

Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 16th Session

Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Colombia

Statement by Australia

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Australia welcomes the Republic of Colombia's public policy approach to enhancing institution-building and social mobilisation in support of human rights and the significant progress made in improving the human rights situation in Colombia.

Australia welcomes the peace negotiations between Colombia and the FARC, and acknowledges the efforts made towards reaching a political settlement.

Australia commends Colombia for the implementation of its Victims' and Land Restitution Law. We welcome increased restitution to victims, particularly for loss of land. **Australia recommends Colombia improve measures to protect applicants, particularly those from rural areas, in order to strengthen the land restitution process.**

Australia is concerned by reports of the systematic targeting of women leaders and activists and their families with sexual violence or threats of sexual violence by members of illegal armed groups. We welcome that the Victims' and Land Restitution Law provides reparations for victims of sexual violence but **recommend Colombia address how victims of sexual violence by illegal armed groups who are not considered parties to the conflict can access appropriate reparations.**

Australia is concerned that Colombia's constitutional reform to expand the jurisdiction of military courts may have a negative impact on the appropriate review of alleged violations of human rights, including allegations of serious crimes by military or police forces. **Australia recommends Colombia review the bill and relevant legislative framework to ensure civilian courts hear cases related to violations of human rights.**

Finally, we recommend Colombia take measures to address claims of continuing extrajudicial executions.

Speaker: Mr Noel Campbell