents a new challenge for humanitarian action and solidarity in the twenty-first century.

From Myanmar to Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan, we have witnessed violence, attacks on civilians and critical civilian infrastructure, creating staggering levels of displacement.

In the Sudan, the site of the world's largest displacement crisis, more than one third of the population have been forced to flee their homes and more than 60 per cent of the population requires emergency humanitarian assistance.

In Ukraine, attacks on civilian infrastructure, the contamination of agricultural land and repeated strikes on populated areas have produced the largest refugee and displacement crisis in Europe since the Second World War; with almost 7 million fleeing across borders and another 3.7 million internally displaced.

And in Gaza, an entire population, predominately made up of refugees, is being denied humanitarian aid. The healthcare system has collapsed. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East has been criminalized. Humanitarianism itself has become a target.

With those deeply disturbing examples in mind, allow me to make three points.

First, the United Nations and its humanitarian partners must always be allowed to support the most vulnerable populations. In complex humanitarian emergency settings, it must have safe and unhindered access to those in need. That is the essential precondition for any meaningful response. It is also an obligation of all parties to conflict. In that regard, the Council and all United Nations Member States must unequivocally reject the deliberate use of bureaucratic and administrative obstructions to deny that access. Whether imposed by States or non-State actors — from Gaza to Ukraine and the Sudan — those tactics cannot be tolerated. In extreme cases, Denmark believes the Council has a duty to use the tools at its disposal to overcome such barriers.

Secondly, I am proud to say that Denmark is currently the fourth largest donor to UNHCR and an important donor to the broader humanitarian system. However, and as expressed by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, the humanitarian system is being reset. UNHCR itself is undergoing dramatic organizational adjustments that will impact its core capacities and operational outreach. Throughout this period of change, we must collectively support UNHCR in preserving its ability to uphold core aspects of its mandate by focusing even more on protection, durable solutions and emergency response.

In the coming years, we need to increase our support not only to forcibly displaced persons, but also to the host States and communities that shelter them. Put simply, we will need to do more with less, and we need to reach beyond traditional humanitarian approaches when doing so. Such approaches, however, must be done in a way that upholds the core humanitarian principles of independence, impartiality, neutrality and humanity. Equally they must not compromise the ethics that underpin humanitarian action and solidarity.

Finally, if we are to avoid a world defined by chaos, the Council must address not only humanitarian symptoms of current crises, but the underlying political drivers — we must take risks, as the High Commissioner advocated.

The Council should remain focused on finding political solutions to conflicts while ensuring that principled humanitarian action remains safeguarded and enabled. Humanitarian obligations must not be made conditional or subject to political negotiations.

In conclusion, Denmark reaffirms its unwavering support for UNHCR and the Global Refugee Compact. That agency represents multilateralism at its best — a shared commitment to solidarity with people who have been cruelly uprooted and dispossessed. The international community can continue to rely on Denmark to play its part.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): I also thank Mr. Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, for his presentation and update on the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). We also want to thank him for guiding us through several conflicts from the perspective of civilian refugees and internally displaced persons. We appreciate his passionate appeal to the members of the Security Council.

A record number of women, men and children have been forced from the places they once called home this year.

New records are surpassed as entire societies, such as the one in Gaza, are torn from their roots with ferocious speed.

Ukrainians continue to flee the bombing while the Security Council calls for peace.

In the Sudan alone, as many colleagues have recalled already, almost 13 million — nearly a third of the nation — now wander in search of safety. Those are not mere numbers; it is a display of a world in distress, a display of people pushed into poverty and hunger and exposed to disease, violence, exploitation and abuse. For displaced women and girls, that includes increased risks of sexual and gender-based violence.

There is one truth hiding behind all those shattered lives: the relentless disregard for international humanitarian law. We are witnessing its erosion with increasing speed. It is the Security Council's responsibility to protect the laws that have guided humankind for the past 75 years.

My delegation would like to outline three points, three directions that the Council and the international community should be making in order to stop and reverse these dangerous trends.

