

**USING UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEMS TO DISRUPT
RACISM**

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>>RINGA HĀPAI: (Te reo Māori). It is my privilege to be your facilitator today -- aroha mai I'm a little bit nervous -- for this session called "Using United Nations human rights systems to disrupt racism". Our presenter for today is Daisuke Shirane. Before we get started I will say a quick karakia for us. (Karakia).

One of the first things I want to do is to acknowledge you all, our listeners today. And over the past few days of this conference, it has been a jam packed session, great to see you all, some of our hoa that are online with us today. And I hope you have enjoyed the last few days of this conference. We have covered an array of kaupapa, intersecting racism and te reo Māori, racial justice, constitutional transformation, education, the criminal justice system, racism and health, the impact of the dawn raids, Islamophobia, and we have coming up also today the anti-racism national action plan. So it's certainly been a learning journey for many of us.

Now we turn to this kaupapa today drawing on the UN mechanisms to disrupt racism. I also want to acknowledge the presentation in the previous Tiriti-based conference on a similar topic and that was presented by Dr Claire Charters who has a prominent role in the United Nations, both internationally and locally and nationally, and also Dominic O'Sullivan who will also be presenting later on in this conference.

And I also want to acknowledge many of you who are on board today who have presented to the United Nations and to the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination as well. Nau mai haere mai.

I'd like to turn to our presenter today, Daisuke Shirane, and -- aah, thank you Mereana and to Laura, some of our moderators today, they've reminded me about some of the housekeeping we've got today. So we're just reminding everybody out there of our community code, to look after and be respectful when we are inviting and making comments, confidentiality, one person at a time, speaking from our own experience, and there's no one great source of knowledge, and making space and taking space as well.

And we also -- I also want to just make a shout out to all of the volunteers that have been a part of this conference, that is a huge group of people that have made time to contribute to this kaupapa. We do invite all of you to share in the kōrero, to put up pātai or

questions of Daisuke, and for those of you who have expertise we invite you to share that today. So we really want this to be an interactive session for you all.

Now I'm just going to go to Daisuke's bio. So Daisuke has quite an extensive expertise in the area of United Nations' mechanisms. He joined the Centre For Civil and Political Rights in 2013 and he also works as a trainer, facilitator and consultant for NGOs and those at both grassroots and national levels in Asia. He has a focus on capacity building for marginalised and discriminated communities, and how to utilise those national and international mechanisms. He's previously served as a representative to the United Nations in Geneva for the International Movement Against All Forms of Racial Discrimination and he has a master of arts in intercultural conflict management from Alice Salomon University in Germany.

Now to get to the kaupapa of our presentation, I will hand it over to Daisuke to introduce himself and introduce us to his topic. Over to you Daisuke.

>>MR SHIRANE: Thank you Papa. I wouldn't do any long presentation here, but I just would like to introduce myself and maybe little bit about what I do with those organisations.

So as Papa introduced, I work for Centre For Civil and Political Rights, but at the same time I'm currently also a senior advisor for International Programmes of International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism called IMADR. Both organisations are working to address human rights violations using international human rights law.

And about IMADR, which is a membership orientated international NGO, headquarters in Tokyo. And it was established in 1988 by one of the biggest minority groups in Japan called Buraku people. And so it started as a movement to address discrimination against Buraku people. In order to do so, it identified to utilise UN mechanism and the international law is one of the most effective way.

So it expanded its network outside of Japan and reached out to the UN, and since then we have been also working with other minorities and groups inside and outside of Japan to help each other and address racial discrimination, rights of the Buraku people and also rights of Dalits, which are also the huge group still discriminated against in South Asia. And also we work with and for indigenous peoples, minorities, migrants etc.

And one of the basic approach of IMADA is it's -- from the grassroots level it works with the people discriminated against at the grassroots level, and based on their needs and challenges we will bring it up to the national level. And if there is no solution at the national level, we will utilise international mechanism, in particular the International

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, so-called ICERD, and other human rights mechanism.

