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**Statement of Ireland**  
**52nd session of the Human Rights Council**

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

**9 March 2023**

Ireland aligns with the statement of the EU and thanks the Special Rapporteur for her first report to the Council. We look forward to working with you on these important issues over the coming years.

As you note in your report, the landscape of freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief has changed significantly since the inception of the mandate. We have witnessed a rise in incidents of religious hatred, discrimination, and intolerance towards individuals on the basis of their religion or belief.

Daily we are witnessing a rise in anti-Islam violence, anti-Semitism, and oppression of Christians worldwide, to cite just a few examples. Persons belonging to religious minorities, such as the Bahá'í people, are particularly vulnerable to violence and discrimination due to their religious belief. We condemn all these practices.

States must ensure that religious communities can manifest their right to freedom of religion or belief and to contribute to society openly and on an equal footing.

Ireland strongly condemns all forms of persecution on the basis of religion or belief. We are especially concerned by the rise in attacks and hate speech, both online and offline, on the basis of religious belief.

*Special Rapporteur, can you outline the priority issues you plan to address during your mandate?*

Thank you.