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Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 16th Session

Universal Periodic Review of Turkmenistan

Statement by Australia

Australia welcomes Turkmenistan's ratification of a number of human rights treaties, but encourages further efforts in their implementation and translation into national law.

Australia acknowledges Turkmenistan's stated commitment to freedom of expression, association and assembly, but notes with concern that fundamental freedoms remain heavily curtailed. The treatment of human rights defenders and political activists – including their repression and harassment – is of serious concern. **Australia recommends Turkmenistan take appropriate action to guarantee the freedoms of expression, association and assembly – including by allowing independent media, political parties and civil society to operate freely – and ceasing the repression and other ill treatment of human rights defenders and political activists.**

Australia acknowledges the release of some political prisoners since Turkmenistan's previous review but notes with alarm continued reports of the use of arbitrary detention and torture. **Australia recommends Turkmenistan take steps to release all political prisoners and facilitate the requested visits of the UN Special Rapporteur on torture and the UN Working Group on arbitrary detention.**

Australia notes with concern that domestic violence and child marriage remain prevalent throughout Turkmenistan. **Australia recommends that Turkmenistan take measures to further protect and promote the rights of women, including by enforcing laws against domestic violence**

Australia also notes with concern discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities. **Australia recommends Turkmenistan address discriminatory practices towards ethnic and religious minorities, including lifting restrictions on their participation in government and society.**

