

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
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NGO Statement
High Level Segment on Afghan Refugees

Agenda Item 4

This week we are discussing the protracted nature of Afghan refugees' residence in countries of the region and planning for their repatriation and sustainable reintegration. However, there is a lack of proper economic and social infrastructure in the country needed to provide basic services, not only for the local population but also for returnees. Moreover, there is growing insecurity in Afghanistan and the development of radical groups' movements in northern and western provinces. We are faced with new waves of Afghans attempting to migrate towards neighboring and European countries, without any guarantees they will receive the minimum support needed. We were collectively horrified by the recent bombing of an MsF hospital in Kunduz and express our condolences.

In this context, we cannot focus exclusively on returns. We urge states in the region and beyond to provide meaningful protection to Afghans, including those fleeing Afghanistan today.

After hosting refugees for three decades, neighboring countries of Afghanistan are faced with significant challenges to enhance their humanitarian space to support large caseloads of Afghan refugees and migrants in their countries. This is due to shrinking funding on one hand, and increasing internal obstacles on the other hand. Rising economic challenges as well as social problems resulting from the lack of proper integration have resulted in reduced social tolerance in hosting countries. We are concerned about the prospects for continued decent hosting by Afghanistan's neighboring countries.

Since its initiation in 2012, the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) has not made enough of an impact - neither in support of host countries nor for improving the situation in Afghanistan to allow refugees and migrants return to their homes. It has not secured the international community's commitment towards comprehensive support for Afghan refugees and asylum seekers in neighboring countries.

With appreciation for all efforts made during last 30 years by UNHCR to coordinate international support, and by host countries, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, for their comprehensive support for millions of Afghan refugees and asylum seekers, we request the continuation of support and international efforts to enhance and sustain the living situation of millions of Afghan refugees and asylum seekers in host countries and inside Afghanistan.

Although we are faced with deteriorating situations in other parts of the world, such as Syria, any disruption of humanitarian support for Afghan refugees and asylum seekers will eventually impact other regions. It is imperative to continue humanitarian assistance in protracted refugee situations. Repatriation can only be encouraged if it is safe and sustainable. Host countries should allow refugees to stay until voluntary repatriation is

To be delivered by Fatemeh Ashrafi of HAMI.

possible. All human beings in dire need of immediate assistance should be treated equally and without discrimination.

At the end of the day, we are at a juncture in history where future generations will judge us for our respect for human kind and human dignity. Humanity is non-negotiable.

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