

Speech General Debate 145th IPU Assembly

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General Debate: Gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments as drivers of change for a more resilient and peaceful world

Honorable President, Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

as a 35-year-old woman, I am younger than more than 80 percent of my colleagues in the German Bundestag. But my youth is not the only thing that makes me stand out. The quota of women, currently at 34 point 8 percent, is astonishingly low. Being a young woman in politics, especially in parliament, is still the exception. Not only in Germany, but worldwide.

That is why I am even more grateful for the opportunities, not only given to me, but that I - if I may say so myself - have earned and taken. At the same time I know that this - what I have - is a privilege. A privilege, that I will never take for granted. A privilege that many women don't have.

Worldwide, we see a series of conflicts that almost always are started by men, while women have to face the dire consequences. For me personally, it is still heart-breaking to see the many Ukrainian women, arriving in

Germany with their children and only the bare minimum of their belongings. It is their unbelievable strength and will that impress me the most. In the face of a barbaric war, carried out by Putin's Russia against their country and people, they stand strong.

And standing strong seems to be a trait in women: Right now, girls and women in Iran are standing strong. They stand strong for their rights. They stand strong for equality, for freedom. And for that, they are being threatened with violence and even death. What we see in Iran right now is the brutality of helpless men – feeling threatened – trying to rid half of the population from basic rights. But these women are not weak. They are not alone. We stand with them in solidarity.

And we say their names: Nika Shakarami! Jina Amini! Sarina Esmaeilzadeh! Hadis Najafi!

They and their fight will not be forgotten!

Women will never stop fighting for their rights, for their freedom and – if they must – for their lives. They deserve it all – and they will achieve it all!

And through all of their fights, we will also stand strong – at their side.

Thank you very much.