<u>Statement on Counterterrorism as a Pretext for the Repression of Religious Freedom</u>

As representatives of the international community, we reject and condemn the use of counterterrorism or other security concerns to justify the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of religion or belief. While underscoring the necessity of effective, human rights-respecting counterterrorism and other security measures, we deplore the application by states for political purposes of any laws, policies and practices to target those seeking to exercise religious freedom and other civil and political rights.

Security tactics that violate human rights have been demonstrated to strengthen and validate, rather than prevent, terrorist recruitment and radicalization. We commit ourselves to continue supporting persons and communities that have been subject to terrorist violence and to holding the perpetrators of terrorism accountable using policies, practices, and laws that comply with international law and standards. When working to address the drivers of terrorism, we emphasize that our actions and behaviors must be consistent with international law and good counterterrorism practices if we are to be effective, and we urge our global partners to conduct their efforts in the same manner. We will promote accountability for officials who misuse or abuse counterterrorism or other security laws and measures to commit violations of religious freedom and other human rights. We encourage reports of such violations to be investigated through relevant mechanisms. Failure to implement accountability measures exacerbates the problem and contributes to further radicalization, further undermining our security worldwide.

Co-Signatories: Ukraine, Armenia, Austria, Lithuania, Bangladesh, Uzbekistan, Kosovo, Poland, Albania, United Kingdom Lebanon, Slovakia, Latvia, Georgia, Moldova, Serbia, Brazil, Czech Republic, New Zealand, Hungary, Colombia, Marshall Islands, United Arab Emirates, Portugal, United States of America