

Human Rights Council – 42<sup>nd</sup> session

General Comment

HRC42 Resolution on the Human Rights Situation in Syria

27 September 2019

Australia thanks the core group for its work on Resolution L.22 and for the open and consultative approach to negotiations.

This resolution shines a spotlight on the grave human rights violations in Syria. It reflects the core role of this council and its determination to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights, in this case for the Syrian people.

As highlighted in this resolution and noted by the Commission of Inquiry, the escalation of violence in Idlib is causing immense suffering for civilians. We condemn in the strongest terms the use of barrel bombs, and unlawful attacks on civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and schools. We call on parties in Idlib to respect previously agreed ceasefires.

Importantly, this resolution urges all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. International law is clear – there is no justification for indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks on civilians. Counter-terrorism objectives do not absolve states of their obligations.

We remain concerned by continued widespread arbitrary detention and disappearances, reports of mass execution and torture, and forced displacement noted in the text. We call on the Syrian regime to release the thousands of Syrians arbitrarily detained, and allow internally displaced people to return to their homes

We urge all parties to allow timely, unhindered and safe humanitarian access, particularly in areas that have come under the control of Syrian authorities, and cease attacks on agricultural areas. We call on the regime to respect its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and Security Council Resolution 2118. Australia reiterates its position, in the strongest possible terms, that the use of chemical weapons anytime, anywhere and under any circumstances is unjustifiable and unacceptable.

Australia strongly urges all members to support Resolution L.22.