

Human Rights Council – 44th session

**Explanation of Vote
Resolution on the situation of human rights in Belarus**

Australia Statement

17 July 2020

Australia welcomes the resolution on the situation of human rights in Belarus.

We share concerns that there has been little improvement to the human rights situation in Belarus, and that the Government of Belarus has continued its policy of non-engagement with the Special Rapporteur.

We are deeply concerned by recent developments on the ground in view of the upcoming presidential elections, as well as ongoing allegations of torture, ill-treatment and arbitrary detention.

While Australia welcomes the Government's increased readiness to engage in a dialogue on the death penalty, we reiterate our full support for the Special Rapporteur's recommendation that Belarus consider a moratorium on executions as a first step towards abolition.

We urge all states to actively seek pathways to move this resolution out of Item 4 consideration, and encourage affirmative action on the part of Belarus to cooperate with the OHCHR and the mechanisms of the Council. We support the extension of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus and encourage Belarus to work constructively with her.

For these reasons we will be voting in favour of this resolution and encourage other states to do the same.

195 words.