**Speak Up-Kōrerotia**

**Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) at 75**

**19 December 2023**

**Speaker 1**

This program was first broadcast on Canterbury's Access Media station, Plains FM, and was made with the assistance of New Zealand On Air.

Coming up next, conversations on human rights with Speak Up-Kōrerotia, here on Plains FM.

**Sally**

E ngā mana,

E ngā reo,

E ngā hau e whā

Tēnā koutou katoa

Nau mai ki tēnei hōtaka, Speak Up-Kōrerotia.

Tune in as our guests ‘speak up’, sharing their unique and powerful experiences and opinions and may you also be inspired to speak up when the moment is right.

Today, 10 December, 2023, marks 75 years since the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This document was drafted by the United Nations in response to the atrocities of World War Two, and sets out fundamental human rights that should be universally protected. The document incorporates civil and political rights such as the right to life, the right to association, free speech, privacy, freedom from discrimination, as well as economic, social and cultural rights which include rights like the right to social security, to health, to education, to food and water.

There has been critique of the UDHR, particularly from theorists and practitioners who view the document as largely Eurocentric, and argue that a universal understanding of human rights fails to adequately recognise the plurality of political, cultural and religious interpretations of what it means to be human. Yet nonetheless, the UDHR remains the cornerstone global reference point for human rights. It has been translated into more than 500 languages and has been referenced in the preambles of more than 70 subsequent human rights treaties and conventions. Its impact on human rights around the world has been undeniably immense.

And to commemorate 75 years of this milestone document, Speak Up-Kōrerotia has put together a special show. We put out a call for contributions, inviting people to share their thoughts on human rights. There was no particular brief associated with this invitation, other than to suggest people reflect on what human rights mean to them personally, or to talk about human rights issues at the local or global level that are important to them. We hear their contributions exactly as they were submitted; note that they represent the views and stories of the individuals who submitted them, not necessarily Speak Up-Kōrerotia.

What you'll notice as you listen to the various contributions is how differently people have approached the topic. The contributors talk about diverse human rights and human rights groups including tangata whenua, people with disabilities, women, children, men, the rainbow community, migrants and refugees. They also reflect on a range of human rights issues here in Aotearoa and abroad, celebrating some of the incredible human rights wins we've seen over the last 75 years, but also acknowledging the ongoing challenges and barriers to achieving equality and equity.

And yet, despite the different issues and groups people discuss, there are some core underlying themes that can be traced through many of the contributions. These themes include the impact of someone's individual situation on the understanding of human rights; the need to treat each other well in order to lift up the rights of all, and especially of minorities; the need to raise our voice and call out injustice; and, the simple fact that upholding someone's rights does not come at the expense of someone else's rights, but rather we all benefit when the rights of minorities are respected. Sadly, one other reflection that can be found in many of the contributions was an acknowledgement that conflict and the rise of right-wing populism have in recent times led to the withdrawal or denial of human rights around the world.

So as we get into our show, I'll leave you with this whakataukī, which seems pertinent in light of today's topic: He aha te mea nui o tea o? He tangata, he tangata, he tangata. What is the most important thing in the world? It is people. It is people. It is people.

**Fiona**

Ko Fiona tōku ingoa. Hello, I'm Fiona. I'm an artist, a mother, and day-to-day I work in a People and Culture team.

Human rights. What are human rights? Such an interesting kōrero. This really should be a simple subject, like equal rights for everyone, but it isn't. I've been thinking about it for a few days now, and – this might be a bit of a brain dump – but here we go. I think human rights is having respect for one another, despite our differences; freedom from discrimination, no matter your race, religion, gender, age, ethnic background, disability, sex, basically anything which could diminish or discriminate against others. It's about being accepted.

Here in New Zealand, well, Europeans are still the majority. We have a broad range of ethnicities which share this land. My family are immigrants. We came here in the ‘90s for an adventure and a better life. It was just for a visit initially, but we stayed. Migrants from India, the Philippines and China have contributed to the population growth in Aotearoa in the last few years. I see our country as being able to cohabit with many cultures, adding to the richness and value. We need to embrace what others bring and not be divided. And respect the people of our land, the tangata whenua, the hosts, one might say of this country, Māori.

I guess there’s human rights, well, the definition at least, and then there's upholding human rights in practice, which I think we as human beings could definitely do better at at times. I feel so lucky to have grown up here in Aotearoa, Land of the Long White Cloud, a beautiful country with beautiful people. My family was embraced with open arms. It's much friendlier than other countries I've travelled to. And I just hope that we don't lose it.

There’s this human vulnerability and consideration for others who at times don't have a voice for themselves that needs to be considered when it comes to human rights. I think of all that's happening in the world at present: the Russian invasion in the Ukraine; the Israel and Gaza conflict – this brings me to tears, seeing children injured and dying, having young children myself really breaks my heart, it's just not right. I think of our neighbours in Australia and its First Nations people whose voice was silenced recently, again with a ‘No’ vote. The undercurrent of racism in our recent elections, which has rippled into protest and fear of losing language, Te Tiriti and mana. Sadly, I don't see humans being respected or having equal rights.

We as fellow human beings need to speak up and be willing to help others. There's so much which could divide us, but we're better together. It's about fairness, compassion and empathy and know the world is not always fair. But little gestures can make big impacts. If you're new somewhere in a new country or a new city, having someone say a few kind words, acknowledging you, accepting you, asking you about yourself can make a really big difference. Sometimes these small things, they have big ripples. I guess in my mind it's about common decency, consideration for others. I feel a real need for human compassion in present times, and connection. We're missing that connection. I'm really hopeful for a positive future for our tamariki here in Aotearoa and beyond. All humans have to be kind to one another. And thank you for listening to my thoughts on this. Kia ora.

