



Predsednica Republike Slovenije

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Address by the President of the Republic of Slovenia at the Special side event: »Human Rights for Everyone, Everywhere – Core of our Shared Humanity«

New York, 25. September 2025

Mr President,
High Commissioner for Human Rights,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Human rights are the inherent birthright of every person – the non-negotiable foundation of human dignity and our shared destiny. This principle stands as one of humanity's pivotal achievements. Yet, the reality of our world reveals a painful truth: these rights are not equally enjoyed by all. This is starkly evident in the many ongoing wars that systematically violate human rights, most horrifically in the unfolding genocide in Gaza.

Human rights law is evolving together with the evolution of human society. Our generation is the one already living in a climate crisis. Slovenia is proud to have been part of the core group that fought for the global recognition of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Its adoption in 2022 was a historic milestone. **But recognition is not protection.** We are therefore grateful that the International Court of Justice affirmed this right in its landmark Advisory Opinion. We must **act** to uphold it, holding polluters accountable for safeguarding our planet for future generations.

We are also failing in our duty to protect those who built our societies. The rights of older persons have been overlooked for far too long, although we are facing rapid demographic change. It is high time for concrete, accountable action to close these protection gaps. Older persons must enjoy their human rights on an equal basis and participate fully in society. This is why we urgently need a new legal instrument, a **United Nations Convention on the rights of older persons**. The time for its creation is **now**.

In the face of a global backlash, Slovenia stands firm for women and girls. We have championed the **Women, Peace and Security Agenda**, recognising that sustainable peace is impossible without the meaningful participation of women. The principle of inclusive participation must also guide our multilateralism, from the **rotation of leadership** here in the General Assembly to the crucial work of the Secretary-General. It is the courage of women's human rights defenders that turns this principle into practice; they are on the front lines, speaking truth to power and defending the rights of all. We owe them our unwavering protection and the amplification of their voices on the highest levels.

Mr President,
High Commissioner for Human Rights,

In a time of increasing geopolitical tensions and narratives of crisis in the multilateral system, Slovenia chooses to respond not with disengagement, but with a reaffirmed commitment to the international law that all of us members of the United Nations have built together in the past 80 years. This, Mr President, is under attack and in danger of weakening and fragmentation. Allow me to point out two obvious challenges:

First, a lack of implementation of the international humanitarian law and human rights law is, I believe, in large part due to the weak and **blocked UN Security Council**. The UNSC is unable to effectively address situations of armed conflict, due to the threat of or actual use of the **veto power**. As we all know, the reform of the UNSC is urgent. Let me once again address an appeal to all five permanent members **to denounce the use of veto in cases of mass atrocities and gross human rights violations**.

And second, **financial constraints, liquidity crises and cuts to development aid** are crippling the Office of the High Commissioner in particular, and the United Nations as a whole. If we allow this to continue, we will be abandoning the most vulnerable and emboldening those who seek to dismantle it. We must therefore ask ourselves – not only as accountants, but as architects of a just future:

How much funding do we need to tell right from wrong?

I thank you.