



MEDIA RELEASE
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The UN set to hear about the “tsunami” of high incarceration rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Ms Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, highlights in her [Country Report](#) high incarceration rates, child removal, racism and abuse of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids in custody as some of the most troubling parts of her trip to Australia earlier this year. The Special Rapporteur will table her report before the Human Rights Council this week, mere weeks before the Council places a vote as to whether Australia will gain a temporary seat on the Council.

In her Country report, the Special Rapporteur has called for a “national plan of action to address the incarceration crisis” and outlines that “the current claim by the Government that matters relating to incarceration remain the sole prerogative of states is untenable...and worsens the impact of the national detention crisis on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples”.

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (**NATSILS**) agrees and calls on Prime Minister Turnbull to demonstrate leadership through the development of a national plan of action in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

“Prime Minister Turnbull must face up to the need for urgent national reform and investment in Indigenous led solutions to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people do not continue to be victims of tough-on-crime legislation, over policing, mandatory sentencing laws, police brutality and inadequacies of funding for essential services, such as our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (**ATSILS**). The Prime Minister holds a clear responsibility to ensure that laws in each state and territory are compliant with our international human rights obligations- he cannot continue to shy away from this responsibility”, said Mr Wayne Muir, Co-Chair of NATSILS.

“As identified in the Special Rapporteur’s Country Report, there is a great need for investment in Indigenous led strategies that reduce the risk of Governments violating the human rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people” said Mr Muir.

NATSILS partnered with Amnesty International this week at the 36th Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva to hold a Side Event on the ‘Abuse of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children detained in Australia: challenges and ways forward’. The Special Rapporteur Ms Tauli-Corpuz, Mr John Paton Quinn, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations Office, Tammy Solonec, Amnesty International Australia and Karly Warner, NATSILS Executive Officer discussed practical ways to eliminate high incarceration rates and abuse of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in detention.

NATSILS identified the need for a National Plan for Action, which must include recommendations contained within NATSILS and Amnesty International’s joint written [statement](#), to be developed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

“Our organisations and communities are bringing solutions to the Government’s doorstep. It is time for Prime Minister Turnbull to listen up and allow us to lead our communities who have retained formidable strength in the face of ongoing discrimination and abuse” concluded Mr Muir.

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For further information on NATSILS & Amnesty International Australia’s Human Rights Council 36th Session Side Event - “Abuse of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander children detained in Australia: challenges and ways forward” see NATSILS [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).