**Human Rights Council – 45th session**

**Item 10: Enhanced Interactive Dialogue: Comprehensive report of the High Commissioner on the human rights situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

**Friday 2 October 2020**

**Australian Statement**

Australia thanks the High Commissioner and the experts for their reports.

We commend the Democratic Republic of the Congo’s renewed engagement with the international community to address security concerns and regional instability.

Australia, however, remains deeply concerned by continued human rights violations across the country, including increasing reports of Congolese authorities targeting peaceful critics, journalists and opposition members under the pretext of enforcing COVID-19 measures.

We also note with concern continued instability, ongoing violence and the mass displacement of civilians in the Kasai and eastern provinces and the alleged involvement of state security agents in human rights violations.

We call on the DRC to implement much-needed security sector reform - it is imperative that State agents comply with international human rights law.

Australia urges the DRC to thoroughly investigate all alleged human rights violations and abuses, ensure the protection of human rights defenders, and take all necessary measures to prevent sexual violence and deliver justice for victims.

We ask what action is being taken by authorities to support humanitarian actors in delivering life-saving assistance to women and child survivors of violence in the Kasai?