

Statement by Mr. Ali Hajilari  
First Counselor of the Permanent Mission  
of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations  
At the Plenary Debate of the International Migration Review Forum  
20 May, 2022 – New York

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

Mr. President,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the course of these four days, we have been presented with eloquent and articulate discourse in the discussions raised by the respected representatives of countries as well as different panelists and discussants. I am sure that as these discussions continue, there will be more statements and remarks with thought-provoking content and ideas that have yet to be presented.

Among the various topics of discussion witnessed, I have taken notice to a number of countries that have not experienced any war, sanctions or conflicts but at the same time, they complain about the presence of just a few thousand refugees and migrants. This observation has compelled me to elaborate on the situation in Iran as it is a host to more than four million refugees and migrants.

It is a well-known fact that my Country has experienced eight years of imposed war. Many of you may have not been born during this era, or some of you were little children just like me and perhaps cannot recall that the very countries which are now raising concerns over the negative impacts of wars and conflicts on migratory flows were also painfully silent during that time or have even played the role of aiding the aggressor.

Iran has also suffered and continues to suffer from a multitude of hostilities, including illegal unilateral coercive measures and illegitimate sanctions, for more

than four decades while, at the same time, hosting more than four million refugees, migrants, displaced persons as well as illegal and undocumented aliens.

We have heard from different delegations regarding the negative impacts of wars and conflicts on the influx of refugee and migratory flows. We also understand and confirm these perspectives because we continue to experience these impacts after four decades. This all occurs in the absence of international support and under grave situations caused by war and unilateral measures, economic blockades and illegal unilateral sanctions. Two days ago in Tehran during her visit to my Country, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impacts of UCMs on Human Rights reiterated that there are half a million Afghan children living in Iran. Furthermore, it was noted that UN agencies cannot even fulfill their commitments towards this vulnerable population due to illegal unilateral measures and sanctions.

My Country has generously hosted millions of refugees, displaced persons, migrants and foreign aliens, documented or undocumented, in the absence of international support and simultaneous with the harshest unilateral sanctions ever imposed on a Country.

Mr. President,

With the situation in Afghanistan and the recent challenges it imposes, we are facing a new wave of displaced persons. However, it seems that some of the countries have taken a double standard approach, which is not a new experience to Iran, and have forgotten this reality and turned a blind eye towards it.

With that being said, I would like to remind you that as responsible members of the international community, you are accountable for not only shaping and implementing effective capacity-building measures but also sharing this heavy burden weighing on the shoulders of my Country. It is more than evident that if Iran had not stepped up to host this massive population, you certainly would have faced them on your borders and would have been forced to carry the burden of deciding how to proceed forward.

In this regard, the very least that can be done for the rights of migrants and refugees is to work towards effectively eliminating UCMs and illegal sanctions on a Country generously hosting millions of refugees, migrants and displaced persons over the time span exceeding more than four decades while providing them - irrespective of their legal status - with the same services provided for its own citizens.

I thank you, Mr. President.