



# AUSTRALIA

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## Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 23rd Session

### Universal Periodic Review of Rwanda

#### Statement by Australia

Australia commends Rwanda for its economic and social development, particularly its efforts in the field of gender equality, where Rwanda sets an example for many countries to follow.

We also applaud Rwanda for having abolished the death penalty.

Australia acknowledges Rwanda's progress in addressing alleged miscarriages of justice in the *Gacaca* trials through the formal court system, a recommendation made during the first cycle of the Universal Periodic Review.

While understanding Rwanda's desire to maintain social order, Australia is concerned with restrictions on fundamental political freedoms, including freedoms of opinion, expression and association. Australia remains concerned that the law on 'genocide ideology' continues to impede fundamental freedoms. **Australia recommends Rwanda ensure that no one is subjected to criminal processes for exercising rights to freedom of assembly and of association, nor subject to violence, harassment, persecution, intimidation or reprisals.**

In the lead-up to 2017 elections, we urge Rwanda to do all in its power to ensure peaceful, timely, credible and transparent elections. **Australia recommends Rwanda allow opposition parties to carry out their activities without intimidation or hindrance; and release individuals prosecuted solely for the peaceful and legitimate expression of their views.**

Australia further recommends Rwanda ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and ensure that it is able to meet obligations to cooperate with the Court under that Statute.