



Statement of Ireland

40th session of the Human Rights Council

Clustered interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief and the Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children

5 March 2019

Ireland aligns itself with the statement of the EU and wishes to add the following.

Mr President,

Ireland welcomes the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and the Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children and reaffirms its continuing support for their mandates. We wish to thank the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children for visiting Ireland in 2018 and for her report, to which we have responded in our right of reply statement.

Ireland will address its statement in this Interactive dialogue to Special Rapporteur Shaheed.

We thank the Special Rapporteur for his most recent report and share the concerns expressed therein. The rights to freedom of religion and belief and freedom of expression are inextricably tied with the concept of self-fulfilment and have a crucial role to play in a democratic society. We welcome the Special Rapporteur's remarks on the interdependence of the two rights, as well as his recommendations. In particular, we welcome the Special Rapporteur's emphasis on the need to repeal the death penalty and other forms of punishment that put lives at risk for religious offences.

Ireland also remains concerned at the continued discrimination, persecution, intimidation and violence that is endured by religious minorities in various parts of the world. In this regard, we agree with the Special Rapporteur that there is an urgent need to strengthen measures against discrimination in the context of politicisation of religion and ensure that minorities are given equal protection.

Mr Shaheed, what can be done to ensure that adequate protection is afforded to the rights of religious minorities, who continue to face discrimination and victimization for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief?