

Human Rights Council – 43rd session

Urgent Debate on current human rights violations that have been inspired by racism, systemic racism, police brutality and violent responses to peaceful demonstrations'

Wednesday 17 June 2020

Australian Statement

Australia thanks the Africa Group for bringing forward such an important issue. Australia supports all efforts to address and eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms, wherever it occurs. The violence, brutality and racial discrimination to which Africans and people of African descent have been subjected around the world is deplorable and must end.

We deplore the tragic death of George Floyd. And we support the United States' recent steps to address racism, police brutality and violent responses to peaceful demonstrations. We note, for example, the charging of officers over George Floyd's death, the removal of others responsible for excessive force, as well as moves towards police reform.

The United States is an open, liberal democracy, governed by the rule of law and we have confidence in their transparent justice system to address these issues appropriately. Sadly, no country can claim to have eradicated racism. We all can – we all must - do more to end the impunity too many perpetrators enjoy in many parts of the world.

Open and transparent democracies are well-placed to tackle such issues. We have long supported the right of all peoples to safe, peaceful protest and freedom of speech. Wherever protests might take place, we urge all those involved – be they from government, police or protestors – to exercise restraint and avoid violence.

In Australia, we have seen large numbers of Australians support action to address racial inequality.

Australia rejects racism and xenophobia in all its forms, and we are proud of our diverse and cohesive society. We remain strongly committed to combating racism and upholding the rule of law, including through action by this Council and its mechanisms.

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