

Celebrate Human Rights Day with protest

by Chibo Mertineit

On 10th December 1948, three years after the second world war ended, the United Nations General Assembly (UN) adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Paris.

The UN had 58 members then, 48 voted for it, eight abstained and two didn't vote.

The Declaration consists of thirty articles outlining the basic rights and fundamental freedoms of each human being.

Even while it's not legally binding, the contents of the declaration have been widely used in international treaties and national constitutions.

All of the 193 member states of the UN these days have ratified at least one of the nine binding treaties. The 524 translations makes this document outstanding in history.

Here are a few short articles:

Article 1: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 3: Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4: No one shall be held in slavery or servitude, slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5: No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6: Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7: All are equal before



the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. Etc.

Article 9: No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Reading these articles, I think of so many issues where we as a democratic society are failing.

Colonial Australia was founded on the premise of 'terra nullius', meaning land that is legally deemed to be unoccupied or uninhabited.

This has caused a huge amount of suffering, deaths and intergenerational trauma for the original inhabitants.

Fifty years after the 1967 referendum, Prime Minister Turnbull didn't embrace the 'Uluru statement from the heart'. Another lost opportunity to close the gap and work towards a better future for aboriginal people.



Photos: Chibo Mertineit

Even today, there are still indigenous children being removed from their families (see article p.12).

Another long running injustice is the treatment and role of women in our patriarchal society.

Domestic violence is a shameful indictment of our society; every week in Australia there is on average one women being killed, mostly by a current or former partner.

Women have in most families the role of primary carer for children without receiving any payment for this vital work.

No superannuation is paid, which can lead to serious financial difficulties in later years, hence the growing number being homeless.

Worldwide, 79.5 million people have been forcibly displaced, 26 million fled to other countries, and more than half of them are

children!

After Riza Barati was murdered on the 17/2/2014 by guards in the Manus Island detention facility, 62 people came to the 'Let Them Stay' rally in front of the Federal member's office in Lismore on the 18/2/2016.

Anne Tuart said then, "OK, same time next month, but people wanted to do it again next week."

That was nearly five years ago, and Lismore Amnesty International members and supporters are still gathering every Thursday between 4pm and 5pm at Kevin Hogan's office in Molesworth Street, and numbers are growing again, each week.

Everyone is welcome; bring your own sign or pick one up there.

Every week a letter is sent to MP Hogan, which you can find on the Amnesty group's Facebook page: [Lismore Vigil for Refugees](#)



Julian Assange's father, John Shipton and supporters are conducting a speaking tour in our region during December. See our article on page 14 for dates. Photo courtesy Getty



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