



# AUSTRALIA

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## Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 13th Session

### Universal Periodic Review of Tunisia

#### Statement by Australia

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Australia congratulates Tunisia on its first free and democratic election last year. We commend Tunisia's efforts towards ensuring the equal participation of both men and women in the political sphere. We note that 49 women were elected to membership of the 217 strong National Constituent Assembly (NCA). Australia encourages the NCA to expand efforts to increase women's participation in politics. To this end, Australia was pleased to contribute an additional A\$500,000 in electoral support to Tunisia in April 2012, half of which will be used to build the capacity of women to participate in the electoral process as candidates.

Australia welcomes Tunisia's ratification of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. We also welcome the amendments made to repressive provisions in the Press Code and Tunisia's withdrawal of its reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

**We recommend Tunisia formally codify in domestic law its international legal commitments and repeal or amend incompatible repressive laws.**

**We further recommend that the new Constitution protects all fundamental human rights, and that implementing legislation expressly defines the limited grounds on which these rights can be restricted, and that Tunisia fully implements its international human rights commitments into domestic law.**

Australia is concerned by reports that protesters have, on several occasions in 2011, suffered excessive or unnecessary force by security officers, as well as reports of torture and other ill-treatment.

**We recommend Tunisia prioritise efforts to reform the security sector to ensure appropriate training and oversight mechanisms are in place and to draft new legal provisions to ensure the independence of the judiciary in line with international standards.**