

Human Rights Council – 41st Session

Item 10 – Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on the Democratic Republic of the Congo

8 July 2019

Australian Statement

Australia thanks the speakers for their update on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and notes the issues of concern identified in the report.

We commend the Democratic Republic of the Congo for its recent pardoning of many political prisoners. We urge the Government to consider further releases and ensure that others are not detained or prosecuted for exercising their human rights.

Australia remains deeply concerned by the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence, including against internally displaced populations and as a result of ongoing conflict in the east of the country. Noting the increasing number of abuses reportedly perpetrated by armed militia groups, as well as the alarming amount of alleged violations by state actors, we call on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to urgently institute security sector reforms.

Appropriate systems to report and advocate against human rights abuses and violations will be critical, especially in the anticipated context of a decreased United Nations presence. Australia encourages the Government to afford human rights defenders within its own system, and those from civil society, adequate public space and to safeguard them from persecution.

We ask what steps are being taken to ensure state institutions instil respect for human rights, and that those responsible for violations are brought to justice?

220 words