



**UNITED NATIONS 78<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
**THIRD COMMITTEE**  
**Item 73: Promotion and protection of human rights**  
**Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief**  
***Belgian intervention***  
26<sup>th</sup> October 2023

President,

Belgium fully supports the statement made earlier on behalf of the EU and thanks the Special Rapporteur for her report on the lived reality of freedom of religion or belief.

By focusing on the grassroots level, this report eloquently illustrates that the enjoyment of human rights, including the freedom of religion or belief, is not just a matter of ratifying relevant treaties, however necessary as a first important step. It is a day-to-day practice and reality that needs continuous investment at every level.

The report certainly delivered on what you hoped for, Ms Ghanea, namely to help provide a “reality check” on how freedom of religion or belief needs to be promoted, protected and fulfilled at the domestic level.

By detailing the wide array of actors at the domestic level who have the power to contribute towards the realization or violation of the enjoyment of the right to freedom of religion or belief, you have shown us how the enjoyment of the freedom of religion or belief must be practical and effective.

*Ms. Ghanea, my delegation is interested in the role that “first responders” at the local level should play in ensuring freedom of religion or belief. Could you provide us with some concrete examples how they can effectively play their role?*

Thank you.