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## **Peacekeeping and security for refugees**

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As we await the government of Canada's renewed engagement with United Nations peace operations, we would do well to consider the changing global security challenges that confront modern peacekeeping – including those posed by record numbers of migrants and refugees.

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the number of forcibly displaced persons – over 65 million in 2016 – is higher now than at any time since the end of the Second World War. Of this total, the number seeking safety across international borders as refugees topped 22.5 million.

As more and more of the world's citizens seek refuge from armed conflict, UN peacekeepers are increasingly tasked to serve in operations where the cessation of armed conflict is still a work in progress, and Security Council "protection of civilians" mandates face enormous difficulties. Recent funding cuts by peacekeeping's largest financial contributor, the United States, constitute yet another challenge.

Countries hosting some of the largest concentrations of refugees are also heavily reliant for their internal security on UN peace operations. Examples include South Sudan, Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The UN system demonstrates an awareness of the cross-cutting nature of many of these challenges (but not always the will to make the changes necessary). Some examples:

- The June 2015 UN High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) called for an essential shift in the way peace operations are conceived and carried out. The HIPPO highlighted the "primacy of politics," the idea that lasting peace is achieved through political solutions and not through military and technical engagements alone.
- The current Secretary-General's embrace of "sustaining peace" as an overarching framework for much of the UN's programming encompasses the spectrum of peace and security operations: conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and long-term sustainable development.
- And last September's Summit, "Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants" led to a declaration that includes a plan of action, "Towards a Global

Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration,” setting out yet another framework for positive responses when governments meet again to address these problems in the Fall of 2018.

As Canada’s foreign Minister, I was involved in efforts like the Landmines Treaty and the International Criminal Court, which made me realize that there are limitations within UN structures to the degree of freedom to think and act outside the box. A lot of interests are at stake. Ultimately the UN needs to be the place where change happens, but it’s not the place where the best thinking is going to be done on the kinds of normative and institutional changes that are necessary.

With climate change, famine, armed conflict all on the rise, the way the world comes to grips with the rising number of refugees need a major re-set.

The World Refugee Council that I am chairing -- supported by Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) and the government of Canada – hopes to come up with recommendations for significant reforms, as well as mobilizing the political will needed to implement them.

For example, the whole system of funding refugees, based primarily on donor government pledging, is really kind of archaic. Many of the legal instruments, like the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, the 1951 Refugee Convention and, in a peacekeeping context, the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians, are weak and/or out of date. We need a new, much more coherent multilateralism.

Canada not only supports our work on the World Refugee Council, but also provides an example to others of how best to re-settle refugees and manage diversity.

Our contributions to peace operations and to refugee system reform can provide important reasons for other UN member states to view positively Canada’s candidacy for election for a two-year term on the UN Security Council in 2021-22.