And I say here UN human rights mechanism because it's not only about ICERD or the monitoring body of this convention, so-called CERD, it's the Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination. This is the main international law and the main body of the UN that addresses racial discrimination. But at the same time there are other international human rights laws and other UN bodies that can also address such similar issues, cross-cutting issues and so on. And from our experience it is much more effective to holistically utilise all of them rather than focusing on one of them.

So this is our basic approach, and I'm happy to answer any questions you might have today, and I'd like to have this session more as interactive as possible rather than me just talking. So yeah.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Thanks Daisuke. I'm going to kick off with a couple of questions of my own that I'm quite interested in, and I welcome pātai, questions from all of our listeners today, as I know some of them and I know they've also had some experience advocating at the United Nations level.

A couple of questions from me to kick off. You talked about how you may be able to draw on a number of different bodies, treaty bodies, to advocate. How does that work and how do they intersect and how can you draw on if you're submitting or presenting to ICERD, to the Committee For the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, how do you reference other bodies, or how does it add weight; how does that all work, could you explain that a little bit more?

>>MR SHIRANE: So when thinking about CERD, the committee, it has its own working method and it has its own procedures. And so basic thing is the most basic function of that committee is State party review procedure. So each of the treaty body, so-called treaty body that monitors human rights treaties, CERD is monitoring ICERD and all the State parties to the ICERD are requested, obliged, to submit a report to the committee regularly. And so we utilise that review procedure to address issues in the country by helping those affected to present their own issues and bring their voice to the UN level.

One of the challenge there is that review does not take place so frequently. So it quite often depends on when the country actually submits the report. So in some cases there are countries that regularly report and review can take place every four, five years, but there are also other cases that countries do not submit the report for more than 10 years or never, and that will of course cause a challenge of review not taking place.

So in that case we usually use other treaty bodies, which can deal with the issues and also scheduling the review. Some other treaty bodies can review one country without having the State report if it is delayed so long.

And CERD can also do that, but it's very rare. So, for example, there is also UPR, universal periodic review, which is a mechanism set up under the Human Rights Council, which is more of a political body of the UN. And so the effectiveness and working method is quite different from treaty bodies, but still the benefits, advantage of the UPR is that, as the name "universal periodic review" says, the review takes place every four and a half years. So that predictability is quite useful for us, because we know when the next review will be, and so on and so on.

So that's the place we usually raise also this country has not submitted the report to this treaty body for how many years and it should be submitted as soon as possible. And also we -- if there is a review done by other treaty bodies, we also raise the issues of racial discrimination there as far as the mandate of that body allows. And that's also a place where we can use to push the country to submit the reports as soon as possible to the other treaty body, and we also refer to recommendations issued by any other UN bodies and also regional body, if any, to the country about the issue. So that kind of helping the treaty body, or anybody we are approaching, to streamline the recommendations to, we don't have to conflict the other recommendations, but we can build up on them.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Thank you Daisuke, that is actually really important information. So Aotearoa New Zealand is signed up to report to the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and regularly report, and then civil society, including Māori communities and iwi, also present or submit reports to the body as well.

But I think that's a really important point about the UPR as a mechanism to go to and other bodies as well, if there aren't regular reports submitted by the countries that there are other mechanisms to ensure that they are presenting.

We do have a couple of questions in the chat that I'll go to shortly. Actually I'll go to them now and I'll ask my next question after we look through these.

So we're wondering, Daisuke, if you had any comment on this, but it may not necessarily be your area of expertise. So one of the listeners is wanting to know about the doctrine of discovery and, if you do know about that, how has that been received and how does the CERD respond to those types of documents.

>>MR SHIRANE: I don't know about that doctrine, sorry.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: That's fine, we'll take that query and we could probably get some information on that by the likes of Claire Charters and others who are familiar with our national and local situation. I'll go to the next question. There was another one down here.

The other question was about this session, it is primarily Q&A and I think through this process we'll find more tailored information from Daisuke that is relevant to us. A pātai or question here from Joseph; recalling it is the fourth international decade of the eradication of colonialism, it would be possible to utilise two separate committees of the special committee on decolonisation and CERD. Did you have any response to that?

