



27 February 2017 - UN Secretary-General António Guterres today deplored the “perverse phenomenon of populism and extremism feeding off each” in his speech at the opening ceremony of the 34th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

“We are increasingly seeing the perverse phenomenon of populism and extremism feeding off each other in a frenzy of growing racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim hatred and other forms of intolerance,” Mr. Guterres said.

He also expressed his worries that hard fought gains on women’s right were being “chipped away... whether it is through a pushback on women’s reproductive rights or turning a blind eye to domestic violence or violently enforcing traditional gender roles.”

Guterres reminded delegates that human rights “must never be seen as luxury or “saved for later”, after peace and development have been achieved.

“And we must speak up for human rights in an impartial way without double standards...And indeed, the integrity and credibility of this Council will only be enhanced by proceeding in a manner that avoids unbalanced treatment of Member States,” Mr. Guterres said.

In his speech the High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein said that “reckless political profiteers” should not be allowed to “throw aside...our rights.”

“To those political actors who, as in the days of the League (of Nations), threaten the multilateral system or intend to withdraw from parts of it, the sirens of historical experience ought to ring clear,” Mr. Zeid said. “We will not sit idly by. For we have much to lose, so much to protect. And our rights, the rights of others, the very future of our planet cannot, must not be thrown aside by these reckless political profiteers.”

The 34th session of the Human Rights Council, which started today ends 24 March 2017.

Additional link:

[Mr Guterres addressing the Human Rights Council in Geneva](#)
[addressing the Human Rights Council in Geneva](#)