

Human Rights Council – 37th Session

Interactive Dialogue with Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan
13 March 2018

Australian Statement

Australia welcomes the work of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan and thanks the Commissioners for their report. Australia is deeply concerned by the human rights situation in South Sudan including the Commission's conclusion that some of these gross human rights violations constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Australia believes that sanctions are a legitimate means of effecting change in the international system where significant human rights abuses are occurring. We welcome recent autonomous sanctions regimes imposed on South Sudan and, in the absence of real progress towards peace, advise we are working on our own sanctions regime. The culture of impunity existing amongst South Sudan's political and military leaders can no longer be tolerated.

Australia echoes the call in the Commission's report for urgent action to end impunity. We urge the Government of South Sudan to ensure perpetrators of serious international crimes are brought to justice.

Trials must be in accordance with international standards and should not be used to target opposition figures. In this regard, Australia is concerned by the Government's recent imposition of the death penalty on two Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in Opposition (Machar) members. We urge the African Union and South Sudan to move quickly to establish the Hybrid Court.

Australia welcomes the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development's (IGAD) efforts to revitalise the peace process in South Sudan. While this continues, we urge the Government of South Sudan and other armed groups involved in the conflict to adhere to the letter and spirit of December's Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. This atrocious violence must end.

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