>>MR SHIRANE: I don't know much about that first one, but yes, if it's about UN bodies, of course you can use any of them, all of them. And depending on the issues at stake, you can also choose which one to go for. And there will be bodies that you can prioritise to approach. And if you talk about colonialism, one important thing is ICERD is, of course, one committee, as I said, that specifically prohibits and addresses the discrimination against minorities and especially in terms of colonialism against indigenous peoples.

But there are other bodies which they are focusing on rights of indigenous peoples. One is IMRIT(?), the ex-parte mechanism which meets in Geneva and another is Parminem(?) Forum on indigenous issues, which is a mechanism sitting in New York. And also there are two international human rights laws that addresses colonialism, which are for us International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and another one is International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

These two covenants, so-called International Bill of Human Rights, has almost identical article 1 which recognises and protects the rights of peoples for self-determination, and this is the article specifically created to address the colonialism. So yeah.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Thank you Daisuke. Again, really important points that you've raised about those two covenants. And thank you to Joseph for sharing information about the special committee on decolonisation. I myself wasn't familiar with that body, so it's good for us to share our knowledge and build up more knowledge collectively on these kaupapa.

I will go now to -- Umi has asked a question about your expertise and experience and actually I'll add on Vanitha's question and she wants to know more about your work with the Dalit people. And I mihi to Vanitha who's my colleague, and she has done some work with CDOR as well. Would you like to expand on your work with Dalit?

>>MR SHIRANE: Yeah, so Dalit, as some of you may already know, is a group of people basically in South Asia. You might have heard in a history class about untouchables; Dalits

are the people who are placed outside the caste system and regarded as non-human and historically being subject to one of the more severe form of discrimination and atrocity.

So and the situation was, had a (inaudible) with Buraku people in Japan. Buraku people are also similarly placed in the society and system of hierarchical system of Japan for a long time, and they are also placed outside the society having been designated specific jobs, and they were not allowed to take up any other jobs other than those, and therefore also discriminated against.

So our work with Dalit started in there, Buraku people's movement to address the issue at the international level, and then they found out Dalit have such a similarity historically and also background and issues they are facing, so they started a solidarity movement and together hand in hand helping each other to address the issue also at the international level.

So we work -- on the one hand we work with Dalits movements and organisations in the country level, helping -- for example, doing training for them so that they themselves can stand up and deliver their voices to the international level. On the other hand, we also help facilitate the interaction between them and the bodies at the UN level.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Thank you Daisuke, this might tie in with this next question; what are some of the biggest challenges you've faced in advocating for marginalised peoples at the UN and what were some of the most effective tactics for navigating the challenges?

>>MR SHIRANE: That's a very good question. It depends on which issues we are addressing, because, you know, there is a variety of issues in people we are working with. The biggest challenge, if I think about rights of indigenous people, for example, the biggest challenge is the recognition of people as indigenous at the national level, including Japan.

Also there are still a lot of indigenous peoples who are fighting for the recognition of themselves as indigenous at the national level, although at the international level it's clear that, according to international laws in the history and the facts, that they are indigenous and many of the -- almost all of the UN bodies can and will recognise them as such, and, you know, do their work and give recommendations to the countries to protect their rights, specific rights as indigenous peoples, including a right to their land and territory and so on so on.

But when we go back to the national level, many governments still argue that all people are equal under the constitution and there is no indigenous or non-indigenous peoples, they are like equally the citizen of this country and so on, whereby ignoring the

important differentiation of recognition of indigenous rights and denying the history of colonisation. Yeah, that is exactly the challenge.

And when facing the issue what we do is although still -- we are still fighting for it, so I wouldn't say it's a success, but still, the important thing is keep continue fighting for it, continue raising the issue at wherever possible in all the levels, raise awareness. And, yeah, also in solidarity with others. So there are other indigenous groups facing similar problem in different countries. So wherever possible to organise something together with them, and also at the regional level, international level in addressing all those countries.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Thank you Daisuke. You raise a really good point about how is this advocacy at an international level received at the national level, so what -- yeah, have you had cut-through after people have presented internationally to the United Nations when they have returned home, have you seen a change in legislation or policy as a result of the international work?

