



An Islands Initiative to  
For the Promotion & Protection of  
International Human Rights in the Pacific

Oceania Human Rights

## **Papua New Guinea**

**39<sup>th</sup> Session**

**October/November 2021**

### **Introduction**

The stakeholder submission was born out of bold conversations at a Business and Human Rights program held during a country visit in November 2019. The initial country visit provided important background to better understand human rights reality and the research continued with civil society consultations as well as remote human rights weekly conversations with communities across Papua New Guinea in preparation of the UPR. For one month leading up to the stakeholder submission, constant communication with directly impacted peoples and community associations provided testimony regarding human rights violations as well as shared recommendations to improve human rights in the Pacific Islands. Papua New Guinea NGOs shared specific situations requiring a commitment to realize human rights and result in positive public policy to achieve the 2030 Agenda and articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Oceania Human Rights continued the conversation with rainbow of human rights NGOs highlighting the most imminent issues to be included during the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of the UPR. Oceania Human Rights is committed to recommendations that can contribute to positive social change rooted in Pacific culture and universal human rights.

### **Core Human Rights Concerns & Challenges**

#### **Business and Human Rights**

A systemic challenge is the role of corporations impacting communities across the provinces of Papua New Guinea. Ok Tedi, Panguna, Porgera have all been documented with negative impacts to the people and natural environment. The biodiversity of PNG is at stake. Also based on the latest data all forms of development models are eroding the national human rights movement. From the activities in the ocean with sandmining and controversial deep sea bed mining to palm oil plantations and gold mining in the highlands, there is a general

lack of respect for human rights law including Free, Prior and Informed Consent.

PNG must commit and create a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights beginning with inclusive consultations with directly impacted peoples and community associations.

## **Climate Justice**

PNG is facing increased challenges due to climate change. Rising sea levels are impacting many economic, social and cultural rights including the right to self-determination, water, food, and health. There are also increased severe weather events that are detrimental to the well-being of the people of PNG. A human rights based approach to adaptation and mitigation will provide path forward for Pacific Islands States.

PNG is vulnerable to the climate crisis. PNG is committed to the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda. PNG must adopt a human rights based approach involving the people in the decision-making process for both international instruments in the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs) for the upcoming UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties in Glasgow in 2021 and Voluntary National Review (VNR) in future High Level Political Forums.

While PNG contributes only slightly to carbon, the government must decarbonize its economy and commit to adaptation and mitigation campaigns across the country. PNG must protect its natural resources. The Sepik river must remain pristine and accessible to the people depending on it for their livelihood.

PNG partners with regional institutions of higher education to develop a national education curriculum to teach youth about climate crisis and prepare future generations for careers in climate justice. PNG also offer university courses and degrees teaching about being agents of social change for climate crisis.

PNG should support traditional voyaging canoes and their programs to share examples of adaptation among islands to thrive during the current climate crisis so will be available as floating classrooms and also to assist with aid during extreme weather facing Pacific Islands States.

## **Right to a Clean, Healthy Environment, including Right to Water & Sanitation**

Water is a human right. All people of PNG must have right to clean, healthy environment. There must be greater priority for accessibility to clean water. Children and families must be a priority in development. The UN SDGs specifically #6 must be priority in public planning.

### **International Human Rights Instrument Ratification & Implementation in National Framework for Fundamental Freedoms**

PNG must uphold international human rights instruments and undertake national action to ratify the core international human rights treaties.

PNG can improve its international human rights record by immediate ratification of the remaining covenants and conventions beginning with the International Covenant on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the core 9 human rights instruments. Upon ratification, PNG must prepare its first report before the 4<sup>th</sup> cycle of the UPR. PNG should also ratify the Optional Protocols of each international human rights instrument providing for individual petitions to the committees.

### **PNG Create a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) Rooted in Paris Principles**

For multiple decades, the people have requested a NHRI and there have been actions to draft legislation. However, no NHRI exists to date. There must be the creation of a NHRI before the 4<sup>th</sup> cycle with a broad mandate to cover business and human rights as well as emerging challenges including climate crisis. The NHRI must strive to be fully independent.

### **Papua New Guinea Be a Leader in Region to Promote and Protect Human Rights**

PNG must exercise leadership and promote a regional human rights instrument to close the gap between the global and on the ground in the islands. PNG should host a regional human rights meeting to develop a regional human rights commission and eventual court.

### **Human Rights Education in PNG**

PNG must ensure human rights education from kindergarten to university curriculum. There must be amendments to current curriculum so students learn about their rights.

PNG should partner with regional universities in the Pacific to host teacher trainings and national consultations to create a National Action Plan for human rights education.

Human Rights Education must be multidisciplinary covering sustainable development, climate justice and international human rights ensuring equality and equity.

### **Domestic Violence and Abuse of Women & Children**

Too many women face domestic violence. There is little accountability for the actions of abuse.

Regarding domestic violence and corporal punishment, there must be action beyond the studies. PNG must allocate resources to local and regional NGOs committed to a human rights based approach to combat all forms of family violence.

### **Decriminalization of Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity and Protection for LGBTQIA+ Rights**

Systemic discrimination denies basic dignity to SOGI community in PNG. Transgender people still face harassment and painful discrimination. The stigma toward transgender must be challenged through vigorous education programs.

PNG must combat discrimination and promote human rights education in all curriculum as well as popular education campaign

### **Peoples With Albinism Deserve Respect & Dignity**

In PNG, peoples with albinism face discrimination and abuse among society. The PNG government should issue an invitation to the Independent Expert to visit and implement the recommendations to realize human rights for all peoples with albinism.

## **Bougainville & The Right to Self-Determination**

PNG recently held a referendum and must abide by the political will of the people. PNG should adopt a holistic human rights approach for reconciliation and self-determination.

PNG should invite relevant UN special procedures to visit and share recommendations to assist in preventing any future conflict.

For more information and to create initiatives together to realize human rights please contact [joshuacooperhawaii@gmail.com](mailto:joshuacooperhawaii@gmail.com)