

## **I. The Rights and Responsibilities of Host Countries Affected by Refugee Populations**

The People's Republic of China wishes to express its appreciation for the continuing work of the UNHCR in helping refugees around the world. As a party to the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees and 1967 Protocol, China actively engages in the international protection of refugees, and believes that the work of the UNHCR is beneficial to meeting international objectives of achieving peace and security. China seeks to maintain friendly relations with the UNHCR, making yearly donations to its programs as well as financial and material contributions to UNHCR-assisted refugees all around the world.<sup>1</sup> China regularly sends delegations to UNHCR-sponsored conferences such as the annual meeting for Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Consultation on Refugee, Displaced and Migrants (APC). China has a long history of working with the UNHCR in hosting, assisting, and protecting refugees from the Indo-Chinese peninsula in order to assure their safety and stability.

Due to its own experience in hosting refugee populations, China recognizes the importance of identifying the rights and responsibilities of host countries in these situations, and is aware of the effects that the ever-increasing number of refugees has on member states worldwide. Meeting the necessary obligations to protect refugees has cost the Chinese government heavily in terms of financial, material, and human resources.<sup>2</sup> Thus, China emphasizes the right of member states to exercise national sovereignty and protection of their national interests in addressing this issue, and would assert our belief that the primary responsibility of protecting refugees should remain in the hands of sovereign countries, with the UNHCR and other relevant actors playing a vital, but not leading role. China's position on this also applies to the matter of illegal immigrants and criminals crossing the border. In these cases, China strongly asserts our legitimate right to handle the issue according to domestic and international law, and firmly opposes any international attempts to politicize the problem into a refugee issue.<sup>3</sup> It is China's belief that voluntary repatriation is the most effective way to resolve the refugee problem and ultimately end refugee status. With the majority of refugees residing in developing countries, China also calls attention to the large burden shouldered by these member states, including the effects that large refugee populations have on their social and economic development as well as the ability to ensure adequate environmental protections.<sup>4</sup>

In moving forward, China would stress the value of international solidarity, constructive dialogue, and cooperation, believing that the issue cannot be separated from the role of the international community in recognizing the responsibilities and rights of member states in addressing the refugee question. With the total number of refugees (now numbering over 11.4 million) on the rise, China would highlight this growth as a result of armed conflicts, political turmoil, economic stagnation, and natural disasters.<sup>5</sup> Thus, China calls on host and receiving countries, countries of refugee origin, and donor countries to establish partnerships and commitments based on mutual trust and understanding and to coordinate their resources in order to tackle the root causes of the refugee problem. China also stresses the importance of the international community engaging in serious efforts to ensure eventual refugee repatriation, and opposes international pressure to make the naturalization of refugees in host countries an ultimate resolution.<sup>6</sup> China calls for a greater role for developed states in contributing aid to the developing states who host the vast majority of refugees worldwide, and who require financial and material assistance to address the strained

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<sup>1</sup> China's Relationship with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). 2004 April 16. Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN Office in Geneva. <<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/cegv/eng/rqrd/jblc/t85094.htm>>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Letter of Wu Haitao, Ambassador, Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva, to Mr. Michael Kirby, Chair of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the DPRK, 30 December 2013. Accessed October 30, 2014. <<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoIDPRK/Report/A.HRC.25.63.doc>>.

<sup>4</sup> China's Relationship with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). 2004 April 16. Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN Office in Geneva. <<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/cegv/eng/rqrd/jblc/t85094.htm>>.

<sup>5</sup> Statement by Ambassador Liu Jieyi at the Security Council Open Debate on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict. 2014 February 12. Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN. <[http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/securitycouncil/thematicissues/civilians\\_ac/t1130686.htm](http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/securitycouncil/thematicissues/civilians_ac/t1130686.htm)>.

<sup>6</sup> China's Relationship with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). 2004 April 16. Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN Office in Geneva. <<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/cegv/eng/rqrd/jblc/t85094.htm>>.

security environments and environmental degradation brought on by hosting refugee populations.<sup>7</sup> China expresses its concern for the “donation fatigue” exhibited by developed states, believing that this goes against the principle of shared responsibility for the protection of refugees. In the interest of protecting national sovereignty, China will continue its firm support of the right of member states to hold the primary responsibility in handling refugees and illegal migrants, while also reminding the international community that it is the responsibility of member states to ensure equal treatment of refugees without discrimination or a double-standard approach.<sup>8</sup>

