

## Human Rights Council – 37th Session

### Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the High Commissioner (oral update) and Commission of Inquiry on Burundi

13 March 2018

#### Australian Statement

Australia thanks the Commission of Inquiry for its ongoing investigations into the situation of human rights in Burundi under its extended mandate. We also welcome the newly appointed Chair of the Commission, Mr Doudou Diène.

Australia remains deeply concerned by the Commission's reports of persistent and gross human rights violations occurring in Burundi, including extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrests and detentions, enforced disappearances, acts of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and sexual violence, which could amount to crimes against humanity. The Commission's finding that most of these violations were committed by members of the state security forces and Imbonerakure [*Im-bon-err-a-koor-ah*] is especially troubling.

Australia urges the Government of Burundi to answer the calls of the international community and stop these abuses. We also urge Burundi to engage with UN human rights mechanisms and to protect those who cooperate, or seek to cooperate with these mechanisms, against acts of intimidation or reprisal.

Australia notes with appreciation the efforts of the African Union to broker a lasting political solution to this crisis, including efforts in the region to support the Arusha Agreement. Australia is concerned by the shrinking democratic space in Burundi and urges all parties to respect the ethnic diversity of the country and refrain from hate speech.

We would also like to ask how can we, as members of the Human Rights Council, do more to assist the Commission of Inquiry to carry out its mandate?

[217] Words