



Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
Special Meeting
Forced Displacement and Refugee Protection
BIOGRAPHIES

OPENING

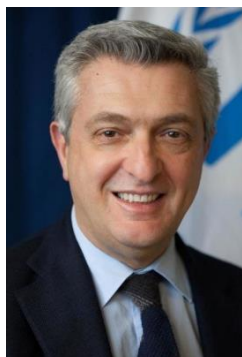
H.E. Mr. Bob Rae, President of the Economic and Social Council and Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations in New York



Bob Rae is the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations in New York. Since assuming this role, he has been active in all aspects of the work of the UN, culminating in his election to the Presidency of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for 2024-25. He served as Premier of Ontario from 1990-1995, interim Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada from 2011-2013 and was appointed as Canada's Special Envoy to Myanmar (2017) and Canada's Special Envoy on

Humanitarian and Refugee Issues (2020). From 1996 to 2008, he was a partner at Goodmans LLP and wrote government reports on the Air India bombing and higher education in Ontario. He also served as Chair of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Conservatory of Music, the Institute for Research in Public Policy and the Forum of Federations. Mr. Rae taught law and public policy at the University of Toronto and in the VicOne programme at Victoria College and was a partner and senior counsel to the law firm OKT LLP from 2014 to 2020, specializing in indigenous law and constitutional issues. Bob Rae is a Privy Councillor, a Companion of the Order of Canada, and a member of the Order of Ontario.

Mr. Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees



Filippo Grandi became the 11th United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on 1 January 2016. The General Assembly has since twice re-elected him to serve, and he will now complete his term on 31 December 2025. As High Commissioner, he heads one of the world's largest humanitarian organizations. UNHCR has twice won the Nobel Peace Prize. Its 17,000-strong workforce spans more than 130 countries providing protection and assistance to nearly 80 million refugees, returnees, internally displaced people and stateless persons. Some 90 per cent of UNHCR personnel work in the field, often in difficult and dangerous duty stations.

Before being elected High Commissioner, Grandi had been engaged in international cooperation for over 30 years, focusing on refugee and humanitarian work. He served as Commissioner-General of the UN Agency for Palestine refugees, UNRWA, from 2010 to 2014, after having been the organization's Deputy Commissioner-General since 2005. Prior to that, Grandi served as Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Afghanistan, following a long career first with NGOs and



later with UNHCR in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and at the organization's Geneva headquarters. Grandi was born in Milan in 1957. He holds a degree in modern history from the State University in Milan, a BA in Philosophy from the Gregorian University in Rome, as well as an honorary doctorate from the University of Coventry.

Panel 1: Success Stories in Refugee Hosting and Integration

Ms. Leah Zamore, Senior Fellow and Director of Global Policy Engagement, Zolberg Institute on Migration and Mobility (*Moderator*)



Leah Zamore is the Senior Fellow at The New School's Zolberg Institute on Migration and Mobility and directs the Institute's global policy engagement efforts in addition to teaching. Prior to joining the Zolberg Institute, Ms. Zamore directed the Humanitarian Crises program at New York University's Center on International Cooperation (CIC). She is the co-author, with Alex Aleinikoff, of *The Arc of Protection: Reforming the International Refugee Regime* (Stanford, 2019). Ms. Zamore has a Juris Doctorate from Yale Law School, a Master's degree from Oxford University, and a Bachelor's degree from Harvard University.

H.E. Mr. Juan José Quintana, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations



Ambassador Juan José Quintana is a specialist in international law, with more than 30 years of diplomatic experience. Since 1984 he has been a member of the Diplomatic and Consular Career of the Republic of Colombia and his extensive experience in positions in the Colombian foreign service includes Sofia, Managua, Washington D.C. and New York.

He has also been Head of Mission to the Kingdom of the Netherlands and to the United Nations based in Geneva, Switzerland. He has held positions within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as Director of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, Director of the Diplomatic Academy, Director of Multilateral Political Affairs, among others. His field of expertise is the law and practice of international courts, with particular emphasis on the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principal judicial body of the United Nations.



Mr. Pablo Moreno, Head, Global Corporate Affairs, Mabe Global



Pablo Moreno is the Head of Global Corporate Affairs at Mabe, the leading brand in home appliance design, manufacturing, and distribution in Latin America that also serves more than 75 countries worldwide. He is also the Chairman of the Energy Efficiency Fund (FIDE), a public-private organization dedicated to promoting energy savings and efficiency across industries, commerce, services, agriculture, municipalities, and residential sectors.

Previously, Mr. Moreno served as Chairman of the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (CANAME), representing companies involved in the generation, transmission, distribution, and end use of electricity in Mexico. He was also Chairman of the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers of Mexico (ANFAD), which advocates for major and small appliance manufacturers,

as well as producers of air conditioners, water heaters, home goods and bathroom fixtures.