**Nathaniel**

My name is Nathaniel Herz Edinger and I'm a community organiser for the Living Wage movement. So for me, the most significant human rights in my life at the moment that I've been thinking about is Article 16, Paragraph 3, which states that the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society in the state. So I'm getting married in January and thinking about my future and thinking about starting a family and the responsibility that entails for me, and then also how that changes my relationship with with my community and with my society.

And I think it's really important that Universal Declaration of Human Rights is talking about the family as a unit and not just individuals because to me, this is about recognising that we don't just exist in a vacuum and that that responsibility that's talked about, you know, the the fundamental group unit of society is entitled to protection by society in the state. That it's not just about making sure that we all, as individuals can go about that life unimpeded, but actually that we flourish in our family groups.

So on a on a local level, I suppose thinking about that is all of the ways in which families in New Zealand are or aren't receiving that protection that they're entitled to. I mean, we have thousands of children in New Zealand who are homeless, whose parents don't earn enough money to pay the rent or feed them healthy food. And so often we when we talk about rights, what we hear the most often, I think is about property rights, you know, the rights of landlords to charge whatever they want, for rent, to receive, you know, certain tax benefits or not have to pay, you know, most recently interest deductibility of loans. And I think that it's really important to remember that there is a human right that exists, which is for the family to be protected by society, and that actually precedes the rights of property that individuals have.

On a global level, I think I would like to stick to this theme of family and think about how a family is not just the nuclear family that we sort of start to traditionally think of it as, you know, a Western society of, you know, two parents and 2.4 children. It's actually an ongoing legacy of your children, your grandchildren, their grandchildren. Yeah. And so often when we're talking about the biggest human rights issue, global warming, the climate crisis that exists we think it's possible in some way to weigh up possible inconveniences in the present against the effect of on the future, as if the future is removed from us and something that's not going to affect us. But that for me, I feel like it's going to affect me in the sense it's going to affect my family so deeply. And I have a right to expect that my family will be protected. Not just my children but my grandchildren, but for posterity.

**Prudence**

Tēnā koutou katoa. Ko te Kaihautū Tika Hauātanga me te Kāhui Tika Tangata o Aotearoa ahau. Ko Prudence Walker tōku ingoa. Kia ora, I'm Prudence and I’m the Disability Rights Commissioner for the Kāhui Tika Tangata New Zealand Human rights Commission.

Human rights are rights that we have because we're all human – things like the right to an adequate standard of living, to justice, to nationality, to peaceful assembly, to equal pay and to education, regardless of who we are. As a young person, I noticed that some people did not just enjoy these things on an equal basis with others, and that some people were discriminated against. Later, I experienced life as a disabled person and found that there were barriers to me accessing many of the things that I had a right to, like housing that is accessible, education that considers my needs, or just being able to get around the area where I live.

Through my work, I've heard from Māori, tangata whaikaha Māori, disabled people, people who are migrants, and heard their experience where their rights have not been upheld or realised. As a country, we often pride ourselves on being high achievers who have achieved some good things in terms of human rights, such as the passing of the Marriage Equality Bill, the announcement of support of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the signing of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, something which Aotearoa played a key role in. However, we must continue to make progress on the realisation of these and of all matters of human rights. So in marking 75 years since the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it's a chance for us all to reflect on the progress that has been made, the progress that is still needed, and the role that we can all play in that. Mā te wā

**Iain**

My name is Iain Fergusson. I'm a men's rights activist, and I just want to reflect a little bit on the 75 years since the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I think one of the most important aspects of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to me was the recognition that men and women have the same rights, they have equal rights, and, human rights are universal.

What I've seen over the development of human rights is that while women's rights have been increasingly recognised and women are seen as rights holders, men's rights and their right to be treated equally and fairly has not had the same focus, and as a result, when human rights violations affect men because they are men – for example, when men are discriminated against; some examples of that would be that we have laws that explicitly discriminate against men – when those things happen, they are not treated equally with similar issues for women. One comparison would be how we treat a female genital cutting and male genital cutting. Male genital cutting is excused for, religious and cultural reasons and that is explicitly denied when it comes to female genital cutting. So this is still a double standard about how we treat the human rights of men and boys and the human rights of women and girls.

I have seen some progress, recently, for example, Richard Reeves speaking at the He For She event put up some issues for men and boys and made the point that we can actually do two things at once. We can address the human rights issues of women and girls, and the human rights issues of men and boys. I think that we are on the beginning of more focus on the human rights of men and boys, which I'm pleased about, in addition, and complimenting the human rights issues faced by women and girls. So that's my reflections on 75 years of Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Thanks very much.

**Shasha**

Hi everyone. My name is Shasha and I work as a Spark risk analyst in Christchurch. So 10 December this year marks 75 years since the signing of Universal Declaration of Human Rights. So I'm going to be talking about human rights just a little bit on how I view it personally and how I view it globally.

So what do human rights personally means to me? Personally, it means that having access to basic needs such as water, health care and education, because to have a valuable quality life, kids need education. And in order to have like a very healthy life, you need water and you need access to the healthcare system. And the other thing is that having a safe place to be a complete person, as you are, you might be practising Islam and you are not allowed to practice Islam. Or you might be, you might be a Christian, but you're not allowed to practice Christianity. So I think having a safe place to be a complete person as you are, means that you have human rights. And that's a basic thing that we need to practice what we believe in.

