

Kahurangi Carter – 148th IPU Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland

Tēnā koutou katoa. It is an honour to be speaking at the 148th IPU Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland.

The big questions, ideas and themes centring peace not only guide our discourse but also propel us towards actionable solutions in the pursuit of global peace and security.

I am Māori, I am indigenous to New Zealand, my hope in the next few minutes is to share a Māori worldview on these issues of peace and security.

Naku te rourou nau te rourou ka ora ai te iwi “with your basket and my basket the people will live”.

I share this proverb with you as an important starting point when reflecting on New Zealand’s place in promoting peace and also a constant reminder that sustained peace cannot be achieved alone, it is spaces like this which bring us closer in the drive for peace.

NZ is a long way away a 22 hour flight. As result of New Zealand’s isolation, Kiwis are pragmatists who have a natural intuition to be innovative, honest, and promote fairness, thus peacekeeping efforts have been remarkably successful and regarded highly among the international community.

We have a strong and significant history of commitment to promoting peaceful resolution of conflicts, especially through the multilateral treaty system.

The issue of nuclear disarmament in the Pacific is especially poignant with parliament enshrining our nations nuclear-weapon-free-zone status into legislation, an important act of sovereignty and part of NZs cultural identity.

We recognise collective peace can not be achieved alone. Sitting in these rooms, I’ve been frustrated as I listen to people discuss what will be written on a piece of paper and determining the value of a human life.

I’m here to talk about peace. Peace can only be achieved when we do not allow a nation to tell us that their human lives are more valuable than another human life. I know my children’s lives are no more precious than any of yours or of any other child in the world.

NZ is a small country and we rely on international law to be upheld and for nations to be held accountable when it is not.

We must be committed to upholding human rights, indigenous rights and a non-violent conflict resolution in Gaza.

I am devastated and outraged at the loss of over 30,000 Palestine lives in Gaza since 7 October. Hostages from Israel and Palestine must be released.

Urgent action by the international community, including the New Zealand Government, is needed to prevent further violence and facilitate justice and peace.

We have seen it before with New Zealand’s Parliament strongly condemning Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and immediately adopting several measures in response to Russia’s actions. Our international community can and must act with the same urgency to bring a non-violent conflict resolution.

I encourage all parliamentarians to make the most of their time in Parliament, recognise the strength in a collective call for peaceful coexistence and foster a more inclusive society.

Naku te rourou nau te rourou ka ora ai te iwi “with your basket and my basket the people will live”.

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