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UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW
17th Session

ISRAEL

Mister President,

Cyprus welcomes Israel's participation in the 2nd Cycle of the UPR and thanks [head of delegation] for a very informative presentation.

At the outset, my delegation wishes to applaud the recent resumption of direct talks between Israelis and Palestinians; we sincerely hope that these talks will yield tangible progress, eventually leading to a final agreement for a two-state-solution, whereby the State of Israel and an independent, democratic and viable State of Palestine will live side by side in peace and security. In this respect, we urge all interested parties to refrain from actions that could undermine the negotiation process and the prospects of peace, and we remain convinced that long term peace and security can only be sustained if human rights and international humanitarian law are fully respected. We also reiterate our position that settlements, including in East Jerusalem, are illegal under international law, constitute an obstacle to peace and violate human rights.

These having been said, Cyprus notes with satisfaction that the citizens of Israel, *inter alia*, enjoy freedom of expression, including through the media, freedom of assembly and freedom of religion. We would also like to commend the Government of Israel for the full promotion of women's rights, both in law and in practice, and for the fact that women in Israel are legally protected from all kinds of discrimination. That Israeli Law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation should also be underscored.

We have the following recommendations:

- Make every effort to persist investigating allegations of violence and ill-treatment by the Police Forces and to ensure that international human rights standards are respected at all levels of public administration;
- Continue to strive to protect the rights of minorities; and
- Safeguard equitable protection to all places of worship, including all Muslim and Christian sacred places.

I thank you Mister President.