



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK**

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

GENERAL ASSEMBLY, THIRD COMMITTEE

STATEMENT BY MANUEL FRICK, SECOND SECRETARY

ITEM 62: REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

Mr. Chairman,

This year we commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugee as well as the fiftieth anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. Liechtenstein reiterates its commitment to the principles and provisions enshrined in the conventions. We welcome the continued dedication of the High Commissioner for Refugees and his staff to uphold these principles when relieving the plight of refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons.

61 years after the creation of the UNHCR, the world faces displacement of enormous dimensions: With 33.9 million people of concern to UNHCR, including 10.6 million refugees, and 43.7 million people forcibly displaced by conflict and persecution worldwide – the highest number in 15 years – the work of the UNHCR is as indispensable as ever. Providing assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons also remains a central element of the broader challenge of this organization to promote peace, development and human rights, in particular gender equality.

Mr. Chairman,

Taking stock after fifty years of the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, we are particularly concerned about the number of stateless persons that is estimated to come close to 12 million, only 3.5 million of which are identified as such by the UNHCR. The large shadow number reflects the notorious difficulties of stateless persons to claim their fundamental rights and freedoms. Additionally, there is a serious risk for statelessness to increase due to new challenges, such as climate change. As a States Party to the Convention, Liechtenstein remains committed to assume its responsibility in reducing statelessness and will continue to work together with the UNHCR in that regard.

Mr. Chairman,

Liechtenstein is deeply concerned about the 27.5 million persons currently displaced within their country for reasons of armed conflict. To establish a secure environment and to bring assistance to the affected population is a major humanitarian challenge for intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. We particularly urge all parties to conflicts to live up to their obligations under international humanitarian law and to facilitate the work of relevant organizations in this field, in particular of the ICRC and the UNHCR by providing the necessary humanitarian space to carry out their operations effectively.

Mr. Chairman,

As the report of the High Commissioner for Refugees underlines, sexual and gender-based violence continues to be one of the most serious threats to the protection of displaced persons. Women and girls are frequently exposed to widespread rape and sexual violence, other human rights abuses and early marriages. We are deeply concerned by the numbers of cases documented by UNHCR, for example over one thousand cases of such violence in 2010 alone in Chad. Ending violence against women in all its forms continues to be a priority for Liechtenstein. Not only are these violations of the rights of women, but they cause significant harm to the physical and mental health of women and constitute a major challenge for

development. Targeted projects must be implemented that aim at ending these violations and reducing the exposure of women and girls to such violence and at ensuring that women can obtain legal advice and legal representation.

Mr. Chairman,

To conclude, let me assure that we will continue to work together with and to support the UNHCR within its continued dedication to relieve the plight of refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons.