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Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 13th Session

Universal Periodic Review of Bahrain

Statement by Australia

21 May 2012

Australia welcomes steps taken to date by the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain to address international concerns over reported human rights violations during and following the 2011 unrest, including by establishing the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) and the National Commission.

Australia is encouraged by recent measures such as the introduction of a new police code of conduct, the removal of the arrest powers of the National Security Agency, the overturning of death sentences, and progress on the reinstatement of workers dismissed during the unrest. These are positive steps towards national reconciliation and accountability.

Australia recommends Bahrain respect the legitimate rights of all its citizens to freedom of assembly and expression, and maintain its commitment to achieving concrete political reform based on respect for the legitimate rights and aspirations of all its citizens.

Australia welcomes the pledge of the Bahraini government to implement the BICI recommendations.

Australia continues to be concerned by reports of human rights violations against peaceful protesters and urges a speedy and fair trial for those who remain in detention. All prisoners should have access to lawyers and due process through the civilian courts.

Australia further recommends a speedy conclusion to these cases, such as the ongoing case of Abdalhadi Al-Khawaja.