

A Hidden Genocide

Australia a land mass that was comprised of over 430 sovereign Aboriginal Nations at the time of the British Invasion and Colonisation.

Whole nations have been eradicated during this process and it continues. Hidden from the eyes of the world behind pictures of beautiful beaches and Aboriginal sacred sites, used for tourism purposes to promote the 'lucky country' and giving a false impression of valuing Aboriginal cultures.

2007 saw the introduction of the government intervention into the NT, a blatant step backwards in Australia's history with the army being deployed to communities, the suspension of the race relations act, and most disgustingly removing the right of Aboriginal people to self determination.

Aboriginal land granted under the 1976 Land Rights Act was (stolen) 'compulsorily acquired' through 5 year leases. These leases should be coming to an end this year however the Gillard government has decided to implement more draconian measures, announcing the continuation of the Intervention for another 10 years, forcing communities now to sign 40 year leases in return for housing and basic amenities that often do not materialise as promised.

This continued imperialist attitude is further demonstrated by the expansion of the intervention and the introduction of new measures.

One such measure is the removal of welfare payments from parents whose children have more than 10 days of 'unexplained' absences in one term. This measure epitomises the ignorance of the government to Aboriginal cultures, with bilingual education being cut or removed children are expected to attend classes that they do not understand. It also negates to take into consideration important societal milestones and events such as ceremonies and funerals, and the time required to attend such.

In the 6 communities that these measures have already been operational school attendances and registrations have decreased. Suicides and self harm have increased by 50% and incarceration by 30%. Surely this is evidence enough that these measures aren't working. Yet they're continuing and expanding into a further 17 communities.

Allowing a cultural genocide to take place across the NT through this continued discrimination and dispossession that lead to suicides, Galiwinku is now experiencing one suicide a week. Thus helping to support the imperialist agenda of eliminating the first peoples of Australia from existence.

Whilst the Intervention has abolished community councils, seized assets and destroyed productive activities such as land management programs, municipal and cultural works, small tourism and farming ventures by removing the wages paid to Aboriginal people. (Aus)\$2.5 billion has been spent on moving Balander bureaucrats and contractors into communities, paid at extortionate rates whilst providing no benefit to the indigenous population.

The extension of the Intervention also sees changes made regarding to quarantining of welfare payments for those suffering from alcoholism, currently 50% of their payment is held back to be spent via a Basics Card on government authorised purchases (food, clothing and rent) in selected stores. The law now allows for 70% to be quarantined, yet little to no investment has been made in preventative or addiction support services in communities. Alcoholism and other social problems are a direct result of the brutal history inflicted on Aboriginal people at the hands of British and Australian governments.

It must also be noted, that alcoholism is rife throughout the non indigenous population yet no sanctions have been placed on them.

Ramingining Elder Mathew Dhulumburrk, a 67 year old Gupapuyngu man has said that the Yolngu people feel that the 'true enemy of our people is the government...they have declared war on us....The government is drowning us slowly and wonders why twice as many of our young people are attempting suicide....Community empowerment is vital for tackling issues in the community, but the intervention leaves their hands tied.....we need bilingual education, Yolngu teachers and Elders involved in developing curriculum.'

Homelands and remote communities have been proven to be better for Aboriginal people, ensuring that they retain their connection to country, forcing Yolngu into urban areas where they're on foreign land is destructive to the retention of law, culture and traditions, thus increasing the social problems the Intervention claims to address.

Aboriginal people need our support just as other oppressed peoples suffering human rights abuses at the hands of governments around the globe do.

Maybe instead of threatening Iran with sanctions the UK should be pursuing the Australian government for their crimes against humanity, this at least would be legitimate given that the Queen is still our head of state. Oh but wait we want the natural resources that we can exploit from Aboriginal land.