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Statement of H.E. Archbishop Ettore Balestrero, Apostolic Nuncio

and Permanent Representative of the Holy See to the United Nations

and Other International Organizations in Geneva, at the 46th Session

of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: AFGHANISTAN

Geneva, 29 April 2024

Mr. President,

The Holy See’s Delegation would like to offer the following recommendations for the Universal Periodic Review of Afghanistan, while emphasizing the importance of promoting in this Country a culture that respects and protects the inviolable dignity of each person:

1. Uphold the human rights obligations stemming from the international treaties to which Afghanistan is a State party, including the right to the freedom of thought conscience and religion, to peaceful assembly and to education, and to ensure that any law review complies with such obligations.
2. Take prompt action to halt extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture, ill-treatment, arbitrary arrests, and detentions, while ensuring equitable access to justice for everyone.
3. Impose an immediate moratorium on any further executions and take steps towards the abolition of the death penalty.
4. Rescind all discriminatory edicts and instructions that are specifically directed towards women and girls.
5. Significantly expand and enhance programs and measures of protection for religious and ethnic minorities, ensuring their secure access to places of worship, as well as to educational institutions and basic health-care, without fear of violence or discrimination.
6. Reinstate a credible and independent national human rights complaint mechanism, in accordance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights.

Thank you, Mr. President.