

## Human Rights Council – 37th Session

### Interactive Dialogue on the High Commissioner's oral report on Ukraine 21 March 2018

#### Australian Statement

Australia thanks the High Commissioner for the oral update on the human rights situation in Ukraine. We reiterate the need for all parties to guarantee OHCHR, special procedure mandate holders of the Human Rights Council, and other international organisations unimpeded access to Crimea and the conflict zones in eastern Ukraine.

We note with concern the ongoing fighting in eastern Ukraine and its impact on civilians and vital infrastructure. Continued fighting creates appalling human rights abuses [*detailed in the High Commissioner's oral update*], including arbitrary detention, summary executions, disappearances, torture and conflict-related sexual violence. We call on all parties to implement their Minsk 2 obligations. This remains the only agreed basis for resolving the crisis.

We remain disappointed by reports that armed groups in Donetsk and Luhansk continue to deny international human rights observers access to particular facilities and regions. We are gravely concerned such secrecy continues to conceal human rights abuses.

We are also concerned by the slow implementation of human rights reforms in Ukraine and by government attempts to limit freedom of expression, access to social media and the proper functioning of civil society.

We reiterate our support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and our concern at reports of unfair administration of justice and attacks on basic freedoms of expression and association by the illegitimate Russian-backed authorities in Crimea.

We support the OHCHR, and relevant special procedure mandate holders continuing to report on the situation in Ukraine and would welcome the High Commissioner's views on options for ensuring accountability for perpetrators of human rights abuses in Ukraine.

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