>>MR SHIRANE: Yes, that's -- I wouldn't say a lot, but there are certainly good practises and success stories there. And we also put a lot of importance on that phase. So through capacity building training in facilitation and technical assistance, we can quite -- almost in all cases we succeed in delivering the voice from the ground to the UN level. And we are really experienced to facilitate interaction between those group with the UN bodies in Geneva or in New York, and in many cases we also succeed to get the recommendations from those UN bodies, the recommendations we want based on the facts and the information we provide, but then that's exactly the phase we really work super hard to, how to bring back the results from the international level to the national level, and how to make it into concrete change on the ground.

And again, depending on the issue, there are some cases, for example, that led to changing the legislation. For example, if there were discriminatory law at the national level, we could -- I can't remember which country it was, but, yeah, so the utilisation of UN system could lead to the change or repeat of such laws. And also change in the practice policies, for example FGM was one issue raised by the civil society and that led to the recommendations given by, I think it was Human Rights Committee.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Excellent.

>>MR SHIRANE: And that led to the prohibition of FGM in that country concerned through law and policy.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Excellent.

>>MR SHIRANE: Yeah, so these are some of the examples.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Excellent, thank you very much Daisuke. It is good to hear about those tangible outcomes, but I know it is a difficult path, so I appreciate your expertise on this.

There are several questions for you, Daisuke, so please keep up and I hope your energy is okay, I know it's very early where you are tuning in from. And I'll try and get through as many questions as possible.

But what I would love to say right now is we'd love to get your contact details because several of our listeners are really interested in how they can participate in the processes. And perhaps one way we can support that is by getting your contact details and you may be able to help people to initiate participation in the mechanism. So if you could share that at some stage if you are willing we'd be much appreciated. I'll go back to the questions now.

One from -- here's a really good question actually. There's several really good questions. I'll ask this one. "How do you keep yourself well while doing this work so you can continue to work in these spaces?"

>>MR SHIRANE: Good question. Well, yeah, that's quite a challenge for me personally, and especially because in the last years I have been also dealing with the situation in Myanmar, and also some of the colleagues I work with are facing severe and real risk of reprisals and violence and also arrest and so on, and yeah, it's sometimes very challenging also mentally.

What keeps me going is to grasp the opportunity whenever, wherever possible to visit the country, meet the people in person, face-to-face, and you know, be connected with them. You know, since the UN is sitting in Geneva in a conference room or in New York, it is very distant and I myself cannot help or even represent the voice of the people on the ground. So that's where we always stress that it's not me or us raising the issue, this is the voice of the people there, and we are helping them.

In order to do so, it's also very important for me personally to know them personally, and yeah, if I visit the country, the village, the society and see how they live and what the issues they are facing, that connects me more or closer to them and become friends and then, of course, if it's your friends who is facing problems then you want to help more and do more as much as you can, yeah, probably. But it's still very challenging.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Thank you and a really good question so thank you for posing that. And I do want to alert you to the comment that Mereana's made in the chat that to continue the discussions on this topic, please go to the Tiriti-Based Futures Facebook page and let's start getting people together to initiate conversations and talk further about drawing on these UN mechanisms. I think it's really important, yeah. Perhaps we've started something now and,

along with Daisuke's expertise, we can continue some good work here together. And also the Instagram link as well, please go there.

The next question, aah, this is a good question, and perhaps I think you may have touched on this already, but we'll go there again. "There are some multiple minority populations, for example, minority race, plus disability, plus sexual orientation. Can they submit a request to all the channels, or one request; what is the best way for them to put forward their concerns to get the most impact?"

>>MR SHIRANE: As many as possible. And it's a very --

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Have you had some experience supporting those types of submissions and from your experience what has been the most impactful?

>>MR SHIRANE: Yeah, we have done that in some cases, and it's important to stress on intersectionality of human rights in international human rights laws. It's not one or another, but things are intersecting. And issues are also intersecting. There are factors that address -- that affects rights of the people and individuals in a cross-cutting way.

For example, there are -- of course when we work for the rights of indigenous peoples, the rights of indigenous people as a collective is one thing, but we often -- we pay particular attention to the situation of minorities within that group, for example in one community there are, of course, women who might be discriminated against within the community by the men in that society or that group, while the community itself might be discriminated against within the larger society in the country, but still within that group doesn't mean that there is no discrimination.

