

Human Rights Council – 43rd session
General debate on the High Commissioner’s oral update
27 February 2020

Australian Statement

Australia thanks the High Commissioner for her oral update. We thank all members who joined the Incoming Members Pledge and reiterate the importance of members upholding the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights.

In this context, Australia is deeply concerned by persistent reports of human rights violations and abuses associated with the civil conflict in **Cameroon**.

We urge **Sri Lanka** to reconsider withdrawal from co-sponsorship of HRC resolution 30/1 and to continue to work within the Council-mandated process on promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights.

Australia regrets the excessive use of force in responding to recent protests in many regions. We commend **Chile’s** cooperation with the High Commissioner to identify corrective measures. We want to see a peaceful resolution in **Hong Kong** that restores confidence in the ‘One Country, Two Systems’ framework and upholds rights and freedoms enshrined in the Basic Law.

Australia is deeply concerned by the detentions of journalists and protestors, and the targeting of civil society activists in **Egypt**. We urge **Zimbabwe** to protect and promote opposition and civil society activists’ rights to freedom of assembly, association and expression. We also urge **Eritrea** to institute reforms, including by allowing independent civil society and political organisations. Australia calls on **Cambodia** to allow all political parties, civil society and media to operate freely, and to ensure due process and procedural fairness in the trial of Kem Sokha.

Australia is disturbed by restrictions on internet freedom and by harassment and arrests of journalists and NGOs in **Bahrain** and **Russia**. We call on **Saudi Arabia** to continue efforts towards reform and cease the persecution and intimidation of civil society actors, gender equality advocates and religious minorities.

We support a two-state solution in which **Israel** and a future **Palestinian** state co-exist in peace and security within internationally recognised borders. We urge all parties to return to peace negotiations and refrain from any actions that undermine the prospects for peace.

321 Words