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146th IPU Assembly Manama (11–15 March 2023)

Raising awareness and calling for action on the serious humanitarian crises affecting the peoples of Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Yemen and other countries, and on the particular vulnerability of women and children

Resolution adopted by consensus by the 146th IPU Assembly
(Manama, 14 March 2023)*

The 146th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Considering that low- and middle-income countries host 74% of the world's refugees and other people in need of international protection, that the least developed countries provide asylum to 22% of these people, and that 90% of the world's humanitarian needs are concentrated in 20 countries that, together, represent no more than 13% of the world's population and 1.6% of global GDP,

Cognizant that the affected countries cannot meet the needs of the at-risk population, making it essential for the international community to guarantee humanitarian assistance including food distribution, health care and, in many cases, infrastructure reconstruction, and that, in 2023, an estimated 340 million people will need humanitarian assistance,

Recalling that such international humanitarian assistance is protected by the "right to life, liberty and security" of all persons, an inalienable and universal principle enshrined in Article 3 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of 1948, and that these rights have been endorsed in the *International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights* and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* of 1966, the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* of 1948, and the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols, among others, which together constitute the international legal framework that, pursuant to Article 2 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, promotes and protects the human rights of all "without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status",

Underlining that the United Nations General Assembly has made achieving gender equality by 2030 a target of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular through Goal 5, including but not limited to Target 5.2: "Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation",

Recalling United Nations General Assembly resolution 2816 of 14 December 1971, which established the post of Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (DRC) to provide humanitarian assistance to victims of natural disasters and other emergencies, and resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, through which the DRC was renamed the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and given expanded powers to coordinate humanitarian assistance, to facilitate access to emergency areas, to conduct the organization's needs assessment missions, to prepare joint appeals and to mobilize resources,

* The delegation of Yemen expressed a reservation on the entire resolution.
The delegation of India abstained from supporting the resolution.

Welcoming the creation of the Central Emergency Response Fund, managed by OCHA, which, based on voluntary donations, makes it possible to finance humanitarian response actions worldwide,

Recalling the *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* of 1951, which defines a refugee as any person who, “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country”,

Recalling also United Nations General Assembly resolution 73/195 of 29 December 2018 on the *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*,

Noting with deep concern that women and girls are still exposed to sexual violence, in particular committed by combatants,

Emphasizing that rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization and all other forms of sexual violence of comparable gravity constitute crimes against humanity,

Noting with deep concern the especially dramatic situation in Afghanistan, where about 24 million Afghans are experiencing misery, hunger and freezing temperatures, including many children at severe risk of violence and family separation,

Noting that decades of uninterrupted war, coupled with years of drought and low temperatures, have led to total social and economic collapse, causing the displacement of 3.5 million people and making Afghans one of the largest refugee populations in the world,

Recalling that the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) works in favour of peace and cooperation among peoples, promoting the defence of universal human rights, and *stressing* that absolute respect for such rights is an essential factor for democracy and the development of all nations,

Recalling also the joint statement on Afghanistan issued on 30 August 2021 by the IPU Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law and the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians,

Alarmed by the situation of Afghan women and girls, and *noting* that the Taliban takeover caused the immediate repression of women, excluding them from secondary and university education, while the absence of a male “guardian” prevents many of them from leaving their homes or even accessing essential services, causing them to lose jobs and the corresponding economic support,

Deeply disturbed by attacks on women parliamentarians, including the assassination of Ms. Mursal Nabizada on 15 January 2023 and the attempt on the life of Ms. Fawzia Koofi on 14 August 2020, and *recalling* that the looming risk to women parliamentarians in Afghanistan prompted a decision by the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians on 2 February 2023,

Acknowledging the disastrous humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, caused by a war of aggression, where civilian casualties and the destruction of critical infrastructure have forced millions of people to cross borders into neighbouring countries, in addition to the internally displaced,

Noting that, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as of February 2023, an estimated 17.6 million people in Ukraine require urgent humanitarian assistance and an estimated 8 million refugees from Ukraine are scattered throughout Europe, 90% of them women and children, and that, according to the International Organization for Migration, there are 5.3 million internally displaced persons within Ukraine,

Recalling the emergency item resolutions adopted at the 144th and 145th IPU Assemblies, held in Nusa Dua and Kigali respectively, which recognized the magnitude of the humanitarian situation in Ukraine and were aligned with the resolutions adopted on this subject by the United Nations in 2022,

Recalling also the situation in Yemen, where a bloody civil war, in one of the countries with the most vulnerable populations in the Middle East, has resulted in violence that has affected millions of people, caused hundreds of thousands of deaths and led to mass displacement,

Noting that over 20 million Yemenis require humanitarian assistance, including 4 million internally displaced persons,

Recognizing the catastrophic and unsustainable situation faced by people in the Syrian Arab Republic, where the recent earthquake that affected the north of the country, and the south of Türkiye, has created a humanitarian crisis, compounding the effects of the civil war in the Syrian Arab Republic,

Noting that some 6.6 million Syrians have been forced to flee to other countries, and that there are 6.7 million internally displaced persons within the Syrian Arab Republic,

Considering the current situation in South Sudan, a country ravaged since its birth by an ongoing civil war, where 4.3 million people are currently in need of humanitarian assistance, including refugees (of which 63% are children), internally displaced persons and asylum-seekers,

