

General Debate: Upholding humanitarian norms and supporting humanitarian action in times of crisis

Honourable Chair, Esteemed Colleagues,

We are witnessing a rise in modern armed conflicts, which makes respect for international law and, in particular, international humanitarian law crucial for safeguarding human dignity and preventing further suffering among civilians. I am therefore pleased to see this issue placed at the heart of our discussions during this session.

As a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, Slovenia attaches particular importance to this matter. In recent years, we have strengthened our role as a donor, increasing our humanitarian assistance fivefold.

In light of reports of humanitarian violations in Gaza, we imposed a ban on the import, export, and transit of arms involving Israel and introduced sanctions against two Israeli ministers. With these measures, we sent a strong signal that Slovenia stands firm in defending the principles of humanitarian law and that we have placed the protection of civilians at the centre of our decisions. We have also strongly advocated for the safety of humanitarian workers and for their unhindered access to populations in need.

At the operational level, we have deepened our cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, which led to the signing of a new memorandum. This agreement guarantees at least 5 million euros until 2030 in support of the International Committee's humanitarian efforts to advance the promotion of international humanitarian law.

Slovenia is also actively involved in global initiatives such as the Global Alliance to Spare Water from Armed Conflicts and the Global Initiative to Galvanize Political Commitment to International Humanitarian Law. Within these frameworks, we share our knowledge, experiences, and best practices, and contribute to fostering a global culture of respect for humanitarian law.

Esteemed Colleagues,

At a time when geopolitical tensions are rising and fragmented diplomacy often weakens coordinated action, it is all the more important that we remain committed to humanitarian principles. I therefore welcome the United Nations' *Humanitarian Reset* initiative, which represents a vital step towards reforming the global humanitarian system to make it more inclusive, accountable, and effective in assisting those most in need.

Parliamentarians bear a special responsibility in this regard. Our role is to carefully scrutinise government decisions, to ensure compliance with international obligations, and to advocate for policies grounded in human rights and humanitarian principles.

Let me continue by underlining a basic principle: humanitarian aid must remain neutral and impartial. Aid should always be focused solely on meeting the needs of those affected and not on serving political interests. Political pressures should never stand in the way of providing relief or undermine humanitarian principles. That is why it is important that we, as parliamentarians, take an active role in overseeing and shaping policies on humanitarian aid and international humanitarian law.

Respect for humanitarian law and the delivery of aid are not just legal or political matters; they are a moral imperative and a foundation of our shared humanity. If we are to maintain trust in the multilateral system and protect those who are most vulnerable, we must act together in a spirit of solidarity, responsibility, and humanity.

Thank you.