

Speech for the IPU General Debate (~5 minutes)

Madam President,

dear colleagues,

we live in a world tormented by crises.

A world of conflict, of war, of hunger and displacement.

A world where violence has become everyday reality —
and where the very idea of humanity seems under attack.

Not one war. Not one crisis.

But more than one hundred and twenty armed conflicts.

In Ukraine, in Sudan, in Gaza, in the Sahel, in Haiti.

And in the Pacific Islands, where the climate crisis has already become a question of survival.

So, the question is: what holds the world together?

For me, as a German, that question carries a deep responsibility.

Because after the Second World War,

after Auschwitz,

our answer is: *Never again.*

War as a tool of politics, dehumanization, silence in the face of suffering. *Never again.*

The mothers and fathers of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the Geneva Conventions gave humanity a foundation —

a promise that even in times of war, rules must apply.

That human dignity is not negotiable.

But today, dear colleagues,

that promise is being broken — again and again.

Hospitals are being bombed.

Humanitarian workers are being killed.

Civilians are being targeted, children are being starved.

Women's bodies are being used as battlefields.

Even the most fundamental humanitarian norms —
those we thought were untouchable —
are under attack.

And at the same time, the climate crisis and armed conflict
reinforce each other.

Droughts, floods, food insecurity — all are multiplying suffering.

122 million people are displaced.

310 million are in need of humanitarian assistance.

And among them, it is women and girls who carry the heaviest burden.

Behind every number is a human being — whose life, whose dreams are stolen by war, by injustice, by indifference.

So yes, we need humanitarian aid.

But more than that — we need humanitarian binding power.

We need to strengthen international law.

And for Germany, this is and this needs to be a priority — just as tackling the climate crisis has become one.

Protecting the planet and protecting people are not separate tasks.

They both depend on one principle:

that even in times of crisis, the law of humanity must prevail.

Because humanitarian law is not a moral luxury.

It is a strategy for survival.

And this, dear colleagues,

is where parliaments come in — where *we* come in.

Because we, as parliamentarians, can turn global norms into national law. Can hold governments accountable for their humanitarian commitments. Can ensure that funding for aid is not the first victim of budget cuts.

And we can defend multilateralism when others turn to nationalism.

That is what makes this IPU so valuable.

Because here, we don't divide the world into North and South.

We can learn from the African continent — about resilience, about community, about solidarity.

We can learn from the Pacific Islands — that climate action is humanitarian action.

And we can learn from the women of Afghanistan, of Sudan, of Iran — what courage looks like when you fight for freedom.

Dear colleagues,
the initiatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross
and the UN Secretary-General to strengthen international
humanitarian law are signs of light.

But they need our support.

They need our political will — and our concrete action.

Because humanitarian commitment begins long before a crisis
erupts.

It starts with prevention, with education, with equality, with climate justice — and with a free press, a vibrant culture, and a strong civil society.

It starts when we make laws that protect the most vulnerable. Seventy-five years after the Geneva Conventions were signed, we must not only defend them — we must revive them and keep their core message alive: that even in the darkest times, humanity must not perish.

Dear colleagues,
let us, as parliamentarians of the world,
be the voice of those who are often not heard or seen.
When we empower women, youth, LGBTIQ people and
minorities, we build societies of compassion instead of fear.
Because in the end, what defines us as nations,
what defines us as human beings, is not how powerful we are
— but how humane we are.
Thank you.