So we pay really particular attention to those minority within the minority, and vulnerable groups, so to speak. So it can be children, women, you know, persons with disabilities, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc, etc. And there might be also, you know, within a minority group there might be an individual, a child suffering from discrimination based on their age, their identity, their disability, you know, all the combination.

So in that case, for example, we can raise it of course with the Committee on the Rights of the Child, but also if it includes gender discrimination or violence against women, then we can raise it also with CEDAW, and all those we can raise with ICCPR Committee, Human Rights Committee, and also Committee on the Economic Social and Cultural Rights, and if it involves any discrimination based on ethnicity or social origin, national origin etc, we can raise it with CERD.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Excellent answer, yeah.

>>MR SHIRANE: Yeah, we look at all those issues and the needs, and identify which bodies we can approach, and then we approach as many as possible.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Excellent, thank you so much, Daisuke. I think that sort of gives us some insight into your expertise advocating for these groups at the international level. And I'm just going to request to Mereana, our moderator, if you could just copy all of these questions in case we're not able to answer them all, and perhaps we can send them to Daisuke to provide a response at a later stage, or on the Facebook page, thank you so much Mereana. My apologies in advance, Daisuke, for requesting further support from you.

I'll go to the next question now. A question from Tess McIntyre. "In what ways can regular citizens interact with the UN processes to disrupt racism and hold governments to account for systemic failings that impact indigenous peoples and other people affected by systemic racism?"

>>MR SHIRANE: Can you repeat the first part?

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Sure. "In what ways can regular citizens interact with the UN processes to disrupt racism and hold Governments to account for systemic failings?"

>>MR SHIRANE: Okay. In that case the best way is to approach the treaty bodies, because the treaty bodies are the ones, more legal body of the UN system. It is treaty-based bodies consisting of experts, independent experts elected by State parties and that's where you can raise the issue, and the highest authority of international law is that treaty body can assess the situation based on the facts and the information provided and they will identify, or determine whether there is a violation or not. If violation the State party has the obligation to address it through legislative, administrative changes and any other necessary measures.

And one of the advantage for approaching treaty bodies, is you don't need any qualification. So if anyone can submit reports, of course reports should be, you know, fact-based and concrete, and provide evidence of violations of human rights.

On the other hand, if you want to approach Human Rights Council, which is more political body consisting of delegation of all UN member states, that's where you might not get accountability. But that's where you can raise awareness at the international community that this issue is happening in this country, this law is existing, this system is existing, we have to address it, so that all the other member states of the UN are aware of that problem and you might get some support from other countries, or you might find potential partners and so on, so on.

With the treaty bodies you can really go for -- to determine whether it is violation of international human rights law, and if so what kind of actions must be taken, and then treaty

body can give a recommendation to the State party; and one important fact here is, all State parties are obliged to implement all recommendations issued by the treaty bodies. There is no option to reject or, you know, say no. The recommendations issued by treaty bodies is must, that's the obligation of a State party as State party to that UN treaty.

So the recommendations of treaty bodies are the obligation to, while, for example, UPR, recommendations issued by other UN member states under the UPR, the country under the review can basically choose which one to accept and which one not to accept. So it's a picking kind of practice. But with treaty bodies there is no such option.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Excellent, thank you very much. And it's interesting to learn more about what the Human Rights Council can do and can't, but also how you can use that mechanism to raise awareness and other countries may pick up on that, so that's a really important point that you make.

Madoka Takemoto has asked several questions, so thank you very much for all your queries and the information you're sharing in the chat. The question here is, do you listen to each Buraku people or through organisations such as Buraku Kaihō Dōmei?

>>MR SHIRANE: Both. Of course if you have organisation that has certain collective movement in this you're making in and might have further reach out among the community, but doesn't mean that we don't listen to the others. There are also Buraku individuals who is not part of the organisation who might also be facing similar but different issues. That individual might be facing discrimination based on his or her region; but as I said before, she or he might be facing discrimination based on other factors, or any other challenges in his or her life as human being.

