



Statement by His Excellency Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič
Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations
and Other International Organizations in Geneva
at the Twenty-Eighth Special Session of the Human Rights Council
on the deteriorating human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,
including East Jerusalem,
Geneva, 18 May 2018

Mr. President,

The Holy See Delegation wants to echo the expression of concern and sadness that Pope Francis voiced two days ago as he responded to “the escalation of tensions in the Holy Land and in the Middle East” and “the spiral of violence that is increasingly moving away from the path of peace, dialogue and negotiations”¹.

As we have witnessed from its recurrence, “war begets war, violence begets violence”². Peace, however, as this Council has stated continually, is the “vital requirement for the full enjoyment of all human rights by all”³; every human being has the right to enjoy peace and see it restored as quickly as possible.

State authorities, indeed, have the solemn duty and responsibility to encourage all parties concerned to find paths to a true and sustainable peace which is the fruit of justice, engaging in “dynamic, participatory process[es] where dialogue is encouraged and conflicts are solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation...”⁴.

The Holy See, therefore, once again “calls for the courage to say ‘yes’ to encounter and ‘no’ to conflict: ‘yes’ to dialogue and ‘no’ to violence; ‘yes’ to negotiations and ‘no’ to hostilities; ‘yes’ to respect for agreements and ‘no’ to acts of provocation; ‘yes’ to sincerity and ‘no’ to duplicity. All of this takes courage, it takes strength and tenacity”⁵.

In particular, all those involved in the recent deplorable actions must recall, well beyond the question of borders, the “unique identity of Jerusalem, which is sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims, in which the Holy Places are venerated by the respective religions, and which has a special vocation for peace”⁶.

In conclusion, the Holy See, while expressing great sorrow for the deceased and wounded and their families in the recent events in Gaza and West Bank, would like to renew its sincere appeal that “wisdom and prudence prevail, in order to prevent additional new elements of tension in a global panorama that is already convulsed and marked by many cruel conflicts”⁷.

Thank you, Mr. President.

¹ Pope Francis, Appeal at the end of the General Audience, 16 May 2018.

² Ibid.

³ A/HRC/RES/35/4; A/RES/71/189.

⁴ A/HRC/RES/35/4.

⁵ Pope Francis, Invocation for Peace, Vatican Gardens, 8 June 2014, in the presence of Presidents Shimon Peres and Abu Mazen.

⁶ Pope Francis, Appeal at the end of the General Audience, 6 December 2017.

⁷ Ibid.