Recognizing the crisis in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, where violence, insecurity, and lack of food, medicine and essential services have triggered the largest migration in the history of Latin America, with 7 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants, and *noting* that these refugees and migrants are frequently forced to take unauthorized routes, falling victim to traffickers and irregular armed groups,

Cognizant that humanitarian crises are caused not only by conflicts, corrupt governments, wars of aggression, invasions and civil wars, but also by climate change, such as the massive floods that hit Pakistan in 2022, which claimed 1,800 lives, left more than 2.1 million people homeless and affected 33 million people in total,

Acknowledging that the above-mentioned crises are only those with the highest numbers of displaced persons, and *emphasizing* that other humanitarian crises are also taking place in many other regions of the world, including but not limited to Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Iraq, Mali, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Palestine, Somalia and the Sudan,

1. *Considers* that humanitarian crises are the leading cause of human rights violations in the world;
2. *Recognizes* that it is up to the international community to collaborate to protect human lives, to alleviate suffering, to safeguard dignity, and to guarantee access to basic services such as food, medical care, water and shelter for all persons, regardless of their origins, through legal and policy measures at the national level, and *encourages* governments to pursue the SDGs, and Goal 5 in particular, through such measures;
3. *Expresses its sympathy* for the populations of Afghanistan, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Yemen, as well as for the millions of people who, on every continent, suffer deprivation and persecution as a result of war, oppressive regimes, terrorism, violence and natural disasters;
4. *Calls upon* the parliaments of the world to speak out against, and to exert political and diplomatic pressure on, those who bear responsibility for humanitarian crises, and to offer support to affected populations;

5. *Calls for* awareness-raising for national authorities and civil society in countries around the world, so that they are able to contribute, to the greatest extent possible, to the creation of specialized assistance programmes for people affected by humanitarian crises;
6. *Calls upon* all nations to strengthen the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on Preventing Famine, adopting simplified protocols to increase the access of children and young people to treatment for malnutrition;
7. *Appeals* for the strengthening of regional and interregional cooperation in order to facilitate the opening of humanitarian corridors that guarantee safe transit for vulnerable people, especially women and children from crisis-affected areas, while managing or negotiating agreements that allow the safe passage of humanitarian assistance;
8. *Strongly condemns* any attack on the lives, integrity and well-being of civilians, and *calls upon* parliaments and governments to take action against impunity for international crimes that cause humanitarian crises and persecution, in particular through support for the International Criminal Court, through national prosecution efforts and through appropriate legal mechanisms for the punishment of aggression and other international crimes;
9. *Calls for* an increase in international support and assistance for refugees and internally displaced persons, be they men, women or children, who lack access to basic rights and reasonable living conditions, as well as for other people who do not have refugee status;
10. *Notes* that women, together with children, are the main victims of humanitarian crises;
11. *Calls for* support for the efforts of the United Nations and other organizations working for the defence and promotion of women's rights;
12. *Demands* that governments refrain from the use of sexual and gender-based violence as a systematic tactic of warfare;
13. *Urges* governments to meet the needs of survivors of sexual and gender-based violence;
14. *Strongly supports* the empowerment of women and youth, and *affirms* its defence of the rights and interests of women, especially in Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine and Yemen, and of all those living through humanitarian crises;
15. *Calls for* global support for vulnerable host countries which have capacity constraints in order to enable them to provide sufficient education and health care for refugees and asylum-seekers, and *urges* host countries to develop and implement frameworks that guarantee refugees and asylum-seekers, particularly women and girls, access to these vital services,
16. *Calls upon* governments to consistently enforce the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of gender in all respects;
17. *Deplores* the practice of forced deportation, which is a crime under international criminal law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and the forced deportation of children in particular, and *calls for* urgent action by United Nations Member States to stop this practice and to return children to their families;
18. *Expresses particular concern* about the persecution experienced by women and girls in Afghanistan, and *calls upon* the current de facto authorities to respect the *Charter of the United Nations*, international treaties and conventions, and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*;

19. *Calls upon* all governments and parliaments to ensure that there are no obstacles, including under immunity provisions or procedural law, that prevent the award of compensation to victims of international crimes, either through their governments or directly;
20. *Calls for* closer coordination between United Nations agencies and the international community in order to guarantee the implementation of the provisions of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and its Optional Protocols, especially in countries such as Afghanistan;
21. *Endorses* the decision of the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians to condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the atrocious murder of Afghan citizen and parliamentarian Ms. Mursal Nabizada, and *affirms* that this brutal crime is an affront to the rights, values and principles promoted by the IPU;
22. *Calls upon* the IPU Executive Committee to follow up on parliamentary work on the humanitarian crises in Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Yemen and other countries to support the efforts of the international community, and its parliaments in particular, aimed at providing assistance to populations, and at promoting order, stability and the long-term restoration of institutions in order to achieve human and sustainable development in democracy;
23. *Calls upon* the international community to address the urgent need for robust financial support by strengthening its institutional support and cooperative financing mechanisms, including the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, the Central Emergency Response Fund managed by OCHA, and UNHCR, and *recommends* that the above financial support be allocated not only to immediate and individual humanitarian assistance such as food and medicine, but also to the design of reconstruction plans for essential infrastructure in order to maintain the basic functions of society in Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine and Yemen;
24. *Calls for* the strengthening of humanitarian assistance mechanisms to respond to these humanitarian crises.