



PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



**Security Council Briefing by
the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Friday 25 September 2026**

Greece's Statement delivered
by H.E. Ambassador Ifigeneia Kontoleontos,
Director General for International Organisations, International Security & Cooperation

Mr. President,

We highly appreciate the High Commissioner's continuous engagement on issues relating to migration management and the protection of human rights. Greece remains firmly committed to ensuring that all migration policies are implemented in full compliance with its obligations under international and European law.

The geopolitical position of Greece, as well as the current international developments, bring the country very often before the human drama of thousands of people fleeing their homes. The irregular entries from the Central Mediterranean route put a significant pressure on our country. At the same time, we all witness an increasingly complex global landscape, where multifaceted factors exacerbate human rights violations and test the resilience of multilateralism with international mechanisms and organs facing a persistent funding and liquidity crisis that threatens their capacity to fulfil their vital mandate.

In the meantime, we cannot stand idly by in the face of the ever-increasing challenges of instrumentalization of migration, posing a challenge at our external borders and undermining our Union's internal security.

In this context, we do welcome the High Commissioner's new strategic vision, advocating for the need to protect the asylum system and for the need to keep genuine refugees in countries close to their home regions.

At the same time, I wish to express my country's support for the "route-based approach" being developed by the UNHCR jointly with the IOM, as well as for the need to make a clear distinction between refugees and migrants at an early stage, so as to prevent abuse of the asylum system. Greece underscores the associated need for cooperation between the Organization and the relevant states.

Regarding UNHCR's overall financial situation, I wish to commend the High Commissioner's efforts towards the rationalization of the expenses of this Organization, which has undergone significant downsizing, as its budget was drastically reduced within a few years – dropping from \$6 billion to approximately \$3.2 billion.

Despite this dramatic reduction in available resources, we are very pleased to note that UNHCR continues its operational work seamlessly, in accordance with its statutory

mandate, while its core pillars of action include providing protection, seeking durable solutions, responding immediately to emergencies, and fostering refugee self-reliance.

In conclusion, Greece as one of the front-line European and EU member-states still receiving large numbers of mixed arrivals, is strongly committed to: first, ensuring respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law, second, stepping up humanitarian action in order to support refugees and displaced persons and the countries hosting them and third, finding meaningful solutions to reverse displacement trends. In this regard, we value international cooperation, while we underline the fundamental importance of national sovereignty, the rule of law and due process.

I thank you.