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This year will focus on celebrations and reflections on occasion of the 70th anniversary of the United Nations. At the same time, the Millennium Development Goals as well as the Sustainable Development Goals for the post-2015 era remain central items on the agenda when global governance issues and international responsibilities are discussed. Notions, which by implication always also carry a local meaning and impact on domestic policy in as much as domestic policy (not only as foreign policy) also impacts on global governance issues. The divide often maintained is more than ever artificial and misleading in the face of the global challenges humanity faces — not only in terms of environmental degradation as a result of climate change. Many issues do not have any territorial boundaries or are transcending those.

The inter-linkages of the local and the global (for which the term 'glocal' was minted a few years ago) are obvious not only when it comes to humanitarian disasters and emergency situations appealing to global solidarity, such as the recent earthquake in Nepal and its devastating consequences. Other manifestations of solidarity in a global world included the almost world-wide *'Je Suis Charlie'* response and outcry to the terrorist attack on the journal and the cold-blooded execution of its cartoonists in Paris. The gathering of world leaders there in defiance of the assault on civil liberties and freedoms of expression was a symbolic act of some magnitude and brought together even deeply antagonistic political players.

But at the same time the lack of similar visible and determined symbolic acts of defiance by the world's political leaders and Western civil society agencies, suggesting an absence of a similar degree of moral outcry and global protest over the ongoing slaughters and abductions by Boko Haram in Nigeria or the massacre of students at the Garissa University College in Kenya seem to suggest that we still live in times of double standards and/or selective perceptions. Humanity as well as human beings remain divided and seem to live in different worlds. Likewise, the tragedies taking place visibly in broad daylight on the Mediterranean Sea, reaching a scale of human loss at days bordering to the numerical proportions of 9/11, have not been met with a similar rigorous political will to promote true values of humanity.

"In Search of Freedom" in as much as "In Search of Development" as paradigmatic strategies remain urgent priorities. This issue of the *Strategic Review*, entering the third year of an open access periodical with a modified outlook and profile, therefore engages with the notion of human

security as intertwined with matters of peace and conflict within the continent. Presenting several case studies in combination with particular dimensions and components related to the necessity of a wide definition and approach to human security, this issue revisits a conceptual understanding, which had been formulated in the editorial for the first issue presenting the revamped profile (Vol 35, No 1, p 10). It then stressed that the journal "is far from understanding regional stability as merely a military or intelligence-motivated undertaking in terms of state security. Rather, we see the need for a human security perspective, which places the people at the centre of concerns".

This special issue follows such an approach. It has been guest edited by 'Funmi Olonisakin, a member of the journal's international advisory board. We thank her for all the hard work invested in the conceptualisation, the coordination and the final editing of the contributions. It is her privilege and responsibility to engage closer with the substance in a specific introduction to this issue.

Henning Melber
Editor-in-chief