



AUSTRALIA



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Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 23rd Session

Universal Periodic Review of Georgia

Statement by Australia

Australia welcomes the delegation from Georgia and appreciates its constructive engagement in the Universal Periodic Review process.

We recognise the efforts made by Georgia towards improving the human rights situation since Georgia's last review. In particular, we welcome the increased level of media freedom now enjoyed in Georgia. **Australia recommends Georgia continue to prioritise safeguarding media freedom.**

We also commend the significant improvement in prison conditions Georgia has implemented. The UN Special Rapporteur for Torture visited Georgia in March 2015 and noted that the Government had 'done away' with overcrowding, implemented 'radical changes in the mentality of its staff' and 'effectively abolished' the use of corporal punishment and forced confessions. **Australia recommends Georgia continue improving the conditions in prisons, particularly to focus on conditions around pre-trial detention.**

Australia welcomes moves by the Government to combat violence against women, by making domestic violence training compulsory for police officers and trying to recruit more female police officers.

Australia supports Georgia's territorial integrity. We note Georgia faces ongoing challenges to provide a long-term solution to the needs of internally displaced persons – whose freedom of movement and access to livelihood are increasingly restricted as de facto authorities in the Georgian territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia continue a policy of 'borderisation' of the administrative boundary line. We urge the de facto authorities in Abkhazia and South Ossetia to provide for credible international human rights monitoring in these Georgia territories.