



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE STATE OF ERITREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS GENEVA

76th session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme
6-10 October 2025
Geneva

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi

Excellencies

Dear delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My delegation extends warm greetings and appreciation to the High Commissioner and his office for the comprehensive report presented at this session.

Eritrea believes that the plight of refugees and displaced persons goes beyond humanitarian concerns; it is deeply connected to peace, justice, sovereignty, and equitable development. To achieve durable solutions, we must address the root causes of displacement—wars of aggression, foreign interference, unilateral coercive measures, structural inequities, and the denial of the right to self-determination.

Eritrea has firsthand experience with these issues. The thirty-year struggle for independence created generations of refugees, and the subsequent decades of aggression, occupation, and relentless hostility have led to renewed cycles of displacement, often without recognition, support or voice.

Eritrea understands, from lived experience, the pain of displacement and the undeniable dignity of return. These issues must be addressed with rigor, fairness, and a respectful regard for the sovereignty of States.

Excellencies,

Eritrea must once again draw this body's attention to an issue that has long eroded trust and hindered cooperation: the so-called Eligibility Guidelines on Eritrea issued in 2009 and 2011.

The organization's guidelines on Eritrea are particularly concerning as they were developed without transparency or consultation. They were created without disclosing their underlying rationale and were shared with Member States, while Eritrea, the country in question, remained uninformed.

These Guidelines are fundamentally flawed and misrepresent the situation. These Guidelines allow for automatic refugee status, the overwhelming majority of whom are essentially economic migrants, thereby contributing to fraud in asylum systems, with estimates indicating that 40% to 60% of registered Eritrean refugees are of other nationalities. Additionally, many Eritreans who received asylum routinely visit home; a recurring pattern that vividly illustrates the tenuous justifications of “political persecution” invoked to rationalize the automatic granting of refugees status.

This grave matter cannot be resolved through minor revisions; the Guidelines should have been withdrawn long ago. Their persistence undermines the credibility of the UNHCR and hinders meaningful cooperation. While Eritrea does not expect to agree on every issue with its partners, it insists on minimum standards of honesty, fairness, and consultation.

Excellencies,

In closing, Eritrea is open to genuine engagement but cannot and will not accept misrepresentation through flawed documents. Our firm rejection of these Guidelines will continue until they are withdrawn, our confidence in this body's objectivity depends on addressing these concerns.

Thank you.