

“Our Pursuit of Justice will never End” says Tariana Turia

Co-leader of the Maori Party

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Tariana Turia is heartened by news from the Treaty Tribes Coalition that they will next week meet with the United Nations *Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination* (CERD) to further discuss the Committee's previous recommendation for the New Zealand Government to repeal the Foreshore and Seabed legislation.

“It is, however, a matter of great sadness that while the New Zealand Parliament looks destined to vote against the repeal of the Foreshore and Seabed Act, Maori yet again have had to seek recourse in the international arena”.

“Today records another chapter in the journal of injustices being observed overseas, about the way in which this country treats Maori” said Mrs Turia.

“The United Nations' observers are asking - what has Labour done about *‘talking with Maori?’*” asked Mrs Turia.

“We will continue to portray the profound grief that our people have felt with the imposition of the Foreshore and Seabed Act, an Act which they have told us is the ultimate symbol of oppression, colonisation and racism” said Mrs Turia.

“They have also told us, that rangatiratanga does not stand or fall on whether there is support in the House for repeal” said Mrs Turia.

“Putting the Foreshore and Seabed Act (Repeal) Bill into the House is an expression of our rangatiratanga and we will never betray the faith of our people who have asked us to do exactly that”.

“In the last few days a Labour MP has publicly called me a traitor, and at the same time made it very clear in the interview that any Maori MP in the Labour Party is Labour first and foremost” said Mrs Turia.

“It is a sad day for Maoridom and the country at large when Maori representatives can't give any sort of priority to the constituencies who voted them in and who they represent” said Mrs Turia.

“If the Bill falls tonight, we will put it right back into the ballot on the first day of the new sitting year in 2008” said Mrs Turia.

“As Rewi Maniapoto, a principal chief of Ngati Maniapoto so famously said, *“ka whawhai tonu matou, ake, ake, ake”*.”

Background

In March 2005, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination criticised the haste with which the government passed the foreshore and Seabed legislation. It concluded that the legislation appeared:

“to contain discriminatory aspects against the Maori, in particular in its extinguishment of the possibility of establishing Maori title to the foreshore and seabed and in its failure to provide a guaranteed right of redress.”

The Committee recommended that the government should “*talk with Maori*” in order to seek ways of mitigating the discriminatory effects of the legislation “including through legislative amendment, where necessary”.

Standing Order 265a states:

The following may not be proposed in the same calendar year:

(a) a bill that is the same in substance as a bill that received, or was defeated on, a first, second or third reading:

The **Treaty Tribes Coalition** is a Maori non-governmental organisation formed in 1994 to represent its constituent members of Hauraki, Ngati Kahungunu, Ngai Tamanuhiri and Ngai Tahu. It represents approximately twenty percent of the Maori population.