



Royaume de Belgique

Intervention de S.E. Monsieur Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve,
Ambassadeur, Représentant permanent

Au Conseil de sécurité des Nations Unies

**Briefing par le Haut-Commissaire pour les Réfugiés,
Filippo Grandi**

New York, le 18 juin 2020

Mr. President,

We sincerely thank you for organising this briefing, without a doubt very timely and relevant in light of the current circumstances.

Mr. Grandi,

Thank you very much for your briefing today. In your briefing and in the Global Trends Report that was launched today, you have provided us once again with a very sobering account of an **unprecedented almost 80 million displaced, of which almost 30 million refugees** and others forcibly displaced outside their country. These figures seem to have become the barometer of our collective inability to prevent, contain and resolve conflicts. We should not forget that behind each one of these figures, we find the hopes and fears of a woman, of a child, o

Refugees and IDP flows are all too often a direct consequence of the **blatant and repeated violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law**. Respect for IHL from all parties to conflicts would without any doubt help decrease forced displacement and better manage internal displacement. Respecting IHL means facilitating humanitarian assistance to displaced persons and protecting them. Respecting IHL also means not bombing entire cities or spaces and infrastructure essential to the survival of the civilian population, and thus help create an environment conducive to the voluntary, safe, dignified, and sustainable return of refugees and IDP's. These issues of return and reintegration must form an integral part of each peace process, accompanied by measures like transitional justice to achieve reconciliation and sustainable peace.

Mr. Grandi,

We are particularly struck by your accounts of the **dramatic increase of refugees and IDP's over the last couple of months in the Sahel**, of the horrifying violence against vulnerable populations, including gender based violence, and of the risk of spillover of the conflict to neighbouring countries, not to mention of the compounding effects of COVID-19 on this already dire situation. These elements, including refugee and IDP flows, are indeed often an **alarm signal or an early**

warning for emerging, reemerging or worsening situations of violence and conflict, and should be analysed as such in reports to the Security Council in order to increase our capability to react and prevent.

Finally, this staggering figure of almost 80 million of forced displacements presents us with a big question mark about the **current international and regional cooperation** on the matter. Better and purposeful cooperation between the United Nations, the African Union and the European Union is needed. Belgium is grateful for the creation of the High Level Panel on Internally Displaced Persons and encourages the Panel to keep up the good work despite the hurdles Covid-19 is presenting.

Belgium also supports your efforts, Mr. Grandi, to call for a **renewed momentum for solutions and for efforts to build sustainable peace as this is key to resolving refugee flows and internal displacement**. We agree that the **Global Compact for Refugees is a useful tool in this regard**. Noting that 85 per cent of refugees find themselves in developing countries, the Pact rightly prioritizes support to host countries, sharing of responsibilities and burdens as well as the search for durable solutions.

Finally, we want to commend you and all the UNHCR staff around the world for your robust engagement in the response to complex emergencies, especially now in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. We are **proud and grateful to count UNHCR as one of our most important humanitarian partners** and hope to continue our financial support this year at the same level as in previous years, around 21M USD. We also want to thank you for the annual report on Global Trends in forced displacement, launched today.

Potential questions:

- Like you mentioned, ICRC's President called the COVID-19 crisis a "protection crisis" when he briefed the Council a few weeks ago. Based on your assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on the protection needs of refugees and IDP's, could you elaborate on how has UNHCR adapted its strategies to tackle these challenges?
- What is your assessment of the impact of climate change on the already existing vulnerabilities of refugees and IDP's, displaced by conflict? How is UNHCR adapting its work to better take into account the effects of climate change as increasing driver of displacement and conflict?