

**76<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE UNHCR EXCOM**  
**REPUBLIC OF SERBIA**  
**Dušica Popović, Acting Deputy Commissioner**  
**Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia**  
**Geneva, 7<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

Mr. High Commissioner  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

We thank the High Commissioner for his statement and we express appreciation to UNHCR staff and all partners for their dedicated engagement and work in protecting persons in displacement and finding durable solutions.

We are aware of the enormous efforts that UNHCR, headed by High Commissioner Grandi, is making to provide adequate protection and equally meet the needs of persons in protracted displacement, at the same time struggling with diminished resources.

The Republic of Serbia is committed to create conditions for permanent and sustainable solutions for all displaced persons as one of our key policy priorities. We would like to remind you of the successfully implemented Regional Housing Programme that enabled housing solutions for over 11.000 refugees in 4 Western Balkans countries, out of which 7500 in Serbia.

The Republic of Serbia, as a country on the Western Balkan route, has also been faced with mixed migration flows for a decade, and our response is based on the principles of solidarity, inclusion and protection of human rights.

The Republic of Serbia developed its system of providing international protection, including access to procedure, inclusion and integration, on the basis of protection of human rights with the support of UNHCR, which celebrates 50 years of presence in Serbia.

Since the outbreak of the refugee crisis in Ukraine, the Republic of Serbia has been actively involved in providing adequate protection and assistance to Ukrainian citizens who are granted temporary protection and all rights in accordance with international law.

We remind that Serbia made five pledges at the First Global Refugee Forum that have been fulfilled. Given the fact that we have fulfilled most of the pledges made at the Second Global Forum, we are reaffirming our readiness to contribute to durable solutions to the problem of increasing number of displaced people around the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to draw your attention to one of the longest and still unresolved refugee issues in Europe, and that is the issue of Serb refugees from the former Yugoslavia. There are still about 25,000 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia in the Republic of Serbia, that need further support.

In addition to the issue of refugees, the Republic of Serbia is also facing the protracted problem of internally displaced persons (IDP's) from the territory of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija, since 1999.

Refugees from the former Yugoslav republics and IDP's from Kosovo and Metohija make up around 10% of Serbia's population.

Currently, there are about 200,000 IDPs registered in Serbia and more than 17.000 internally displaced Serbs and non-Albanians within the Province.

Allow me to bring to the attention of this Committee an unacceptable situation in our Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija that is a result of violation of human rights by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Priština. The position of Serbs and non-Albanian population is still deteriorating daily, through introducing impunity for ethnically motivated crimes against Serbs, Serbian Orthodox Church and their property. Conducting arbitrary arrests, unlawful intrusions and closures of facilities of institutions of the Republic of Serbia. Obstructing freedom of movement, illegal expropriation of land, as well as many other acts of violence.

The above-described and continuous ethnically motivated attacks have resulted in the departure of more than 20% of the Serbian population from the territory of Kosovo and Metohija in the past two years alone.

The return of Serbs and other non-Albanian population to Kosovo and Metohija is one of the most unsuccessful in history. They have been provided with neither sustainable return, nor access to basic human rights and essential needs. After 26 years of displacement, the rate of sustainable return compared to the total number of IDP's in Serbia amounts to less than 2%.

It is necessary for the international community to enable the implementation of the signed agreements within the EU-facilitated dialogue, and thus the safe and effective return of Serbs and non-Albanians to the territory of the AP of Kosovo and Metohija, including the formation of the Community of Serb majority Municipalities. I would like to remind you that this obligation from the Brussels agreement is still pending for more than 12 years.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to conclude, that UNHCR remains an important partner for the Republic of Serbia in addressing the needs and finding durable solutions for all displaced persons in the Western Balkans.

Thank you for your attention.