

UNHCR Executive Committee 72nd session
Statement by Mr. Donatas Tamulaitis, Chargé d'affaires of the Republic of
Lithuania to the United Nations Office in Geneva,
6 October 2021

Madam/Mr. Chairperson, High Commissioner Grandi, Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to participate in this General debate and to address you on behalf of Lithuania.

Lithuania fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and would like to add few remarks in our national capacity.

I wish to take this opportunity to express Lithuania's gratitude to the UNHCR for the long-lasting partnership and fruitful cooperation.

As we witness new and recurring conflicts, and ever-more disturbing forms of violence and persecution, we share the concern of the High Commissioner regarding the increasing needs of humanitarian assistance to refugees and displaced persons.

The COVID-19 pandemic presents yet another serious challenge. In this respect, we highly value the activities of the UNHCR in guaranteeing international protection and safeguarding the rights and well-being of refugees and other persons in need of international protection. Furthermore, international cooperation under the leadership of the UNHCR is an essential element to the refugee protection.

Lithuania as a committed member of the international community is doing its utmost in fulfilling our obligations and commitments in the areas of refugee protection and humanitarian assistance. Lithuania contributes annually to the alleviation of humanitarian needs by allocating financial resources through the office of the UNHCR.

At the same time, we cannot fail to see the problems of the internally displaced persons who can often be in even more vulnerable situations, due to the security risks and lack of access in areas affected by conflict and instability. Be it in Georgia or Ukraine, where the IDPs are fleeing the zones of Russian aggression, there is a strong need of global attention and concrete steps for finding solutions to internal displacement

globally. We commend the UNHCR for the support it has provided to the IDPs through protection, legal assistance, policy development and capacity building.

Madam/Mr Chairperson,

Let me use this opportunity to raise the issue of particular importance to my country as well as other Member States of the European Union. We are extremely concerned about the ongoing worrisome actions at the EU external border undertaken by Belarus. We consider it as a hybrid attack, aiming to destabilize the EU Member States by means of irregular migration of citizens from third countries in order to achieve its political goals.

At the same time, Belarus has made numerous attempts to spread disinformation in international fora, including in this Executive Committee, in relation to this crisis.

We would like to stress that entire responsibility for this inhumane situation and its consequences lies with the Belarusian regime. We call on international community to firmly condemn the instrumentalization of migration and engage with the Belarusian authorities urging them to assume their full responsibility in compliance with the international legal obligations related to persons coming from the third countries. We are grateful for UNHCR's attention to the situation and the support we have received so far.

Madam/Mr Chairperson,

Let me assure you that Lithuania is committed and ready to take part in finding solutions for global refugee related challenges that we face today.

I thank you.