



ICAAD
Human Rights Innovation

YEAR IN REVIEW

DRIVING TRANSFORMATIVE HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRESS



December 2023

Letter from the ICAAD Team

A Year Like No Other

Dear friends,

ICAAD was founded over a decade ago, after recognizing the need for human rights advocacy that drives systemic change. Rather than tackling each individual issue of discrimination, we developed a model to address the major human rights challenges of our time with the goal that this model echoes through future generations.

Innovation, multidisciplinary project design and close collaboration with local partners form the pillars of how we work. From deep engagement with communities most impacted by injustice – survivors of gender-based violence, indigenous communities, victims of hate crimes and more – we bring together diverse teams to problem-solve for lasting impact. Our initiatives are adaptive to the changing needs and priorities of the people we serve, and are built to be sustainable into the future.

This year, we have had our biggest impact yet. To address the persistent needs of climate-frontline communities, we published our Right to Life with Dignity advocacy brief which lays out a pioneering framework to protect the more than 60 million climate-displaced people around the world. Our work tackling gender-based violence has also made major inroads with the launch of TrackGBV Caribbean. With support from UN Women and partner law firms, we are working to change laws and strengthen protections for 14 million women and girls.

Hate crimes and hate speech are on the rise in the U.S. and around the world, which led us to launch our Countering Hate initiative this year. We identified where the major gaps in hate crimes data collection exist in the U.S., and are using this to more effectively advocate for marginalized communities in the country. Our arts and activism initiative also saw tremendous success this year. From an exhibition at Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, law firm in New York, to an exhibit at an artspace in New Delhi, our resident artists are receiving unprecedented exposure for their collections that continues to grow.

As we look to the future, we're acutely aware of the global challenges that exist in tackling systemic injustice. The climate crisis is only intensifying, with persistent lack of accountability by major carbon emitters to support those on the climate frontline. Gender-based violence continues to be one of the most entrenched human rights obstacles, with outdated laws and policies impeding access to justice. The rise of far-right movements is fueling division and hate, making it more difficult to foster community and solidarity.

Tackling these issues requires creative solutions. At ICAAD, we will continue working to reverse these trends so we can build a more equitable future. Thank you for being a part of our journey. We're filled with gratitude, and we look forward to what 2024 will bring.

With care,

Hansdeep Singh, Jaspreet Singh, Erin Thomas, Jyoti Diwan, and Sara Lobo
ICAAD Team



Supporting Climate-Displaced People

Right to Life with Dignity Initiative

This year, we published our Right to Life with Dignity advocacy briefing which lays out a pioneering legal framework to protect climate-displaced people, who currently lack any protections under international law. This briefing was created with over 40 scientists, lawyers, frontline activists and researchers. We set out a call for displaced people to be featured on the COP28 agenda and held a global training on climate change and international law with the Global Green Recovery Collaborative.

Our continued work with the Indigenous Banaban community, who were displaced due to environmental degradation last century and face protracted human rights struggles, saw global exposure this year. We collaborated to host an arts exhibition in Auckland to bring their story to the world. We helped organize the first ever World Indigenous Summit for the Banaban people, attended by Fijian ministers. In the face of efforts by an Australian phosphate company to explore re-mining Banaba, we supported a successful global campaign against re-mining. We also published a policy brief on the displacement and dispossession of Banaba that has been used to support key advocacy objectives.



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Climate change is already creating human rights abuses, especially for those already migrating without access to dignified migration pathways. As the crisis worsens, it's important to know how the right to life with 'dignity' applies to climate mobility, and what it means beyond Eurocentric frameworks. *Dr. Olivia Yates, Advocacy Policy & Research Advisor, Worldvision*

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Right to Life with Dignity Spotlight: Justice for Rabi

ICAAD's arts exhibition Justice for Rabi: The Story of Banaba took place in Auckland this year, attended by over 800 people and members of New Zealand Parliament. The exhibition told the story of Rabi Island and the Banaban people, displaced from their island home in the Pacific over 70 years ago as a result of colonial mining and environmental destruction. It is now available to view in a [virtual exhibit](#).



