

European ministers tell Assembly UN is proper place to tackle phenomenon of mass migrations

21 September 2017 – From the podium of the United Nations General Assembly today, European foreign ministers called for humane treatment of the hundreds of thousands of refugees flooding into the continent and the orderly management of migrant flows that benefit the countries of origin, transit and destination.

“Large displacements of people have reached unprecedented levels in recent years,” Spanish Foreign Minister Alfonso María Dastis Quecedo told the Assembly’s 72nd general debate.

“The two Global Compacts on Refugees and Migrants that we have undertaken to adopt in 2018 should confirm the concerted, equitable and humane response to the phenomenon of refugees,” he added.

In a wide-ranging speech that touched on all major world crises, as well as development and climate change, Mr. Dastis expressed “the sincere gratitude of the people of Spain for the multitude of heartfelt displays of support and affection we have received from around the world” following last month’s terrorist attack in Barcelona.

“Terrorism will be vanquished through unity, perseverance and the full weight of the law,” he said.

[Full statement available here](#)



Minister for Foreign and European Affairs Jean Asselborn of Luxembourg addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Luxembourg’s Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn, said the UN was the appropriate place to tackle the phenomenon of mass migration.

“The causes are manifold: demographic pressures, climate change, conflict, humanitarian catastrophes. Perfectly respectable economic motivation, both in the country of origin and that of destination are also often the cause of such movement,” he added.

He also called on the five permanent Members of the UN Security Council to forgo the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocities, such as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

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Minister for Development Cooperation Ulla Tørnæs of Denmark addresses the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Also addressing the UN General Assembly today was Ulla Tørnæs, Minister for Development Cooperation from Denmark, who highlighted the “ever more interconnected” threats and challenges facing the international community, including displacement and irregular migration, as well as violations of human rights and armed conflict.

Given the evolving global landscape, there is a need for leadership and common purpose to steer the UN in a new direction by breaking the status quo and reforming the UN development system, bridging immediate relief and long-term development objectives.

“Staying on the current path is not an option if we want to maintain the legitimacy of the United Nations. Fundamental and ambitious reform is the only way forward,” Ms. Tørnæs said.

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