And why do I have this kind of like perspective is because I am from an economic major. So I studied economics where I learned about the Development Goals by the United Nation so to that cause I feel like human rights physically you do need those things such as water, health care, education, just to lead a very quality life because if you don't have those things, you're not the whole nation is not going to be developed. And for me, that is actually a basic human right and as a personal but, in a personal experience, I work as a retail person at Spark. I started out as a retail, and my basic human rights is that I want it to be respected of who I am and what I actually do, not because of what I wear and what religion that I believe in.

And human rights at the local level is that what I do want at the local level is that is to treat me the same as you would treat your friends. So that's my basic human rights and allow me to practice my religion and wear things that I want to wear, because I might be wearing like full cover but that doesn't mean that I don't respect you as a person. I do respect you as a person. It's just that my human rights means that I need to be my whole, complete self, and I need to practice what I believe in, especially in my religion. And what is an important human rights issue, in my opinion, is that the freedom to believe in access to basic necessities for a decent life.

And the human right at a global issue level is that that and that I can think of right now is is about the Palestinian war, right now where, everyone needs to be aware of it. Because I'm a practising Muslim myself and then knowing that my brothers and my sisters got cut off from electricity, from, from getting the basic things like water and they can't even learn anything. So that just makes me sad, that I can have my human rights here in New Zealand, but somehow they won't be able to enjoy human rights in their own country. And those are the challenges that I face right now, because sometimes there is a sense of superiority and racism that prevents us from getting our human rights in place. So that's all for me. Thank you.

**Anonymous**

I grew up as a child from a relatively wealthy New Zealand European family, strongly religious. My upbringing from the outside appeared wholesome. In reality, it was controlling and abusive: what I wore, ate, said, my location and my personal space were all heavily monitored. I could not speak on the phone without my parents listening. They were allowed access to my bedroom at all times. The list goes on. From a very young age, even my body was not my own. Children are responsible for the emotions of the adults around them. Women were often held responsible for the sexual behaviour of men. My mother was also told what to think, say, wear, how to behave, while enforcing so many inappropriate and harsh boundaries on her children. She also had concerningly limited rights.

My environment influenced my interests. I felt a deep concern for other children and difficult situations, usually far worse situations. Since my early primary school years, I have followed both the progress – at times frustratingly slow; and in some cases, the complete lack of progress – in children and women's rights to autonomy, especially the exploitation of young girls, along with religious control. The change in purity culture in a number of religious environments since this time is a relief. I do not wish this type of indoctrination, fear, guilt and restriction to ever be placed on another young person. It has a long-term effect. For this, among other reasons, I am no longer a member of the church.

Notable political progress that comes to mind includes the prioritisation of a Children's Commissioner, education about consent and personal boundaries in schools, the broadening of sex education, children's preferences being taken into account in family court environments, and of course the Anti-Smacking Bill, to name a few. Alongside this is changing parenting views in New Zealand, with children being viewed more as their own person instead of an extension of the parents, is, in my view, important progress.

I am dismayed and frustrated when I hear people bemused by children being allowed autonomy, opinions, participation or a point of view, when I hear phrases such as “That kid needs a jolly good spanking”. It hurts my heart, the heart of small girl, with its memories of being treated this way and worse, still feel so close. My child-like logic forget that not everyone has had my experience or has been damaged by these views and behaviours and the same way that I have. When I hear of engaged grandparents choosing to grapple with these concepts for the sake of their children and grandchildren, I'm encouraged. When I am lucky enough to talk to some of our incredible educators, I am so inspired. I'm only the beginning of understanding these issues, I still not have years of growing and learning and understanding in this area. I know that we are all at different stages, but when I hear children being spoken to in a respectful manner, that takes into account the ownership of their personhood, immense value, and vast gifts they have to offer, it gives me hope for the future, the future of our children, and the future of other little girls just like me.

**Tyron**

Mauriora ki a tātou. Ko wai te mihi o tēnei māngai te MORE HERE Tēnā koutou kaota, ko Tyron Love tēnei.

Well, thinking about human rights and what human rights mean to me personally: as an educator, as a teacher at the University of Canterbury, I think about human rights in the context of ethical theories and thinking about, how it is that societies draw down particular rights and extrapolate from society a certain number of rights. And then thinking about the Universal Declaration, thinking about those rights and a list of rights, that's one way of thinking about, rights or thinking about human rights. Sometimes in classes we – and classes I'm taking are around management and around communication – we talk about human rights in the context of other theories as well. So thinking about, say utility, utilitarianism and other consequentialist theories, like egoism, but also theories like virtue ethics, in trying to make sense of different ways of thinking about ethics and morals and society. So that's one way of thinking about, what I think about, human rights.

I think primarily, my interest in rights stems from my whānau, the Love whānau in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington but who whakapapa back to Taranaki. When I was growing up, I would not so much probably listen into conversations around indigenous rights but I certainly saw family members who were engaged in conversations around indigenous rights. And, particularly now for me, when I think about theory and I think about indigenous rights, I think that indigenous rights are primarily attached to land rights, and that indigenous people’s dignity is attached primarily to land rights. I think land can be seen as an institution and upholding the mana of that institution of land and people's connection to land, that's really important. I think it's something that we should be focusing more on. And I suppose when we look around the world at the moment and we think about conflicts, over time, but also at the moment, when we think about Gaza, I think about Ukraine and other parts of the world, it seems that a lot of conflict and human rights violations are brought about over disputes around land. So if we can sort out some of the issues around land and people's connections and rights to land and lands, then maybe we'll be going some way to upholding people's basic human rights. So I think when I think human rights, I think indigenous rights, people's rights to lands. Yeah.

