

Human Rights Council – 40th Session

Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on Eritrea

11 March 2019

Australian Statement

Australia thanks the distinguished speakers for their update on the situation of human rights in Eritrea. We welcome Eritrea's peace agreement with Ethiopia and hope this agreement will facilitate increased international cooperation and improve government transparency and accountability in Eritrea.

Australia remains concerned by continued reports of forced labour and compulsory, prolonged national service in Eritrea. We call on the Government of Eritrea to introduce legislation that prohibits the use of forced labour, enforces reasonable time limits for national service and provides options for conscientious objection.

While Eritrea has acceded to the Convention Against Torture, Australia is concerned by reports of torture, and arbitrary and indefinite detention. We are also concerned by reports of prisoners experiencing cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and urge Eritrea to uphold international human rights conventions.

Australia supports the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for the situation of human rights in Eritrea and calls on Eritrea to cooperate fully with the mandate. We urge the Government of Eritrea to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry's 2016 report. We further urge Eritrea to implement the 1997 Constitution to allow its citizens safe and full freedom of expression and freedom of religion.

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