



AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

E-mail australia@un.int

150 East 42nd Street, New York NY 10017-5612 Ph 212 - 351 6600 Fax 212 - 351 6610 www.AustraliaUN.org

UN General Assembly
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Suspension of the rights of membership of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in the Human Rights Council

**Statement by Gary Quinlan
Permanent Representative and Ambassador
of Australia to the United Nations**

Australia co-sponsored this historic resolution.

We condemn the recent events in Libya. The Libyan Government must uphold its responsibility to protect its population. The international community has its own responsibility to act in such situations – to protect civilian populations from mass atrocities, including crimes against humanity.

It is our strong belief that the gross and systematic human rights violations recently committed by the Libyan regime warrant its suspension from the Human Rights Council in accordance with the General Assembly's own resolution 60/251. It is untenable that a regime so clearly failing in its responsibility to protect its own people is fit to serve on such a fundamental body. The General Assembly has been mandated to take precisely this action in precisely these circumstances. It is right that it has done so today by consensus.

We welcome the strong statement issued by the League of Arab States on 22 February, the communiqué issued by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on 23 February as well as the statement by the Secretary-General of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

The unanimous and robust actions taken subsequently by both the Security Council and Human Rights Council sent a clear signal to the Libyan Government that the international community would not stand idly by in the face of such gross and systematic violations of human rights. We urge the Security Council to consider further action to protect the people of Libya.

We welcome Security Council resolution 1970 and are working to implement it urgently, together with additional autonomous sanctions announced by Australia's Foreign Minister last weekend.

The Libyan people are crying out for freedom. Australia supports the universal rights and freedoms of the Libyan people. Our thoughts are with the Libyan people – a people who continue to struggle for freedom from oppression. We salute their bravery.