The first is to save lives, protect people and enable aid. We demand the absolute protection of civilians — always, everywhere. That protection extends to every humanitarian worker, to every United Nations and associated staff member, whether flown in from afar or recruited from the very communities they serve. Humanitarian access is not a matter of discretion; it is a legal obligation of every country under international law.

The second is to confront the climate displacement storm. Like Guyana, we want to point out the disaster that lingers in silence: climate change. Its effects present a growing everyday challenge, which calls for enhanced collaboration and action. Climate-fuelled floods, fires and prolonged droughts now drive families from their homes as ruthlessly as any gunman or bomb. Environmental degradation and water scarcity amplify existing conflicts and seed new ones, striking civilians hardest both during and after war. We therefore insist that climate and environmental considerations be woven systematically and without delay into every strand of conflict-prevention, resolution and peacebuilding.

The third is to support humanitarians and end statelessness. High Commissioner Filippo Grandi and the men and women of UNHCR serve on the very front lines of human need. They have our deepest respect, and they must feel and get our concrete support. As a Council, we must do more in terms of protecting humanitarian workers and ending impunity for attacks against them. Slovenia is committed to continuing to address the root causes of migration through its development aid. It has been responding to the needs of conflict victims and displaced populations, and it has been assisting with the safe return of refugees. We have ratified the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, and we will soon join the Global Alliance to End Statelessness.

If we follow those three directions, our chances for changing the tone and substance of meetings with the High Commissioner and many other meetings in the future will be better. Let us step up our efforts.

Mr. Sekeris (Greece): I would like to start by thanking the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi, for his in-depth yet sobering briefing and the very important messages he conveyed to us. My country, Greece, would like to express its appreciation to the High Commissioner for his continuous and ardent dedication to his mandate. We extend our full and unwavering support to his work, as clearly manifested during his visit last year to our country and his meetings with political leadership but also during our fruitful interaction in the framework of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

The world is currently facing one of the most significant humanitarian challenges of our time: the forced displacement of millions of people due to armed conflicts, violence, human rights violations, economic and social insecurity, food insecurity, natural disasters and the impact of climate change. The numbers speak for themselves and reflect a vicious circle of violence and deterioration of living conditions, with a dire impact on regional and international stability and peace. The numbers also reflect a blunt reality: the uprooting of human beings from their lives by forces beyond their control. Ongoing crises in Gaza, Syria, Ukraine, the Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Haiti and Venezuela are major drivers of forced displacement.

Allow me to highlight the following key points.

All of the conflicts mentioned share two common features: the blatant disregard of international humanitarian law by parties to conflicts and the lack of accountability. Both features have a devastating effect on civilians, civilian infrastructure and humanitarian personnel. We firmly believe that it is our duty, as members of the Security Council, to, first, ensure respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law; secondly, step up humanitarian action in order to support refugees and displaced persons and the countries hosting them; and thirdly, find meaningful solutions to reverse the displacement trends. Greece will continue to work in the context of the Security Council and beyond towards these goals.

As one of the front-line European Union member States still receiving large numbers of mixed arrivals, Greece contributes to the implementation of the mandate

of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) by hosting a significant number — in relation to its population — of refugees and asylum seekers. My country prioritizes the protection of most vulnerable groups, especially women and children, who are exposed to gender-based violence, exploitation, separation from families, lack of access to education and long-term psychological trauma. We have developed a comprehensive support system for unaccompanied minors, comprising, *inter alia*, accommodation, healthcare, nutrition, education, guardianship and integration, based on the best interests of the child. Our relevant strategy builds on the enhancement of the protection of children, especially from violence and exploitation, and the establishment of legal pathways for joining family members, through multilateral agreements for relocation and family reunification.

The management of refugee flows poses multiple challenges. At the epicentre of our current priorities on this issue lies the need for effective returns. Moreover, we remain gravely concerned about the involvement of criminal smuggling networks that exploit human suffering along migration routes and, of course, about the heinous practice of the instrumentalization of migration, which is in total disregard of international law.

