

Permanent Mission of Hungary

to the United Nations

New York

*CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY!*

**Statement by**

**H.E. Ms Katalin Annamária Bogyay**

**Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations**

**On the occasion of the**

**Interactive Dialogue with Mr. Ahmed Shaheed,**

**Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief**

**Third Committee of the General Assembly Agenda Item 70:**

**Promotion and protection of human rights**

**17 October 2019**

Mr/Madam Chair,

I would like to thank Special Rapporteur Mr. Ahmed Shaheed, for his valuable report. We are deeply committed to the protection of freedom of religion or belief, and firmly support you, Mr Rapporteur, in your mandate.

As it is pointed out in the report, religious intolerance does not only affect the suffering communities, but the fulfilment of human rights for all. We much welcome this year’s focus on fighting anti-Semitism, which is a top priority for the Hungarian Government. The Hungarian Government implements zero tolerance policy against all forms of anti-Semitism, supported by legislative measures, coherent Holocaust education and remembrance, as well as a strong support to Jewish culture and organizations. The Constitution and civil law protects against incitement or violence against a community, online and offline; the Hungarian Criminal Code bans public Holocaust denial, thus protecting communities against violence.

Mr/Madame Chair,

Violence against religious minorities threatens people, cultures and whole regions at once. Therefore, ensuring freedom of religion and belief for both communities and individuals is a cornerstone of building sustainable peace, stability and inclusive societies.

Hungary takes a leadership role in uniting efforts to support and protect persecuted Christians and other religious communities. In the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa, the Hungary Helps Program has helped thousands of families surviving violence and displacement to stay or to return to their homeland, including the Yazidi community of northern Iraq. We also participated in a fact-finding mission was initiated in June 2019 in order to find ways to support Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

We strongly believe that religious freedom can be achieved only by the close cooperation of like-minded international actors, and are ready to work with all of you to this end.

Mr Rapporteur,

Thank you very much.