

London mayor warns of rising far-right populists in Europe



Warsaw, September 2 (RHC)-- Europe is starting to resemble the situation on the eve of World War Two, with leaders using divisive language to win popularity and spread hatred against minorities, London Mayor Sadiq Khan has warned.

“Are we living through times now similar to the 1930s? Because if you look at the 1930s, what happened - the rise of charismatic leaders using the power of hatred to divide communities and to pick on the other,” Khan said.

A Muslim of Pakistani heritage, London’s mayor was speaking at an event in Poland to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the start of the 1939-1945 conflict. “Look at some of the things happening (now) across Europe. People are trying to divide communities using the language of hate, scapegoating people because of their sexual orientation, because of their ethnic origin, because of their faith, or because of who they are,” he said especially pointing out presidents like Donald Trump.

Yet the animosity between the two is not new, as they have exchanged taunts before.

Trump called Khan a “stone-cold loser” earlier this year after the mayor criticized the British government for inviting the U.S. president for a state visit. While Khan had compared Trump to 20th-century fascists in an opinion piece.

“President Donald Trump is just one of the most egregious examples of a growing global threat. The far-right is on the rise around the world, threatening our hard-won rights and freedoms and the values that have defined our liberal, democratic societies for more than 70 years,” Khan wrote back in June.

He also likened Trump with Viktor Orban in Hungary, Matteo Salvini in Italy, Marine Le Pen in France and Nigel Farage in the U.K. who are “using the same divisive tropes of the fascists of the 20th century to garner support, but with new sinister methods to deliver their message.”

The mayor’s warning was also made earlier this year by the United Nations special adviser on the prevention of genocide, Adama Dieng, who said that the advance of a new class of nationalist, far-right leaders in Europe is reminiscent of the 1930s when Nazis rose to power.

As the Nazis did during their rise to power, rhetorics of fear and hate against an “other”, who is to blame for every wrong in society are now again being used by far-right parties across Europe.

In the same manner, Hutu officials promoted hate speech to justice the genocide of an estimated 800,000 Tutsi Rwandans between April and June 1994. Both cases, are examples of how fear, hate, and discrimination were narrative tools to push towards fascism and death.

And although May 26 elections dissipated some fears on a rapid rise and take over from far-right parties in Europe, it also showed that their core support is still intact.

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