

**Agenda Item**

**FORUM ON MINORITIES ISSUES**  
**Protection of the existence of and prevention of violence against**  
**religious minorities**  
(27<sup>th</sup> November 2013)

Madam Chair,

we continue witnessing a worldwide increase in acts of intolerance and violent attacks against persons belonging to religious groups and minorities, more and more inspired and executed by terrorist groups. Italy firmly condemn such a scourge.

States must protect religious freedom of people belonging to minorities by taking all necessary measures to prevent violence, protect individuals and places of worship, prosecute and punish those responsible, of religious-based violence. For this reason, we welcome the chapter H of the draft recommendations document.

(Sectarian violence continue to plague many--countries. It is increasingly becoming a major cause of conflicts or a recurrent amplifier of conflicts that already exist. Therefore, prevention of sectarian violence, through the respect of human rights, is crucial to safeguard peace within and among states.)

This is why Italy strongly supports the existing UN early warning mechanisms *that* take into consideration also violence based on religion or belief In this vein, in June 2013, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized a conference on "Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect: the UN Early Warning Mechanism", in which the Special Adviser of the UN Secretary General r for the Prevention of Genocide, Mr. Adama Dieng, took part as key note speaker. During the conference it was underlined the relevance of sectarian violence and religious-based persecution - affecting chronically persons belonging to minorities - as indicators or warning signs of the risk of genocide and mass atrocities.

Following the conference , Italy has provided support for the Office of the UN

which has strengthened the relevance of sectarian and religious based violence as an indicator of danger of genocide and mass atrocities.

In light of those considerations, Italy believes that the issue of the active cooperation of States with the UN early warning mechanisms, concerning the prevention of the violence against persons belonging to religious minorities should be mentioned in the draft recommendations document of this Forum.