In conclusion, let me stress that, against a discouraging backdrop of a world in crisis, marked by armed conflicts, the climate emergency and human rights violations, Greece calls for tangible actions in order to do the following: uphold international humanitarian law; address the root causes of the refugee and displacement crises; opt for local and regional solutions; increase the scale of funding for humanitarian assistance; and commit to the protection of forcibly displaced persons.

Ms. Swallow (Sierra Leone): I thank Mr. Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, for his comprehensive briefing and valuable insights. Sierra Leone commends the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the High Commissioner in particular for their efforts and commitment in assisting refugees and displaced persons.

Sierra Leone is deeply alarmed by the escalating global crisis of displacement, affecting refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons. The urgency of this situation cannot be overstated. Millions are being forcibly uprooted by persecution, armed conflict, violence, human rights violations, climate-related disasters and other catastrophic events. By June 2024, the global number of forcibly displaced persons had reached a staggering 122 million, including approximately 72 million internally displaced persons. This surge reflects the increasing number of conflicts worldwide. Africa, in particular, bears a disproportionate burden, hosting more than one third of the world's forcibly displaced persons, including nearly 22 million internally displaced persons. The crisis is particularly severe in the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where intensified conflict and targeted attacks on densely populated areas have driven significant displacement.

In view of the disturbing trends and growing challenges facing displaced populations, Sierra Leone wishes to highlight three key points.

First, we urge the Security Council to ensure the protection of displaced civilians in accordance with international human rights and humanitarian law. Despite existing legal frameworks and the Council's calls, notably through resolution 1265 (1999), parties to conflict continue to violate their obligations. We are witnessing relentless and targeted violence in the Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ukraine, Myanmar and Haiti, often involving destructive weapons such as drones and ballistic missiles. In Gaza, indiscriminate bombardments, the destruction of civilian infrastructure and attacks on humanitarian personnel remain deeply troubling and are clear violations of international humanitarian law.

Women and girls continue to bear the brunt of armed conflicts, displacement and climate crisis. Beyond the loss of agency, livelihoods, education and basic services, they face escalating levels of sexual and gender-based violence. Harrowing reports have emerged from Sudanese women fleeing to Chad, Congolese women in displacement camps around Goma and Rohingya women and girls in long-term refugee camps in Bangladesh. Climate-induced disaster further compounds their vulnerability and increases the severity of such violence. Such suffering, inhumanity and the existence of constant fear cannot be overemphasized and amount to a clear breach of international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

Secondly, the Security Council and the broader United Nations system must intensify efforts to ensure that life-saving assistance reaches those in need, in accordance with resolution 1674 (2006). That is especially vital amid declining humanitarian funding and increased restrictions on aid delivery imposed by belligerents. Humanitarian support for displaced persons must be grounded in a firm commitment to humanitarian principles alongside efforts to advance sustainable peace and development. In that context, we strongly condemn the growing number of attacks against humanitarian personnel, in particular in Gaza and the Sudan, and we call for the accountability of those responsible. Peace processes must prioritize civilian protection and uphold the core humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. The safe, voluntary and dignified return of refugees to their countries of origin remains critical for long-term peace and stability, including in the Middle East, where, as we learned from the High Commissioner's briefing today, more than 1 million Syrian refugees are returning home after years of conflict.

Thirdly, as a co-Chair of the Security Council's Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security and as a member of the Board of the Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, Sierra Leone commends UNHCR for its leadership in the Compact. We also acknowledge its partnership with the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund and its collaboration with agencies such as the World Food Programme and the International Labour Organization through programmes such as SKILL-UP in Africa and the Middle East. Those initiatives provide displaced persons with access to training, protection and asylum; deliver life-saving aid and work to reduce statelessness. We further welcome regional efforts to address statelessness, including the African Union's adoption of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights Relating to the Specific Aspects of the Right to a Nationality and the Eradication of Statelessness in Africa in 2024.

