

Human Rights Council – 28th Special Session – 18 May 2018

General Debate: Australian National Statement

Australia expresses its deep regret and sadness at the loss of life and injury that occurred during the protests in Gaza.

We send our sincere condolences to the many families who have lost loved ones.

It is particularly tragic that a number of those who were killed were children.

The situation on the Gaza perimeter was both serious and complex.

Australia is firmly of the view that Israel has legitimate security concerns, and has the right to protect its population. It should also exercise appropriate restraint in the use of force.

The role of Hamas in inciting the situation on the Gaza perimeter must not be ignored.

Australia is of the view that investigations into incidents where international law may have been breached must be independent and impartial. Any inquiry must be demonstrably impartial, thorough, and transparent. All relevant parties should cooperate.

We are therefore giving serious and detailed consideration to all specific proposals for external investigation mechanisms into the situation surrounding the recent protests on the Gaza Strip's perimeter.

We are considering proposals on their merits, with a particular focus on whether the investigation is genuinely independent and impartial. This is the approach we have taken on this resolution and the commission of inquiry it seeks to establish.

The violence on the Gaza perimeter underlines the importance of a return to negotiations toward a two-state solution so an enduring peace can be found.

Australia is strongly committed to a two-state solution, where Israel and a future Palestinian state exist side-by-side in peace and security within internationally recognised borders.

We do not support actions that diminish this prospect.

Throughout our membership of the Human Rights Council, Australia will continue to urge all states and parties to conflict to respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law.