



**Statement**

**by**

**H.E. Dr. Nawaf Salam  
Permanent Representative of Lebanon  
to the United Nations**

**at the  
Third Committee**

**Item 60: “Report of the UNHCR, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions”.**

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Madam Chairperson,

Today the world is facing the largest crisis of enforced displacement since World War II. 90% of refugees live in developing countries and eight countries alone host more than half of the world's refugees.

As so rightly stated in the report of the High Commissioner for Refugees, "rarely before has the issue of refugees been so squarely in the spotlight. We must take advantage of the centrality of refugees in the current debate and leverage more support to address their plight".

Nevertheless, it is important to recognize first that there are two groups of victims: the displaced and refugees on the one hand, and often, the host communities on the other.

Madam Chairperson,

With 1.2 million registered Syrian refugees and over 400 thousand Palestinian refugees living in camps across the country for more than seven decades, Lebanon is today the country with the highest ratio in the world of refugees and displaced both per capita and per sq/km.

The mass influx of Syrian refugees into Lebanon has multiplied the challenges facing the country overstretching its originally limited resources and its education, health, energy, water and sanitation infrastructure, reducing housing capacity, increasing unemployment levels, seriously affecting the economic activity and investment climate, and threatening its security.

Based on our national experience, and challenges we face, we can assert that the only way forward is a global shift in the humanitarian assistance approach.

It is time indeed to recognize the need to move from only humanitarian assistance to addressing the development needs of refugees and displaced as well as those of host communities.

Madam Chairperson,

Burden and responsibility sharing remain fundamental principles in addressing the consequences of forced displacement, while sustainable solutions to refugee situations need to address, first and foremost, the root causes of their displacement.

Furthermore, the specific context of each situation should be appropriately taken into consideration. For example, Lebanon as enshrined in its constitution cannot be a country for resettlement and/or naturalization. Hence, seeking solutions, from local regional or international should be based on the above mentioned principles.

Madam Chairperson,

Lebanon reaffirms the need to make the return of displaced persons and refugees one of the chief priorities in the commitment for durable solutions.

We welcome in the regard the conclusion in the report of the High Commissioner for Refugees to start working on repatriation, “even when return is not yet an option”. Which means to engage with “development actors in a meaningful way to stabilize countries emerging from conflict, to lay the groundwork to end protracted displacement through new approaches, and to ensure that when returns take place they are sustainable”.

Finally, I would like to reiterate Lebanon’s commitment to the principles of human rights and international humanitarian law. As a small country, and despite the immense challenges on its resources, stability and security, Lebanon continues to strive for the realization of the goals and purposes of the UN Charter.