

Human Rights Council – 37th Session

**High Level Panel on Human Rights of Children in Syria
13 March 2018**

Australian Statement

Australia remains deeply concerned by the impact on Syria's children of seven years of war.

There is no end in sight to the physical and psychological trauma inflicted upon these children – who will ultimately be asked to bear responsibility for Syria's recovery and future stability. Many will carry these scars for the rest of their lives, others will surely die in coming weeks and months.

To the shame of all involved, Syria's children have been deprived of normality and exposed to countless horrors. They have been chemical weapons victims, civilian shields and child soldiers.

The deliberate and indiscriminate destruction of medical facilities and schools, in violation of international humanitarian law, hurts children the most. International humanitarian law must be respected, for the sake of Syria's children and adults alike.

We have seen whole communities besieged and suffering under bombardment. We have seen children become severely malnourished while humanitarian aid is blocked.

We must keep pushing for access, and expose the regime whenever it obstructs the delivery of aid.

Australia's humanitarian assistance, \$433 million to date, is helping to meet the needs of Syrian children. It is providing protection and education for those seeking refuge in Jordan and Lebanon.

We cannot do all we would like for Syria's children, but we must help those we can reach, and urgently find a lasting solution to this conflict.

225 words