



Mission permanente d'Israël  
auprès de l'Office des Nations Unies  
et des Organisations Internationales à Genève

משלחת ישראל  
ליד משרד האומות המאוחדות  
והארגונים הבינלאומיים בג'נבה

Ms. Ikponwosa Ero  
Mandate of the Independent Expert on the  
enjoyment of human rights by persons with  
albinism  
Palais des Nations  
CH-1211 Geneva 10

Geneva, 19 September 2017

Dear Independent Expert,  
Dear Special Rapporteurs,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism, Ms. Ero, for organizing this extremely interesting – and necessary– Expert Workshop, and to invite us to join her.

Unfortunately, today and tomorrow are the days that mark the celebration of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, and therefore it is not possible for me, or my team, to be present with you today.

Nonetheless, the topic of the workshop, the content of the programme and the quality of the participants are to be highly commended.

As explained by the IE on her last report to the Human Rights Council, and reaffirmed in the concept note of this event, witchcraft related beliefs and practices have resulted in serious violations of human rights; and those who are usually the most vulnerable – women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, persons with albinism – are in this specific case the most persecuted, and therefore in dire need of protection.

Witchcraft related beliefs and practices create big distress to those groups who are targeted by these practices, since they create a double dangerously problem: either they are killed or hurt as part of witchcraft practices, or they are killed or attacked because they are labelled as witches.

This situation cannot continue. I am sure that this Workshop will help to better understand the root causes of this phenomenon, and therefore help Member States, the UN and its

mechanisms, civil society organizations, victims and general population, to further comprehend witchcraft and to realize the actions that are required to combat the upsetting practices related to it.

We strongly believe that in order to combat them, education has a key role to play. Through education and training, we can differentiate beliefs and traditional practices from those that can turn into harmful ones. In this, as the Independent Expert has reaffirmed, States, above all, have a role to play. Israel is committed to help fighting those practices worldwide and renews its support to the Independent Expert and her mandate.

Once again, I thank the organizers, partners and panelists; and I wish all participants a fruitful discussion. We look forward for its outcome.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aviva R S', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Aviva Raz Shechter  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative