

Human Rights Council – 40th Session

Item 10: Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on Mali

19 March 2019

Australian Statement

Australia thanks the Independent Expert for his Report on the situation of human rights in Mali and calls on Mali to continue efforts to promote and protect human rights.

Australia remains deeply concerned by the security situation in central and northern Mali. In particular, Australia is disturbed by reports that human rights violations and abuses are being committed against civilians by parties on all sides of the conflict, including the Malian security forces.

We urge the Government of Mali to sustain its focus on restoring state authority throughout the country, conduct inquiries into all alleged human rights violations and abuses, and take urgent steps to progress the peace process, including ensuring the participation of women.

Australia is concerned by the rate of sexual and gender-based violence against women in the country, including rates of female genital mutilation and child marriage. We note that Mali does not have a law specifically addressing gender-based violence and encourage the passage of a 2017 bill on gender-based violence into law.

Australia is also concerned by the impact of Mali's ongoing instability on children. The current conflict has prevented hundreds of thousands of children from attending school. We urge the Government of Mali to make every effort to promote access to education.

We ask the Independent Expert to elaborate on progress made towards addressing violence against women and girls, particularly sexual violence and female genital mutilation.

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