



AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

E-mail australia@un.int

150 East 42nd Street, New York NY 10017-5612 Ph 212 - 351 6600 Fax 212 - 351 6610 www.AustraliaUN.org

UNGA Third Committee Item 74: Interactive Dialogue with Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief

Statement delivered on 22 October 2018

Australia thanks the Special Rapporteur for his report exploring the relationship between Freedom of Religion or Belief and national security.

Freedom of religion or belief is a fundamental human right belonging to all individuals. This freedom must be respected in all countries in accordance with international human rights law.

We share the Special Rapporteur's concerns regarding the negative impact that restrictions on human rights, including FoRB, can have on national peace and stability. Australia firmly believes that the promotion and protection of human rights, national security and public safety are complementary, interdependent and mutually reinforcing objectives.

Religious freedom and tolerance are fundamental to open, multicultural and resilient societies. Our efforts to meet national security challenges head on, to combat terrorism and counter violent extremism, must comply with international law. The work of protecting our communities must align with international human rights law. Efforts must also be calibrated to avoid undermining social cohesion, alienating vulnerable communities, and diminishing trust.

Australia firmly believes that all people are entitled to respect, dignity and legal protection, regardless of race, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, national or social origin, or other status.

We urge all states to uphold and protect all peoples' rights, including in the development and implementation of national security measures.

Could the Special Rapporteur share some best practices on building the capacity of law enforcement bodies to understand diversity in religious beliefs and views, and to better distinguish between beliefs and views based on peace and tolerance compared to those which may, unfortunately, lead to intolerance or

violence?

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