

---

**UN Human Rights Council  
37<sup>th</sup> Session – February 28, 2018**

**High-level panel discussion  
70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights  
and 25th anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action**

Delivered by Mr. Yoel Mester,  
Deputy Permanent Representative of Israel to the UN in Geneva

---

Thank you, Mr. President,

We would like to thank the organizers of this panel, and the distinguished panelists for their valuable contribution. May 1948 saw the establishment of the State of Israel, as the long overdue realization of Jewish self-determination. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted several months later that year. And yet many of the principles that were put forth in the Universal Declaration were already present in Israel's proclamation of independence which preceded it. Among these is the commitment to freedom, justice, peace and equal social and political rights.

But as any country that is seriously committed to human rights, we know full well that the moment in time when the declaration is made is but the beginning of a long journey. It may pave the way, but then it is up to the state walk the path and stay on track, as times change and the trail winds through uncharted territory.

Mr. President,

The ambition of the Universal Declaration is especially big, since it demands that all states adhere to its standards. The universality of many of the Declaration's principles is constantly challenged, and too often we see human rights being pushed aside in favor of other interests and considerations. Unfortunately, we see this happening in the Middle East around us all the time. It is the role of the international community to protect the Declaration, and foster a growing respect for it among people and nations. Let us not let the authors of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights down.

I thank you Mr. President.