**Anonymous**

Kia ora. What do humans rights mean to me? I feel like is the right to be human. To be respected. To be embraced for who you are and where you come from, including your culture, your background in how you identify and relate as a person. So when any of that is stripped away from us, I feel it's a violation to our human rights. And I feel I've developed this sense of these meanings for myself through my life, through what I have experienced, as a child growing up in a country where there was a dictatorship, and also my own observations from living in different countries and cultures. Thankfully, through my life where I've experienced, you know, different ways of how the people is treated, how rules kind of change in different places and, yeah, basically, for me, it means the right to be human, the right to be yourself, the right to be respected.

And, in terms of, I guess I know the narrative I could include in terms of my own observations, one thing that pops to my mind, from growing up, is the right to to have your voice heard and, coming from a country where there was a dictatorship, as I mentioned before, the right, the voice of people whenever there was a voice that was controversial to that regime, obviously that was not allowed. It was, you know, it was shut; their voices were just shut. So that was obviously a horrible part of the dictatorship but that's still continued in one way or another when after the dictatorship regime ended, because in that country where in my country where this happened – and this is in Panama – this story of how the regime, the dictatorship, ended was not told properly. And I feel like the voices of those people that suffered were, you know, extinguished forever, their stories were never told. So, yeah, I feel like the right to tell stories that tell your stories.

The right to protest for me is an essential human right. And it's something that we should never allow anyone to take away from us. Yeah, it's a very sort of emotional kind of topic for me. And, you know, as I also mentioned before, having lived in other countries, I saw the extent of what that looked like, in terms of, you know, in one country in South America where many, many, many people, were murdered because they thought differently from what the government said and their voices were shot forever silenced for ever. And that's a terrible, terrible thing to do to to us as humans, you know, stripping them from from their rights of, you know, participating in society from, maintaining in, in celebrating their cultures or from, you know, embracing and celebrating their religion, or, you know, being who they are in any way that that may look like, and obviously respecting others and respecting their spaces and respecting their opinions. Yeah. I hope I've shed a bit of light on what I feel it means to me. And thank you very much for the opportunity to open the space for voices to be heard. I feel like that's a really powerful thing to do. So thank you, Sally, really appreciate it. Ngā mihi.

**Anonymous**

To me, human rights is about uplifting and sanctifying the human, unifying and equalising us as a species. It is both an expectation and a goal, both a passive entitlement and an active project that prompts us to ask what basic resources a human is missing, and how might we solve that? It is a concept full of hope, intangible to all around, which we can have fruitful discussions. Although we are largely doing well compared to some other countries, a local human rights issue to New Zealand that springs to mind would be, naturally, child poverty. Globally, climate change will surely present a bunch of challenges for human rights.

**Penelope**

I wrote this song in the aftermath of the October 2023 referendum held in Australia, into whether or not Aboriginal people should have a constitutionally enshrined Voice to Parliament, which basically would mean that they would have a constitutionally guaranteed right to have a say in the laws that affect them. Didn't seem unreasonable to me. A bunch of activists worked really hard for literally decades to get this proposal up. And when it was first presented to the public in 2017, it seemed to have a lot of popular support. However, when it went to the vote in 2023, the ‘No’ campaign just really succeeded in drawing people in, and it was pretty much a toxic dumpster fire of misinformation, disinformation, racism, fear, and the idea that Aboriginal people didn't really want it, which turned out to be patently untrue once the votes were counted. It's a “Where to from here?” song, because having had that national debate and having had 60% of Australians say “No, you can't have a say in the laws that affect you”, what do we do now?

It's my observation that Australians are particularly bad at facing up to their colonial history. We’re not just talking about injustice, we’re talking about genocide, and we’re talking about some of the most awful disadvantage in the developed world. And it's heartbreaking that the majority of Australians couldn't see how this very simple, straightforward reform could have made such a big difference. And I wanted to give voice to the people who who said yes; they were, you know, 5.5 million Australians that said, “Yes, we want you to have a say in the laws that affect you. And we're devastated to see this outcome in this country”. very early.

**SONG**

**Kirsten**

Kia ora Sally and everyone listening. My name is Kirsten, and I’m going to talk about some stuff to do with human rights at the local level.

Something that is top of mind for me, maybe unsurprisingly given what's been happening in New Zealand politics, is indigenous rights and the rights of Māori in Aotearoa to sovereignty, to rangatiratanga. And I think with the new government in in place at the moment, it is really disappointing to see some of those rights being walked back. And, yeah, I hope that that for all indigenous people and allies of indigenous people, that's a thing that we can continue to fight for.

Another thing that is top of mind for me is, well, in terms of wins at the local level: Of course, in the last 25 years we've had same-sex marriage legalised and banning of conversion therapy went through recently as well. I think in terms of trans rights in New Zealand, we do still have a little ways to go. And also just being wary of some of those cultural wars that are happening overseas kind of being imported in with very divisive figures, again, from overseas. Just want to yeah, just want to be wary of that and say that, yeah, we, we have some ways to go in terms of full rights to healthcare and legal rights. I'm hoping that we can continue to fight for that as well, for our trans whānau.

And finally, a little bit further from home, but really close to my heart at the moment, what's going on in Gaza and Palestine. I won't say too much because that would be a very long conversation, but I guess we're seeing this large-scale genocide being carried out, and it is just not only what's happening there, but just how governments around the world are reacting or not reacting as the case may be. And I just really hope that we can continue to show up for Palestinians and continue putting pressure on our government and governments overseas as well to, hopefully, step up a little bit more. Thank you so much.

**Halswell Residents’ Association**

Tēnā koutou. I’m David Hawke, Secretary of the Halswell Residents’ Association. Our association's aims include promoting the interests of Halswell residents to the benefit of the community, and taking an active interest in the cultural and social welfare of the community. It wasn't something we had in mind at the time the association was formed over 25 years ago, but these objectives actually fit really well with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, whose anniversary we are celebrating in this programme. These objectives have become really important as our community has become much more diverse.

