**Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 28th Session**

**Universal Periodic Review of Gabon**

**Statement by Australia**

Australia commends the Gabonese Republic on its ongoing commitment to the abolition of the death penalty, particularly through its accession to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights since its last Universal Periodic Review.

Australia observed with concern the post-election violence that took place in Gabon following the 2016 Presidential poll. We note the Gabonese Government’s referral of matters related to this violence to the International Criminal Court (ICC). We look forward to reviewing the outcomes of the ICC Prosecutor’s preliminary examination.

Ahead of the ICC’s report, **Australia recommends the Gabonese Government investigate alleged arbitrary arrests of demonstrators and excessive periods of pre-trial detention that reportedly took place following the election.**

**We recommend that the Gabonese** **Government seek to improve prison conditions in Gabon including the availability of appropriate medical care for prisoners and access of prisoners to legal counsel and family.**

Australia urges the Government of Gabon to proceed, as soon as possible, with legislative elections postponed since December 2016. In the lead-up to the election, we encourage the Government, and other political leaders, to fully respect the rights of all Gabonese citizens to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly.

**Australia recommends that Gabon proceed with measures to ensure transparent and credible legislative elections no later than 2018.**