**Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 26th Session**

**Universal Periodic Review of the Syrian Arab Republic**

**Statement by Australia**

Australia condemns the countless violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law that have been committed in Syria.

Not only has the Syrian government failed in its responsibility to protect the human rights of its people, it has itself committed some of the conflict’s worst atrocities. So-called counter-terrorist measures are not an excuse for violating fundamental human rights.

In particular, Australia condemns Syria’s use of indiscriminate weapons including barrel bombs and its use of chemical weapons. **Australia recommends Syria fulfil its obligations, including under the Chemical Weapons Convention and international humanitarian law, and cease all deliberate, indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks against civilians.**

The rights of Syrian people to safety and to medical care have been cruelly violated by reprehensible attacks on hospitals and health facilities. **Australia recommends the Syrian government cease attacks and prevent further strikes on medical facilities.**

Australia is shocked to see siege and starvation tactics used as a weapon of war, including the besiegement of 731,200 people by pro-government forces. **Australia recommends Syria immediately lift sieges and allow full, sustained and unimpeded humanitarian access to civilians in need.**

**Australia recommends Syria cease the unacceptable practices of unlawful detention and torture, allow in independent observers and immediately release all prisoners of conscience.**

**Australia further recommends Syria allow full access to and cooperate with the UN Commission of Inquiry and civil society monitors.**