

Human Rights Council – 41st Session

Interactive Dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi

2 July 2019

Australian Statement

Australia thanks the Commission of Inquiry for its update on the human rights situation in Burundi and welcomes its ongoing work.

Australia deeply regrets the Government of Burundi's lack of cooperation with the Commission of Inquiry and other independent international mechanisms seeking to investigate human rights violations. We strongly encourage the Government of Burundi to accept the Commission's requests to visit the country ahead of preparing its final report. We also urge the Government of Burundi to reconsider its closure of the UN Human Rights Country Office in Burundi.

Australia is gravely concerned by continued reports of arbitrary arrests, intimidation of opposition political parties, and restrictions placed on media freedoms under a climate of impunity in Burundi. Australia condemns such actions which also threaten to undermine the free and fair elections scheduled for 2020. We urge the Government of Burundi to respect the rights of civil society and human rights defenders, and recognise their valuable contribution to the human rights discourse in the country.

We also call on the Government of Burundi to ensure its security forces and the Imbonerakure [*Im-bon-err-a-koor-ah*] respect international human rights law.

We ask the Commission of Inquiry to detail steps the Government of Burundi can take to ensure free and fair elections in 2020, and to update the Council on reports of violence or intimidation in the context of electoral preparations.

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