

Human Rights Council – 38th Session

Interactive Dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi (Oral Update)

27 June 2018

Australian Statement

Australia thanks the Commission of Inquiry for its oral update. We remain disappointed that Burundi has not cooperated with the Commission, particularly as it is a member of the Human Rights Council.

Australia remains concerned by reports of human rights violations and abuses in Burundi. Violent intimidation, enforced disappearances and the arbitrary arrest of political opponents of the Government intensified prior to the May referendum to amend the Constitution. A lack of freedom of expression and association, suspension of media outlets and repression of civil society further highlight the diminishing democratic space.

The recent referendum results in Burundi are also concerning. The Constitutional amendments did not involve genuine, inclusive dialogue despite calls by the international community at the African Union and East Africa Community summits. This runs counter to the Arusha Peace Agreement, which remains the cornerstone for peace and stability in the region.

Australia calls on the Government of Burundi to ensure accountability for any crimes committed by Government forces and other groups, including through cooperation with the International Criminal Court investigation, consistent with Burundi's continuing obligations under the Rome Statute. A culture of impunity protects perpetrators and may lead to further abuses.

We ask the Commission of Inquiry how regional leaders might best encourage the Government of Burundi to address the violence and repression in the country?

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