



### The Pacific voice needs to be heard

Here at Amnesty International Aotearoa New Zealand we are particularly working to:

- support the incredibly brave and active human rights defenders already operating throughout the Pacific;
- ensure that Pacific governments are held to account for any grave human rights abuses they are guilty of;
- enhance the Pacific voice to make sure it is heard globally.

Sadly, when Tuvalu did speak out at the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference in December 2009 its pleas for the survival of its people were ignored.

Which is why Amnesty plans to support Pacific Island voices at international fora including the Pacific Island Forum, the Commonwealth and the United Nations.

### Pacific Island Forum

The Pacific Islands Forum is a political grouping of 16 independent, self-governing states. Members include Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. Forum leaders meet annually to develop collective responses to regional issues.

Amnesty International attended last year's Forum in Cairns, urging leaders to stop paying lip service to gender based violence and to tackle it decisively. Amnesty's lobbying contributed to leaders committing to eliminate gender based violence in the Pacific region.



*"I'm sure we will pinpoint this meeting as the first time that Pacific leaders committed themselves to eliminating violence against women"*

**Apolosi Bose, Pacific Researcher, Amnesty International Aotearoa NZ**

### United Nations

Amnesty will be working to encourage Pacific Island nations to sign up to treaties and conventions. Every four years a Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is carried out to examine the human rights record of all member states. Amnesty International frequently comments and makes recommendations on these reports.



### Celebrating Human Rights Defenders in the Pacific

On International Human Rights Day (10 December), last year, Amnesty announced Shamima Ali as the inaugural winner of our Human Rights Defender Award. Shamima, Executive Director of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, has been at the forefront of combating violence against women in the Pacific for more than three decades, and has been an outspoken critic of the current military dictatorship in Fiji.

The Award grew out of the need to recognise the courageous, and often overlooked, work of people contributing to the defence and promotion of human rights in New Zealand and the Pacific region.

*"Amnesty International New Zealand should be commended for establishing this award. While I'm the recipient, one must remember the many other human rights defenders in Fiji and the rest of the Pacific who work just as hard. The work doesn't end – every day we are challenged anew. And this award gives me further encouragement never to give up defending our rights. This is what makes us human."*

### TAKE ACTION

Add your voice to our call for a region where human rights are respected by writing on our frangipani flower petition about the human rights that most matter to you to allow you to live in dignity in the Pacific.

We'll create leis of human rights messages to deliver to Pacific Island Forum leaders.



**Amnesty International** is a global movement of 2.2 million people in more than 150 countries and territories who campaign to end grave abuses of human rights.

Our vision is for every person to enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards.

We are independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion – funded mainly by our membership and public donations.