



42

PERMANENT MISSION OF NORWAY

STATEMENT

Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review of Australia,

9 November 2015.

Statement by Norway.

Norway welcomes the delegation from Australia, and commends Australian efforts in the promotion of human rights domestically and internationally. Norway appreciates the comprehensive and timely tabling of the Australian national report in preparation for this review. We also recognize the independent contribution to this hearing from the Australian Human Rights Commission and the multitude of other organisations who have presented their views and assessments in the process leading up to UPR.

While recognizing Australia's important role in dealing with the global refugee crisis, Norway remains concerned about the reported procedures and conditions for asylum seekers, including those detained in offshore processing centres in Nauru and Papua New Guinea. Furthermore, Norway is concerned that the reported enhanced screening procedures conducted at sea do not give asylum seekers a genuine opportunity to make a claim for protection and that proper consideration may not be given to Australia's non-refoulement obligations. Norway recommends that asylum seekers' claims are processed in accordance with the UN Refugee Convention and that detention occurs only when necessary, for a minimal period and that access to judicial oversight of detention is ensured.

Norway notes that indigenous peoples are still reported to experience discrimination and socio-economic disadvantage. Furthermore, a disproportionately high rate of incarceration of indigenous people remains a critical issue for Australia. Norway recommends that Australia adopt the recommendation by the UN Committee against Torture to review mandatory sentencing laws with a view to abolishing them.

Finally, we recommend Australia to begin a consultative process towards adoption of a National Action Plan on business and human rights.