



**Permanent Mission of the State of Eritrea**

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Araya Desta**

**Permanent Representative of Eritrea the United Nations**

**On Agenda Item 62: Report of the United Nations High  
Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees,  
returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions**

**At the Third Committee of the Sixty-Eighth Session of the  
General Assembly**

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Mr. Chairman,

I wish to thank the Secretary General and the High Commissioner for their reports on this agenda item. My delegation, while applauding the humanitarian work of UNHCR on the basis of its mandate, wishes to share its perspective and observation on the subject under consideration.

Eritrea is a signatory to the OAU Refugee Convention. Although a non-state party to the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees, it customarily observes the principles and upholds the safety of refugees. This has been reflected and acknowledged in its limited experience in dealing with refugees who have been destined to the country.

Mr. Chairman,

The endeavours aimed at assisting refugees have to first and foremost begin with granting full protection and safety of refugees. While we envisage addressing the questions related to refugees and their general wellbeing, regrettably, the question of refugees is often abused contrary to the established norms that should solely assist refugees. In this regard, it is observed that certain refugee camps are used as centers for political activism and recruitments. This is unacceptable. The lack of scrutiny and accountability of refugee camp managements has led to misuse and diversion of resources allocated to refugees as a means of enriching personal interests of camp administrators. Worse enough, the mistreatment of refugees in some camps have left them putting their very safety at grave risk.

Mr. Chairman,

Eritrea maintains a policy of voluntary repatriation of its nationals wherever they may be. And it opposes any forced repatriation or expulsions. Eritreans who have been repatriated face no persecution and they are indeed encouraged and assisted to reintegrate to their respective families and societies. As opposed to such policy practice however, to our very dismay, some humanitarian workers are engaged in

depicting a wrong image of my country through pronouncing that returnees could be subjected to imprisonment or torture.

The Preferential treatment of Eritrean nationals which is not only acting as a pull factor but also luring other nationals to be registered in Eritrean identity, is a case in reference that undermines the purpose of refugee protection and assistance. Moreover, conducting a thorough vetting process in determining refugee claimants as economic migrants or otherwise has to be a requisite for a long term solution of their repatriation or reintegration.

Mr. Chairman,

The Eritrean people, who have suffered the denial of self-determination, two wars of aggression, the occupation of sovereign territory and illegal sanctions, are now facing an additional assault on their human rights and their struggle for redress and justice- ***organized human trafficking***. This barbaric crime is the latest tool in the ongoing attempt to drain Eritrea of its human resources, destroy the economy, impoverish the people and foment a crisis. Eritrea reiterates that collaboration between countries of origin, transit and destination is vital to combat this heinous crime. In this regard, Eritrea is closely coordinating its actions with Egypt, Sudan and other countries. Time and again, Eritrea is strongly committed to fight human trafficking nationally, regionally and globally. It has undertaken concrete measures to prevent this crime from happening and mitigating its impact on victims.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.