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**UN Human Rights Council  
49<sup>th</sup> Regular Session, March 2022**

**Item 2 – General Debate**

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

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Thank you, Mr President

Israel remains highly concerned by the deteriorating situation of Women and Girls in several countries.

In Ukraine, we remain concerned about the disproportionate impact that conflict and the resulting humanitarian situation will have on Women and Girls.

In Iran, we are concerned about the recent law ratified in November 2021 on young people and the protection of the family. This law imposes severe restrictions and prohibitions on abortion, voluntary sterilization, and access to modern contraceptive goods, services, and information. We are also concerned about the increase in early marriage, with over 31,000 marriages of girls between the ages of 10 to 14 recorded last year, an increase of around 10.5% compared to the previous year.

In Afghanistan, we remain concerned that the Taliban continue to institutionalize large-scale and systematic gender-based discrimination and violence against women and girls. Women and girls have been barred from returning to their jobs, prohibited from using public transport on their own, and have had a strict dress code imposed on them. It is extremely concerning that the fundamental right of women and girls to education continues to be denied.

Finally, in Syria, women and girls have felt the toll of the decade of war. Reports that the Syrian Government has used rape and other forms of sexual violence as part of a widespread and systematic attack against civilians in house-to-house searches, at checkpoints, and in detention are highly troubling.

I thank you.