As an example of the growth of both Halswell and its diversity, Knight Stream School Mingimingi Hautoa is a brand-new primary school in southwest Halswell, opened in 2019. It now has over 400 students and they come from over 30 ethnicities. A vital human rights issue is having these people and their families feel welcome and included in our community, but I'm sorry to say that the dominant cultural narrative wholesale is stuck in nineteenth century colonialism, and pretty much ignores the place of Māori ways of thinking and histories and landscape. And regrettably, many of the ethnicities of people in Halswell will also be the consequence of colonialism of one sort or another.

So how can we build a sense of place for our new arrivals that respects the place of our Ngāi Tahu friends and the human and ecological heritage of Halswell? Well, we reckon that you can't get past the value of a good story, so we're bringing out ways of telling stories. These can be narrative stories, but they can also be artistic pieces such as sculptures or crafts or photographs or poetry or whatever. Really helping us out here was the excavation a few years back, of the remains of a former mātai forest around the southern fringes of Halswell. This buried forest was brought to our attention by ECan [Environment Canterbury] Councillor Craig Pauling, who is from Te Taumutu Rūnanga. This forest grew from at least 1500 years ago up until the early 1400, 600 or so years ago. Finding something like this has been enormously valuable for our project, because there are stories built into the wood, and because the wood can be used as the basis for all sorts of artworks and installations. We've been busy working alongside artists and craftspeople for the last couple of years. We've got installations completed or on the way at two of our local schools, Knight Stream School and Aidenfield Christian School, and there is a sculpture planned to have a local library Te Hāpua. People like John Robertson from the Addington community have been busy creating pieces for sale that spread the narrative around.

So what next? Well, as we said at the start, storytelling is fundamental. So we need more stories from more people and more of the communities that make up Halswell. So just thinking aloud here, something we're pondering is setting up a competition for schools that explore the past and the people who lived here, and perhaps people from the migrant community drawing parallels into their own heritages. Such a competition needs to be set up with questions that take people beyond the westernised way of thinking, and it needs to be open to all sorts of types of expression. These ideas are still early days, but we're in it as an association for the long haul, both for the good of our Halswell community and to respect the human rights of the people who live here.

**Anna**

Kia ora, greetings. My name is Anna Stevens, I'm co-ordinator of Amnesty International volunteers here in Christchurch Observatory. In terms of what human rights means to me: Obviously the freedoms and their responsibilities as well, they are enshrined within the Declaration of Human Rights. There's quite a lot of overlap, too, with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, you know, a lot of human rights are about the basic, essential things that make life worth living, that make us able to support each other and contribute in a positive way to the community that we're in.

In terms of local human rights issues, I think child poverty is a big one in New Zealand. It still tends to get used up as a bit of a political football – I'd really like to see the various parties coming together more, and really investing in what is essentially the future of our nation. There's so much inequality of start and outcome that just really doesn't need to be there.

In terms of some significant wins over the last 75 years: I think one of the most recent ones that we're really proud of is stopping the incarceration of asylum seekers in New Zealand, and there was a number of people who had obviously had really traumatic experiences being retraumatized by being put into general population. Obviously the majority of them then had the refugee status approved, so it's simply just not an appropriate way to deal with people in that situation. So we're really proud to have gotten that stopped and hope that the new government will not roll that back.

In terms of ongoing challenges: obviously, refugee status. New Zealand's done a lot of work over the last ten years, you know, with Amnesty and other organisations around trying to raise the quota and to introduce a community sponsorship of refugees. But going into the next ten, 20 years, with climate change and obviously ongoing war, conflicts, there's going to be more people that are needing help in that space. And I think we can still do better. Everyone that I've ever met that came from a former refugee background into a community in, you know, local area has always been just an enormous asset here. They really, they value what they know, how valuable it is. And I just wish that we would invest more in that space, too, on a global level.

An issue that sort of top of mind at the moment is the targeting of civilians in non-combatants, including aid workers and reporters in conflict situations – we're seeing that are on the rise again. Obviously, there's a lot of international conventions that deal with that issue, arising from former world conflicts, but with World War One and Two and so on becoming less living memory and sort of more historical now, for most people, I think perhaps the awareness of just how severe those issues are and how much we need to stop them has perhaps died off a bit. So it'd be great to see people really raising their voices around that again, and holding governments of all sizes to account.

In terms of big wins over the last 25 years: obviously the Arms Trade Treaty, legalisation of gay marriage and significant progress around the perspective of indigenous people, particularly when it comes to the ecological side of things and looking after the spaces that have been traditionally something that they love. I think that's better recognised now. Obviously still a long way to go around things like rainbow rights, women’s rights, racial inequality, but still working hard in those spaces all around the world.

I think one big challenge that we do face is how much information people are trying to deal with at the moment, and they watch the news, you know, they watch social media, and often they get a bit overwhelmed with the bad news that they see. But Amnesty is one of the ways in which we can really make a difference on an individual basis, individual by individual and together so I highly encourage people to get involved. You don't have to read the in the news and weep; you can make a change.