In conclusion, Sierra Leone reiterates its urgent call for countries and development partners to respond to the critical needs of displaced persons. UNHCR's global appeal for \$10.2 billion dollars for displaced and stateless populations remains sadly underfunded, with only \$1.5 billion dollars received to date. We hope that today's briefing serves as a catalyst for action, including through compassionate and responsive refugee and asylum policies.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): Let me also begin by thanking High Commissioner Filippo Grandi for his comprehensive and compelling briefing, his realistic assessment of the conflict situations around the world and his comments about the crucial role of the Council in effectively addressing those crises. We commend the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for its tireless efforts to protect and assist millions of displaced persons around the world. We wish the High Commissioner all the best. As he noted, this might be his last regular briefing to the Council.

The global displacement crisis has certainly reached catastrophic proportions. As has been noted by members today, more than 120 million people worldwide are forcibly displaced. Those are not mere statistics: they represent human lives, hopes and futures shattered by violence and injustice. At the root of the crisis lie conflict,

persecution, foreign occupation and entrenched inequalities. Those man-made tragedies continue to force millions to flee their homes, often with nothing but hope to sustain them. Yet even as displacement continues to rise, the global response remains unequal, unjust and woefully insufficient. Developing countries, many grappling with their own socioeconomic challenges, continue to shoulder the greatest burden. Meanwhile, developed nations, despite their greater resources and moral obligations, have increasingly turned inwards. Physical and political barriers have been erected, closing doors to those most in need.

The Middle East remains profoundly affected by the consequences of unresolved conflicts and illegal occupation, resulting in some of the world's most prolonged displacement crises. The right of return of Palestinian refugees, as affirmed by General Assembly resolution 194 (III), remains unfulfilled. Prolonged occupation and recurrent cycles of violence have produced successive waves of Palestinian refugees. Millions of others displaced from Syria, Yemen and other conflict zones across the region continue to await conditions conducive to voluntary, safe and dignified return. The situation in the Sudan is equally alarming. The ongoing conflict has displaced millions within and beyond the Sudan's borders. Urgent and concerted efforts are needed to end the violence and ensure humanitarian access and assistance. Elsewhere, crises across Africa, Latin America, the Sahel and Europe further exacerbate the global displacement challenge.

In Afghanistan, decades of conflict, economic collapse and persistent insecurity have produced one of the most protracted refugee situations in history. For more than four decades, Pakistan has upheld a proud tradition of compassion and hospitality, hosting one of the world's largest and most long-standing refugee populations. Despite associated economic and security challenges, Pakistan has provided shelter, protection and opportunities to millions of Afghans, besides facilitating the resettlement of Afghan citizens in third countries.

The existing architecture for addressing refugee situations, conceived in the aftermath of the Second World War, is no longer adequate for today's complex realities. The principle of equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing, as enshrined in the Global Compact on Refugees, remains largely unfulfilled. While developing countries host 85 per cent of the world's refugees, many developed countries continue to shrink the space for asylum, tighten immigration policies and reduce resettlement quotas. That is not burden-sharing: it is burden shifting. A fundamental rethink is urgently needed. Allow me to highlight a few key points.

First, we must address the root causes of displacement. The Council must act decisively to prevent new conflicts, resolve protracted ones and promote the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with international law. Forced displacement must be categorically rejected.

Secondly, equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing must be operationalized. Humanitarian and development support for refugee-hosting countries must be timely, predictable and delivered through grants, not loans, which further strain national capacities. We also urge donors to significantly increase financial contributions to UNHCR, commensurate with the growing scale of global displacement.

Thirdly, we call on developed countries to establish multi-year resettlement plans with fixed quotas, while ensuring that resettlement processes are efficient, predictable and inclusive. States with greater resources must also open more legal avenues for migrants and asylum-seekers.

Finally, voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration must be prioritized. Fully funded programmes, greater development aid to countries of origin and investments in critical infrastructure are essential to creating conditions for safe, dignified returns.

Pakistan firmly believes that the path forward is clear. The primary drivers of displacement — unresolved conflicts, foreign occupations and systematic denial of rights — must be addressed through the collective will and effective action of the Council and the international community. That duty is not merely a political obligation. It is a moral imperative that is deeply rooted in human history. In Islamic tradition the Hijrah — the migration of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him — stands as a timeless symbol of the pursuit of safety, dignity and justice in the face of persecution. It is from that journey that the Islamic calendar begins — a reminder that migration, though born of hardship, can give rise to new beginnings built on compassion, solidarity and resilience.

