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Observer (9)

given by HE Ms Caroline Millar

Human Rights Council – 12th Session

Ambassador + Permanent Representative

Item 4 – Proposed Australian intervention

Australia strongly condemns the widespread human rights violations committed by the Fiji Interim Government since the coup in 2006. The situation has worsened sharply since the abrogation of Fiji's Constitution in April 2009. As the Council will be aware, these violations have been outlined in detail recently by Amnesty International.

We call on the regime in Fiji to cease its interference in the judiciary, intimidation of the media and harassment – including the summary detention for questioning of the opponents of the regime. The regime must restore an environment in which all Fiji citizens can publicly and freely express their political opinions, and meet and associate freely, without fear or retribution.

We also call upon the Fiji Interim Government to take immediate, clear and credible steps to return Fiji to democracy, in line with comments by the United Nations Security Council and the requirements for Fiji's full reinclusion in the South Pacific Forum and the Commonwealth.

Australia remains gravely concerned by Myanmar's disrespect for the human rights of its people and its suppression of their democratic aspirations. We call on Myanmar to start a genuine and inclusive process of political reform and national reconciliation, and urge the authorities to seek non-military resolutions to Myanmar's long-running ethnic conflicts. Australia condemns the recent conviction of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and calls again for her immediate and unconditional release, along with that of the more than 2000 other political prisoners in Myanmar.

We remain gravely concerned by continuing reports of sustained and severe human rights abuses in the **Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)**, including arbitrary and unlawful killings and detention, the imposition of the death penalty for political reasons, torture, widespread use of labour camps at which harsh and inhumane conditions prevail, forced abortions and infanticide, and the suppression of freedom of expression, religion and opinion. We urge authorities in the DPRK to end such manifest abuses of human rights, in line with universally-accepted human rights norms.

Four months have passed since the conclusion of military hostilities in northern Sri Lanka. Australia remains concerned that over 250,000 civilians remain displaced in camps in northern Sri Lanka. It is vital now to move quickly, more quickly than has been the case to this point, to create the conditions for civilians to move to their lands and rebuild their lives. Freedom of movement for the civilians in the north is essential. The voluntary resettlement process requires full access by international humanitarian agencies to areas of return and to information to ensure effective coordination.

Australia has longstanding and well-known concerns about the human rights situation in Iran, including concern about executions, including of juvenile offenders, discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities such as the Baha'i, and political and media freedoms. Australia has also been concerned at the human rights situation in Iran following the presidential election on 12 June, including violence and loss of life, and reports of deaths in detention, torture and rape of detainees. In accordance with its international obligations, we call on Iran to fully investigate all these claims,