**Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 40th Session**

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

**Statement by Australia**

**24 January 2022**

Thank you, [President/Vice President]

Australia remains deeply concerned about grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Syria.

After a decade of conflict, civilians continue to suffer deliberate and indiscriminate attacks; deprivation of liberty resulting in trauma, injury and death; and attacks on religious freedoms.

We strongly urge all parties to engage meaningfully with the political process established by UN Security Council Resolution 2254; to take all necessary steps to bring the conflict to an end, cease violence against civilians, release detainees and restore human rights to all Syrian people, including religious freedoms.

**Australia recommends that the Syrian Arab Republic:**

1. Cooperate fully with all international mechanisms to advance accountability, including by granting unfettered access to Syrian territory to the Commission of Inquiry.
2. Cease the unacceptable practices of unlawful detention, torture and other cruel or inhuman treatment, including sexual and gender-based violence, and immediately release all civilians detained arbitrarily.
3. Fulfil its obligations, including under the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and international humanitarian law, and cease all use of chemical weapons regardless of target.
4. Cease all deliberate, indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks against civilians, and end all restrictions on religious freedoms for Christians and other minorities.