

Human Rights Council – 37th Session

Discussion on the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran 12 March 2018

Australian Statement

Australia welcomes the opportunity to participate in this dialogue on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Australia welcomes Iran's amendment of its drug-trafficking laws in November 2017 to remove the death penalty as punishment for some drug-related offences.

Australia nevertheless remains deeply concerned by the human rights situation in Iran. The amended drug trafficking law retains mandatory death sentences for a wide range of drug-related offences. We remain troubled by the widespread application of the death penalty, including on juvenile offenders. Discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities, including Ahwazi Arabs, Baha'is, Balochs, Christians and Kurds, remains persistent.

Australia calls on Iran to ensure human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists are able to practise safely and freely. We urge Iran to eliminate discrimination on ethnic and religious grounds, and to ensure fair trials and due legal process. We urge Iran to release all political prisoners, including those arrested following protests which began at the end of 2017, and impose a moratorium on the death penalty. We express concern for the recent arrests of a number of environmental and women's rights activists.

Australia encourages Iran to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Australia is deeply saddened by the loss of Ms Asma Jahangir and appreciates her work on a range of human rights issues, including the abolition of the death penalty. Australia looks forward to the appointment of a new Special Rapporteur in due course.

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