

PRESS RELEASE

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International Feminist Summit Support Calls for the Australian Government to withdraw Military in latest Invasion of Aboriginal Communities in Central Australia

The International Feminist Summit currently being held in Townsville have slammed the Federal governments actions that constitute an invasion of the Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. The use of military and police force by the government as the solution to addressing Child sexual abuse is an act of terrorism and is unacceptable. More than 200 women from 15 countries stand in solidarity with our Aboriginal sisters to demand the Prime Minister, Mr. John Howard to immediately withdraw the military and police from those Aboriginal communities.

We are totally outraged that the deployment of the military is being used to terrorise innocent women, children, elders and communities as a response to the recent findings of the "Little Children are Sacred Report of child sexual abuse Inquiry. In response to Aboriginal women's concerns we support the calls to action that government meet with Aboriginal leaders to address these vital issues. The federal governments continuing failure to properly resource what all the evidence clearly shows is the means to address all forms of violence against Aboriginal women and children does not constitute a failure of Aboriginal communities.

The mandatory health checks being conducted on children under the age of 16 is unethical and a violation of their basic human rights as citizens within their own country. We call on all Australians to take a stand against the Howard Governments actions to these issues of violence. This is a national disgrace and can no longer be seen as the 'Aboriginal Problem' but rather the 'Australian Problem' that has to be addressed.

The naked land grab currently under way is not intended to and cannot address violence against aboriginal women and children. This action is in itself an act of violence against Aborigines and is unacceptable. Why are children being continually punished for crimes committed against them? The forced removal of children from these communities is not addressing the issue of abuse whilst the perpetrators are allowed to remain in these communities to re-offend.

We call on the government to heed and implement the Recommendations made by successive royal commissions, Inquiries and Reports including those of:

- The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody
- The National Aboriginal Health Strategy
- The National Report into Violence and Abuse of Aboriginal Women and Children
- Ampe Akelyernemang Meke Mekarle: “Little Children are Sacred”

We stand in solidarity with our Aboriginal sisters “Enough is Enough!”

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