



Statement by Reverend Father Michael Czerny,
Undersecretary of the Migrant and Refugee Section of the Holy See
5th Thematic Discussion towards a Global Compact on Refugees
Panel 1: *“How can we address the root causes of large movements of refugees?”*

Geneva, 15 November 2017

Mr. Moderator,

As recent emergencies have demonstrated, there is a constant increase in the number of people fleeing their countries of origin because of conflicts, violence, persecution, political repression, human rights violation, climate change, natural disasters and extreme poverty. The source, intensity, and interplay of these factors vary from place to place, but there is a tragic common denominator: millions of people forced to leave their homes, their livelihoods, their families and their countries, often risking their lives in search for safety, peace and a life of dignity.

Addressing the root causes of large movements of refugees requires courage and political will. The Delegation of the Holy See wishes to support a more systematic, strategic and regular collaboration, in accordance with existing international norms, to bring to an end conflicts which breed hatred and violence, and to strive for peace and reconciliation.

Mr. Moderator,

Open questions must be resolved by means of diplomacy, dialogue and prevention, which are also basic requirements in the promotion of an integral human development, built upon peace and security. In this context “the Holy See has repeatedly called to limit strictly and to control the manufacture and sale of weapons, where the likelihood of their illegal use and their falling into the hands of non-state actors is real and present.”¹

The proliferation of weapons inevitably leads to violence and is a major obstacle to the creation of a culture of peace. In particular, the sale of arms to countries with on-going (or potential) internal or international conflicts must stop. Speaking of those touched by conflict, Pope Francis has remarked: “Today, too, the victims are many.... How is this possible? It is so because in today’s world, behind the scenes, there are interests, geopolitical strategies, lust for money and power, and there is the manufacture and sale of arms, which seem to be so important!”²

Mr. Moderator,

The most comprehensive and effective way of achieving durable solutions to forced migration is to ensure the right of all to remain in dignity, peace and security in their countries of origin.

My delegation wishes to recall the importance of establishing dialogue and reconciliation. The human person is capable of forgiveness. Alas, this virtue is so often ignored, even though it is

¹ Statement by His Eminence Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State of His Holiness Pope Francis, on Roundtable 1: Addressing the Root Causes of Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants. 19th September 2016, New York. <https://holyseemission.org/contents/statements/57e013c221de4.php>

² Pope Francis, *Homily*, 13/9/2014.

absolutely essential during and after periods of crisis. “Forgiveness is a kind of healing of memory, the completion of its mourning [...] Forgiveness gives a future to memory.”³

As Pope Francis recalled: “violence leads to more violence, hatred to more hatred, death to more death. We must break this cycle which seems inescapable; this is only possible through forgiveness and concrete reconciliation.”⁴

I thank you, Mr. Moderator.

³ Paul Ricoeur: “*Le concept de responsabilité*” in *Le Juste*, Paris, Ed. Esprit, 1995.

⁴ Reconciliation Liturgy by His Holiness Pope Francis, Apostolic Journey to Colombia, Villavicencio (Colombia), 8 September 2017.