

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE & FREEDOM



WILPF Aotearoa Newsletter, February 2024

WILPF events: Wellington WILPF online forum on 5 March, Section AGM on 9 March **News and reports:** Christchurch / Ōtautahi, Wellington, Tāmaki Makaurau, Hui ā motu, WILPF Aotearoa supports human rights NGO statement, WILPF International **Reminders:** 1 March: NFIP Day, 8 March: Intl Women's Day

WILPF Events on Soon

**IWD Forum: 'Refusing to support the troops'
Researching public discourse on militarism**

On Tues 5 March 2024, 12 - 1pm noon (NZDT)

 **Online discussion with
Ellen Martin**


PhD candidate, University of Bristol, England, speaking about her thesis chapter and future article: 'Refusing to support the troops: support, disengagement, and resistance on online discussion forums'

"My research opposes the elevation of the military in society and its status as an intrinsic public good"

Please register at bit.ly/nzwp09

Peace Movement Aotearoa, with Wellington WILPF
facebook.com/PeaceMovementAotearoa @PeaceMovementA

Online IWD forum, 12 noon, 5 March: 'Refusing to support the troops', Researching public discourse on militarism - forum on 5 March to mark International Women's Day 2024. Co-hosted by Wellington WILPF, please register at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9181111111> to join.

 **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
9 MARCH 2024**

WILPF Aotearoa AGM: Our Section AGM will be held on Saturday 9 March 2024, from 2pm to 4.30pm by Zoom.

Draft Minutes of the 2023 AGM, a link for the Zoom call and an agenda for the meeting has been emailed to members.

WILPF Women in Action



Top photo on page 1: Solidarity with Ukraine on the 2nd anniversary of the Russian invasion.

Photo: Ukrainian Gromada of Wellington

Middle photo: Solidarity with West Papua at the annual Global Flag Raising for West Papua solidarity gathering at parliament in Wellington.

Photo: Peace Movement Aotearoa

Lower photo: Solidarity with Palestine in Devonport. *Photo: Del Abcede*

WILPF News and Reports

Christchurch / Ōtautahi Report

As with the last few years, we have found it too hard to keep a Christchurch / Ōtautahi group going, but members do keep in touch and support each other in peace-related activities. The effort to make a South Island network has forged links with a few Dunedin / Ōtepoti women.

WILPF and the DSC held their annual Hiroshima / Nagasaki commemoration on August 6th at the Peace Bell in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens, this was well attended and very moving.



We have taken part in various demos, Irinka Britnell took our banner to the protest on Sept 16th to mark one year since the murder of Mahsa Amini. Our banner has also been to some of the Palestine demos. – Prue Stringer

Wellington report

Since the last newsletter, Branch members have supported a range of online events and activities including the annual West Papua solidarity

gathering at parliament (see photo on page 1) and the regular rallies and vigils for Palestine, mainly organised by Justice for Palestine.



Photo: Justice for Palestine

As covered in the last newsletter Sheryn Elborn has been actively involved with the weekly rally for Ukraine outside the Russian Embassy in Wellington over the past two years, and she reports:



“Although on holiday at the top of Te Waipounamu, I still remembered those suffering in Ukraine.

The war has been going 2 years now, so many deaths, so many injuries and many many traumatized children. So I wanted to share that time even though not in Wellington, and I did with my sign attached to the van and my speaker attached to my phone to sing some of our songs.

On Waitangi Day, I missed out on the festival at Porirua, so decided to have a mini festival at



the at Totaranui motor camp, hanging a sign saying “This tauwi supports Tino Rangatiratanga” (as suggested by our local Iwi advisor) and the tino rangatiratanga flag.

I was a little anxious as I did not know how other campers would react. Many people stopped and looked at the flag, others commented "great flag", then went onto say how we have to fight

to keep Te Tiriti alive and functioning in our society. Many were very disappointed in the stance the government is taking and people said they were committed to stopping the referendum on Te Tiriti - "It is a gross human rights infringement", such a great response."

On Sheryn's return to Wellington, she spoke and sang at the Ukrainian Gromada of Wellington's commemoration on the 2nd anniversary of the Russian invasion (see photo on page 1).

