



**135th INTER -PARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU) ASSEMBLY AND
RELATED MEETINGS**

General Debate

on

***Human Rights Abuses as Precursors of Conflict:
Parliaments as Early Responders***

By

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Speaker of the National Assembly

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Mr. President

The theme for this Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly is timely as it gives Parliaments an opportunity to reflect and positively intervene on the state of human rights abuses at national, regional and international levels in order to constrict human conflict. This is critically important because it is axiomatic that each human being has universal inalienable rights which may not be encroached upon by any person.

In this context, Parliaments share a grave responsibility to ensure that states respect, promote, protect and fulfil human rights as a culture that negates human rights abuses as precursors of conflict. To that extent, Parliaments ought to be unflinching advocates of the rule of law without fear or favour. In so doing, let each Parliament echo the clarion call of Koffi Annan, the former Secretary General of the United Nations who aptly opined

that **"Human rights are foreign to no culture and native to all nations; they are universal"**. It is this universality of human rights which must enjoin all our Parliaments within the Inter-Parliamentary Union which must disabuse of human rights abuses, the fertile ground of human conflicts the world over.

Mr. President,

To forestall conflicts, Parliaments must table robust motions that condemn unreservedly human rights abuses wherever and whenever they show up their inhumane ugly head. The adopted motions should have a scheduled time-framed plan of action to redress human rights abuses where they are occurring. Furthermore, Parliaments ought to exercise stringent oversight on the Executive Arm of the State where there is some fragrant human rights abuses without unflinching from such responsibility.

Additionally, our Parliaments should be the apostolic champions of upholding and defending the sanctimonious application of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Regional Human Rights Charters such as the African Charter on Peoples and Human Rights as a measure to be early responders to reckless human rights violations which threaten human peace and stability globally. Relatedly, our Parliaments can forestall and contain human conflict by religiously ratifying and domesticating international human rights instruments which ought to anchor the Bill of Human Rights and the rule of law. Side by side with such pro-human rights laws, Parliaments should endeavour to ensure that human rights institutions such as the Human Rights Commissions are established and fully functional in order to assist Parliaments to be early responders to human rights violations which trigger human conflicts.

Mr. President,

Human rights abuses as the precursors of conflict can be curtailed through a vibrant and robust judiciary, particularly at the Constitutional Court level. In Zimbabwe, Parliament enacted a sound Constitution in 2013 which allows the public to nominate possible judge candidates for public interviews by the Judiciary Services Commission. This selection process of the Bench guarantees a judiciary that is accountable to the upholding of the Bill of Rights, to the rule of law and being answerable to the court of public opinion.

Mr. President,

Last but not least, Parliaments must deliberately engage civil society, inclusive of the media, in the fight against human rights abuses that subsequently become the bedrock of human conflict. No Parliament can be an early responder to human rights abuses

if it fails to leverage the instrumental and powerful voice of civil society, inclusive of the media. Such democratic synergies are an imperative for our Parliaments, if we are to crusade against human rights violations which nudge human conflict.

I THANK YOU, MR PRESIDENT.