



Statement by His Excellency Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See  
to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva  
at the 25<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council on the situation in Ukraine  
*Geneva, 26 March 2014*

Mr. President, first of all, the Holy See wishes to express its closeness to all the people of Ukraine in this time of crisis.

As it has emphasized on other occasions, the Holy See recognizes and supports the special role of the United Nations and its organisms in promoting peace and peaceful coexistence among nations. These international institutions have the task of ensuring respect for certain indispensable principles, necessary for building and maintaining the international order. These include the freedom and territorial integrity of each nation, fidelity to agreements undertaken and the defence of the rights of minorities.

These international bodies were established because of the need to ensure peace and respect for fundamental human rights, which are also the presuppositions for the common good of humanity.

One of the specific ways of giving concrete expression to the common good and human dignity at the international level is the determination of the just proportion and weight to be given to perceived national interests, given that these interests are inter-relational and may never be considered absolute. To promote and defend them, not only is it never right to harm the legitimate interests of other States, but there is also an obligation to promote and defend the common good of all peoples (cf. *Statement of the Permanent Observer of the Holy See at the 64<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly, 6 May 2010*).

Thus, the Holy See considers that, for the good of the international order, national interests, including the rights of minorities and respect for territorial integrity, should be resolved through internationally accepted procedures, rather than by the unilateral initiatives of any particular country.

With regard to the specific situation of Ukraine, the Holy See stands by the international community, as expressed in this august Assembly, in its efforts to reach a solution of this crisis through dialogue and concord. It, accordingly, calls on all Parties involved to respect the principles of international law, to ensure the protection of the common good, to abstain from any initiatives which innovate, or attempt to innovate the situation at the expense of the international order, and to avert at all costs the danger of bloodshed and loss of life, resolving disputes exclusively by dialogue and diplomatic means.

Thank you, Mr. President.