“

We can't just keep telling the story of devastation and vulnerability over and over again. Where does the crisis end, if not with justice? *Katerina Teaiwa, Project Banaba*

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Tackling Gender-Based Violence

TrackGBV Initiative

One of the major challenges to tackling gender-based violence is access to information about the obstacles facing survivors, ranging from reporting difficulties to bias and discrimination within the judicial system. Leveraging law and data/tech, we are working to identify where the gaps in access to justice are in order to improve outcomes for women and girls.

After years of working to tackle gender-based violence in the Pacific, we published our [TrackGBV Country Reports](#), which lay out the bias and discrimination within the justice sector across Pacific Island countries. We also launched TrackGBV Caribbean this year – beginning with Barbados, Jamaica and Grenada. These two regions have exceedingly high rates of gender-based violence and limited transparency. Working with partners, we won a case at the [Caribbean Court of Justice](#) to support domestic violence survivors. We also overturned a law in Barbados that criminalizes girls for being “uncontrollable”. Our TrackGBV project continues to focus on training local civil society and government officials on the gender discrimination issues affecting their respective country – so they can be advocates for change themselves.



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The session on TrackGBV Dashboard was a great resource tool. It shows the data on the issues of sexual harassment in each of the countries in the Pacific and the data on the legal processes – it gives me the push I need when creating sexual harassment policy and how I can be able to somehow help in a way with the legal process of it to be transparent and accountable. *Pricilla Ragu, Solomon Islands Women in Media and Communications.*

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TrackGBV Spotlight: Big Win at the Caribbean Court of Justice

The protection of spouses and partners across the Caribbean is certain to be strengthened after a landmark ruling this year at the Caribbean Court of Justice. We worked with Barbadian non-profit Operation Safe Space, UN Women and Clifford Chance to make it happen.



Earlier this year, claimant Roxann Rachel Goddard brought her case to the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) after being denied a protection order against her ex-partner, with whom she shares a child. The Court in Barbados, where she brought her claim, had dismissed her application for protection under the Domestic Violence Act due to the fact that Roxann was no longer in a relationship with her partner at the time of filing. While the court provided an interim protection order for the child, it did not find Roxann eligible for protection.

In a landmark ruling, the Caribbean Court of Justice overturned the Court's decision, asserting that former spouses and partners have a right to seek protection orders and that there is no time limit for seeking protection after a relationship ends. The approach taken by the Barbadian court, said the CCJ, would also leave the mother exposed to the risk of violence, "without the realization that it was in the best interest of the child to protect the mother as well as the child."

Represented by lawyer Anya Lorde and supported by pro bono lawyers at Clifford Chance, ICAAD joined with Operation Safe Space in filing an amicus curiae brief in support of the claimant. The legal research and victim survey submitted as part of our amicus were crucial in deciding the case. We also worked with the lawyer for the claimant, Lalu Hanuman. UN Women also filed an amicus brief in the case.

Advancing Activism through the Arts

Artivism Initiative

We're currently working with six emerging and underrepresented artists from around the world who are exploring issues of human rights across topics including colonialism and climate change, law and justice, discrimination, and displacement. This is based on our belief that arts play a powerful role in challenging harmful narratives, building solidarity and communicating across borders and languages. This year, we launched three virtual galleries and four in-person exhibitions.

- Dicta by Harbani Ahuja has been on display at the offices of Manatt and Clifford Chance in New York and Los Angeles. The virtual gallery, created in partnership with y'all, received a Webby honoree nod.
- Colonialism and the Climate Crisis by Namita Kulkarni was on display in Bangalore and launched in a virtual gallery.
- Vishavjit Singh's short film American Sikh had its global premiere at Tribeca, has been shown at film festivals across the country, and was featured on Good Morning America. It is also an Oscar qualified animated short.
- Queen's exhibit, re:covering (The Reflection Sessions), launched in a virtual gallery.
- Katja Phutaraksa Neef's co-designed multidisciplinary exhibition, Justice for Rabi, with the Banaban community, included an in-person exhibit in Auckland and a virtual one.
- Dilpreet Bhullar's collection A Home in the Constant Flux: A Call to the Verb Memory launched at the Simurgh Center in New Delhi.



