

Good evening.

It is my absolute honor to be invited by Terres des Hommes, to speak on behalf of a generation whose dreams have been shattered, whose visions have been burned, and whose ambitions have been crushed— a generation that appears to live in the 21st century, yet is forced by an authoritarian regime to exist centuries behind.

This may sound unbelievable—almost impossible. But this is the undeniable truth of Afghanistan today.

My name is Lailoma Nomani. I come from a country that is no longer a safe place for women. And I must admit: we—all women everywhere, no matter where we live or what borders surround us have fought for centuries to experience the real meaning of justice and equality and still, our fight continues, and still we have not succeeded in breaking the glass ceiling. But the story of women of Afghanistan... it is a chapter far more painful, far more tragic, far more heartbreaking.

They are denied not only education and work—which now seem like a dream—but even the basic right to step outside and breathe freely.

I know you are already aware of the bans, the fear, the suffocation that women of Afghanistan face every single day. But tonight, I want you to imagine it.

Tonight, before you go to sleep, think about this scenario:

Tomorrow morning, you open your door and suddenly find gunmen standing in your street—not to ask, not to explain, but to command:

“Stay home. Home is your place.

**A good woman has no connection with society or the public sphere, and should not be involved in any area of public life or in roles that influence decisions or progress.**

A good woman does not question, does not criticize, does not speak. And if you dare to protest—even softly—your life will be the cost.” Shocking, isn’t it?

But for women of Afghanistan, this is not imagination—this is daily life.

And tonight, I want to focus neither on these tragedies nor on the Taliban who caused these tragedies, Why?

Because I do not expect them to believe in dignity, humanity, or women's rights. Their ideology has no space for liberty or freedom. They did not fight to build a nation where everyone belongs—they fought to erase women from every aspect of society.

My message is for you—for everyone who believes in human rights and civic participation; for the global community that once encouraged women of Afghanistan to dream, to learn, to discover their potential, to believe in themselves, and to build networks beyond borders.

But at the peak of their success, the world stepped back and these women fell from the summit of hope into a terrifying hopelessness. This withdrawal left countless women of Afghanistan wounded and abandoned. And now, the world watches in silence—as if everything is perfectly fine.

In such silence, I truly wonder: Why would the Taliban change their **policies, which are** rooted in misogyny? Without global pressure, clear red lines, or strict sanctions, how can we realistically expect different behavior?

And do you know what is the worst part of this scenario? The collapse of global efforts to build fair, conscious, and humane societies.

The suffering of women of Afghanistan does not remain inside Afghanistan. **It undermines the global efforts to build a society free from discrimination**

The positive changes we see today in the lives of women around the world were never achieved easily or freely—they are the result of continuous sacrifices and tireless struggles.

When one girl is denied education, the promise of equality everywhere is pushed backward.

Some may say, “Political change is beyond us,” or “We can’t influence governments.” But we often forget something powerful: Every voice, every gesture, every small act can spark a revolution.

Every great transformation in history began with one step.

Imagine if tonight, we choose to change one life— to offer one educational opportunity, to amplify one silenced voice, to support one woman, to stand against discrimination, to advocate for recognizing gender apartheid in Afghanistan. How many lives could transform— one by one?

This gathering tonight already shows commitment. This exhibition— Hope in Darkness—is evidence of your dedication.

We Afghans are not ungrateful. We do not forget your solidarity. We do not forget your compassion, kindness, support, and empathy. But today, our voices must rise higher. Our presence must grow stronger. And we must stand firmly against anyone—anywhere—who attempts to erase women’s identity.

Lassen Sie mich meine abschließenden Worte in der süßen deutschen Sprache sagen: Heute sitzt ein Mädchen in Afghanistan hinter einer geschlossenen Tür. Sie schaut zu uns. Vielleicht öffnen wir eines Tages ihre Schule, geben ihr die Hand, helfen ihr aus der Dunkelheit ins Licht, hören ihr zu und machen ihr Mut. Zusammen können wir viel ändern. Lasst uns mutig und stark für Gerechtigkeit, Gleichheit und Menschlichkeit kämpfen. Eine Welt, in der alle gleich sind, ist die schönste Welt.

Vielen Dank.