



**Permanent Mission of The State of Eritrea  
To the United Nations, New York**

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STATEMENT BY MS. ELSA HAILE, DIRECTOR OF REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DIVISION, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE STATE OF ERITREA ON AGENDA ITEM 61-“REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS” AT THE THIRD COMMITTEE 69<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 06 2014

Madam Chair,

I would like to thank the UN Secretary-General for his reports and the High Commissioner for his briefing.

Eritrea aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Mauritania on behalf of the African Group.

Madam Chair,

Armed conflicts, poverty, food insecurity, natural disasters and humanitarian crisis continue to contribute to the increase of international refugees and mixed migration. Eritrea takes note with concern of this global phenomenon as elaborated in the report of the UNHCR.

Refugees and immigrants, in particular from developing countries, are increasingly facing discrimination and xenophobic attacks in many countries, especially in the West. There is a need to galvanize our efforts to enhance the protection of refugees worldwide. No group or individual, armed or non-armed, should be allowed to enter the refugee camps or receiving centers. The camps and the centers must not be used as recruitment or political agitations facilities. The rights and dignity of refugees and mixed migrants must be fully respected. The camps and centers should be under the full control of the UNHCR.

Eritrea is a signatory to the African Refugee Convention. Eritrea's record in dealing with refugees and immigrants is exemplary.

Madam Chair,

Eritrea maintains a policy of voluntary repatriation of its nationals from any country. And it strongly opposes any forced repatriation or expulsions. Contrary to what is claimed by some quarters that have an axe to grind against the government of Eritrea, Eritreans who have been repatriated face no persecution or detention. They are in fact encouraged to come back and assisted to reintegrate into their respective societies and reconnect with their families. As a result, over the past few years thousands of Eritreans have voluntarily returned home from Africa Europe and the Middle East.

Madam Chair,

Eritrea concurs with the High Commissioner's statement that the issue of refugees and mixed migration cannot be addressed without properly dealing with its root causes. All member states should respect their international law commitment and treaty obligations. Occupation of any country by another should not be tolerated. Unjust sanctions which adversely affect the welfare of the people in particular woman and children, must be unconditionally and immediately lifted. Eritrea believes that the work of the UNHCR should also be conducted in conjunction with the development activities of the United Nations agencies.

Madam Chair,

International migration needs a clear legal, orderly, regular and non-discriminatory mechanism. A clear distinction between economic migrants and refugees is critical and important. Developing the necessary capacity to maintain the clear distinction between economic migrants and refugees would better address the protection needs of international refugees and will save unnecessary expenditure. Conducting a thorough vetting process in determining refugee claimants as economic migrants is a prerequisite for a long term solution of their repatriation or reintegration.

Moreover, it is important for countries of destination to create a mechanism on who is who, and what his/her true identity and nationality is. For the sake of political expediency, preferential treatment of Eritrean asylum seekers by the western countries has lured other nationals to be registered as Eritreans. This is a criminal act that needs to be investigated.

Let me conclude, Madam Chair, by stressing the importance of cooperation between UNHCR and concerned states to find a durable solution for the problem of refugees and mixed migration. Eritrea reiterates its full commitment to the values and principles of UNHCR.

I thank you, Madam Chair