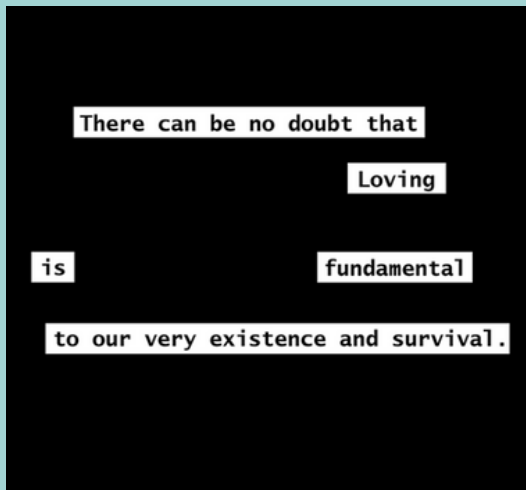
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Far too often, we see the climate crisis framed as a matter of carbon emissions that we can compensate or offset our way around. **I wanted to create a series of paintings that make explicit the link between colonialism and the climate crisis**, and also point to indigenous perspectives that dominant culture excludes. *Namita Kulkarni, ICAAD Artist in Residence.*



Advancing Activism through the Arts

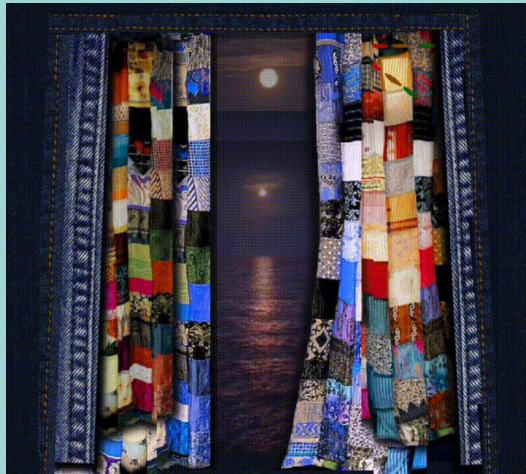
Artist Spotlights



Dicta by Harbani Ahuja



Justice for Rabi by Katja Phutaraska Neef



re:covering by Queen



A Home in the Constant Flux: A Call to the Verb Memory by Dilpreet Bhullar



Colonialism and the Climate Crisis by Namita Kulkarni



American Sikh by Vishavjit Singh

Countering Hate

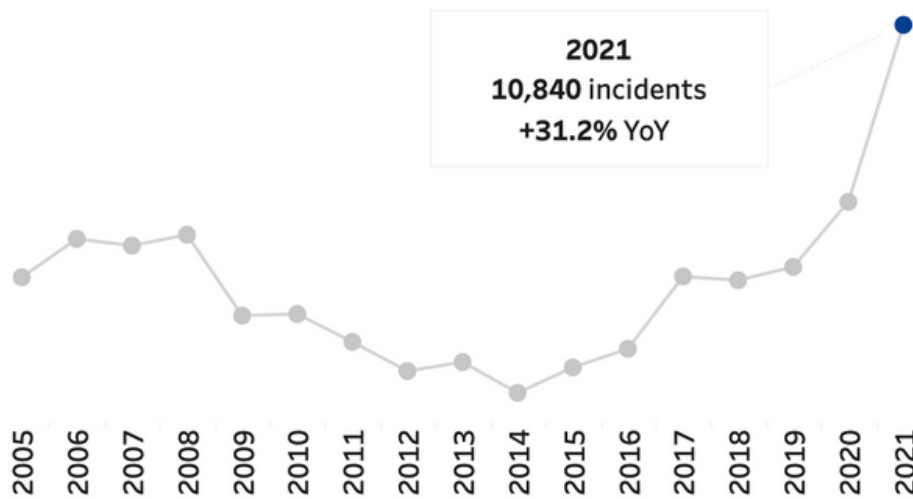
Tackling Hate Crimes in the U.S.

This year, ICAAD launched our Countering Hate initiative as part of our mission to tackle structural discrimination. Hate crime incidents are on the rise in the U.S., having increased nearly 31.2% in 2021 compared to the previous year.

Our Countering Hate Data Dashboard analyzes existing hate crimes information and identifies where there are inadequacies in data collection and analysis. Using this dashboard, we create specific recommendations to improve reporting and shine a light on the real scope of hate crimes in the United States. By increasing access to information around the prevalence of hate crimes, and identifying where gaps exist, we are able to advocate for stronger protections for minority communities in the country.

