



**Statement by Ms. Nino Javakhadze,
Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Of Georgia
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General Debate**

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Madame Chair,

Mr. High Commissioner,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to address such a distinguished audience today and share with you the recent developments in the situation regarding asylum seekers and refugees in Georgia.

Today, I also have an opportunity to share the experience of Georgia in securing the rights of forcefully displaced persons.

Georgia has received 542 asylum-seekers - in 2018 (with the top countries of origin: Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Iraq). Nowadays, there are 1410 international protection holders in Georgia, among them 442 are refugees and 968 - humanitarian status holders.

Georgian asylum system has been enhanced during recent years since new legislation and institutional framework were introduced in the asylum procedure. The law of Georgia "On International Protection" is in line with 1951 UN Convention and its 1967 protocol, the legislation specifies general principles and strengthens procedural safeguards at all stages of the asylum procedure; guarantees special procedures for persons with specific needs; elaborates rights and freedoms of asylum-seekers, refugees and other persons in need of international protection, providing them with more favourable treatment.

While guaranteeing their safe stay in Georgia, asylum-seekers, refugees and humanitarian status holders benefit from the state universal healthcare program and enjoy the right to education and labour rights; international protection holders also benefit from monthly financial allowance during their stay in Georgia as well.

Georgian Government has active cooperation with UNHCR and other international organizations while guaranteeing efficient asylum procedure as well as socio-economic assistance to our persons of concern.

With the spirit of deepening international cooperation, through which the Georgian asylum system will be more refined and efficient, Georgia has already expressed the cooperation initiative to European Asylum Support Office (EASO).

Georgia has also been participating in drafting of the Global Compact on Refugees. Since GCR aims to mobilize relevant stakeholders, including states, to contribute in solving current refugee challenges, Georgia has been vocal to examine the provisions of GCR in cooperation with the Regional Representation of the UNHCR in South Caucasus. Not being a legally binding document for states, Georgia considers GCR as a guideline and expression of the political will of states to resolve the refugee crisis.

In light of the foregoing considerations, it should be noted that Georgia has its own difficulties with regards to displacement.

As you are well aware, 20% of Georgian territory is occupied and the IDPs constitute approximately 7% of the total population (280,055 IDPs). To this day they live in protracted displacement as there is no progress in terms of the implementation of their right to return to their places of origin.

Until the environment is safe enough for the ultimate goal - their voluntary, safe and dignified return - the Government provides Durable Housing Solutions (DHS) to IDPs and facilitates their full integration in the places of their residence. Through multiple accommodation programs more than 110,000 IDPs (110,835) had received housing from the Georgian government. Moreover, in order to strengthen the security and motivation of IDPs, these housing units are transferred into their private property.

I would like to inform you that following a recommendation of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, the work is ongoing concerning planning IDP allowance reform, which will allow the government to shift from status to needs-based assistance. Taking into the account the sensitivity of this issue, adequately informing IDPs and explaining to them the reform in detail is extremely important. Therefore, broad consultations with IDPs are ongoing. In this regard, we are grateful for the UNHCR Representative in Georgia and its support in this campaign.

I hope we will continue our fruitful cooperation based on the best interests of IDPs, refugees and asylum seekers.

Once again, please allow me to express my sincerest gratitude to the Office of the High Commissioner and personally to your, Mr. Grandi and wish success in all future endeavours.

Thank You!