

21st October 2025

Speech by Rt. Hon. Jemma Nunu Kumba

**Speaker of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly (TNLA)
Republic of South Sudan**

On the Occasion of the 151st IPU Assembly

**Theme: Upholding Humanitarian Norms and Supporting Humanitarian
Action in Times of Crisis**

Madam President,
The Secretary General,
Executive Committee,
Rt. Hon. Speakers,
Head of delegations
Hon. Members of Parliaments,
IPU Partners
Distinguished guests
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor to address this august Assembly under this year's important theme "*Upholding Humanitarian Norms and Supporting Humanitarian Action in Times of Crisis.*"

As the world drifts toward bilateralism and growing nationalism, the Inter-Parliamentary Union remains one of the few enduring fora for multilateral dialogue and collective reflection. It reminds us that the challenges we face—conflict, displacement, hunger, climate shocks—cannot be solved by nations acting alone. The IPU stands as a testament to the enduring power of multilateralism and the shared responsibility of parliaments to act as bridges between peoples and governments.

We remain firmly convinced that multilateralism is indispensable. It is the only mechanism through which nations — large or small, can address complex global challenges effectively. Hence, we in South Sudan value our membership within the IPU and other multilateral mechanisms that allow us to streamline our needs with those of our neighbors.

The consequences of humanitarian crises are most acutely felt in vulnerable states, where the fragility of peace undermines development and weakens social cohesion. For countries like South Sudan, where communities are still healing from years of conflict, every humanitarian emergency threatens to reverse our gains, deepen inequality, and erode public trust.

In South Sudan, this theme resonates deeply. We have endured the consequences of conflict, not only domestically but also regionally. Conflicts in neighboring countries like Sudan and DRC, and climate crises such as floods, continue to exacerbate our need for humanitarian interventions. Currently, South Sudan is hosting over 650,000 refugees from neighboring countries, of which 600,000 are from Sudan. Despite the internal challenges we are facing, South Sudan has accepted its obligation to upholding international humanitarian law and norms, by opening its borders to those who need the most protection and support.

The president of the Republic of South Sudan, H.E. Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit has always directed our security services and host communities to provide protection of refugees and free movement to humanitarian aid workers throughout the country.

Therefore, upholding humanitarian norms is not an abstract ideal for us, rather it is a daily necessity for saving lives and maintaining peace and stability. We know from experience that the protection of human life and dignity must always remain at the center of governance and international cooperation.

Madam President,

At the Transitional National Legislative Assembly, we have sought to strengthen our legislative and oversight functions to ensure that the values enshrined in international humanitarian law are reflected in our national legal frameworks. We continue to review laws and policies related to human rights, protection of civilians, and equitable resource allocation. That includes making amendments to our NGO laws, which governs the operations of humanitarian organizations. This is aimed at safeguarding humanitarian action in times of crisis, which requires more than declarations of intent, but demands national ownership and accountability.

In this regard, our Parliament has established a **Parliamentary Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition**. This seeks to advance the right to adequate food and promote investments in nutrition and food security, recognizing that hunger is both a humanitarian and development issue.

We have also launched the **Parliamentary Caucus on Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)** to confront one of our country's most pressing humanitarian challenges — access to clean water and proper sanitation. To advance the humanitarian agenda, we must embrace a multi-sectoral and inclusive approach. The TNLA has therefore prioritized inclusivity and partnership as guiding principles of its work.

Excellency's, ladies and gentlemen

Our key national mandate at the parliament is to oversee the implementation of the 2018 peace agreement. H.E the President has reiterated his commitment to the peace agreement and stated that he will never allow the country to slip back into the spoils of war and considers the peace agreement as the only viable mechanism that will restore peace and security in the country. I want to report to this August house, that despite the challenges we are facing in my country, the peace agreement is on track – with the hope of ending the transitional period in December 2026, marked by free and fair elections.

Taking the aforementioned inclusivity further, I wish to report that, in September 2025, we established the **Young Parliamentarians Caucus** as required by the IPU to amplify the voices of young MPs in national decision-making and shaping the future.

In addition, we have initiated the process of creating a **Parliamentary Task Force on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, composed of members drawn from relevant committees. This ensures that parliamentary action in South Sudan is aligned with the 2030 Agenda and that our legislative priorities reflect global development aspirations.

We also continue to work through the **South Sudan Parliamentary Network on Population and Development (SSPNPD)**, in collaboration with the UN Population Fund, and other partners, to advocate for gender equality, maternal health, reproductive health and youth empowerment as well as advocating for gender parity, girl child education, and the enactment of the anti-gender based violence law and family law as ways to protect women against violence.

Madam President,

As Speaker, I wish to reaffirm South Sudan's conviction that protecting human dignity is not optional – it is our shared duty. As a country and despite our own

national challenges, we remain committed to restore peace and stability in our country and contribute to the achievement of regional and global peace and security.

As I conclude, I wish to thank our gracious host country for the warm hospitality we have received.

Thank you for your kind attention.