Next year, we will be developing partnerships with institutions and nonprofit organizations working to counter hate crimes and hate speech in the U.S. We are also exploring the use of AI tools to track the link between hate speech and hate crimes, as well as sentiment analysis of news reports for hate crimes, to augment our data with qualitative information that can help counter hate.

Nationally, reported hate crime incidents increased **31.2%** in 2021.



I'm committed to building religious tolerance in my role as Equinix's Interfaith ERG Founder, and believe ICAAD's work plays a critical role in promoting solidarity, countering hate and helping to build more meaningful connections across our society. *Marsie Sweetland, ICAAD Board Member*



Providing Human Rights Education Supporting the Next Generation of Advocates

We are providing human rights activists and advocates with the tools they need to bring about systemic human rights progress. Our online and in-person course offerings provide practical skills and resources for how to leverage media, arts, law data and more to advance social justice.

This year, we opened our first online facilitated course offering, “How To Be An Effective Human Right Advocate.” The five-week session will begin in February, and will be followed by several more courses next year. We also launched our Mentorship Program, which provides individualized support for anyone interested in human rights, along with a new offering of services to support businesses, nonprofits and individuals looking to enhance their advocacy. This includes data visualization and analysis services, strategic litigation support, anti-discrimination and sexual harassment policy expertise, and more.

Over the course of 2023, ICAAD conducted trainings, workshops and engagements with over 750 partners, students, researchers and activists. As our Human Rights Education offerings continue to grow, we will engage with more partners and organizations next year from around the world, making a lasting impact as an advocacy and educational center.



“

My biggest takeaway is a clearer understanding of power and how crucial it is in creating change. That we have to be able to identify power and also develop and enhancing our own power in ethical ways. *2023 Advocacy Strategy Workshop Participant*

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Investing in Sustainable Development

TrackSDG Initiative

Despite efforts to advance the SDGs, progress is not looking promising – with only 15% of targets on track to be met. One of the core problems with SDG efforts is there is often little to no consideration of the human rights landscape of countries where projects are being implemented. For a nonprofit or a business, understanding a country's human rights track record related to each SDG is key to planning impactful projects.

ICAAD's TrackSDGs initiative was created to help address this lack of progress. Using human rights data, we provide stakeholders with the knowledge to develop initiatives that are sustainable and that can best address the root causes of inequity – with a focus on helping communities most in need.

This year, ICAAD attended the UN SDG Action Weekend at the UN General Assembly. Meeting with partners and stakeholders from around the world, we pushed for stronger action to advance sustainable development and human rights.



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More effective allocation of resources, and changes in laws and policies, are needed to ensure that development does not come at the cost of human rights, and does not further entrench the structural inequalities impacting marginalized communities around the world. *Sara Lobo, ICAAD Communications & Development Lead*



Advocacy Spotlights

Supporting the Right to Life with Dignity in Tonga

This year, ICAAD supported Dare to Dream ('Amanaki Lelei) Foundation to advocate for the right to life with dignity of Tongan returnees.

Collective testimony from the five founding returnees: “We just found out that we all share a Common Dream: To make better human beings out of ourselves and others whom we can help through our life-stories. **To be involved in this humanitarian but very worthwhile venture that is much needed in Tonga.** To help this target group of human beings that have been abandoned and stigmatized by society and make great gentlemen out of them.



We are hoping to remove the stigma and make the word “deportee” a symbol of hope and better life for all. Society also needs to change their mindset about returnees so we are willing to make a difference to convince the societal change of mindset and attitude.”

Addressing U.S. Military Harm in the Pacific

Ahead of U.S. President Biden’s first-ever anticipated visit to Papua New Guinea (PNG), we joined a network of regional civil society organizations and human rights advocates stressing the need for a regional compensation mechanism to address the harm caused by the U.S. military to the Pacific region.

We called on Pacific governments to ensure that Biden’s pivot to the region include a regional compensation mechanism to address past harm, the end of military expansion in the region, and a commitment to promoting a nuclear-free Pacific.