As we confront today's global refugee crisis, let us be guided and inspired by the exemplary responses of history, based on acceptance, not rejection; hope, not indifference; and not walls, but bridges of humanity. We are encouraged by the comments around the table today, particularly the role that the Council can play in addressing the refugee crisis by actively working to peacefully resolve conflicts, and we will work with fellow members to advance that objective.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I want to start by underlining our wholehearted support for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and High Commissioner Grandi's passionate leadership. He has steered the Organization through a decade of global change — a decade of increasing conflict, climate shocks and instability.

All those factors continue to push people from their homes, driving displacement ever higher. In the world today, more than 123 million people are forcibly displaced. In the face of such challenges, we must focus on solutions. I will highlight three that are priority areas for the United Kingdom.

First, we will continue to do all we can to tackle the root causes of displacement, including war, instability and repression. We will work at all levels, including through the Council, to protect the rules-based international system and promote peace. We will work with international partners to tackle people smuggling and human trafficking, which exploits vulnerable people for financial gain. Just this month, the United Kingdom led a successful border-security summit, at which we secured agreements among participating countries to drive efforts to disrupt organized immigration crime and save lives.

Secondly, we will seek solutions to regional and country-specific crises, many of which, from Ukraine to the Middle East, are the focus of the Council. This month, the United Kingdom hosted a conference on the Sudan, with humanitarian and political objectives, including support for an end to the conflict and easing the impact on the region, and we were grateful for the participation of Commissioner Grandi along with other parts of the United Nations leadership. In Cox's Bazar, we have funded UNHCR to support refugees' access to healthcare, clean water and hygiene. We will continue to advocate for safe, dignified and sustainable solutions for refugees, including at the United Nations Rohingya conference in September.

And thirdly, we continue to push for innovative approaches to addressing displacement. We support the High Commissioner's sustainable responses initiative, which supports refugee inclusion and self-reliance, and ownership of solutions by host countries. We look forward to the Global Compact on Refugees meeting in December — a key moment to review progress on pledges we made in 2023 to deliver better outcomes for displaced people and host communities — and we encourage others to join and sustain our collective efforts to achieve the Compact's goals.

In conclusion, to reverse the growing trend of displacement, we need to focus on solutions to the causes we have all discussed today. The United Kingdom is committed

to working with UNHCR and other international partners and institutions to achieve that.

Mr. Mohamed Yusuf (Somalia): Somalia welcomes High Commissioner Grandi to this meeting and thanks him for his comprehensive briefing. Since this is his last briefing, I join others in also thanking him for his dedicated leadership and for fulfilling his mandate in a challenging environment.

We recognize and commend the tireless efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in protecting and assisting more than 122 million people forcibly displaced worldwide — an unprecedented figure that has more than doubled in the past decade. In that regard, I wish to highlight three critical aspects of that global challenge.

First, the scale and complexity of current displacement crises require an unprecedented coordination and response. We are witnessing displacement at a scale that tests the limits of our humanitarian systems. In the Sudan alone, millions have been uprooted from their homes, while in Gaza, more than three quarters of the population face displacement, multiple times over. UNHCR's presence in those crises — as well as in Ukraine, Syria, Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo — remains vital for delivering protection and coordinating humanitarian responses.

Secondly, we note with deep concern the documentation of the erosion of international humanitarian law. Our humanitarian workers continue to document rising civilian casualties, weaponized hunger and sexual violence and deliberate attacks on critical infrastructure. We must reinforce our commitment to international humanitarian law and human rights principles. The Council's resolutions — 1265 (1999), 1674 (2006) and 2417 (2019) — provide the framework for protecting civilians and ensuring humanitarian access. However, without renewed commitment to those principles, we risk failing those who need our protection the most.