His leadership extends to standardization and certification, having chaired the Association of Standards and Certification (ANCE), which develops, certifies, and audits over 500 standards across various industries, including electrical, forestry, mining, food, and beverage sectors. He is also a co-founder of United for Efficiency (U4E), a global initiative focused on implementing an integrated policy approach to enable a sustainable and cost-effective transformation to energy-efficient lighting, equipment and appliances, and the Alliance for Inclusion, an initiative created by UNHCR Mexico to identify, highlight, and recognize the work of companies in the inclusion of refugees in Mexico.

Throughout his career, Mr. Moreno has held key leadership roles, including Head of Institutional Affairs at Vitro and Director of Public Relations and Communications at Prodigy MSN. His extensive knowledge of energy efficiency, sustainability, and regulatory affairs has positioned him as a prominent advocate for advancing sustainable practices in Latin America and beyond

Ms. Rez Gardi, Co-Managing Director, Refugee Seeking Equal Access at the Table (R-SEAT)



Rez Gardi is an international lawyer and human rights advocate. Being born as a refugee in Pakistan, Rez sought to use her difficult start in life as motivation to help others. She became New Zealand's first female Kurdish lawyer and the first Kurd to graduate from Harvard Law School, where she graduated as a Fulbright Scholar with a Master of Laws. Her previous roles include working for the New Zealand Human Rights Commission, as lecturer on international law and human rights, and a Harvard Human Rights Fellow in Iraq working to build cases for the prosecution of ISIS regarding their targeted genocidal campaign against the Yezidis. Rez is the founder of 'Empower' – a refugee-led organization which aims to address the

underrepresentation of refugee youth in higher education. She is also the Co-Founder the Centre for Asia Pacific Refugee Studies at the University of Auckland, New Zealand.

Rez represented New Zealand at the first ever Global Refugee Youth Consultations in 2016, helped establish the Global Youth Advisory Council to the UNHCR, and is a co-founding member of the Refugee Advisory Group to the UNHCR Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR). She currently



serves on UNHCR's Advisory Board and as an expert on the Refugee and Forced Displacement Initiative at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

Rez has received an array of awards including: 2017 Young New Zealander of the Year, 2018 Women of Influence Finalist, 2019 Outstanding Youth Delegate Award at the UN Youth Assembly, 2019 Eisenhower Youth Fellow, 2020 Global Impact Award, and 2021 Peace Ambassador for the One Young World Summit and was recognized as a Gates Foundation Global Goalkeeper in 2022.

Panel 2: Solidarity and Sustainable Approaches

Ambassador Daman Hamar, Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamic Republic of Mauritania



Ambassador Hamar is a distinguished career diplomat who studied Diplomacy at the École Nationale d'Administration (ENA). His extensive experience includes serving as Director-General of State Protocol (2010-2014), Consul General of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania in Guinea-Bissau (2014-2016) and in Saudi Arabia (2016-2019), Ambassador of Mauritania to Tunisia (2019-2023), and Ambassador to Moscow (2023-2025). Since January 2025, he has been the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He holds several prestigious diplomas, including a Diploma of Foreign Affairs Advisor from the National School of Administration of Nouakchott, a Master in Management and a Master's Degree in Business Law from the Academy of Montpellier, a Higher Diploma in Administrative Management from the National School of Administration of Rabat, Morocco, and a Master's degree in Economics from the Faculty of Legal and Economic Sciences, University of Nouakchott. Ambassador Hamar is fluent in Arabic, French, English, and Portuguese.

Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon, Special Representative of the International Labour Organization (ILO) to the United Nations



Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon is the Special Representative of the International Labour Organization (ILO) to the United Nations and Director of its Office in New York. Prior to her current appointment, she was the Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for Africa of the ILO and has held this position since 2017. Ms. Samuel-Olonjuwon joined the ILO in 1995 and has undertaken different responsibilities in the field and Geneva, including Deputy Regional Director for Africa, Chief of the ILO Programming Unit for Africa and Deputy Director of the

ILO Office in Pretoria.

Ms Samuel-Olonjuwon holds a BSc in Sociology (1980) and a Masters' Degree in Industrial and Labour Relations from the University of Ibadan in 1982. With about 40 years' experience in the world of work, she had worked as Assistant Director in the Nigerian Employers' Consultative Association (NECA). Prior to that, she was a Senior Researcher and Trainer at the National Institute for Labour Studies, and had been a Lecturer on Gender Issues, Industrial Sociology and Group Dynamics at the Ahmadu Bello University.



Mr. Bassel Ramli, Co-founder, Jumpstart Refugee Talent



Bassel Ramli is the Co-Founder of Jumpstart Refugee Talent, a refugee-led organization that connects displaced people with meaningful employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, while supporting their access to durable solutions. As Director of Global Initiatives, Bassel leads Jumpstart's international efforts, including the expansion of complementary pathways that create mutually beneficial solutions: enabling refugees to access sustainable futures, and helping host countries fill pressing labor gaps. His work also emphasizes empowering refugee-led organizations to shape, deliver, and contribute to these initiatives.

This work is informed by Jumpstart's role in the Global Task Force on Refugee Labor Mobility, where Bassel leads Jumpstart's engagement on sustainable and scalable approaches to labor mobility and economic inclusion.

Before co-founding Jumpstart, Bassel worked in the banking and consulting sectors.