



KENYA

STATEMENT

BY

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MINISTER OF STATE FOR IMMIGRATION AND
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ON

THE OCCASION OF THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE
1951 REFUGEE CONVENTION AND THE 50TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONVENTION ON
STATELESSNESS

WEDNESDAY 7th DECEMBER, 2011

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

The Chair,
The Secretary of State,
The High Commissioner for Refugee,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

I am sure each one of us feels gratified as I do on the occasion of the celebration of these two momentous anniversaries- the 60th anniversary of the 1951 refugee convention and the 50th anniversary of 1961 convention on statelessness.

Mr. Chairman,

The 1951 convention urge an international response to a human tragedy. That people forced out of their homes and habitats by war or other conflicts can seek and obtain protection and care across their borders.

The 1951 convention provides a framework of how to respond to refugee emergency and other protracted crises. We are gathered here together to show our commitment to the letter and spirit of the refugee convention and to find ways and means of dealing with this human catastrophe that affects so many people in their millions every year.

Mr. Chairman,

Today it is a shame that with all this progress that the world has made in science and technology, we can still be confronted with new forms of forced human displacement especially arising from human conflicts whose real causes are primitive to say the least.

Massive displacements continue, conflict multiply as old conflicts remain unresolved. It is estimated that 44 million people are currently uprooted as a result of conflicts. At the end of 2010 an estimated 7.2 million refugees were stuck in protracted refugee situation in 24 countries across the world.

In my own country Kenya, we have been host to many refugees fleeing conflict from our neighboring countries. The most protracted refugee situation has arisen from a cyclic assault on the government of the Federal Republic of Somalia by competing bands of armed forces for decades now.

These competing forces known variously as Islamic Courts, Al Shabab or pockets of Al-Qaeda have caused distraction to the Somalia state and sent hundreds of thousands of people, especially women and children fleeing Somalia to the neighboring countries of Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Yemen.

Kenya alone hosts over 600,000 people (several times the population of Geneva city) in camps in the different parts of the county and our cities.

Kenya is overwhelmed by this huge human translocation with its attendant monetary cost and security challenges. It is estimated that Kenya spends an average of USD 10 million per month of the tax payers' money to meet these challenges.

The Al-Shabab militia which operates under the auspices of the Al-Qaeda terrorist networks has become extremely adventurous and for a long time now:

- 1 . Planned and executed attacks on targets within the regions including suicide bombing in Uganda and Kenya.

2. Made numerous cross-border incursions particularly in north eastern region of Kenya that borders Somalia.
3. Laid landmines and improvised explosive devices (IEOS) targeting Kenya security personnel, equipment and installations at border towns
4. Abducted foreign tourists, relief agency workers and our own armed personnel
5. Increased the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, contributing to aggravated crimes in the region
6. Participated in large scale piracy activity in the horn of Africa – Indian Ocean coastline disrupting trade and increasing cost of doing business
7. Injured our tourism industry which is the mainstay of our economy after agriculture

These terrorist attacks on Kenya and its neighbors have forced Kenya to reluctantly join forces with the Transitional Government in Somalia to pursue and neutralize the Al Shabab bases inside Somalia and restore peace and a semblance of governance in the troubled country. The campaign is ongoing and we as a region are determined to bring this mess to an end.

However, we as Inter-governmental Agency for Development (IGAD) comprising Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Burundi, Sudan, Djibouti etc, - the frontline states and the entire African Union have resolved to confront this enemy head on and restore civilization in the republic of Somalia.

We appeal to the international community to politically and materially support our just cause. It is a conflict that has been thrust upon us that require enormous resource, energy and resolve to deal with it comprehensively. We have the resolve

and the human resources but we need hardware, technical and logistical support to complete the job.

Refugee problem will not be solved by humanitarian assistance alone. We must decisively intervene in Somalia by helping the TFG government to govern itself. This will effectively stem the outflow of refugees that continue to crowd camps in the neighboring.

In the meantime we insist that the host countries (that host large number of refugees) are entitled to burden sharing by the international community.

We need budget support to deal with the financing gaps that are occasioned by the drain on our respective treasuries to support the refugee crises.

We need to assist the host community who bear the greatest burden of the influx by supporting development projects in water, health and environment to avoid conflict between host community and refugees. Conflicts often arise from competition for water pasture and source of energy.

Mr. Chairman, in closing let me put emphasis on the following themes:

Firstly, it is imperative that we harness the political goodwill of the host country through international solidarity and burden sharing in confronting the refugee crises.

Secondly, we urge that the material support be extended to the frontline state to the conflict zones to enhance their own capacity in the face of attacks by the insurgents.

Thirdly, we must decisively deal with conflict that generate endless exodus of asylum seekers worldwide and to provide durable solution to the protracted refugee situation.

A refugee without hope is one too many

I THANK YOU