
UN Human Rights Council
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Item 3
ID with the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief

Ambassador Meirav Eilon Shahar
Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations in Geneva

Mr. President,

Israel read the report of the special rapporteur very closely and wishes to set the records straight. Contrary to what the report is trying to suggest about the way Israel treats its religious and ethnic minorities, Israel is a diverse society, as reflected in its diverse government, comprising, among others, Jewish, Muslim and Druze members. Let me be very clear, Israel does not target groups advocating for freedom of religion, nor prosecutes individuals based on their religion.

As any other democracy, we face challenges, but we are committed to promoting and protecting the rights of all minorities, including national and religious minorities.

Israel is home to large Muslim, Christian, Druze and other religious communities who are well represented in politics, in the media, in the health system and in the public service. Only in recent weeks, a Muslim judge was appointed to serve in the Israeli Supreme Court, along with other judges belonging to minorities in the judicial system.

Mr. President,

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is based on competing political-territorial claims between two peoples. Suggesting that discrimination based on religion is the motivation for Israel's policies is baseless and only serves fundamentalists interested in inflaming the region into a helpless crusade. Despite all the attempts, Israel will continue to abide by the rule of law and respect all of its religious and ethnic minorities.

Thank you, Mr. President.