

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Naseer Ahmad FAIQ**  
**Chargé d'Affaires of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the United Nations**  
**United Nations General Assembly, Third Committee**  
**Agenda Item 60: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions**

**06 November 2024**

Thank you Madam Chair,

The crisis facing Afghan refugees today is among the most pressing humanitarian challenges of our time. Since the Taliban's forced takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021, millions of Afghans have sought refuge beyond their borders, escaping violence, economic collapse, and systemic rights violations. Neighboring countries now host **6 million Afghan refugees and asylum-seekers**, with **1.6 million new arrivals** in the last three years alone. These communities, primarily hosted by the I.R of Iran and I.R. of Pakistan, are stretched to capacity. Despite the resilience of both host nations and Afghan refugees, the scale of need continues to outpace available resources.

Over the past year, nearly **733,000 Afghans have returned from Pakistan**. Many of these returnees are highly vulnerable, with **30% being female-headed households** and **2.5% living with disabilities**. Their precarious return highlights a concerning reality: returning to Afghanistan is not a choice but a necessity for many, due to insufficient support in host countries and unyielding pressures. This crisis has also severely impacted children, with **89,200 supported for primary and secondary education**—yet this is a fraction of those in need. Women and girls, too, face harsh conditions, as restrictive policies in Afghanistan increasingly limit their rights and opportunities.

The **Afghanistan Refugee Response Plan (RRP)** remains critically underfunded, receiving just **28% of the requested \$620 million** by September 2024. This financial gap is felt across sectors: in education, healthcare, shelter, and essential protections. Now, more than ever, coordinated global action is

imperative to address this crisis and uphold our commitments to human rights, safety, and dignity.

**To address this situation, I urge the Member States to consider the following recommendations:**

1. **Increase Funding Commitments:** Enhanced financial support for the **Afghanistan Refugee Response Plan** is essential to meet basic needs and extend critical services, particularly for education, health, and livelihood programs. Sustained funding will enable a comprehensive response that can support both refugees in host countries and returnees.
2. **Expand Resettlement and Safe Pathways:** We call upon Member States to increase resettlement quotas and support diverse pathways for Afghan refugees, including family reunification, education, and humanitarian visas. This alleviates pressure on host countries and offers refugees a chance to rebuild their lives safely.
3. **Strengthen Legal Protections and Rights:** Refugees and asylum-seekers deserve robust protection mechanisms that grant legal status, safeguard against forced returns, and ensure access to essential services. Collaborating with host nations to strengthen these legal frameworks will reduce the vulnerabilities Afghan refugees face.
4. **Support Sustainable Reintegration Efforts:** For those returning to Afghanistan, support programs focused on sustainable reintegration—such as the **Priority Areas for Return and Reintegration (PARRs)**—that address shelter, healthcare, livelihoods, and education, are crucial to easing the transition and rebuilding communities in Afghanistan.

In closing, the situation of Afghan refugees is a test of our collective resolve and commitment to human rights. Let us strengthen our support and our partnerships to forge a path toward security and hope for all Afghan refugees.

Thank you.

- **Increased Funding and Resources:** We must fully fund the Afghanistan Refugee Response Plan, not only to provide essential aid but to build sustainable support for host communities. Funding is urgently needed for programs that provide shelter, education, and healthcare for both refugees and their hosts.
- **Voluntary Repatriation in Safety and Dignity:** While some Afghans may wish to return to their homeland, any repatriation must occur on a strictly voluntary basis, ensuring that returns happen in conditions of safety and dignity. These returns must be supported by adequate reintegration programs to help families rebuild their lives.
- **Upholding the Principle of Non-Refoulement:** In line with the international refugee protection regime, I call on all states to adhere to the cardinal principle of non-refoulement. Afghan refugees must not be forcibly returned to situations where they face serious threats to their lives or freedom. This principle is essential for safeguarding the fundamental rights of refugees and must be respected unconditionally.
- **Expanded Resettlement and Legal Pathways:** The international community should enhance access to resettlement and expand legal pathways for Afghan refugees, prioritizing the most vulnerable—women, children, and those with disabilities. This includes facilitating family reunification and streamlining visa processes to ensure that Afghan refugees are not subjected to prolonged uncertainty.
- **Support for Host Countries:** Countries neighboring Afghanistan, particularly Pakistan and Iran, continue to bear the brunt of this crisis. We call for greater international support for these host countries to strengthen their infrastructure, bolster local healthcare and education systems, and provide community-based services that benefit both refugees and host populations.