

**Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva at the 43rd Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review - Israel**

*Geneva, 9 May 2023*

Mr. President,

The Holy See welcomes the Delegation of Israel during the presentation of its National Report and takes note of the efforts made to protect and promote fundamental human rights in the country.

Nevertheless, my Delegation wishes to express concern over the surge in violence between Israelis and Palestinians.

The Holy See wishes to present the following recommendations:

1) To guarantee full respect for the right to freedom of religion or belief, and its exercise, in law and practice, without discrimination.

2) To maintain and respect the "*Status quo*" in the Christian Holy Places to which it applies and the respective rights of the Christian communities thereunder.

3) To respect the unique and sacred character of the Holy City of Jerusalem, its spiritual significance and its special vocation as a City of Peace, being the common patrimony of humanity.

4) To ensure the effective protection of persons belonging to Christian communities and other religious or ethnic minorities from all forms of violence, including by duly prosecuting acts of aggression or vandalism directed against the persons and places of worship, especially the Holy Places.

5) To work towards the permanent abolition of the death penalty in all circumstances, and to guarantee respectful living conditions in detention facilities.

6) To promote the peaceful coexistence of members of different religions, especially Christians, Jews and Muslims, including through educational programs that encourage the culture of encounter and prevent radicalization.

Thank you, Mr. President.