

Statement by
the Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran
in the
Working Group on smuggling of migrants, 11th Session
(11 and 12 July 2024)

- *Agenda item 2: Preventing and combating the smuggling of migrants through international cooperation while addressing its root causes, in line with the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto*

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

At the outset, I would like to thank the secretariat for organizing this meeting, and the distinguished panellist for their insightful presentation.

The inclusion of this important agenda item is a clear reflection of the pressing need to tackle the intricate issue of drivers of migrant smuggling at national, regional and international levels. A collective response to combat migrant smuggling effectively is more than ever critical. To this end, it is essential to address the socio-economic factors of smuggling, rather than continuing the prevailing approach of treating the symptoms.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, being at the crossroads of several key migration routes, is profoundly affected by the challenges of migrant smuggling, particularly with significant migration flows from some neighboring countries. Having necessary legal and executive frameworks in place, Iran is going out of its way to protect vulnerable populations in SOM and uphold human dignity across borders.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is at the forefront of combating smuggling of migrants and other related crimes in the region. Considering its geopolitical situation, intensified by recent developments, Iran has long been identified primarily as a transit country for SOM. Instability, conflict, war, and deterred access to economic development, among other underlying socioeconomic issues, are driving the increased flow of migration to and through Iran. These drivers may potentially influence the decision to migrate, including using the services of migrant smugglers.

The striking and increasing number of migrants falling victim to criminal networks as a result of the conflicts in the region, only intensifies the need to a unified approach, focusing on the countries involved. This crisis will affect the international community as a whole, if not contained and effectively managed in due time.

It is a matter of serious concern that some of the self-proclaimed advocates of human rights continue to contribute to the root socio-economic causes of this crime and disregard, either explicitly or otherwise, the rights of the migrants, forcing some of the developing countries to face the atrocious consequences of the instability they have caused in the region.

In the same vein, while promoting sustainable and lasting economic and social development can aid properly addressing migrants' concerns, the inhumane imposition of Unilateral Coercive Measures continues to inflict immeasurable harms on the affected people, which not only contravenes this important need but also runs counter to and violates the purposes of the UN Charter. Moreover, such internationally wrongful acts hinder international cooperation including in fighting SOM as well as undermine the capacity and ability of affected states, among others, in international resource mobilization for fighting various forms of crimes.

Nevertheless, witnessing the ever-increasingly challenging situation in the region, our law enforcements have been kept to a higher standard, and aspire to enhance executive measures in the fight against SOM by, inter alia, improving our control over borders, establishing suitable camps and shelters complying with relevant health protocols for the victims, and fostering joint border cooperation within bilateral agreements.

Co-Chairs, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen

We take note of the background paper prepared by the secretariat; however, we would like to highlight that while the background paper focuses on a certain conflict situation, and the significance of provisional protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof, other similar situations like the ones in Afghanistan and Gaza are entirely neglected. Thus, we concur with the conclusion that “if States parties extended that kind of protection to citizens from countries in situations of conflict, it would significantly reduce the occurrence of migrant smuggling globally”.

This, of course, would require unhindered access to tailored, accessible, and effective technical assistance and necessary equipment, which is pivotal in addressing various aspects of combating SOM, as well as the ability of the countries to allocate sufficient resources to combat these crimes.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that Iran's commitment to prevent and counter SOM is unequivocal. Our success to fight effectively against this global and regional threat of SOM lies in a collective action including through a meaningful and enhanced international cooperation enabling Members States to meet requirements under the provisions of the Convention.

Thank you.