

MEDIA ALERT

Australian and Marshall Islander nuclear test survivors demand a ban on nuclear weapons

**“Black Mist White Rain” Speaking Tour
4-7 April 2016**

Four Indigenous women from South Australia and the Marshall Islands are touring four cities over four days to speak about how nuclear testing has impacted their lives, and why a treaty banning nuclear weapons is urgently needed.

Sue Coleman-Haseldine, Kokatha-Mula, and Abacca Anjain-Maddison, Republic of the Marshall Islands, spoke to over 150 governments at the Third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in Vienna, December 2014. They are joining forces again to bring their personal stories to Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.

“The bombs have destroyed a large part of Australia and despite several attempts it will never be safe or clean. There are many Aboriginal people who cannot go back to their ancestral lands and their children and their children’s children and so on will never know the special religious places it contains.” Sue Coleman-Haseldine.

Coleman-Haseldine and Anjain-Maddison will be joined by Rosemary and Karina Lester, the daughters of Yankunyjtjara elder Yami Lester, who was blinded by the Totem 1 nuclear test at Emu Field in 1953. Speaking about the nuclear testing conducted in South Australia;

“Many people died immediately, but others are living with chronic health issues, cancers and disabilities. Not to mention depression, the painful loss and trauma suffered mentally, the psychological and social damage, and watching loved ones’ lives diminish. It has eroded our culture and further marginalised our people.” Rosemary Lester.

The United Kingdom conducted 12 major nuclear weapons tests in Australia between 1952 and 1963 at Monte Bello Islands, Emu Field and Maralinga. The United States conducted 67 nuclear tests in the Marshall Islands between 1946 and 1958, including the 15-megatonne “Castle Bravo” test at Bikini Atoll, which was 1000 times more powerful than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima, and exposed thousands of people to radioactive fallout.

“Marshallese people endured the loss of traditionally-held land and marine resources without negotiation or compensation; (and) were exposed to fallout contamination compromising the environmental health of individual and communities.” Abacca Anjain-Maddison.

In the wake of Three Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, 127 nations have endorsed a Pledge to “fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons”. A UN-endorsed working group to take forward nuclear disarmament negotiations is meeting over three sessions during 2016, and is expected to lay the groundwork for negotiations to begin on a nuclear weapons ban treaty.

“While the Republic of the Marshall Islands is holding nuclear weapons states accountable for their failure to disarm in the International Court of Justice, the Australian government continues to justify the utility of the nuclear threat. The time is overdue for us to join the international majority in banning nuclear weapons”, said Gem Romuld, ICAN Australia.

The Tour Schedule:

Monday April 4 in Adelaide

Tuesday April 5 in Melbourne

Wednesday April 6 in Sydney

Thursday April 7 in Brisbane

More detail is available at: www.icanw.org/au/bmwr

Please contact tour organiser Gem Romuld to arrange interviews with the speakers and representatives of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons:
gem@icanw.org / 0421 955 066.