

CONCEPT NOTE

Responding effectively to the needs of refugees, displaced persons and returnees. The role of the United Nations Security Council and its members.

Monday June 24th/CR3/1000-1300

I. Introduction:

The magnitude of the current figures handled by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (more than 70 million people in 2018) reminds us that we are living a moment in human history in which we have surpassed the highest numbers ever recorded; as States, we have a common obligation to provide an adequate response to this growing problem.

On December 17, 2018, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Global Compact on Refugees, which is an appeal to the international community to react to this crisis by providing increased and better support for refugees.

In the same context, the African Union, at its 32nd Ordinary Session of the Assembly from 10 to 11 February in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, adopted its 2019 theme of the year: "The year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards lasting solutions to forced displacement in Africa ". The objective is to find ways to meet the material and protection needs of displaced persons and to find creative solutions to this humanitarian crisis that should be understood as a collective challenge to the wellbeing of humankind and its ability to progress. To this end, President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo was appointed in January as the continental Champion of this cause.

The efforts made by many United Nations Member States, the United Nations System and other stakeholders, including regional organizations and civil society are truly commendable. However, the world needs concrete and urgent actions. As was stated by UNHCR Filippo Grandi on his April briefing to the Security Council, the global response to this serious crisis is "fragmented, focused on alleviating symptoms rather than dealing with the root causes."

II. Purpose and scope of the meeting

The meeting, organized on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the 1969 Convention of the Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (OAU Convention for Refugees) and the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the AU Convention of 2009 for the Protection and Assistance to internally displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) provide an opportunity to address the issue of refugees focusing on debunking the causes that precipitate this phenomenon, mainly poverty and political instability in places of origin. Also, it will provide ample opportunity to identify and discuss challenges and best

practices relevant to the context of increasing effectiveness of prevention and response strategies. In addition, it will provide a platform to consider, inter alia, the role of the Council and its Members and explore possible contributions for a permanent solution to this real-life drama.

III. Format and participants

The Arria-formula meeting will be organized by the Permanent Missions of Equatorial Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire and South Africa in conjunction with the Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union to the United Nations. They have worked closely with the Office of the Special Adviser to the SG for Africa, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the local ICRC representation.

Security Council members are invited to take the floor for no more than five (5) minutes, focusing on practical proposals for action aimed at increasing the effectiveness of protection of refugees and displaced persons and to facilitate safe return of those returning.

All other members of the United Nations are offered the opportunity to make brief and specific comments in no more than three (3) minutes.

IV. Briefers:

1. Mr. Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees (VTC)
2. Mrs. Fatima K. Mohammed, Permanent Representative of the African Union
3. Mrs. Bience Gawanas, Special Advisor of the SG for African Affairs
4. Mr. Gilles Carbonnier, Vice-President ICRC (VTC)

V: Indicative questions for consideration

Participants are requested to focus their interventions on practical steps to make the international response to the refugee crisis more effective. Suggested questions to guide interventions are the following:

1) How can the Security Council and its members contribute to improving the situation of refugees, displaced persons and returnees given the implications of this phenomenon to international peace and security?

2) What role can the Security Council play in implementing some of the key provisions of the Global Compact on Refugees?

3) How can the international community better support the strategic partnership between the AU and the UN to produce a better impact on the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons worldwide?