

Human Rights Council – 41st Session

Item 2 – General Debate
25 June 2019

Australian Statement

Australia thanks the High Commissioner for her oral update.

This year we mark the 40th anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Much work remains to be done to implement the rights articulated in the convention around the world.

Australia is concerned by the prevalence of violence against women around the world, particularly conflict-related sexual violence against women in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** and **Myanmar** and by terrorist groups such as Daesh.

Civil society plays a critical role in promoting and protecting the human rights of women. We are concerned by continuing arbitrary restrictions on women's rights groups and activists in **Saudi Arabia**. Australia is concerned by the increasing use of regulations and other measures to create barriers for civil society organisations, including those promoting improved gender equality in **Pakistan**.

Australia believes that human rights are universal, indivisible and inalienable. Dignity and respect should apply to everyone, which is why Australia is deeply concerned by persistent discrimination against LGBTI persons. Australia welcomes **Brunei's** decision to extend its de facto moratorium on the death penalty to offences under the Syariah Penal Code Order and urges Brunei to decriminalise same-sex relations between consenting adults. We call for greater protections to LGBTI persons against violence in the **Russian Federation's** Chechen Republic. Australia welcomes the recent decriminalisation of same-sex relations in **Botswana** and encourages other countries to follow this example.

Australia is disturbed by the continued narrowing of civil society space in many countries, including in **Bahrain, Cambodia** and **Egypt**. We remain concerned by the continuation of alleged extra-judicial killings in the **Philippines**.

Encroachments on freedom of expression are becoming more sinister.
Australia strongly protests against the killing of journalists and dissidents such
as Jamal Khashoggi.

291 words