

Human Rights Council – 40th Session

Interactive Dialogue with Commission of Inquiry on Burundi

12 March 2019

Australian Statement

Australia thanks the Commission of Inquiry for its ongoing work on documenting human rights violations in Burundi. Australia is deeply concerned by the continued absence of independent international mechanisms in Burundi to investigate human rights violations and Burundi's lack of cooperation with the Commission of Inquiry. The recent closure of the UN Human Rights Country Office in Burundi is regrettable. We strongly encourage Burundi to engage constructively with all UN human rights mechanisms.

Australia is also concerned by the severe and arbitrary restrictions placed on non-governmental organisations in Burundi. We call on the Government of Burundi to support and protect organisations which promote the advancement of the human rights of Burundi citizens. We urge the Government of Burundi to pursue policies that promote gender and ethnic inclusivity through full engagement and cooperation with international human rights bodies and domestic civil society.

Australia is gravely concerned that serious human rights violations continue to be committed within a climate of impunity. We urge the Government of Burundi to ensure members of its security forces and *Imbonerakure* [*Im-bon-err-a-koor-ah*] show restraint, and hold the perpetrators of these crimes to account.

We ask the Commission of Inquiry if there have been any reprisals against NGOs who have cooperated with your work.

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