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**UN Human Rights Council**  
**41<sup>st</sup> Session, Item 3 – June 26, 2019**

**ID with SR on Freedom of Expression**

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Thank you, Mr. President,

Freedom of expression is one of the bedrocks of Israel's prosperous democracy. Challenges and dilemmas, insomuch as they exist here and there, are no different than those that arise in most if not all other Western democracies. They may arise more often, as Israel is a democracy fighting terror. But we invite the Rapporteur, as well as all delegates sitting in this room, to randomly access some of the twitter feeds of the countless journalists and civil society activists operating in Israel, just to get a firsthand impression of the astonishing extent of freedom of expression that exists at any given moment.

Therefore, we are profoundly disappointed by the approach adopted by the Rapporteur when purporting to assess the implementation of previous recommendations given to Israel by his predecessor seven and a half years ago. We fail to understand why the Rapporteur chose to dedicate much of his so-called "follow-up" report to events that have been taking place only as late as the past year, and as such were not dealt with during the original country visit in 2011. Moreover, we deplore the fact that the Rapporteur embraces some of the baseless allegations made by the most recent Gaza COI, a fundamentally flawed mechanism which has been repudiated by many States. This casts a serious doubt on the judgement of the mandate holder when addressing the complex realities on the ground.

Finally Like other countries around the world, Israel remains concerned by the constant threat of terrorism and is threatened by the escalating levels of incitement to violence and recruitment of children to commit acts of terror through social media. Israel is deeply invested in combatting the challenge of online hatred and abuse of social media platforms for the sake of terror and will continue to do so, while simultaneously being careful to preserve individuals' rights to freedom of expression.

Following the Rapporteurs concern, we would also emphasize that Israel fully agrees that the right to life must be preserved and respected. We strongly recommend that the grave concerns for the preserving of this right, together with others, would also be taken under consideration when righting such a report on the State of Israel.

I thank you Mr. President.