

Street by Street: Systematic Dehumanization in Europe

Op-Ed by Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide Adama Dieng

Europe is facing a challenge of promoting and maintaining harmonious coexistence among its citizens, and those who cross borders to seek sanctuary on the continent. Immigrants and refugees continue to test the capability of European countries to uphold fundamental rights and freedoms for all.

However, from the streets of Palermo to Budapest, reports of physical and verbal attacks towards immigrants and refugees are no longer isolated incidences. These groups of people continue to suffer humiliation and dehumanization.

The demonization of immigrants by politicians, and attracted widespread outrage nor condemnation.

Instead, politicians seem to exacerbate such attacks with sanctimoniousness and hateful rhetoric. All over Europe, ultranationalist resurgence is legitimizing hatred, racism and violence.

While extremists spread inflammatory language in mainstream political discourse under the guise of ‘populism’, hate crimes and hate speech continue to rise. Hate crimes constitute one of the clearest early-warning signs for atrocity crimes. Therefore, they must not remain unchallenged.

What is presented as rational sovereignist policy, centered on the protection of ‘borders’, deliberately disguises its racist and nationalist connotations. In fact, these leaders deny the problem: their racism is an ‘invention’ by its critics. In the real world, these attacks are manifestations of racist violence.

The new Italian government's anti-immigration drive has been linked to a significant increase in violence towards immigrants, including shootings, attacks on minors and murders.

After calls