**Caroline**

Hello, I'm Caroline, directly from São Paulo, Brazil to New Zealand. Talking about human rights as a woman, immigrant and also a lawyer gives me several thoughts. I can say that I was a lawyer, student and a student that history brings with it advance towards the creation of norms that will guarantee human rights. Women vote and gain more space near your mark and right to vote. They took on high-ranking position. A huge achievement for humanity was that black people stopped being object of commerce during slavery and recognised as a human. Imagine that to happen in the past, immigrants moving around the world, the planet, at different times and gain social guarantees. It is what I lived in New Zealand, I had a lot of guarantees as a student, as someone that have had a work visa. But let's also look at the fact that we still face difference in many countries and the treatment given to women, immigrants, black people, minority groups, and the rights to equality, freedom of expression, security, property and no violence are not guaranteed. So of course, we can celebrate the small wins and big victories that have existed so far, but will never settle until there is a real guarantee of human rights for all those who live on this planet. Therefore, we need everyone to collaborate to guarantee human rights. Do your part. Report when you see abuse of power or inform anyone who doesn't know about their rights.

Unfortunately, as we speak, there are still people being enslaved, suffering physical violence, seeing homeless, making confession of crimes they did not commit because they were beaten by prepared police officers.Immigrants receiving less for the same work done by local people, as well as women receiving less by doing work by the same position as a man. So that we have to do, to always use our voice to inform others, to fight for, to everyone, to have equal rights, fight for the human rights. We are all humans. We live in this planet. We need to do that. We have to fight for the human rights for everyone. I would like to thank for those who invite me to be part of this project. Thank you, everyone and that we all have a wonderful week and all the best for who is listening to this recording. Thank you very much. Here’s Caroline from Brazil, kia ora.

**Anonymous**

Human rights. Many thanks for bringing it to our collective attention that it actually marks 75 years since the signing of the Declaration of Human Rights. Human rights is something we don't often think about in our everyday lives. It seems to be far away, and we are detached from them. Especially in New Zealand, where we are geographically further away from other countries and live in a somewhat small, isolated world, relating things to global legislation can actually put things into a very different perspective. The ability to look at things from different angles is something I find more and more important in our increasingly diverse world; looking at our local issues through a global lens gives us the ability to have different conversations, to open somewhat narrow viewpoints which often relate to particular person or particular local place, to open it up to a broader perspective and say “Right, it was possibly okay for this person to view this from your perspective, but if we look at it from a human rights perspective, I can see some issues”. Just an example.

If you have a closer look at human rights in detail, they state that we all have a right to an adequate standard of living, to work in favourable conditions, to education, to the highest attainable standards of well-being, and to enjoy cultural freedom. Looking at that, I would say even in little Aotearoa we have thousands and thousands of breaches of human rights every day. This is not okay. This is not acceptable. And I think it's our responsibility to continue to raise awareness, to start by educating ourselves about the thirty articles in the Declaration and what they state, and then implement them in our conversations, our careers and our actions. Weave in and help more and more people to be aware, to become aware that human rights are the most basic foundation for us humans on this planet and that it is most relevant locally to keep this in mind and actually fight for it.

**Anonymous**

Thoughts on human rights at the global level? We seem to go historically through ups and downs in terms of respecting human rights and trashing them. The periods where we go through when we're trashing human rights seem to go hand-in-hand with right-wing populism, the rise of the right, and that ideology seems to be at the expense of minorities, seems to be at the expense of the vulnerable, and it seems to be geared towards the benefit of white supremacy and of the rich. And that seems simple, an obvious statement to make, but there's so much misinformation and disinformation that manages to persuade groups of people otherwise when really it's clear, it's a very simple proposition: money is power, and power corrupts, and that is at the expense of human rights.

We've made incredible progress in the last hundred years in terms of human rights on a global level but there's still a long way to go. But that progress is marred by ups and downs. It's marred by peaks and troughs, the troughs smaller, obviously, the troughs where human rights are trashed. And the reason for that, I think, is because the powerful fear losing that power. It's easy to persecute people who have no power, and if other people don't stand up for them, it will unfortunately continue. I think there are lots of examples for that kind of thing – pick your own at the moment, pick your own around the world. This is an important global issue because we are in a trough. Human rights are currently being trashed. Nationally, internationally. And it's because of the rise of the right and it's because of a fear of lack of power or a loss of power and loss of wealth. Inflammation might be the key to battling it, but I don't have the answer. I don't really know anyone who does and doesn't mean that the fight shouldn't be fought. Thanks.

**Sophia**

Kia ora koutou.My name is Sophia White and I am an environmentalist and sustainability advocate that lives in Christchurch. I thought I'd share some thoughts on the global challenges that I see when it comes to human rights and things that are worth celebrating. So in times of global challenges, I think we can't ignore feminism, women's rights, or human rights or human rights. And globally they are not being fulfilled. And I also think it's really important here to mention the rights of people who are transgender and non-binary and other genders, and the challenges that we're seeing worldwide in enabling people to live their full lives.

I also think it's important to talk about the ecological crisis because although the Universal Declaration of Human Rights doesn't include the environment –although do correct me if I'm wrong – the impact of losing a healthy, clean environment for people today and for future generations means that there's going to be pressure and impacts on other human rights. And so we're going to see people who are going to be forced to leave their property, their country, their ancestors, and migrate. And this does massively impact the human rights, especially as the countries they migrate to have to respect these. And unfortunately, we're seeing a lot of that at the minute.

And the third and final thing that I'm kind of worried about is the digital revolution. How does this impact human rights? I'm not so sure myself whether or not it's been a positive or a negative, whether or not all digital lives have enabled us to fulfil our human rights, or in some spaces have they've been weakened. And maybe it's different for different people in different places in the world, but I do think that how our personal data is used and manipulated or shared is something we should think of, especially in the lens of the Declaration of Human Rights.

So I do think we should be celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Absolutely. It's a fantastic document that holds a vision for humanity, and I'm not so sure that all the countries would agree to something like that today. And so we should be celebrating it because it is a symbol of hope, of what people agreed globally should be able to, you know, have be able to fulfil. But of course, in New Zealand, that doesn't mean that we shouldn't strive for more. We should be upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and also bringing it into the twenty-first century and striving for more: for mana whenua, for Pākehā, tauiwi, for Papatuānuku. Kia ora.

