

Human Rights Council – 43rd session

Item 4 General Debate

10 March 2020

Australian Statement

Individual human rights are universal, indivisible, and interrelated and Australia will continue to speak frankly on situations where they are not being protected.

Australia denounces the **Syrian** regime's indiscriminate targeting of civilian areas and infrastructure in Idlib, which has resulted in almost one million newly displaced people – including some 569 thousand children and over 195 thousand women. We are gravely concerned by reports of extrajudicial killings, widespread disappearances and prolific torture in regime-controlled areas.

Australia condemns the illegitimate Maduro-regime and its central role in generating the grave political, economic and humanitarian crisis in **Venezuela**. We call for human rights violations by government security forces to end immediately and for free and fair presidential elections without delay.

Australia remains gravely disturbed by the systematic widespread human rights violations committed by the **Democratic People's Republic of Korea**. We call on the DPRK to respect the human rights of all of its people and abandon its WMD programs in compliance with many UN Security Council resolutions.

We are deeply concerned at the resumption and escalation of conflict in **Yemen**. We are alarmed at reported ongoing violations of international humanitarian and international human rights law, particularly instances of sexual violence, and reports of intimidation of humanitarian workers, including by the Houthis.

Australia is troubled by reports of extrajudicial abductions, torture and killings, amid a climate of impunity in **Burundi**. We call on Burundi to put an end to these violations and ensure its general elections in May are free and fair.

We note the report by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in **Iran**. Australia urges authorities in Iran to halt disproportionate use of force against protesters and cease systemic discrimination against religious minorities.

Australia remains deeply concerned by reports of enforced disappearances, mass detention, forced labour and pervasive surveillance of Uighurs and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, and by restrictions on freedom of religion and belief in **China**. We welcome the High Commissioner's commitment to closely examine the human rights situation in China, and support her continued request for access for her proposed visit to China, including Xinjiang.

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