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**Statement by Mr. Ahmed Shaheed
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FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF**

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Distinguished President, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Violence, discrimination and expressions of hostility driven by antisemitism are serious obstacles to the enjoyment of the right to freedom of religion or belief, and a range of other human rights. The frequency of antisemitic incidents appears to be increasing in magnitude in several countries, including online; and the prevalence of antisemitic attitudes, regardless of the presence of a Jewish population in a country; and the risk of violence against Jewish individuals and sites appear to be significant. These incidents, along with discriminatory acts perpetuated by individuals or advanced by State laws and policies have fostered a climate of fear among Jewish populations.

My current report, in document A/74/358, is the outcome of consultations in nine countries with victims of antisemitic acts; representatives and leaders of Jewish communities; rights monitors and advocates, academics, legal experts and security officials; and responses received to my call to member states and civil society to submit information. The report explores the classic narratives and tropes employed to express antisemitic views; identifies the vehicles used to disseminate said views; demonstrates the global nature of the problem; considers the fact that antisemitism is a multi-generational concern, along with the reality that the authors, instigators and perpetrators of antisemitic views and acts come from the spectrum of social, political, religious, cultural and economic backgrounds and experiences represented in our societies today.

The ways and means in which antisemitism is manifested have evolved over time. And while the ethnic, religious and racialized narratives and tropes used to incite hostility, discrimination and violence against Jews throughout history continue to inform antisemitic views today, the virulent nature of those expressions owe their ubiquitous potency to social media platforms and networking tools which enable their instantaneous, frequent and extensive dissemination.

Just as the sources of antisemitism are varied, so too are the responses of governments to proliferating antisemitic acts and speech. There have been a number of cases in which government officials have reacted responsibly to antisemitic acts, by denouncing antisemitic expression at the highest levels and providing protection to Jewish community leaders and religious sites. In other cases, however, government officials have remained silent, equivocated, or even leaned into antisemitic sentiment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is not a more graphic example than the Holocaust of how religious and racial hatred can lead to genocide and the destruction of societies. Under international human rights law, States are required to prohibit discrimination on the basis of religion or belief, including against Jews, and to take all appropriate measures to combat intolerance and violence on such grounds, including where such acts are manifested by private persons. States Parties have a duty to “prohibit by law” incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence.

Bearing these duties in mind, my report offers several recommendations to states, civil society actors, the media, and the UN system centered on a human rights-based approach to combatting antisemitism. Such an approach includes implementing measures, in law and in practice, which foster the development of open societies that are resilient to extremist ideologies, including antisemitic propaganda. It also requires investments in education and training to enhance society-wide literacy about the different ways in which antisemitism manifests itself.

I recommend, for example, that States enact and enforce hate crime legislation and appoint a senior official to work with Jewish communities and rights monitors to strengthen efforts to track, document and report on, and respond to, hate crimes and other acts driven by antisemitism. I highlight the important contribution that guidelines on policy and pedagogy developed by UNESCO can make in the education sector. I note that civil society actors can also play a vital role in combatting antisemitism, including by establishing inter-faith networks aimed at advancing social cohesion. I recommend that social media companies enforce terms of service and community rules that do not allow for the dissemination of hate messages and offer user-friendly mechanisms and procedures for reporting and addressing hateful content. I recommend that UN system entities take a joined-up approach to foster collective action against antisemitism. I call on the UN Secretary-General to appoint a senior -level focal point in his Office to co-ordinate system-wide efforts to combat this global scourge.

My report also highlights that the working definition of antisemitism adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance can offer valuable guidance for identifying antisemitism in its various forms and recommends its use by all States as a critical non-legal tool in education and awareness-raising and for monitoring and responding to manifestations of antisemitism. The report also cautions that when public bodies use the definition in any regulatory context, due diligence must be exercised to ensure that freedom of expression within the law is protected for all.

Antisemitism presents serious challenges to the elimination of all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief and, therefore, does not only pose risks to Jews, but to members of minorities everywhere. It is toxic to democracy, impairs the fostering of mutual respect among citizens, and threatens all societies in which it goes unchallenged.

The purpose of this report is to contribute to a constructive, sober dialogue which grapples with the various manifestations of antisemitism and recognizes that such views and the acts they engender must be urgently and effectively combatted if we are to promote social cohesion and lasting peace for all. Most of all, it is a call for urgent action within the human rights framework. I intend to work with interested stakeholders to advance the implementation of these recommendations and appeal to you all to do the same.

Thank you.