So for us it's important to listen to anyone, and the needs of one particular individual might have, although even if it's just only one person, it is important to hear that voice, because we are working for minorities and, you know, there can be always a minority within a group.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Thanks Daisuke. I'll go to the next question, but before that I just want to acknowledge the comments in the chat. Thank you everyone for interacting and sharing your expertise and your thoughts. And Etian(?) raises the point that the UN human rights system can be limiting because it is based on states and the sovereignty of states, and often sidelines indigenous peoples.

And that actually makes me think about some of the work that indigenous -- land rights defenders here and when they have advocated at the UN level, but they're ensuring that when they come home they're doing a lot more work here, and not just leaving it as an

issue that sits in a document at the UN CERD, for example. So I agree, I think that they can be limited and so it is one mechanism as part of a group of advocacy tools that are needed to draw on.

I'll go to another question. This one is "I'm unsure if this is relevant to your expertise, however could you give some context and history in pushing for autonomy for Ainu people?"

>>MR SHIRANE: Autonomy for Ainu people, I'm not sure what I can say on that. But we also work with Ainu people, not all of them, but some of them who are willing to utilise UN system for their rights and ask for our help, and in that sense we -- I'm not the one, you know, saying what should be done for autonomy of Ainu people, but we are the ones who just helping them to deliver their needs and their voices to the UN. Yeah, so and then I must also acknowledge there are quite a difference among the Ainu people themselves. Some might be calling for independence, some might be, you know, okay with what is now, but of course many of them the important thing is recognition as indigenous.

But that's also the difficulty lies when you go back to Japan. The government, to some extent, recognise the Ainu is indigenous, but in practice it fell short of, you know, protecting their rights as indigenous peoples as enshrining the international instruments. So if they are indigenous, the government of Japan must also protect their rights to the land territory, language, culture and so on so on. But so far in practice I could only see that their cultural rights only certain measures, some measures are taken by Japan to protect their cultural rights or cultural identity, but nothing, close to nothing is done to recognise and protect other rights of Ainu people as indigenous people.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Thank you. Another question now, "are there any resources, bodies or organisations, you can recommend that practically support New Zealand businesses to disrupt racism within their own organisations or communities?" This person said they've found that many organisations commit to combatting racism but struggle with having access to support, or are not quite sure how to put this into effect.

>>MR SHIRANE: It, again, depends on what you want to do, but if you want to interact with the UN system, there are organisations based in Geneva mostly that helps and facilitates interaction between civil society and the treaty body. So, for example, for ICCPR there is a Centre For Civil and Political Rights, and for CDOR there is another organisation based in Malaysia, and for rights of the child there is Child Rights Connect. So they are forming so-called treaty body network, and if you are planning to approach treaty bodies, those

organisations are best placed to, you know, help you technically, capacity building, explaining the procedure and might be able to also even assist your work.

Fund-raising is another issue, so yeah. It's also a challenge for us to raise funds to carry out all these activities. New Zealand might be a destination of so many funds, but if it's about the indigenous rights, there is UN voluntary fund, and there are some other international regional funding possibilities for indigenous peoples. There might be also other funding opportunities for minority or sexual orientation, gender identity groups etc, etc. So, well, yeah, I cannot name any organisation for funding, but that's another possibility to approach different donors or diplomatic missions.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Thanks Daisuke, I've just put a note in the comments that we will put up some of these links to the voluntary fund and to some of the treaty bodies that you have mentioned today.

I'll move now to a really important question from Itie(?). "Kia ora Daisuke, how do you ensure that in your advocacy you are being an ally or the partner with the groups you represent rather than a saviour figure for them?"

>>MR SHIRANE: The last part sorry?

>>RINGA HĀPAI: How do you ensure you're an ally rather than the saviour, does that make sense? Rather than -- yeah, more of a support, how do you ensure that you are there to support, not sort of be the hero I guess is what they are asking, or what they are querying.