Thirdly, and perhaps most crucially, we must address the root causes of displacement. The intersection of conflict and inequality creates a continued storm of vulnerability. We must prioritize durable solutions while addressing the specific needs of vulnerable populations. Safe, voluntary and dignified return, and local integration and resettlement must be pursued in close consultation with affected communities and host countries. The particular needs of women, children and other vulnerable groups demand our focused attention, especially in preventing and responding to sexual violence in displacement settings. We call for sustained international assistance to ensure returns are sustainable and basic services and livelihoods are restored.

Somalia recognizes the severe financial constraints facing UNHCR. We appeal to all Member States and donors to scale up their generous support. Adequate, predictable and flexible funding is essential for UNHCR to fulfil its mandate and respond effectively to growing displacement needs.

Every refugee, regardless of background or skill set, deserves dignity and a durable solution.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of France.

At the outset I would like to thank Mr. Filippo Grandi for his briefing to the Security Council, a tradition during his mandate at the head of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). He starkly outlined the situation of forcibly displaced persons who seek security and made recommendations to ameliorate their suffering.

France commends the remarkable work accomplished by the High Commissioner during a mandate of almost 10 years. We pay tribute to his commitment to serving

refugee, stateless and forcibly displaced populations and, through him, we pay tribute to the dedication of the women and men who carry out UNHCR's mission throughout the world. I am thinking of those who have been wounded or have lost their lives undertaking that increasingly difficult mission, whether in Syria, Lebanon, the Sudan, Ukraine, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan or wherever their work is essential.

It is the Security Council's responsibility to address threats to and breaches of international peace and security, namely, the crises and conflicts at the root of most forced displacement. We cannot simply let UNHCR deal with those consequences. It is of course finding it increasingly difficult to do so, in a context of more and more crises and increasingly serious violations of international law and the protection of civilian populations. High Commissioner, France reaffirms, here in the Security Council, the strength of its political commitment to UNHCR's work.

As we know, UNHCR was established in the aftermath of the Second World War on a temporary basis, to help the millions of Europeans who had fled or lost their homes, in the hope that a lasting solution to the issue of refugees, displaced persons and stateless persons would be found. That mandate, which has been renewed many times, was extended indefinitely by the General Assembly in 2003 (General Assembly resolution 58/153). Forced displacement continues to increase. It remains one of the main consequences of crises and conflicts, of which civilians are the first victims. In 2015, 60 million people were forced into exile. Ten years later, in 2025, the figure has more than doubled. That change is the reflection of a world facing increasing and protracted conflicts and the combined effects of food insecurity, health crises, human rights violations, climate change and economic shocks.

The responsibility of the Council and the international community remains to support the displaced and those who host them. It is a question of solidarity and humanity. It is also a question that lies at the heart of security and peacekeeping. As the High Commissioner said, the risks of drastic cuts in funding are clear — human tragedies, instability and an increase in forced displacement. The already displaced populations that we will not help will have no choice but to go into exile again. We must be aware of that, and we must rethink our collective action to achieve greater efficiency and impact by involving local actors and host and transit countries of refugees.

In 2023, France co-sponsored the Global Refugee Forum, alongside Jordan, Japan, Colombia and Uganda. We made clear commitments back then to support UNHCR and the first countries that refugees reach and to share responsibilities through asylum capacity-building and legal channels for access to the territory — resettlement and humanitarian, academic and professional corridors. France has supported the multi-stakeholder initiative "Avec elles" for the protection and inclusion of refugee women and girls through all phases of displacement, supported by many partners.

Our collective action is reflected in increased support for the Global Compact on Refugees. By calling for shared responsibility, increased support for host communities and concrete solutions for integration or voluntary return, the Compact provides the framework for our joint action. It is an investment in stability. Enabling refugees to fulfil their potential with dignity and supporting the communities that host them — often at great sacrifice — is imperative.

On behalf of France, I would like to thank the High Commissioner once again before the members of the Council for his unwavering efforts in support of refugees and displaced persons and all those who host them.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to Mr. Grandi so that he may respond to the observations made and make a final statement.

Mr. Grandi (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for your words of appreciation and support, of which I have taken due note.

(*spoke in English*)

I would just like to add a few remarks to the points made today.