Puna Kōrero mō te Pū Firearms Registry

Edwina Hughes is on the Police Arms Advisory Group, set up after the mass murders at two mosques in Christchurch on 15 March 2019 to monitor the legislative and policy changes to the Arms Act, including the new Firearms Registry. All of the progress made is now under threat from the coalition government, with ACT MP Nicole McKee - former spokesperson for the Council of Licenced Firearms Owners - appointed to dismantle the changes as Associate Minister of Justice (Firearms) and Minister for Court. - Wellington branch members

Sheryn is not the only WILF Aotearoa member active for peace and justice on her travels in recent months, Del Abcede sent through a great series of photos of rallies she joined in Adelaide and Melbourne in December, including this one of a FPP placard "To stand with Palestine is to stand with humanity".



Photo: Del Abcede, Melbourne, December 2023

FPP (Free Palestine Printing) has a range of free downloads and images, as well as an opportunity to donate, <https://freepalestineprinting.com>

Tāmaki Makaurau Report

We have been supporting the rallies for Palestine organised by Palestinian Youth Aotearoa, Te Kūaka and Palestine Solidarity Network Aotearoa, both the central Auckland ones and others around the city.

Branch members have been working with the Palestine Solidarity Network Aotearoa and we're really grateful to Janfrie Wakim for keeping us informed of activities and providing background reading.



Photo: Del Abcede, Devonport, January 2024. The photo on the front page is of Jude Lowry, Del Abcede and Ruth Coombes at this rally.



Photo: Del Abcede, Auckland 14 January 2024

You can also watch some of Kathy Ross's videos of Auckland rallies on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/kathy.ross1/videos/1460511498197486> and <https://www.facebook.com/kathy.ross1/videos/913525927158779>

At our final branch meeting for 2023, a young woman from Student Justice for Palestine spoke to us about the organisation as well as giving us information about the situation for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Did you know, for example, that if a Palestinian prisoner dies before their sentence is completed, the Israeli authorities keep the body until the end of the sentence. Appalling. (See: www.thenation.com/article/world/israel-postmortem-detention/)

Branch members, Lorri Mackness, Maria Claire and Del Abcede maintained our links with the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and networked with other women when they attended the Community's Annual Convention which had the theme: 'Voices for Peace'. They were joined by Betty Ofe Grant of NCW.



Maria Claire, Lorri Mackness and Del Abcede (front) at the convention, with Betty Ofe Grant. Photo: Del Abcede

Members have also been attending planning meetings organised by other groups concerned by the new government's attitude towards the role of Te Tiriti in our country. Maria Claire has been to a strategy hui organised by Te Ohu (www.teohu.community/) and Trish Cheng and I were at the first of an ongoing series of zui organised by Tāmaki Treaty Workers.

Nola Smith, Beverley Turner and I continue to maintain the Auckland Human Rights Network email list. - Megan Hutching

Hui ā Motu, Ngāruawāhia

WILPF Aotearoa Vice President Pauline Tangiora attended the hui at Tūrangawaewae, on 20

January and spoke in the plenary session on finding a road to a peaceful resolution.

She also presented her article on understanding Te Tiriti which was published in the *Gisborne Herald* on 16 December 2023. You can find the article on our website at www.wilpf.nz/news-and-reports.html



- Megan Hutching

WILPF Aotearoa supports joint NGO statement on NZ's human rights record



Combined NGO statement: New Zealand UPR Pre-Session, Geneva, February 2024

While there has been some progress on the recommendations of the last UPR, the NGO written submissions made in October 2023 highlighted ongoing human rights issues still requiring action. Since the coalition government took office in November there has already been a major reversal on some areas of progress, and it proposes changes that will further erode a range of human rights.

This situation has highlighted the lack of constitutional protection for the Treaty of Waitangi and human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights which are not even included in the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act. The notion of parliamentary supremacy means that any New Zealand government can pass legislation violating human rights by a simple majority.

