

Human Rights Council – 42nd session

Interactive Dialogue with Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan

16 September 2019

Australian Statement

Australia thanks the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan for its report and is pleased that the Government of South Sudan continues to support the Commission's work.

Australia welcomes the meeting between President Salva Kiir and Dr. Riek Machar in Juba in September and their recommitment to forming a transitional government. Full implementation of the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution to the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), including armed forces unification and transitional justice mechanisms, are key to a stable future for the South Sudanese people.

Australia reiterates its condemnation of continuing violence against civilians. In July 2019, it was reported that over 100 civilians were brutally killed in Central Equatoria by government and rebel forces. Cases of sexual violence also appear in the report. The normalisation of such sexual and gender-based violence is deeply concerning. Australia calls on the Government of South Sudan to hold the perpetrators to account and to take active steps in addressing all forms of violence.

Australia is also alarmed by the shrinking civic space for journalists and civil society in South Sudan and reports of arbitrary arrests, detention and torture carried out by the National Security Service. We urge the government to end forced disappearances.

Australia asks the Commission what steps must be taken to ensure justice for victims of sexual and gender-based violence in South Sudan and for an update on plans to establish a special court to handle such crimes?

242 Words