



# AUSTRALIA



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## Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 20th Session

### Universal Periodic Review of Kazakhstan

#### Statement by Australia

Australia welcomes the progress made by Kazakhstan in prison reform and towards eliminating torture, and hopes these processes will continue. In particular, Australia notes Kazakhstan's establishment of a National Preventive Mechanism against torture and its commitment to "not rest until all vestiges of torture have been fully and totally eliminated." We also welcome the involvement of the Committee against Torture and various local and international NGOs in helping Kazakhstan reduce and prosecute instances of torture. **Australia recommends Kazakhstan continue to apply a zero tolerance approach against torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading punishments, in line with domestic legislation.**

Australia also would like to highlight the constructive input which civil society organisations and independent media are making to civil liberties, democratisation and reform in Kazakhstan- and Kazakhstan's commitment at its last UPR review to decriminalise slander and libel. Protecting freedom of expression will significantly enhance Kazakhstan's progress towards becoming a respected and mature democracy. In that context, we note with concern there are reports that independent journalists continue to face pressure and restrictions. **Australia recommends Kazakhstan ensure changes to its criminal and civil codes decriminalise slander and libel, and protect media freedoms and the freedom of expression, including for NGOs.**