>>MR SHIRANE: Well, basically throughout the process I wouldn't go in front, I remain in the background, and I'm not drafting the report. If they come to me asking for, you know, whether we should improve the text, I might give advice, but it's merely suggestions, it's up to them to decide which suggestions of mine to take up or not. And we only facilitate, we are not the one owning the advocacy. The people on the ground are the one owning, initiating the action and owns that whole initiative, and we were the ones who support it, facilitate. So we wouldn't move or do much if there is no owner of the initiative in the country.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Thanks Daisuke. I'll move now to Vanitha's question about religion, but please take note of the comments everyone. Hermione has let us know about the work of the Human Rights Commission as well as the Iwi Chairs Forum. There are a series of hui that are going on at the moment on the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People. So please get in touch with the Human Rights Commission if you want to know more about that.

And I am aware that we are close to finishing the session. I'll try and get through a couple more questions. However, any questions we don't get to, we will follow-up with Daisuke and find a way to get the responses back to you.

So now to Vanitha's question on religion. So Vanitha is stating that "religion is often used as a way to discriminate people regardless of whether they are indigenous or not or a minority within a minority. How do you navigate this given how sensitive religion is in a lot of countries that you work in?"

>>MR SHIRANE: We approach them quite legally referring to the international human rights law article provisions. And it's very true that in many societies there are so many human rights violations happening in the name of the religion, either might be a discrimination against certain groups or violence against women, harmful practice, early marriage, forced marriage, etc, etc. And the important aspect we always stress when dealing with that issue is that in some cases those groups committing the violation claim "this is my freedom of religion, religion must be protected" and so on.

But article 18 of the ICCPR, which protects freedom of religion, clearly states that that freedom to manifest own religion can be limited in order for certain purposes. For example, the security and also for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. So freedom of religion cannot be used as a ground to violate others' rights and freedoms. That's one thing.

And the international human rights law protects the rights of individuals to freedom of religion, but it does not protect the religion. So it's not the religion we are protecting, but it's the individual's rights. And if religion is used, or being the sole cause of the violation of anyone's human rights, that is the human rights of that individual to be protected, not the religion.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Thank you Daisuke. I understand that those are serious concerns, Vanitha, when it comes to religion and the impact that may have on groups and countries around the world. Thank you for your pātai.

Joseph has a question, and this is more a practical one. "How can individuals make submissions, or can individuals make submissions, or do you do it on behalf of a group to the treaty bodies?" How do you do that, and perhaps this might just be about sending some links to information, but I'll pass that over to you, Daisuke.

>>MR SHIRANE: Yes, any individual can submit reports to the treaty bodies. Just as a comparison, for Human Rights Council-related, Human Rights Council and its bodies, you have to have special UN status as an organisation to interact, participate in the process. But

for treaty bodies, you don't have to have any such qualification or status, anyone can submit.

But the important fact to note is if you submit report as an organisation, or jointly as many individuals as possible and as many organisations as possible as collective voice of your country, the power of the report is much stronger than, you know, just one person submitting a report. Yeah, so that's one factor you might need to consider.

But of course if you want to submit on your own, you can do so, but your report, your voice might have more impact if your report is submitted with others as collective.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Thank you Daisuke. We've actually managed to get through all of the questions that have been posed in the Q&A, there are a couple of other comments in the chat. One is from Hermione that there are, as I mentioned, there is hui that are going on at the moment in Aotearoa New Zealand about the United Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People, and we will be in touch to find out more about that and how our listeners can participate in that.

And Stella has posed a question about "what is the best way to get in touch with the treaty bodies?" And if you could make the answer quick and then I can wrap up so we don't get cut off. Over to you, Daisuke.

>>MR SHIRANE: Treaty bodies, you can visit the UN website. Each treaty body has own website and it has own secretariat, or treaty body networks. If you Google TBNET or treaty body network -- let me quickly check whether I can find the link, I can't -- here, it has a Facebook page. I'll send it in the link. This is the treaty body network. So you can see there the list of organisations working parts of that. And each organisation has websites and contact address too.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Fantastic. Much appreciated for that information, arigato. Again, I just want to -- I'll wrap up now, thank you so much Daisuke, thank you to all our listeners, thank you to our moderators, and thank you to all our partners. Please listen in until Monday of this conference and you can hear a marathon on our Pecha Kucha presentations from a range of students. And a quick karakia for us to close. (Closing karakia).

>>MR SHIRANE: Thank you.