



CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND
RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES**

76th Plenary session of the UNHCR Executive Committee
General Debate

Geneva, 9 October 2025

Mr. Chairman,

High Commissioner Grandi,

Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, we extend our sincere appreciation to High Commissioner Grandi for his dedication and steadfast leadership in advancing the protection of refugees and displaced persons throughout his tenure. UNHCR has been — and will remain — an important partner to the Red Cross and Red Crescent, from the local to the global level.

Others have spoken of the immense challenges before us: increasing risks for asylum seekers and refugees, growing constraints on principled humanitarian action, shifts in the multilateral system, and, in some cases, erosion of the very solidarity that underpins international protection.

In the face of these challenges, we would like to highlight three areas where we are focusing and we see as essential to strengthening protection and assistance.

Mr. Chair,

1. **First**, addressing the needs of people on the move – including asylum seekers, refugees and other displaced populations – is a core strategic priority and commitment for our global network. This will not change.

This is also not new – we have a long tradition of providing principled humanitarian support to people on the move. Last year our global network supported more than 15 million people, including direct local assistance and protection for asylum seekers and refugees in more than 115 countries.

Our work builds on our mandate, our local presence, and our reach: **191 National Societies**, more than **200,000 local branches**, and **16 million volunteers**, many of whom are refugees themselves. We are present before, during, and after displacement — in countries of origin, transit, asylum, and return.

At the end of last year, our Movement adopted a new **Global Strategy on Migration, including Refugees**, jointly with the ICRC — reinforcing our shared commitment.

This year, we will take another step by launching a **Global Platform on Migration and Displacement**, to further mobilize our network, and promote coordinated, holistic action — addressing the interconnected needs of displaced populations across the full spectrum of displacement.

2. Second, *locally led action* must remain at the heart of our collective efforts to protect and assist refugees.

In recent years, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have collectively been the largest local partner to UNHCR. In 2023 National Societies worked to support refugees in 115 countries, some 28 in direct partnership with UNHCR.

We thank UNHCR for this partnership and commitment to locally led action.

But we need to go further. We cannot stall on localization.

In 2019, we led the first **multi-stakeholder pledge on localization**, and in 2023, supported a renewed pledge now joined by over **200 actors** — governments, NGOs, and local organizations — calling for stronger, more equitable partnerships, inclusive decision-making, investment in local capacities, and higher-quality funding.

For the IFRC, localization is not an aspiration — it is *our DNA*. We are a truly local network. We remain committed to working with UNHCR, governments, and partners to strengthen locally led action that delivers protection and sustainable solutions for refugees and displaced persons.

At the same time, in many countries – such as South Sudan, Cameroon, across the Americas - we see international organizations – including UNHCR – leaving, many due to funding cuts. Our National Societies do not leave, but they are being asked to do the work of many, with the same level of funding, and this is not possible. NS and other local actors need all of your help to be able to meet the many needs that still remain.

3. Third, at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum, as well as committing to further localisation, we pledged to prevent the loss of life along routes – including through our route based approach, to strengthen the meaningful participation of refugees, and to take action to reduce climate and disaster risks that lead to and affect displaced populations.

We remain committed to these core issues and look forward to continuing to work with UNHCR, Governments and partners to advance further, including at the Global Refugee Forum Progress Review this year

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Mr. Chair,

In closing, let us remember that 2024 has been the deadliest year for humanitarian workers and 2025 is on track to be even worse.

Of the over 280 humanitarian workers killed 99% have been local staff and volunteers. We must reverse and stop this trend.

At a time when global solidarity is strained and humanitarian principles are under pressure; our collective responsibilities could not be clearer.

To uphold them, we must ensure unhindered humanitarian access, safeguard principled humanitarian action, and protect and support the humanitarian workers who carry out this lifesaving and humanity-affirming work every day.

Thank you.