

Human Rights Council – 37th Regular Session

Interactive Dialogue with Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea 12 March 2018

Australian Statement

Australia remains deeply concerned about reports of ongoing systematic and grave human rights violations by the Government of the DPRK, and the Government's ongoing prioritisation of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles development over the welfare of its people.

As the Special Rapporteur has said in his report, in circumstances such as those seen in the DPRK, "it is the weak and invisible who suffer the most". We are disturbed by the severe restrictions on all forms of expression, movement and access to information, and access to food outlined in the Special Rapporteur's report. We also remain concerned by ongoing reporting of summary executions, torture, arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances.

After decades of isolation and limited possibility for scrutiny and monitoring, we note the recent small steps by the DPRK to engage in conversation with UN representatives and treaty bodies. Australia strongly urges the DPRK to engage more openly with the international community, particularly the OHCHR and Special Rapporteur Quintana, including permitting the Special Rapporteur to visit in his official capacity.

We welcome the Special Rapporteur's update on the accountability agenda. Australia continues to support calls to hold to account those responsible for serious human rights violations in the DPRK, in line with recommendations by the Group of Independent Experts on accountability.

The Government of the DPRK needs to do more to implement the recommendations of these reports and take immediate steps to halt the human rights violations occurring in the country. Special Rapporteur, what opportunities do you see for the DPRK to engage further with the UN on human rights?

260 Words