

Speech — 151st IPU Assembly

Theme: *Upholding humanitarian norms and supporting humanitarian action in times of crisis*

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Dear Fellow Parliamentarians,

As a young parliamentarian, it is a special honour to take the floor as the head of the Albanian Parliament delegation in this important General Debate.

We meet in Geneva, the birthplace of humanitarian law, at a time when its very foundations are being tested.

Today, the world faces over 120 armed conflicts, some stretching back decades. More than 122 million people are forcibly displaced, and almost 310 million depend on humanitarian assistance simply to survive. Among them, women and girls bear the heaviest burden.

These are not statistics. They are a moral warning. Behind every number stands a life, a mother, a daughter, a future that may never be lived.

The Geneva Conventions were born from humanity's determination to set limits, to ensure that even in war, compassion would not die. Yet today, those limits are violated with impunity.

Hospitals are bombed. Humanitarian workers are attacked. Civilians are used as leverage in political disputes.

Albania stands firm in the belief that the protection of human dignity is not a matter of political choice but a moral obligation. For us, the strength of a nation is measured not by its power to dominate, but by its will to protect.

Albania's history has shaped our moral compass in moments of crisis.

During one of humanity's darkest chapters, between 1939 and 1945, when war and persecution swept across Europe and millions of Jews were denied safety simply for who they were, Albania became a rare place of refuge. Guided by the ancient honor code of "*Besa*", the moral sacred duty to protect those who seek refuge, even at personal risk, Albanian families risked everything to shelter those fleeing for their life. Ours was the only country in Europe that ended the war with more Jews than before it, a quiet victory of conscience over fear. That moral instinct has shaped our national character ever since.

When the war in Kosovo erupted in 1999 and forced hundreds of thousands to flee their homes, Albania once again opened its doors without hesitation. That moment reaffirmed that solidarity is not an abstract principle; it is a moral imperative, born from shared pain and shared hope.

In 2021, as Afghanistan faced a moment of profound uncertainty, Albania once again welcomed families in need of protection, not because we had abundant resources, but because

we understood that humanitarian aid begins with a simple human gesture: opening a door when others are closed.

That same conviction guides our stance on Ukraine. From the very first day of aggression, Albania has stood in full solidarity with the Ukrainian people, defending the principles of sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity that underpin international law. Our support has combined humanitarian assistance, political engagement, and a consistent call for accountability within multilateral institutions.

These are not gestures of charity but expressions of conscience, the reflection of a small nation's enduring belief that solidarity, protection, and humanitarian action are the truest measures of strength.

Guided by that belief, Albania continues to align its policies with European humanitarian and civil-protection frameworks, investing in disaster resilience, gender equality, and youth engagement, while ensuring that assistance is delivered transparently and effectively.

We recognize and appreciate the ongoing diplomatic efforts led by President Trump to encourage dialogue, restraint, and de-escalation in some of the world's most fragile regions. Such initiatives remind us that leadership is measured not only by power but by the courage to pursue peace, even when the odds seem insurmountable.

That is the spirit Albania stands for: moral conviction, human empathy, and the pursuit of peace through courage.

Parliaments are not bystanders to humanitarian crises. We are their moral and political anchors. We must turn commitments into enforceable laws and compassion into public policy. And we must ensure that populism or short-term politics never erode our obligations under international humanitarian law.

In Albania, this responsibility is taking shape through a comprehensive framework that brings parliamentary oversight, civil protection, and citizen participation under one vision.

Behind every humanitarian tragedy lies another crisis, that of trust in multilateralism. As global divisions deepen, cooperation weakens, and humanitarian needs grow. But no country, large or small, can face these challenges alone.

Parliaments, as the democratic voice of nations, must be the bridge between citizens and global institutions. Albania calls for

- Stronger parliamentary diplomacy to monitor compliance with humanitarian law
- Joint fact-finding missions to crisis areas
- Cross-border collaboration in humanitarian innovation, including digital tools for early warning and climate adaptation

These are not symbolic gestures. They are necessary to restore credibility to multilateral action.

Dear Colleagues,

In a world shaken by conflict and cynicism, upholding humanitarian norms is not an option. It is the measure of who we are.

Thank you.