

Human Rights Council – 37th Session

The Deteriorating Situation of Human rights in Eastern Ghouta 2 March 2018

Australian Statement

Australia is appalled by the dire humanitarian situation in eastern Ghouta, where nearly 400,000 people remain under siege and bombardment by the Syrian regime.

Hundreds of people have been killed by regime attacks in recent days despite the passage of UNSC Resolution 2401. International humanitarian law is clear – there can be no justification for such attacks, which have been indiscriminate and disproportionate.

Many more will die if the regime continues its offensive. We call for the immediate implementation of the ceasefire agreed by the UNSC to bring an end to the bombardment of eastern Ghouta and to allow aid to reach Syrians in need. All actors should ensure humanitarian corridors are safe for those civilians who wish to leave.

UNSC resolutions must be fully implemented. The onus is on the regime's backers, including Security Council member Russia, to bring an end to this terrible humanitarian crisis.

Australia condemns unequivocally all violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Syria. We support efforts to investigate abuses through the IIIM and other mechanisms, and to bring those responsible to account.

The escalation of violence underscores the desperate need to forge a political solution to this terrible conflict, one that ends appalling human rights abuses. All parties must engage meaningfully at peace talks in Geneva.

We urge all delegations here to support the resolution before us.