

Mr. Boban Karapejovski, Leader of the Delegation

Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia

General Debate on the theme:

**“Upholding Humanitarian Norms and Supporting Humanitarian
Action
in Times of Crisis”**

Honorable Madam President of the Assembly,

Distinguished Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Macedonian Assembly, I would like to express a sincere appreciation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union for convening this timely discussion, at a moment when the values that sustain our shared humanity are under unprecedented threat.

The global humanitarian landscape today presents a sobering reality: more than 120 active armed conflicts, 122 million people forcibly displaced, and almost 310 million in urgent need of assistance. Behind these statistics stand human lives, families torn apart, children deprived of their futures, and communities devastated by conflict and despair. These are not abstract numbers, but a testament to our collective failure in upholding the essential principles of international humanitarian law.

Macedonia, as a signatory to the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, remains firmly committed to the principles of international humanitarian law. As a candidate country for European Union membership, we consistently align with EU positions concerning the protection of victims of armed conflicts and the promotion of humanitarian norms. Our adherence to these universal principles goes beyond political boundaries, reflecting our profound belief in the dignity and worth of every human being.

Our commitment has been demonstrated through concrete actions. Many times our country granted protection to refugees, ensuring their access to residence permits, employment, education, and essential services, in partnership with UNHCR and civil society organizations. This response reflects our unwavering resolve to stand with those fleeing violence and persecution.

Distinguished colleagues,

The magnitude of today's challenges demands a comprehensive parliamentary response. We must reaffirm our dedication to multilateralism and the rules-based international order. In an era marked by rising nationalism and geopolitical fragmentation, parliaments bear the moral duty to safeguard international humanitarian law. National interests must never be invoked as a pretext for undermining obligations that are the cornerstone of civilized conduct.

We have to exercise our legislative and oversight responsibilities to translate humanitarian norms into effective domestic frameworks and ensure that our governments uphold international commitments and maintain transparency and accountability. We must also embrace a holistic approach to humanitarian action. The intersection of armed conflict, climate change, health emergencies, and gender-based violence demands coordinated, cross-sectoral responses.

Dear colleagues,

Safeguarding humanitarian action requires political will as much as financial support. Despite limited means, our country continues to work closely with international organizations to address statelessness and assist vulnerable populations. By providing legal documentation to stateless persons, we ensure access to fundamental rights and services. These efforts, though small in scope, symbolize our conviction that no individual should remain invisible before the law.

We stand ready to contribute constructively to the global efforts for upholding humanitarian norms and the rules-based international order. As a small nation that has experienced its share of hardship and transition, we understand the transformative power of solidarity and the importance of international support.

The Macedonian Assembly reaffirms its full commitment to the principles of international humanitarian law and pledges to work

actively within the Inter-Parliamentary Union and with international partners to ensure that humanitarian norms are respected, humanitarian action is supported, and the voices of those in need are heard.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Parliamentary diplomacy has a decisive role to play in reinforcing multilateral values: inclusiveness, solidarity, cooperation, and shared responsibility. At a time when trust in global institutions is decreasing, parliaments can bridge divides, foster dialogue, and amplify the voices of the most vulnerable. As parliamentarians, we have the authority to legislate, to allocate, and to inspire. We must use these powers to foster a culture of humanity, even amid crisis.

Thank you for your attention.