**Grant**

Hi, this is Grant Knowles from Golden Bay, and I've got a few thoughts to share about my feelings on human rights. Human rights, people think of them as the basics of of clean water and and clean air and food and shelter and fear of, freedom from from persecution. But, you know, it comes a lot more. There's a lot more that comes with it. There's a lot of responsibility, personal responsibility: if you want human rights, you've got to be personally responsible. And if you want, if you want to, really look at what human rights, it is about the personal expression of, do you express yourself in a free way?

That’s a major fundamental of human rights. We have a world where there are many countries where you can't express yourself freely. You can't speak up against the government or the things that the government, they that are, they are doing, for fear of being thrown in jail. These are not human rights. We should be able to stand up and say, “No, this policy is wrong. You can't do it”. You should be able to stand up and say, you know, we need clean water and not be persecuted for it. So these are the fundamental human rights. We all live in small communities, whether you recognise it or not; you know, you live in your family community and that's usually quite small, we live in the work community; we exist in our village or town, that's a community. And these communities we have a responsibility to each other to actually just make sure that we live the best way we possibly can, the healthiest and without without encroaching on other people.

Human rights are a very personal thing. Human rights are what we do to others. It's not necessarily about what a government turns around and gives us as human, you know, oh, we'll let you protest without fear – I mean, yeah, that's great, but it's way, way deeper than that. It's very personalised. And we need to make sure that we have to we take that responsibility seriously and we don't step over the mark. You know, in New Zealand we have a very free society and it runs parallel, like I just said, with anarchy, because anarchy people think of is is total destruction and craziness, but it's actually true freedom. It's true freedom because we can self-regulate. We can self-govern ourselves if we know the boundaries of what is right and what is wrong. And yes, there are some grey areas of what is right for me is not right for you but I think basically it's about making sure that we have we take personal responsibility for our personal freedoms.

So lucky New Zealand: 75 years of human rights. We've had a lot of local wins; we've had, there's been a lot of global wins. People want to be heard if you're a government or if you're a in a in a position of power and you listen to the people, you might be able to act on it. And then again, you may not, but I think it's really important to give people that expression to freely express themselves. And it comes down to art and music as well. To be able to express yourself through art and music without fear of persecution is extremely important. These are basic, fundamental human rights. It's not just about clean water, clean air, a place to live for shelter, food. It's way more personal than that. And I think if we all live in a way that is in concert with the world, we will have a much better world. And real freedoms reveal freedoms. That's what human rights are to me. Freedoms. Thank you.

**Souhila**

My name is Suhila Abdelazziz, and I am an empowerment hidden awakening life coach. And, for the question about what does human rights mean to me personally? To be honest, human rights means human dignity. And the main objective, I think, of human rights regulations is the protection of human dignity. I believe that you humans are the heart of the universe; therefore, their dignity is of utmost priority and importance. Why do I have, why or how have I developed this perspective? To be honest, people are not microcosm small universes, but macrocosm create universes and assume he said. Oh man. You seem to be a microcosm, of course, but in reality, actually you are a microcosm. Most humans are asleep and therefore disconnected and oblivious to their divinity, greatness and power, and therefore they need protection till they awaken, if they ever do.

Of course, I would like to contribute, with some quotes and, poems from Rumi regarding human rights. Rumi says, you are more precious than heaven and earth. What more can I say? You do not know your own worth. You are another version of the Divine Book. You are a mirror of the beauty of God. But that created the universe. Whatever exists in the world, it's not outside of you. Whatever you ask for. Ask for it in yourself. Seek it in yourself. And I would conclude with this one. Or you who is searching for faults in everything. Do not look down on anyone. God does part of him in everyone, regardless of their nationalities and religions. The people are the miracles of God. Thank you.

**Anonymous**

For at least two decades, the government of China has been accused of forcibly harvesting organs from prisoners of conscience, killing the victim in the process. Our organisation, the International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse in China, it decided to approach distinguished barrister, an expert in crimes of mass atrocity, Sir Geoffrey Nice QC, for an independent legal opinion.

So did the evidence begin? Prior to 2000, there were few transplants in China. During this period, organs were primarily sourced from death row prisoners. From 2000, there was a rapid increase in the number of transplants. The source of the raw organs underpinning this high level of activity has never been explained in a credible way by the Chinese government, with the number of transplants taking place far exceeding the number of deaths of prisoners executed. In 2012. It was clean, but the Chinese health minister that China had created a donation system; however, there is no evidence to suggest that this could possibly account for the amount of transplants performed in Chinese hospitals. The increase in transplant activity coincided with the repression and mass arrest of practitioners of the Buddhist qigong practice of Falun Gong during the 2000s.

Broadly speaking, the lines of evidence examined by Sir Geoffrey Nice and his team, the China Tribunal, include, but are not limited to, the following: evidence of medical testing that include organ scanning, CT scans, X-rays, and ultrasounds, primarily of Falun Gong practitioners in custody, but also more recently of the Uyghur people. Two: investigations analysing information from official Chinese websites such as utilisation rates, hospital revenue and transplant infrastructure indicate China is conducting far more transplant operations than their official claims. Three: undercover investigations conducted in Chinese hospitals show transplant tourism is taking place and organs are available on demand. Four: involvement of the military and transplant activity and research. Five: websites for hospitals advertise transplant services to foreigners on a pre-scheduled basis, including for heart transplants – so in other words, they're killing on demand. Six: telephone investigations. Two Chinese transplant specialists confirming waiting times as short as two weeks, with some calls stating that Falun Gong organs are available.