## II. Analyzing the Effectiveness of Humanitarian Efforts in Response to Political Instability in Southeast Asia

As a regional neighbor, it is of utmost importance to the People’s Republic of China that humanitarian concerns resulting from political instabilities are sufficiently addressed within Southeast Asian states. Recognizing our own strong stake in the region, China regards it a priority to build and promote a wider Asia-Pacific area of peace, stability, and cooperation.<sup>9</sup> China expresses its gratitude for the progress made worldwide due to the UNHCR’s work with refugees, Internationally Displaced Persons (IDPs), and stateless peoples in the region, including on voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement.<sup>10</sup> In keeping with its obligations to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol, China’s own hosting of refugees from the region has been accomplished under the policies of “equal treatment, non-discrimination, equal remuneration for equal work”.<sup>11</sup> As a demonstration of China’s commitment to refugees in need of humanitarian assistance, China has worked with the UNHCR to provide effective protections to over 283,000 Indo-Chinese refugees on its soil since 1978, guaranteeing them opportunities for employment, education, medical care, and the chance to live stable and secure lives.<sup>12</sup>

Seeking to play a constructive role in addressing humanitarian crises in Southeast Asia, China has taken responsibility upon itself to promote and foster open and stable security cooperation and mechanisms that sufficiently address the particular needs of the region.<sup>13</sup> We continue to actively pursue this goal through multilateral frameworks such as the Association of Southeast Asian States (ASEAN) Plus China, ASEAN Plus Three, and the East Asia Summit. In this context, it is China’s firm belief that member states maintain primary responsibility of protecting refugees and innocent civilians within their sovereign territories, with the UNHCR and other organizations playing a vital role, and we defend member states’ right to exercise protection of their national interests in cooperation with other actors. China believes that national judicial institutions maintain first priority when there exists a need to address violations of human rights violations and the breaking of international humanitarian law.<sup>14</sup> China fully supports the involvement of the international community and external organizations in assisting refugees, IDPs, and stateless persons, provided the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries is not infringed.

In order to address the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance in the Southeast Asian region, China believes it is important to first address the root causes of the refugee issue. To this end, China calls on member states of the Southeast Asian region to advance political dialogue, engage in processes of reconciliation, and strengthen security

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<sup>7</sup> Statement by Ambassador Liu Jieyi at the Security Council Open Debate on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict. 2014 February 12. Permanent Mission of the People’s Republic of China to the UN. <[http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/securitycouncil/thematicissues/civilians\\_ac/t1130686.htm](http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/securitycouncil/thematicissues/civilians_ac/t1130686.htm)>.

<sup>8</sup> China’s Relationship with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). 2004 April 16. Permanent Mission of the People’s Republic of China to the UN Office in Geneva. <<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/cegv/eng/rqrd/jblc/t85094.htm>>.

<sup>9</sup> APEC Beijing: China is Ready (Speech by Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the Lanting Forum). 2014 October 29. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China. <[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjdt\\_665385/zyjh\\_665391/t1205756.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1205756.shtml)>.

<sup>10</sup> Statement by Ambassador Liu Jieyi at the Security Council Open Debate on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict. 2014 February 12. Permanent Mission of the People’s Republic of China to the UN. <[http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/securitycouncil/thematicissues/civilians\\_ac/t1130686.htm](http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/securitycouncil/thematicissues/civilians_ac/t1130686.htm)>.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> APEC Beijing: China is Ready (Speech by Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the Lanting Forum). 2014 October 29. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China. <[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjdt\\_665385/zyjh\\_665391/t1205756.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1205756.shtml)>.

<sup>14</sup> Statement by Ambassador Liu Jieyi at the Security Council Open Debate on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict. 2014 February 12. Permanent Mission of the People’s Republic of China to the UN. <[http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/securitycouncil/thematicissues/civilians\\_ac/t1130686.htm](http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/securitycouncil/thematicissues/civilians_ac/t1130686.htm)>.

sectors.<sup>15</sup> China promotes the idea of “preventive diplomacy” to prevent the escalation of conflict and find resolutions that will lessen and contain the impact of conflicts on innocent civilians.<sup>16</sup> China calls on the humanitarian aid agencies and organizations, including the UNHCR, to enhance communication with the Southeast Asian countries facing challenges with refugee populations. China would remind the international community that humanitarian aid operations must operate on the basis of objectivity and impartiality, while fully respecting the national sovereignty of any member states party to the conflict. China calls on assenting member states in the Southeast Asian region to provide adequate access to civilians in order for the UNHCR and other humanitarian actors to ensure the delivery of humanitarian relief. China underscores the importance of global consultation in addressing humanitarian crises, and hopes that the UNHCR can play a more central role in this aspect.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.