



**Islamic Republic of Iran
Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

**Statement by
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At the Plenary of Global Refugee Forum:

Burden and Responsibility Sharing

Geneva, 17 December 2019

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Mr. High Commissioner,

Distinguished Delegates,

My delegation is grateful to all who have contributed to the organization and preparation of this event.

Dear friends,

As you all know, Iran continues to be dealing with one of the most protracted refugee problems. We are truly proud of the contributions our people have made to the cause of protection of refugees not merely by providing them with reliable sanctuary and welcoming them among themselves but also, and perhaps more importantly, by offering them tools, space and courage to thrive. A testimony to this proposition is the level of literacy which is now at %68 comparing with %06 forty years ago when flocks of refugees entered Iran. Right now, the majority of 480,000 Afghan kids who are going to public schools in Iran are refugees.

Mr. Chairman,

We have made our utmost in supporting and protecting our brothers and sisters who have taken refuge in Iran and we pledge to continue to do so, being mindful of the very minimal support we have received from the international community and being cognizant of our limited resources. As a yet another sign of our long-time resolve to help Afghan refugees, we signed into the "Support Platform for the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host Countries". This new initiative could be fruitful provided that it is genuinely supported and adequately resourced by all stakeholders.

No doubt, voluntary repatriation is the most preferred solution for refugee problem, but we also expect others to shoulder their responsibility by keeping their doors open for resettlement. Responsibility and burden sharing need to be translated into action in all aspects.

We share UNSG's and UN High Commissioner's concern over the disturbing trend in the global North where refugees and migrants are dehumanized for domestic political gains.

Mr. Chairman,

We are very encouraged, during the course of our deliberations today, by many heartening pledges and words of support to ease the plight of refugees worldwide.

However, my delegation would have been most delighted if we heard a pledge by one particular Member State that happens to be among the major financial contributors, 'to discontinue afflicting the refugees with double pain and hardship by their unilateral sanctions against the hosting States'. It is very tormenting, Mr. High Commissioner, that the impact of unilateral sanctions on the host countries' capacity to protect refugees is conveniently overlooked. The international community should react to this inhuman practice and grave sin seriously.

Mr. High Commissioner,

No matter how much one may contribute financially to the UNHCR, charity does not absolve grave sins.

The US unilateral sanctions, as vindictive and cruel as they are, continue to take a heavy toll on the most vulnerable, including the people on the move, by stripping them of their right to health and access to medical care. This is a double injustice to refugees. The sanctions have also narrowed space for humanitarian work by politicizing humanitarian assistance and jeopardizing the activities of the humanitarian community. This is a shame for the whole humanity and an affront to solidarity among nations.

We hope this Forum becomes a turning point in making the principle of fair and equitable burden and responsibility sharing among all stakeholders as an integral part of the international refugee protection system.

I thank you for your attention.