



National Statement by the Honorable Agegnahu Teshager

at the 151st IPU Assembly

“Upholding Humanitarian Norms and Supporting Humanitarian Action in

Times of Crisis”

Geneva, Switzerland, 2025



Mr. President,

Honorable Members of Parliament,

Distinguished delegates,

I would like to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to the people and Government of Switzerland for their warm hospitality, and to the Inter-Parliamentary Union for convening this important Assembly under the theme ***“Upholding Humanitarian Norms and Supporting Humanitarian Action in Times of Crisis.”***

We gather at a time when humanitarian norms are under unprecedented strain. Across the world, civilians, humanitarian workers, and medical personnel are increasingly affected by conflict and violence. The erosion of respect for international humanitarian law the very foundation of our shared humanity has placed millions of lives at risk.

In this challenging environment, parliaments bear a moral and political duty to safeguard these principles, strengthen multilateralism, and ensure that humanitarian action is protected and adequately supported. Upholding humanitarian norms is not only a legal commitment; it is an ethical imperative.

Mr. President,

Ethiopia has long been a steadfast supporter of international humanitarian law. Ethiopia is a state party to the four Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols.



We are also party to major human rights treaties and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

Domestically, our Constitution and national laws uphold these obligations. For instance, the Refugees Proclamation No. 1110/2019 stands as a progressive refugee law, granting refugees the right to work, access education and health services, and live with dignity. Ethiopia has maintained an open-door policy, currently hosting over 1.1 million refugees, primarily from neighbouring countries in crisis.

Through the justice system and our judicial reforms, we continue to ensure accountability, protect fundamental rights, and provide access to justice, in humanitarian situations.

In addition, in a recent development, Ethiopia, as a co-chair of the "IHL and Peace" work stream under the ICRC Global Initiative, launched in September 2024, is playing a key leadership role in the ongoing efforts to translate humanitarian principles into practical actions. We are working actively to create tangible outcomes that bring these principles from the paper to the ground, ensuring that humanitarian norms guide not only policy but also practice.



Beyond legal commitments, Ethiopia has taken concrete action to strengthen humanitarian systems and resilience. Our government has launched a national digital identification program that includes refugees, ensuring they can access services and participate in the economy. With support from international partners, Ethiopia extends social protection, health insurance, and livelihood opportunities to refugees demonstrating a model of inclusive humanitarian response.

These efforts reflect our conviction that humanitarian action must be integrated with development and peace efforts, guided by national ownership and international solidarity.

Mr. President,

Honorable Members of Parliament,

In times of crisis, we parliamentarians are uniquely positioned to uphold humanitarian norms by:

- Enacting and monitoring legislation aligned with international humanitarian law;
 - Ensuring budgetary allocations for humanitarian response and refugee protection, even amidst economic constraints;
 - Exercising oversight to ensure transparency and accountability in aid delivery;
- and
- Using parliamentary diplomacy to foster dialogue, prevent conflict, and strengthen multilateral cooperation.



To conclude, Ethiopia's experience demonstrates that upholding humanitarian norms and supporting humanitarian action are not separate tasks, but mutually reinforcing duties. Through national legislation, regional cooperation, and multilateral engagement, we can build societies that protect life, dignity, and peace, even in the most difficult times.

Let us reaffirm our collective commitment to protect civilians, respect international humanitarian law, and ensure that humanitarian action remains impartial, neutral, and guided by compassion. Our shared humanity must always transcend our differences.

I thank you