

Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 34th Session

Universal Periodic Review of The Gambia

Statement by Australia

Tuesday 5 November 2019

Thank you [President/Vice President].

Australia welcomes steps taken by The Gambia to improve its human rights framework, including ratification of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. We note action is still needed to give effect to these commitments.

Recalling Australia's recommendation at the last Review, we welcome legislation banning female genital mutilation but note the practice remains prevalent.

We also acknowledge commencement of hearings by the Gambian Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission – a vital step in national peace-building processes.

Australia recommends that **The Gambia**:

1. Establishes a formal moratorium on the death penalty, as a step towards complete abolition of this practice, and commutes all remaining death sentences.
2. Amends legislation to decriminalise homosexuality.
3. Ensures media and freedom of expression provisions contained within the Constitution comply with international standards, as outlined under Article 19 of the ICCPR.
4. Takes further action to enforce the ban on female genital mutilation, educate communities on the law, and protect the rights of women and girls.