

Statement by H.E. Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Permanent Observer of the Holy See

to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva

at Human Rights Council – 29th Session of the Universal Periodical Review

**Burundi**

*Geneva, 18 January 2018*

Mr. President,

The Holy See welcomes the Delegation of Burundi during the presentation of its National Report for the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review.

My Delegation notes the efforts made by the authorities of Burundi in improving the education system that serves also as a tool to promote peaceful coexistence in the country. A major concern remains, however, the massive number~~s~~ of refugees outside the country, often living in deplorable conditions and left without hope for a peaceful return. My Delegation recommends the following:

* To initiate an unbiased mediation of the conflict and to establish well-monitored democratic processes that include all sectors of society by promoting political and social reconciliation and respect for freedom of religion;
* To build conditions that will allow the safe and voluntary return of refugees;
* To establish an effective torture prevention mechanism;
* To improve living conditions and, in particular to work at overcoming poverty and to invest in projects for social and economic development.

The Holy See considers a mutual and inclusive as a priority for Burundi as a way to overcome the approach of those who prefer the use of force.

Thank you, Mr. President.