

- Fellow parliamentarians, I am honoured to participate in this critical debate on “Upholding Humanitarian Norms and Supporting Humanitarian Action in Times of Crisis.”
- Humanitarian action and respect for international humanitarian law have never been more important than they are today.
- As parliamentarians, we have a role to play in preventing and resolving conflicts and supporting people who are impacted by conflict or other crises, such as natural disasters.
- As the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development observes in its report, [States of Fragility 2025](#), the number of armed conflicts is higher than it has been since the end of the Cold War.
- That report also notes that “resources for peace and conflict prevention in contexts [regions] facing high and extreme fragility are at their second lowest level since 2004.”
- Tragically, as the [Global Humanitarian Overview 2025](#) explains, “the most vulnerable are the worst betrayed.” Roughly one in five children globally lives in a conflict zone or is fleeing from conflict.

- The report also observes that, “Underfunding of protection has left people at greater risk of violence, including exploitation and gender-based violence.”
- Combatting gender-based violence is part of [Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy](#).
- In fact, the Government of Canada’s [Report to Parliament on the Government of Canada’s International Assistance 2023–2024](#) observed that “[n]early all of Canada’s bilateral international development assistance targeted or integrated gender equality.”
- As parliamentarians, we can raise the importance of humanitarian action through various venues.
- In Canada, during sittings of the House of Commons and the Senate, Members of Parliament and Senators can question the government about humanitarian actions and assistance during crises and natural disasters.
- In doing so, parliamentarians can ensure that [foreign assistance decisions are evidence-based](#).
- Humanitarian action can also be, and has been, examined in many parliamentary committee studies. In particular, the House of Commons [Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the](#)

[Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development](#) and the [Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights](#) are frequently seized with issues relating to humanitarian crises.

- As donor countries grapple with their own economic concerns and citizens globally face financial challenges, we know that support for foreign assistance is dwindling.
- An [April 2024 poll](#) in Canada found that 59% of those surveyed believed that Canada spent too much on foreign assistance.
- Parliamentarians can share the value of foreign assistance, including during humanitarian crises, with their constituents in a variety of ways.
- This could include during humanitarian crises, in a variety of ways, such as through community events and newsletters.
- Doing so would help to address the beliefs and concerns of their constituents with respect to foreign assistance.
- Communication between parliamentarians and the people they represent on the issue of foreign assistance is crucial. At the same time, dialogue between parliamentarians at assemblies like this is essential.

- **Multilateral events for parliamentarians present tremendous opportunity to learn from others about parliamentary approaches for promoting humanitarian action.**
- **Events like this one also allow us to meet face to face and gain insight on a personal level about what support is needed and how best to deliver that support.**
- **As the *Global Humanitarian Overview 2025* tells us, “people in crisis need political action to end wars, climate action to help them prepare for a shock-filled future and development action to lift them out of crisis.”**
- **We need to act now. I encourage everyone in attendance to seek out colleagues and engage in meaningful discussions, and to bring to these discussions both open hearts and open minds.**