



## Milischia Rezai: Tal till FN:s generalförsamling

**Talare**

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Distinguished delegates, youth delegates, Mr. President,

The world is changing, but history seems to be repeating itself. The 22nd of July last year, right-wing extremism once again struck a society with its ice-cold hatred.

A terrorist killed 77 innocent people in an attack targeting the summer camp of the Norwegian Social democratic youth organization. These young people, some of them my personal friends, believed in the strength of standing together, using democracy to make their society and the world a better place. They stood together in the fight for freedom, justice and equality. They did this with a strong belief in openness, anti-racism and democracy. The terror attack the 22nd of July last year was an attack on these values. And it was a testimony of an increasing spread of racism and islamophobia throughout the world.

The response to this terror attack was more openness, more democracy and more humanity. For the world has no better answer to tackle terrorism. Responding with violence only creates a spiral of hatred and conflicts.

Mr. president,

The world is changing, and it is therefore time to rethink the old-fashioned security policies protecting national and financial interests, rather than protecting human rights. A modern security policy places human security as the first priority by tackling issues such as environmental threats and humanitarian challenges. A modern security policy is not based on fear. It is founded on cooperation and aims to reduce global tensions by strengthening democracy and social and economical equality instead of investing enormous resources in military aggressions, arms and weapons. Peace and security goes hand in hand with justice and equality.

The security threats facing my generation are the results of today's global challenges. Climate change, lack of resources and growing inequalities could force hundreds of millions of people to leave their homes. Many of these refugees will seek shelter in countries that have not been as badly hit by natural disasters, draught and rising sea levels, though it is often regions where the world's resources have been concentrated through the current global economic system. These countries now have to face up to their responsibilities.

Mr. president,

Both of my parents are immigrants. I often think about how my freedom and my rights would have been limited if I had not grown up in a democratic society. One thing I know for sure is that I would not have been standing here today, getting the chance to make my voice heard.

Millions of refugees are today leaving their homes to seek a better future for their families. Many of them spend years in camps, detention centers or hidden away by fear of being sent back to poverty, oppression, torture, and in some of the worst cases, death. Living in poverty, under danger and oppression has for many people become like living in a burning building with no exits.

Although immigration restrictions do not explicitly mention race, they still apply, overwhelmingly, to people of color. And as long as the immigration policies are influenced by racism and misconceptions about migrants, refugees from all over the world will continue to face closed doors.

Migrants who do find shelter in another country, will find that in many societies, the concepts of race and nation are very closely connected. Global capitalism has been built on the backs of migrant labor. Forced to work long workweeks for sub-minimum wages in a country where their presence is resented and where they can expect no institutional support, migrants are often lacking most fundamental rights such as joining and forming trade unions. Many undocumented migrants are exploited under the threat of deportation and without rights to social protection. The structural discrimination and subordination of immigrants has led to a modern form of apartheid where your name and the color of your skin have important impacts on your chances in life. This must come to an end.

Racist and particularistic movements feed on high unemployment, low levels of social security and big income-differences. Racism is thus best fought politically; by public investments in free quality education, job creation and redistribution of wealth and welfare.

We need a humane migration policy that is opening borders to people in need. Decriminalizing border crossing and reversing militarization of borders are two necessary steps. Countries need to respect international law protecting the rights of refugees and migrants. The international instruments stating that refugees have the right to seek asylum are rather toothless in a context where countries are systematically making it more difficult for people to travel to their countries by legal means. The principle of non-refoulement is increasingly ignored. These are only two examples of how countries are violating international agreements and the human rights of migrants. The greatest challenge for the UN is thereby to uphold compliance by its member states, as was underlined in the resolution adopted last year by the General Assembly on the protection of migrants.

My hope is now that the questions concerning the rights of migrants and asylum-seekers, as well as the positive effects of migration on development, will be incorporated in the post-MDG process and looked at through a holistic perspective.

Ladies, gentlemen and others,

The world is changing, but history seems to be repeating itself. What worries me the most is that we seem to have learned very little from history. The terror attack the 22nd of July last year should serve as a wake up call, reminding the world of the urgency to close the racist parenthesis in modern history.

Let us ensure that there will be no more victims of right-wing extremism. Let us do this by taking the initiative to put an end to racism and islamophobia and by reaffirming the equal rights of all human beings no matter of their ethnicity or nationality.

Thank you.

**Taggar**

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