



Sharing stories, finding solutions

UN Human Rights Council 41st Session

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sovereignty never ceded

By Meriki Onus

Mr Vice President,

I'm a Gonnai and Gunditjmarra woman.

We call for internationally scrutinized treaties with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and a Truth and Justice Commission.

Australia has a shocking human rights record when it comes to our people. The country was built on and continues to thrive on genocide and dispossession.

Today, Australia's genocide takes place in the form of taking our children away, the abuse of our women and the unjust incarceration of our people. Australian systems continue to perpetuate colonial violence.

Domestic treaties without international scrutiny will mean very little when Australia regularly suspends laws like the Racial Discrimination Act to create apartheid laws. An example of this is the Northern Territory Intervention.

Just one devastating impact of this is that it has led to youth prisons in the Northern Territory being filled with only Aboriginal kids.

Yes, our kids make up 100% of youth prisoners in some parts of the country.

We must question why Australia has a position on the Human Rights Council when our people continue to feel the full impact of significant human rights violations.

Sovereignty never ceded.

Thank you.

Geneva, 2 July 2019