

World Leaders Face Immigration Issues

Federico Ghelli (September 22, 2016)



In a side event of the United Nations General Assembly, world leaders share their opinions and approaches to migratory and refugees flows from Africa and the Middle East into Europe.

A panel of world leaders debated the regional matter of refugees and migrants movements last Wednesday, during a side event of the [71st session of the United Nations General Assembly](#) [2].

The event named “Large movements of refugees and migrants: global challenges, regional responses, comprehensive strategy,” was hosted by representatives from Europe (Italy and Netherlands), the Middle East (Jordan and Lebanon), East Africa (Ethiopia), West Africa (Nigeria and the Sahel region (Niger). The aim was to examine current trends of migrants and refugees and promote cooperation among the countries involved in migration flows.



[Paolo Gentiloni](#) [3], Italian minister of foreign affairs, opened the session. During his remarks he highlighted the work Italy is carrying out around the Mediterranean Sea for the safeguard of immigrants.

“We [Italy] are working hard to save lives,” he said. “But when we hear the debate in Europe and then we see the numbers of immigrants that other countries such as Lebanon and Jordan welcome, frankly speaking, we cannot be proud of European civilization.”

Gentiloni reminded the panel of the importance of finding a common strategy that takes into account the need of all countries.

[Nasser Judeh](#) [4], Jordan’s deputy prime minister and minister of international affairs, agreed with Gentiloni, considering immigration a common responsibility. According to Judeh, the countries involved need to talk to each other to find a solution.

“It’s imperative that the international community doesn’t wait for the immigration crisis to get worse to act. We have done our share, and we remain committed to do the right thing,” Judeh said.

Along with Gentiloni, Italy was represented at the event by few high representatives, such as [Filippo Grandi](#) [5], UN high commissioner for refugees, [Federica Mogherini](#) [6], European Union high representative for foreign affairs, and [Emma Bonino](#) [7], co-chair of the [European Council of foreign relations](#) [8].

Grandi commended the Italian effort to rescue people. He supported the idea of a regional approach to face the immigration issue, especially in a region such as the Horn of Africa.

“It’s important to strengthen asylum and protection to refugees and change the nature of support.”

Mogherini, instead, spoke on the effort of the EU to create more awareness on migration and refugees movements. According to her, the EU started partnerships with few African countries that have immigration issues and with member states of the Union.

“Two years ago immigration wasn’t the center of the policies of the UE and UN. It wasn’t the global priority,” Mogherini said. “Now, there’s a new global awareness, or an European awareness, at least.”

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