

Speech Mr. Peter Beyer, German Bundestag, Leader of the
delegation 145th IPU GA

This session could not have come timelier. We are facing various crises around the world simultaneously. The world is in disarray as it has not been for many, many years.

And these times call for a firm and decisive reaction by parliaments around the world. It is time for voices of reason, of responsibility and of peace. This must be our role.

If we look at those different crises – Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, which I will talk about in more detail later, the ferocious repression against women and other protesters in Iran, the continuous instability in Mali and other countries of the Sahel region, the ongoing civil war in Yemen, and many other wars and conflicts, there is one common thread among all of them:

Women and children are especially affected. The most vulnerable groups are the ones who are suffering the most and deserve most attention and protection.

Therefore, it was wise and forward-looking to choose gender equality as the main topic of discussion for this general assembly.

We need to strengthen the role of women in international conflict resolution, increase the protection of women and children and improve the participation and representation of women in our parliaments.

If I take a look into this hall – this also goes for this very assembly of the IPU.

But I do not want to finger point at others: I want to be self-critical. My very own party, the German Christian Democratic Union, only introduced a quota for women this very year because we have not been successful attracting and bringing enough women into our ranks and positions.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I must and I want to start with the most horrendous human rights violation these days: The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, which started into the most violent phase on February 24th with the full-fledged war breaking fundamental principles of international law and destroying the European peace architecture the Soviet Union and later the very Russian Federation helped to build up and shape.

But let us not forget that this aggression had already started years before, in 2014, with the illegal annexation of Crimea and the violent intrusion of the Donbas by Russian packed paramilitary troops.

We are witnessing worst war crimes and numerous civilian losses caused by Russia. Many victims are women and children. Many more had to flee and leave their husbands or fathers back in the war.

This is one of the most heinous crimes of the current time perpetrated against women and children.

I want to say it clearly: Russia must stop this war now and leave Ukraine with all its forces right now. Only this way this horrendous war can be stopped and peace be reinstated. And I want this message to be sent out loudly and clearly from our assembly in Kigali!

At the very same time, we are witnessing an unprecedented uprising against the authoritarian, repressive Mullah regime in Iran. This regime has suppressed and represses women in a very particular fashion for the past 40 years. One of the biggest collective crimes against women in our time.

These women are standing up to fight for their rights. And we should all support them in their fight for equality, justice and freedom. This is another strong signal I want this assembly to send from Kigali: We stand with the women and the democratic opposition and protesters across Iran! They deserve our support by all means.

Looking from a European perspective, the ongoing crisis across the Sahel is gaining intensity again. Many people are victims of terrorist attacks and oppression of Islamistic organizations and actions. Under our watch, again, hundreds of thousands of women and children are being tortured, raped, displaced, and even killed.

As parliamentarians from across the world, as representatives elected by the peoples, we must take this seriously and stop these developments. Again, women and children are those suffering most from these developments. We must call for an immediate cessation of all violence and suppression and a resumption of peace talks and a fast return to democratic elections – in Mali, in Burkina Faso and in other places.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues,

Let us not underestimate the power we all together have. We are uniquely empowered by the many men and women who live in our countries. Who entrusted us to represent them and their destiny.

If governments, if regimes fail to stop violence or achieve compromise for peace, stability and the protection of human rights, parliamentarians have to step in and make their voices heard. This is our time, our hour. Let's seize the opportunity wisely and send this strong message. This is what I, this is what my delegation expects from our efforts this week.

Thank you very much.

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