First of all, I would like to say that I appreciate not only the expressions of support that members shared with us today, but also, and in particular, the affirmations made by many regarding the importance of respecting international law and refugee law, including in matters related to receiving refugees and dealing with those who request asylum. Members will not be surprised if I say that that is at the core of my mandate and that of my organization. Not only do I appreciate members' statements, but I trust that they will translate into actual policies that respect refugee law and the right of people fleeing conflict or persecution to seek asylum in members' and other countries. I also appreciate that, in making those choices, States — as I mentioned in my opening remarks — must balance many considerations, including security, social impact and possible destabilization. I also trust that those considerations will be balanced with those regarding the international protection of refugees.

The response to increasingly complex movements of people must naturally be informed by the need to control and ensure security for members' citizens but can also only be effective if, besides those controls, measures offering opportunities to people on the move are implemented. That is the only way to manage, along the routes, as we have said many times, these very complicated population flows.

I thank you, Mr. President, and others for referring to the Global Compact on Refugees. As members know and as I always say, that Compact, which the General Assembly affirmed in 2018 (General Assembly resolution 73/151), is really a toolbox offered to States to better deal with increasingly complex population movements. That toolbox should be looked at and dealt with in conjunction with the other toolbox that the United Nations affirmed in the same week (General Assembly resolution 73/195), the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, because the two are complementary.

The second point I wanted to make is that many members mentioned crises and situations, including refugee situations, to which I only briefly alluded or did not mention in my initial remarks. As always, having to contain one's remarks within a limited period of time, one cannot, unfortunately, mention the many crises around the world. I am thinking of the crisis that has, for decades now, been devastating the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are witnessing — as we speak, actually — an outflow of Congolese refugees into neighbouring countries. Another region that is witnessing conflict and displacement is the Central Sahel in West Africa, from where people are being displaced, not only within the same countries but also to neighbouring countries, including coastal States in West Africa. Some members mentioned the continued difficult situation in Venezuela, which has led to major migration and refugee displacement in Latin America and, increasingly, beyond. Afghanistan was mentioned. Afghanistan continues to be a complex situation regarding human rights, but also regarding physical hardship for millions of people, with millions of Afghans displaced in the region, in particular in Pakistan and Iran.

I could continue, but I just wanted to flag that we are engaged in all those places and others. The one place where — as I said at the beginning, but almost all Council members mentioned it — we are not engaged because of the division of labour with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, of course, is the occupied Palestinian territory and Gaza in particular. I take note of the many mentions that Council members made of that devastating crisis just to flag that, although the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is not involved, as the head of a large humanitarian organization I fully

share the concerns and the appeals made by the Secretary-General and by some of my fellow heads of agency regarding the urgency of returning to the ceasefire, the urgency of releasing the hostages and, may I say, the urgency of getting a very weakened and fragile peace process back on track. For it is only by doing so that we can avoid, even after a ceasefire, the recurrence of conflict and of the impact on civilians.

Some Council members have directly or indirectly mentioned the increasing complexity of conflict. The representative of Guyana, for example, mentioned the increasing role of criminality and of gangs, which are one of the main factors of displacement in Latin America and in the Sahel and other places. It is very important to take that into account in order to better inform Council members' and our responses to this crisis. That also applies to the impact of the climate crisis, extreme weather events, droughts, floods and the diminishing of resources, which are also at the root of many conflicts — think of the Horn of Africa, think of West Africa again and of other parts of the world. That is an area in which humanitarian agencies have to renew the manner in which they respond to crises, but which also require the Council's cooperation on the political and security side.

