



Statement on behalf of the State of Israel

**UN Human Rights Council
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ID with the SR on Independence of Judges and Lawyers

Thank you Mr. President,

Our statement will focus on the issue of Independence of Judges and Lawyers.

We thank the Special Rapporteur for her work and congratulate her for her first report presented before us today.

Israel agrees with the SR when she affirms that the context for the realization of the independence of judges, lawyers and prosecutors is that of democracy.

Israel is a strong democracy and has a deep commitment to the rule of law. The democratic values are central to Israel's ethos and political system, which is based on 3 independent pillars: an executive branch, a legislative branch, and our independent judiciary branch.

The values of equality, freedom and respect for human rights are upheld and protected by the judicial branch.

The independence of the judiciary also serves to bolster and inspire public trust in the judiciary. Yet, owing to the democratic nature of our society there is also active, ongoing debate and public critique of the judiciary.

Israel's commitment to the principle of independence is enshrined in the Basic Law, which ensures the independence of judges, as it requires that any person having judicial authority be "bound to obedience solely to the law".

In addition, any party is entitled to directly petition the Supreme Court regarding a claim that a government action is ultra vires, unlawful or substantially unreasonable.

To demonstrate the commitment to due process and legal representation to all, free legal aid is offered in Israel, under certain circumstances, in both civil and criminal proceedings.

The Public Defender Office is a part of the Ministry of Justice, and was established to raise the quality of criminal representation in Israel by offering professional and high-quality legal representation to indigent clients .

Mr. President,

The state of Israel continues to promote, ensure and safeguard the rights of all those accessing the judicial system. In doing so, Israel is constantly assessing the situation to consider the need for reforms or new innovations, bearing in mind the centrality of the independence of judges to the proper functioning of Israel's legal system and the promotion and protection of human rights.

Thank you.