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The U.S. has pledged renewed support to the region with diplomatic and military engagements. But this has not been accompanied with any real measures to address the ongoing environmental and public health concerns resulting from the historical and ongoing presence of the U.S. military. The U.S. must stop paying lip service to the human rights of those living in the Pacific and start taking action to right these historical wrongs. *Erin Thomas, ICAAD Director + Change Facilitator*



Pro Bono Spotlight

Manatt x ICAAD

Since 2014, Manatt, Phelps & Phillips has provided ICAAD with pro bono resources to advance human rights globally. Legal research has helped us change laws to benefit over 7 million women and girls globally as we work to tackle gender-based violence. With Manatt's help, we developed our pioneering sexual harassment training program across the Pacific. Sponsorship of our Artivism project has facilitated our artist residency and public arts projects.

“Dicta is a brilliant showcase of how written laws in the justice system do not always reflect the injustice of the world, and bridges art and activism in a way that connects people with something that can feel as intangible or impersonal as Supreme Court decisions. Providing access to justice for all, no matter a person’s skin color, gender identity, sexuality or immigration status, is part of Manatt’s DNA, and we’re extremely proud to partner with ICAAD to feature Harbani’s incredible work highlighting the legal inequities we too often see for historically underrepresented communities.” – Sirena Castillo, Manatt Partner and Director of Pro Bono



Clifford Chance x ICAAD

Clifford Chance has been a longstanding ICAAD partner, providing both pro bono assistance and financial support for our projects tackling gender-based violence, supporting climate justice, and advancing activism through the arts. We’ve collaborated to create a first-of-its-kind handbook to tackle gender-based violence in the Pacific; worked together on two successful human rights cases to support women and girls in the Caribbean; and were thrilled to have Clifford Chance support our Artivism initiative with an exhibit of Dicta in their New York Office. Clifford Chance has also been instrumental in our Right to Life with Dignity initiative and full policy paper which will be published next year.



ICAAD Team Spotlights

Internship Program

This year, we brought on board interns Komalpreet Toor, Chloé Hupin and Anjali Joshi-Dave. Chloé helped support our [Artivism initiative](#), Anjali helped research the link between hate crimes, the climate crisis and [health impacts](#), and Komalpreet supported our human rights work in [Tonga](#).

“I think the ability to listen is a very important part of advocacy work. Listening can serve as a counterbalance within societies, like America, that so highly value personal advantage and gain. The best advocacy work happens when people approach others with listening and self-awareness, rather than operating for their own motives. This allows advocates to achieve a deeper understanding of peoples’ situations and needs.” – ICAAD Intern Chloé Hupin



“I would like to expand what voices are heard, included, and are able to participate in the creation of policies, interventions, and more. By creating more pathways that allow everyone to participate, better solutions can be created.” – ICAAD Intern Anjali Joshi-Dave



Artivism Program

ICAAD Artist in Residence Katja Phutaraska Neef shared: **“One of the biggest takeaways from working with ICAAD this year has been the importance of relationship-building and partnerships.** I found that our most valuable and impactful work has come from organic and strong partnerships we have built in the Pacific. Through our long-standing and close relationship with the Banaban Human Rights Defenders Network, earlier this year, we were able to bring over 13 youth advocates, dancers, knowledge holders, elders, and community leaders to Aotearoa New Zealand. We were able to showcase Banaban artwork, handicrafts, art-making practice, storytelling, and traditional dance to unpack and explore the history of Banaba and how it is deeply rooted in New Zealand’s colonial landscape. The biggest impact were that the Banaban youth themselves were able to reclaim their history and stories and share them through different mediums and tell their own stories and narratives which impacted anyone they came across.

Erin has always reminded me through our work that ‘relationships are the project’ and that has always stuck to me and I have seen the true meaning of it through the impactful and relational work that ICAAD does at all levels. **It is rare to work with such an incredible organisation that can occupy and sit at the intersection of so many realms but remain accountable to communities** and be driven by the relationships and yet leverage powerful tools and international connections which is where the key change can happen.”