I thank those Council members — practically all of them — who mentioned the importance of continuing to financially support humanitarian organizations and UNHCR in particular. I cannot emphasize more how dramatic the situation is. In this very period of time, I am leading an internal effort that may conclude with the retrenchment of my organization to up to one third of its capacity. We are one of the largest humanitarian organizations in the United Nations system, and some of my fellow heads of agency are leading similar efforts. That includes the World Food Programme and the International Organization for Migration, some of which we work very closely with. I spoke about that the other day in the Economic and Social Council. I was invited to speak at an event on displacement that was very useful. That is perhaps the forum in which to talk about these issues, but Council members must also understand that the retrenchment of agencies like UNHCR, the World Food Programme and UNICEF and their retreat from the theatres of crisis will also have an impact on matters of peace and security. That is because we will be much less able to exercise what is, after all, a stabilizing function in those areas, not only in respect of onward population movement, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, but also of the stability of those regions. If the current trend continues in terms of the freezes and cuts that, unfortunately, many donor countries have announced, the humanitarian system will be gravely retrenched. The Ambassador of Denmark spoke very eloquently about that.

I just have to note — not to take exception, but to further note — that if that trend continues, we will not be able to do more with less. As I have said many times, we will do less with less. We are already doing less with less. We are already cutting — I am speaking for UNHCR — programmes in education and health to focus on certain sectors. We are already cutting — and I say this because it was mentioned by the representative of Sierra Leone and others — valuable programme protection, programmes aimed at countering gender-based violence that all Council members care very deeply about. Many of those programmes were funded by financing initiatives that no longer exist. We will, of course, do our best to do less with less in the best possible manner and in the most strategic and effective manner. We will seize every opportunity within UNHCR, but also in the context of the humanitarian reset led by Emergency Relief Coordinator Tom Fletcher and in the context of the UN80 Initiative of the Secretary-General. We will do our best to remain strong, present and effective, but it will be very tough if those trends are not reversed.

I hear much, as Council members do, about the need to rebalance defence spending and to deal with possible trade tensions around the world. I hear very little in political circles about the terrible impact that the decline in bilateral and multilateral aid and

in humanitarian and development aid will have on affected individuals and countries and on international relations. Therefore, I am sorry for elaborating a bit more to assure the Council that we will do whatever is in our power to respond to that in the best possible way. Sustainable responses are one of the initiatives that we have put in place to respond to that, but there will be fewer offices, fewer programmes and fewer operations. Therefore, I really am grateful to countries like Denmark and Korea that have announced that they will remain stable and flexible in their funding, and I hope that others will follow their example. Please allow me to take this opportunity to stress that particular point.

In conclusion, and as I may be taking leave from the Council in my current capacity — although I still have eight months to go, so if the Council needs me, I am here — I would like to say that this debate and listening carefully to all Council members once again prove the point that I learned many years ago when I was not High Commissioner but when I was sitting behind other High Commissioners listening to their statements, namely, that there is an inextricable link between the work that the Council does and should do here as the Security Council and the work of an organization like mine, which is purely humanitarian but which deals with issues that are the result of political crisis and of conflict. There is a very important and inextricable link. Therefore, we will continue to urge Council members to do their best — because we do also realize the challenges that they are facing — to be as united as possible to try to bring to an end those conflicts that are causing the displacement crisis, and to remember, as many Council members have reminded us, that solutions are also important in those wars, because more than 70 per cent of the refugees are in poor or developing countries. The vast majority of the 123 million refugees are either displaced in their own country or in the country next to where the crisis is. Consequently, a solution of the crisis can reduce that figure quite quickly if those efforts are successful.

Please, then, let me repeat what I said. Continue to remain engaged. Try to be as united as possible. Take some calculated risks. In my long career, over more than 40 years dealing with this crisis, I have seen a decreasing appetite to take the risks that are necessary, especially to restore and to build peace. I mentioned Syria, I mentioned Myanmar — an even more complex situation — and I could mention other contexts in which we could embark on a solution, but the international community is a bit reluctant to take risks, and the risks are essentially political. That is why I am addressing that point with the Council, because those risks are very much part of our work. I also say that with a sense of gratitude for all the support that I have always received from Council members individually in this same body.

Unfortunately, UNHCR will observe its seventy-fifth anniversary this year. It was mentioned that UNHCR was founded in 1950. It is not a date to celebrate, but one perhaps on which to reflect on the challenges that we all face and to try and find some inspiration to address them together.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Grandi for the additional observations that he shared with the Council, and I once again commend him on his efforts at the helm of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.