



## **Statement of Ireland**

**46<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council**

**Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief**

**2 March 2021**

Madame President,

Ireland aligns itself with the statement of the EU.

Ireland thanks the Special Rapporteur for his report, and reaffirms our support for his mandate. It is crucial that freedom of religion or belief is protected in a world where intolerance and hatred is widespread, especially as the Special Rapporteur has highlighted, towards Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim.

Ireland is fully committed to promoting freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief for all. We call on States to fulfil their responsibilities as duty-bearers, ensuring that legal protections are in place for individuals and groups to manifest their religion or belief. The disturbing accounts of attacks based on anti-Muslim hatred evidenced in the Special Rapporteur's report demonstrate a real need for all states to take further measures to protect the rights of individuals.

Ireland strongly condemns all forms of persecution on the basis of religion or belief, irrespective of where they occur or who the victims are. We believe that an inclusive society is fostered through education and removing bias, which allows us to recognise the prejudices and attitudes that fail to respect the dignity of others.

*Special Rapporteur, Ireland is actively working to improve legislation on hate speech and hate crime through engaging directly with those targeted as a result of intolerance. We would be very interested to hear your recommendations on steps to take in this process.*