Read the statement, find out more at <http://www.nzupr.org>
facebook/PeaceMovementAotearoa @PeaceMovementA

We were pleased to add our name to a combined NGO statement in advance of the fourth Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of New Zealand's human rights record which will take place in April and May this year. The statement begins: "While there has been some progress on the recommendations of the last UPR, the NGO written submissions made in October 2023 highlighted ongoing human rights issues still requiring action. Since the coalition government took office in November there has already been a major reversal on some areas of progress, and it proposes changes that will further erode a range of human rights.

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The notion of parliamentary supremacy means that any New Zealand government can pass legislation violating human rights by a simple majority.”

Read the full statement at <http://nzupr.org>

News from WILPF International

The big news from WILPF International is that Secretary General Madeleine Rees is retiring this year. The Strategy Circle has been hired to run a series of consultations with WILPF members ‘to reflect on leadership and help shape the role of the SG in light of the needs of our changing and growing movement’. It will be an opportunity to discuss the purpose and function of the Secretary-General’s role.

The 68th Commission for the Status of Women meeting will be held at the UN in New York in mid-March and WILPF women will be there. The ‘Priority Theme’ this year is: Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective.

WILPF has prepared a background paper, at https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1gCH1QMVUxIOEwXes0mBV41g5zVpB25_w

The Global Calls organised by the WILPF Membership team continue, but are usually held at an unfortunate time for us here in Aotearoa.

- Megan Hutching



It’s Time for Feminist Action Against Genocide in Palestine! Find out more on the International

WILPF site at <https://www.wilpf.org/our-work/middle-east-and-north-africa/palestine>

Preventing Further Genocide in Gaza Means Looking at Governments Arming Israel: find out more on the International WILPF site at <https://www.wilpf.org/att-this-week-preventing-further-genocide-in-gaza-means-looking-at-governments-arming-israel>



Q&A with Rania Mohammed: Protesting Against Violence with Young WILPF – find out more on the International WILPF site at <https://www.wilpf.org/qa-with-rania-mohammed-protesting-against-violence-with-young-wilpf>

Reminders: NFIP Day and IWD

Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific (NFIP) Day, 1 March

1 March is Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Day, commemorated as Nuclear Victims Remembrance Day in the Marshall Islands - the 70th anniversary of the 'Bravo' nuclear bomb detonation by the United States close to the surface of Bikini Atoll, in the Marshall Islands, which blasted out a crater more than 200 feet deep and a mile across.

Particles of radioactive fallout from the blast landed on the island of Rongelap (100 miles away) to a depth of one and a half inches in places, and radioactive mist appeared on Utrik (300 miles away). The US navy did not send ships to evacuate the people of Rongelap and Utrik until three days after the explosion. Fallout from

this one nuclear weapon detonation spread over more than 7,000 square miles, and traces were detected throughout the Pacific, in India, Japan, the United States and Europe. These, and other Pacific, peoples were subjected to more than 300 full scale nuclear bomb detonations in the Pacific - conducted by Britain, France and the US - were used as human guinea pigs in an obscene experiment to 'progress' the insane pursuit of nuclear weapons supremacy." ...



Image and statement: Peace Movement Aotearoa

... "Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Day is a day to think about the many faces of colonisation - physical, cultural, spiritual, economic, nuclear, military - past and present; the ongoing issues of independence, self-determination and sovereignty here in Aotearoa and the other colonised and occupied countries of the Pacific; and the ability of Pacific peoples to stop further nuclearisation, militarisation and economic exploitation of our region. "

– Read more at <http://icanw.org.nz/> or <https://www.facebook.com/PeaceMovementAotearoa/posts/813413417482459>

International Women's Day, 8 March

The theme for IWD 2024 is 'Invest in women: Accelerate progress', find out more about the Day and the theme at <https://www.un.org/en/observances/womens-day>

Here in Aotearoa, NCW has an IWD events page at https://www.ncwnz.org.nz/iwd2024_events

Shakti Woman's Refuge Trust are holding an online discussion on displacement of women and children due to war from 2pm to 3pm on 8 March, link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85850055888?pwd=RGs3RFVxQiljWkNOMHp4Mkx6LzFPdz09>

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Newsletters: This Newsletter was produced by Wellington branch, contact wilpf@xtra.co.nz and the next will be produced by Christchurch / Ōtautahi, contact Prue Stringer, pruestringer@hotmail.com