



GOVERNMENT OF MALAWI

STATEMENT BY

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HOME AFFAIRS AND INTERNAL SECURITY**

**AT THE 69TH SESSION OF THE UNITED
NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES
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Chairperson, first and foremost, I bring my best wishes and warm greetings from Malawi, the Warm Heart of Africa, to this Conference. I would also like to thank the Government and people of Switzerland for the warm hospitality accorded to all delegates to the Conference, since our arrival in this beautiful City of Geneva.

Let me join the earlier speakers in congratulating you, Chairperson, on your appointment to lead the deliberations of the 69th Session of the UNHCR Executive Committee (EXCOM, 2018). I also wish to convey the Malawi Government's appreciation to the High Commissioner for the wonderful work and support provided in the management of refugee operations in Malawi in the past year.

Your opening statement Chairperson, underscores UNHCR's continued commitment to assist Governments in curbing and containing the refugee situation, internally displaced and stateless individuals globally.

Allow me, also to thank the UNHCR staff for the excellent humanitarian operations worldwide and it is the hope of the Malawi Government that the good work will continue in the years to come. We fully associate ourselves with the statement made on behalf of the African Union (AU).

Chairperson, allow me to assure you that by acceding to the 1951 UN Convention and the 1969 OAU Convention, the Government of Malawi made a strong commitment in the management of refugees. We have maintained open borders and have been hosting refugees for over four decades. Refugees are allowed to stay, until the conditions are safe in their respective countries. This was also the case with Mozambican refugees who were in Malawi between 1985 and 1996.

Currently, Malawi is also caring for over 2,700 Mozambican asylum seekers who are being hosted at Luwani Refugee Camp in Neno District in the southern part of the country. Plans are underway between the Governments of Malawi and Mozambique in collaboration with the UNHCR to facilitate the Voluntary Repatriation of the caseload. The Tripartite Agreement to facilitate the Voluntary Repatriation of the caseload is still pending and consideration is being made for the process to be carried out through the exchange letters between the Malawi Government and UNHCR. As an updated, a caseload of 2,500 voluntarily left the camp by 29th September, 2018 while others have believed to have left spontaneously.

Further to this, there are over 42,000 individuals from Rwanda, Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), among other countries being hosted in Dzaleka Refugee Camp, our main camp in Dowa District in the central part of the Country. Another 1,500 newly arrived giving a total of 43,500 population.

All refugees are accorded equal rights and protection under the Malawi Constitution and are not restricted from engaging in self-employment within and around the designated areas of residence. Those with rare professional qualifications are recognized and employed on issuance of relevant permits.

Under the CRRF which Malawi is to adopt, it is Government's desire to enable refugees to become self-reliant and not to rely on food and non-food handouts, once the CRRF is rolled out. The plan is to adopt the settlement model at the new camp in Katiri in the northern part of the country. The establishment of the new camp will require a lot of cooperation and coordination from relevant stakeholders to provide funding. At present Government plans to finalise the environmental impact assessment of the area to ensure its feasibility. The Government has set aside K500 million for the project, but we request for more financial support from the Donors community.

At this point, let me register sincere appreciation for the support rendered by the cooperating and Implementing Partners. These include: World Food Programme (WFP), Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), Plan-Malawi, Churches Action on Relief of Development (CARD), World University Service of Canada (WUSC), UNICEF, OXFAM, CARE International, WHH and World Vision.

Chairperson, Malawi has continued to implement the Comprehensive Strategy for the Rwandans affected by Cessation. Consultations and follow ups are currently being conducted for all ceased applicants and voluntary repatriation is being⁴ encouraged.

Chairperson, Malawi however continues to be concerned with the increased problems of mixed migration. Most migrants avoid official border posts and claim to be asylum seekers after being intercepted. We hope to continue strengthening our screening systems in order to curb the malpractice as we continue to receive over 500 to 600 individuals every month. This has developed into a protracted situation that might last longer than expected.

Chairperson, our food distributing agency, World Food Programme Malawi has plans to go into targeted food distribution for the vulnerable groups on the monthly food rations. This will help manage the protracted caseload at Dzaleka.

With this in mind, we would like to make, once again, a request to the International Community to assist the Government of Malawi through:-

- (a) Resettling some of refugees to other countries;

We would like to express our gratitude to the United States of America, Canada and Australia, among others that have allowed the resettlement of some of the refugees from Malawi;

- (b) Pledging more food aid to WFP to help improve the food rations;
- (c) Lobbying refugee originating states in the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region to encourage their people to Voluntarily Repatriate. Malawi, being a strong advocate for Voluntary Repatriation as one of the durable solutions, stands ready to facilitate this process; and

- (d) Pledging more financial resources for initiating programmes aimed at promoting self-reliance among refugees.

In conclusion, **Chairperson and Distinguished Members** let me assure the meeting that Malawi remains committed to the management of refugees together with UNHCR and other partners in the best interest of the people we all care for.

I thank you all for your attention.