Events, Workshops and Trainings

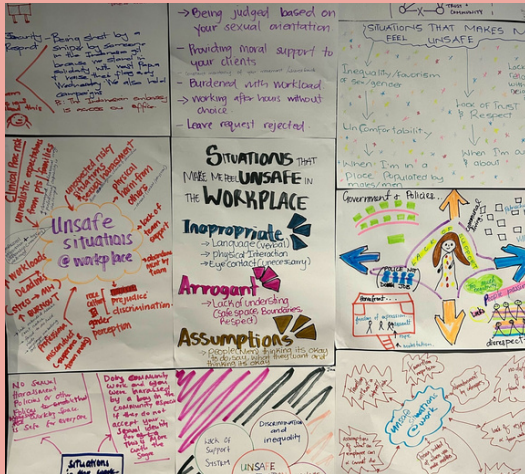
Supporting Partners Around the World



Training to Strengthen Access to Justice in Tonga



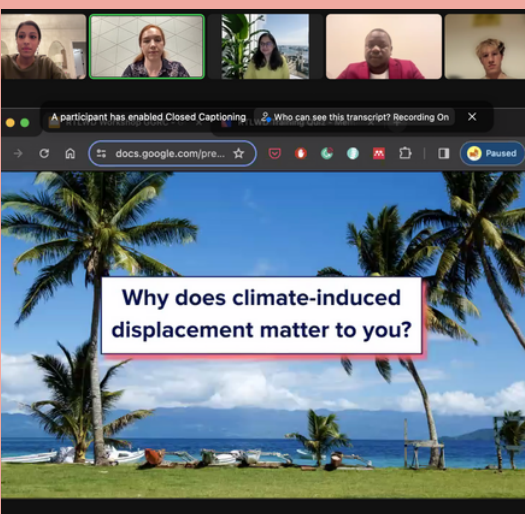
World Indigenous Day Summit for Banaban Changemakers



FRWM's Regional Feminist Learning Convening



ICAAD at RightsCon



Event with GGRC: Climate Mobility and International Law



Event with Dasvandh Network: Advancing Activism through the Arts



ICAAD in the Media

Amplifying the Impact of our Work

Australian company Centrex under fire from Banaban islanders displaced by past phosphate mines

Pacific Beat / By Marian Faa
Posted Tue 29 Aug 2023 at 7:02pm, updated Tue 29 Aug 2023 at 7:10pm



[ABC Australia](#)

Displaced people need to be on COP28 agenda - human rights group

2:10 pm on 29 November 2023 Share this     


 Eleisha Foon, RNZ Pacific Journalist
[@eleishafoon](#)



[Radio New Zealand](#)

As Banabans fall through the cracks they get help from ICAAD

From Pacific Waves, 6:02 am on 7 September 2023
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Amid fears of a renewal of mining on the already decimated Kiribati island of Banaba, the residents there, and on Rabi Island in Fiji, have been receiving help from an international advocacy group called ICAAD.



Banabans celebrating World Indigenous Day 2023 Photo: International Center for Advocates Against Discrimination (ICAAD)

The mining plans are now in abeyance after an outcry over Banabans being shut out of the decision making and ICAAD wants the world to be aware of their plight.

[Radio New Zealand](#)

 BARBADOS TODAY
Local Court Sports Business Caribbean Travel Magazines Festival Pulse

Home / Local News / Judicial / Local group seeks further security for women as CCJ rules in protection order case



Local group seeks further security for women as CCJ rules in protection order case

[Barbados Today](#)

Pacific project Pacific islands

Mining once made this Pacific island unliveable, now residents fear its return

Australian mining company puts Banaba exploration plan on hold amid islanders' concerns their phosphate-rich homeland may again be exploited



[The Guardian](#)

The Fiji Times

Call to review | Banaban community on Fiji's Rabi Island wants change

From The Crowd, Local News, News, Opinion | Published: September 6, 2023 | Last Updated: December 6, 2023 | By RNZ

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Banabans protest on Rabi Island. Picture: International Center for Advocates Against Discrimination (ICAAD)

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Partner Spotlight

Without Whom, Our Work Would Not Be Possible

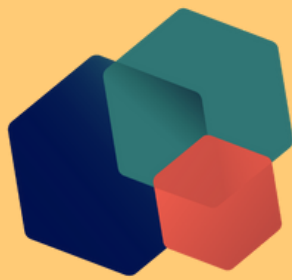


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