

**BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**



**Statement of H.E. Prof. Dr. Safet Halilovic,  
Minister for Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**Intergovernmental event at the ministerial level of Member States of the United Nations  
on the occasion of the  
60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the  
50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness**

**(7-8 DECEMBER 2011) PM  
PALAIS DES NATIONS, GENEVA**

**Honourable High Commissioner, Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Ministers, Dear colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen**

On the occasion of the ceremonial commemorating anniversaries of two important UN conventions, allow me to take this opportunity to state that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country that ratified the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees at its very admission as a Member of the United Nations in 1992. Our strong commitment to accede the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness is decisive, as well.

Faced with a tremendous displacement situation of its own citizens in the past two decades, as well as being a recipient country of thousands of refugees and asylum seekers from outside our country, predominantly from neighbouring countries - over the years Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has taken significant measures to develop procedures and safeguards to ensure the protection of refugees and stateless persons. In this process BiH has gained substantial experience in the field of international protection. Together with solidarity and burden sharing we are ready to cooperate and share our experience and expertise with other states. This particularly refers to our experiences in the repossession of property and occupancy rights, including other related rights; due to the results that have been achieved regarding these issues, BiH is perceived as a good example, both in and outside the region.

In keeping with our commitment to the plight of refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons, BiH officials recently participated in two important regional conferences that produced conclusions and recommendations that would strengthen international protection further in the region. The first was the *Conference on the Provision of Civil Documentation and Registration in South-Eastern Europe*, held in Zagreb in October. The second was a *Ministerial Review Conference on Solving the Refugee Situation in the Region*, held in Belgrade at the beginning of November, which reaffirmed the principles enshrined in the January 2005 Sarajevo Declaration.

As part of our ongoing efforts to find durable and sustainable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons nationally and regionally, Bosnia and Herzegovina established a close cooperation with the governments of Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia; and with the guidance and support of UNHCR, our cooperation is starting to yield results. Next year in April, at a Donors Conference to be organized in Sarajevo, our governments will present a Joint Regional Program that we have collectively developed.

**Mr. Chairman,**

In this context, the support of the international donor community to complement the common efforts is essential to implement the agreements reached through the regional collaboration within the Sarajevo Process.

To this end, in my capacity as the Minister for Human Rights and Refugees in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the host of the forthcoming Donors Conference in Sarajevo I am expressing my deep appreciation for the opportunity to announce this important event to state delegations, as well as to the United Nations specialized agencies, observer entities, and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations - welcoming their presence on the occasion of the Joint Regional Programme presentation.

Bosnia and Herzegovina will, in parallel, present its remaining needs for the implementation of the Agreement on Refugees and Displaced Persons – Annex 7 of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

To end, allow me to express my sincere gratitude for UNHCRs' great strides that have been made in supporting the initiative of four regional countries towards ending displacement and ensuring durable solutions for vulnerable refugees and internally displaced persons, and in particular for its continued engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Together we have accomplished much and by UNHCR remaining committed we can reach our final goal to end the chapter of protracted displacement in Bosnia and Herzegovina once and for all.

**Thank You.**