



Human Rights Council thirty-sixth Session

Side Event

ABUSE OF ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN DETAINED IN AUSTRALIA: CHALLENGES AND WAYS FORWARD

10h15 -11h15, 19 September 2017

Tea, coffee and pastries will be served outside the room from 10h00.

Room XXII, Palais des Nations, Building E (English only)

Shocking reports of abuse of detained Indigenous children in Australia emerged over the past year, eliciting national and international outcry. [Film footage](#) of the mistreatment of children in the Don Dale detention centre in Australia's Northern Territory prompted the Australian Government to establish a [Royal Commission](#) into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory, due to report on 17 November. The abuses included violent strip searches, the use of tear gas, hooding and prolonged isolation among other ill-treatment. There have been subsequent allegations of abuse of Indigenous children at detention centres in other parts of the country, including Cleveland in Queensland, Barwon in Victoria, Bimberi in the ACT and most recently Banksia Hill in Western Australia. In this context, it is of note that the age of criminal responsibility is ten years in Australia.

During the thirty-sixth session of the UN Human Rights Council, the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples will report on her country visit to Australia (20 March – 3 April 2017). During her country mission, the Special Rapporteur visited detention facilities and examined the high rate of incarceration of Indigenous men, women and children. The Australian Law Reform Commission is currently conducting an inquiry into the incarceration rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

This side-event provides an opportunity for State representatives, the Special Rapporteur and civil society to share their primary concerns and identify key challenges. The emphasis of the event will be to generate practical and action-oriented proposals to provide solutions to the serious concerns over the high numbers of Indigenous children in detention centres in Australia and the substantial risk of abuse they experience.

Introduction and moderation: Ms. Tammy Solonec, Indigenous Rights Manager, Amnesty International Australia.

Panellists:

- Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples.
- His Excellency Mr. John Paton Quinn, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.
- Ms. Karly Warner, Executive Officer of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS).

Discussion.