In summary, individual lines of evidence, when drawn together, paint a backdrop of planned, systematic, institutional and intentional organ harvesting. So what can and must be done? Legislation needs to be put in place banning organ trafficking and transplant tourism, with a component for mandatory reporting to ensure transplant tourism is tracked. Universities and hospitals should abide by their business and human rights obligations. Partnerships with China in relation to transplant medicine research and training are increasing. Policies are urgently needed should so that collaborations do not take place in relation to organ transplantation. Any institutions already collaborating should disassociate immediately. Chinese transplant surgeons should not be allowed to partake in international transplant conferences, nor should they be allowed to partake in decision-making groups with leading international bodies such as the Declaration of Istanbul Custodian Group, the Transplant Society or the WHO, where they currently have representation. Resolutions should be passed by governments around the world condemning forced organ harvesting in China, urging both international bodies and the public to act. Lastly, Chinese perpetrators should be sanctioned. These are only some of the actions that need to take place. I thank you very much for your attention to this very important issue.

**Anonymous**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was created in 1948, the year of my sister's birth. I was born a few years later. So throughout my life, there has been a recognition that human rights and freedoms are fundamental to existence. I lived in a home where these rights were regarded as fair, just and unarguable. It was a post-war era where memories of Nazi atrocities were very fresh. My father said he volunteered for service in the forces in a non-combat role, because he felt strongly that the horrors he saw in pre-war Germany had to be stopped. He felt that rights must be respected for everyone.

I was to be active in human rights work from quite a young age, telling my parents I was sightseeing in London when in reality I was protesting the Vietnam War. I think I was 16. That was hugely scary as the protests were met with violent police resistance. My next venture was supporting the demand for civil rights in the US. Joan Baez singing and marching and civil rights protest was a hero of mine. Little did I imagine 40 years later, I would be out to her concert in Christchurch promoting a rise in refugee numbers. So my 20s saw a rise in my activism: anti-apartheid, anti-nuclear, pro women's right. It was an optimistic time. We thought we could change the world. There were successes in those areas, so many put down the placards and donned a suit, thinking the war was won. But there was a resurgence: when you take your foot off the pedal and fighting for human rights, the surge begins. Measures that were previously fail because government cunning, they circumvent the methods. So campaigning for the release of prisoners became, where are the prisoners? The disappeared became the battle. Bodies dropped from planes into the ocean. Leave no trace. It reminds me of that fairground game where you're given a mallet, up pops a monster, you hit it and it disappears, and another monsters appear somewhere else. You hit one after the other until you're exhausted, but they just keep coming back. Such is the human rights battle. You have to keep hitting the monster on the head while aware another will pop up next door. It's exhausting and it can be dispiriting.

So am I optimistic things will change and the world will have no need for human rights activists in the future? No, that would be unrealistic. Of course we will have successes in the next 75 years, but the war will still go on. Is the fight worth the effort? Yes. Because what alternative is there? We may not be able to save everyone or win every battle, but if we save one person, win one battle, then it's worth it. Why? At 71, am I still an activist? I sometimes ask myself the same question as I stand in the cold for two hours outside the Chinese consulate asking for the whereabouts of a human rights lawyer, or walk with a banner asking for a ceasefire. The simple answer is I don't know why I'm still an activist. Sometimes I wish I didn't care. But if I'm not prepared to fight for the rights of others, who will fight for mine? When you say injustice, a feeling begins that can't be stilled. A fire lit you can't put out. You feel you need to say no, not on my watch. Even if you aren't successful. The universe demands you try.

**Himasha**

Kia ora, Himasha herefrom University of Canterbury. As a researcher in the field of education and technology, I would like to talk about the impact of artificial intelligence, or AI, on human rights. While AI technologies have the potential to bring about positive advancements in various fields, they also pose challenges that can affect human rights in significant ways.

Here are some of the key aspects of the impact of AI on human rights: Number one: Privacy concerns. AI systems often rely on extensive data sets, raising concerns about mass surveillance and the collection of personal information without adequate safeguards. The use of facial recognition and other biometric technologies by AI systems can infringe on privacy rights, leading to potential misuse and abuse.

Number two: Bias and discrimination. AI algorithms can perpetuate and even exacerbate existing bias in society, leading to discriminatory outcomes, particularly in the area such as hiring, law enforcement, and financial services. Vulnerable, marginalised groups may be disproportionately bad. The negative consequences of biased AI systems further exacerbating social inequalities.

Number three: freedom of expression and information. AI-driven content moderation can sometimes result in overcensorship, limiting freedom of expression. Conversely, it may also fail to identify harmful content effectively. AI can be used to create and spread manipulated content, contributing to the challenges associated with disinformation campaigns.

Number four: employment and economic disparities. The automation of certain tasks through AI can lead to job displacements potentially impact the right to work and livelihoods. The benefits of AI may not be distributed evenly, contributing to economic disparities and potentially exacerbating social divisions.

Number five: accountability and transparency. The opacity of some AI algorithms make it challenging to hold responsible parties accountable for the decision made by these systems, and the lack of transparency in AI systems can be hinder individuals ability to understand how their data is used and the reasoning behind AI driven decisions.

The last one, number six: security and autonomous systems. The use of AI in military applications, such as autonomous weapons, raises ethical concerns about the potential for loss of human control and adherence to international humanitarian law. Addressing the impact of AI on human rights requires a collaborative effort involving governments, industries, civil society, and academia. Establishing clear ethical guidelines, robots, robust regulations, and promoting transparency are crucial steps in mitigating potential negative consequences and ensuring that AI technologies respect and protect human rights.