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**UN Human Rights Council**  
**47<sup>th</sup> Session – June 2021 – Item 3**

**ID with Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and  
Lawyers**

Adv. Merav Marks  
Legal Adviser, Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations in Geneva

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Madam President,

Israel wishes to thank the Special Rapporteur for his report.

The importance of the right to access to justice is perceived in Israel as a cornerstone of the rule of law.

The Israeli Supreme Court held that: “.... *The right to access the court is not a basic right in the normal sense of the word...its existence is superior to a basic right- you can say-... it is a necessary and essential condition to the existence of the other basic rights. The right to access to justice is the court’s lifeline. It is the infrastructure for the existence of the Judiciary system and the rule of law...*”

Madam President,

COVID 19 poses many challenges to the enjoyment of human rights, and it is the State’s obligation to find a way to protect its people from the pandemic while protecting and respecting their human rights.

Given the high significance Israel places on the access to justice, it is important to note that throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, which broke out in Israel in February 2020, Israeli Courts, Tribunals and the Knesset remained open, and continued to conduct hearings, functioning pursuant to the relevant health regulations.

Several regulations were enacted promoting and securing this right. In the laws that were enacted during the pandemic, which limit the ability to access public spaces, the attendance in legal proceedings was specifically excluded. In the same manner, the functioning of the Knesset was excluded from the limitations.

Finally, the Israeli courts also conducted certain proceedings through digital means, in cooperation with the Israeli Prison Service.

Thank you.