

Human Rights Council – 43rd session

General Comment

HRC43 Resolution on the Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic

19 June 2020

Australia thanks the core group for its work on Resolution L.33 and for its open and consultative approach to negotiations.

The focus of the resolution on the disproportionate impact of the conflict on children and women is both timely and important, given the deeply concerning findings of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry. We welcome new language in the text on sexual and gender-based violence and systematic discrimination against women and girls in Syria.

We condemn the continued use of widespread arbitrary detention and disappearances, and express deep concern at the 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, allow internally displaced people to return to their homes and cease the arbitrary appropriation of private property.

We echo the calls by Secretary-General Guterres and Special Envoy for Syria Pedersen for a comprehensive nationwide ceasefire. We condemn the use of chemical weapons in Ltamenah in 2017 attributed to Syrian Regime forces by the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team in its report of 8 April 2020. We urge all parties to the conflict to abstain immediately from any actions that may contribute to the further deterioration of the human rights, security and humanitarian situations in Syria.

We acknowledge that this resolution does not consider the impact of COVID-19 on the conflict in Syria. The pandemic compounds and complicates an already dire situation. It makes the work of this Council and of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry even more important.

This resolution continues to shine a spotlight on grave human rights violations and abuses in Syria. Maintaining this spotlight is a core role of this council. We remain determined to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights, in this case, for the long-suffering Syrian people.

Australia strongly urges all members to support Resolution L.33.