

Human Rights Council – 43rd session

Interactive Dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi

9 March 2020

Australian Statement

Australia thanks the Commission of Inquiry for its oral update and ongoing work.

Australia remains deeply concerned by human rights violations and abuses in Burundi, including reports of extrajudicial abductions, torture and killings, taking place amid a climate of impunity.

Australia urges the Government of Burundi to end these violations and abuses, hold those responsible to account, and ensure that government security forces and the Imbonerakure comply with international human rights law.

Ahead of general elections in May 2020, we acknowledge that a new candidate rather than the current President will stand for the ruling party. However, we remain concerned that fear and intimidation will continue to be used to repress political opponents. Australia urges the Government of Burundi to take urgent steps to support free and fair elections.

Australia is also aware that refugees are being encouraged to return to Burundi, often after long absences. We highlight the need for Burundi to ensure returns are safe, voluntary and dignified.

Australia is concerned by reports of vilification of LGBTI persons. We call on the Burundian authorities to end discriminatory practices against LGBTI persons.

Australia encourages the Government of Burundi to engage fully with the Commission of Inquiry, taking immediate steps to address the Commission's concerns.

205 words.