



HINDU COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND Incorporated

(Registered with Charities Commission Regd No: CC31281; Donee organisation status from IRD)

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DHARMA COMMUNITIES AGAINST VIOLENCE

A statement by the Hindu Council of New Zealand in support of the National Statement

Violence in many communities is a significant moral and social challenge that we currently face. Hindu Council of New Zealand (HCNZ), a group of dedicated volunteers from the Hindu community of New Zealand, believes it is our responsibility to take a stand and address this.

Violence has been eschewed by Hindu Dharma in the most ancient yet most modern writings of Hindu philosophy and scriptures, as is evidenced in the part of a shloka that appears in many Sanskrit works, including the Mahabharata.

“Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah”

This phrase was the guiding principle for the Hindu leader Mahatma Gandhi in the non-violent (Ahimsa) struggle for freedom against British colonisers in India. Within Aotearoa Maori society, a strikingly similar stand on non-violence was taken by Te Whiti O Rongomai of Taranaki fifty years before Mahatma Gandhi.

The stand Hindu Dharma has on opposition to violence is not just a mere matter of faith or religion, indeed religion and faith have often been one of the worst offenders in numerous brutal wars in human history, and the silent sufferers in those wars have primarily been women and children.

Hindu Dharma’s stand on non-violence or Ahimsa is a well thought out and reasoned principle, and hence a Dharmic principle, since violence threatens a family and society in a way that brings suffering not only to an individual but for generations.

Violence, especially violence against women and children, is not OK. Often the most vulnerable victims of violence are children. Our children deserve the best we can offer them. Accordingly, we have come together, as a Dharmic community, to affirm the following:

We Believe children are our future and a significant and precious gift to society today.

We Believe children embody the hope, promises and values of our Dharma.

We Believe our Dharmic values and traditions will live on through our children

We Believe the well-being of children is our responsibility.

We Believe children deserve our compassion, kindness, love and care.

We Believe we can make a difference in the lives of children and families.

We will not tolerate family violence and we will not turn a blind eye to it. We accept our responsibility to stand up for our children, women and families. We strive to provide places of safety and nurture for the children and families of our community. We will ensure our lay and

paid staff are trained to respond safely to family violence and are well supported with policies and appropriate resources. We will encourage our communities to report family violence, hold perpetrators accountable and provide support for victims. We will partner with community organisations to ensure that families experiencing violence are referred appropriately and provided with counselling, anger management, prayers, yoga & meditation. We will advocate with government for policies and resources to address family violence.

We will strive to educate the families with values of Ahimsa (non-violence in thought, word and deed).

From

Executive Committee

Hindu Council of New Zealand Inc

Explanatory note

Translation of the Sanskrit word Dharma into either faith or religion is inaccurate, it is more accurate to use the phrase Dharma when indicating Hindu community and culture.

We have incorporated the appropriate terminologies for the benefit of Hindus, second largest community in NZ (64,392 - 2006 Census) who have adopted the Dharmic way of life.

We have also proposed to use the knowledge and techniques available in the scriptures to promote non-violence as a way of life.

Quick Statistics about Culture and Identity – 2006 Census

Other religions

In the 2006 Census, just over 2 million people, or 55.6 per cent of those answering the religious affiliation question, affiliated with a Christian religion (including Māori Christian).

- In contrast with the small decrease in people affiliating with Christian religions between 2001 and 2006, there was an increase in people affiliating with non-Christian religions.
- The number of people indicating an affiliation with the Sikh religion increased from 5,196 to 9,507 (up 83.0 %) between 2001 and 2006, while people affiliated with either.

Hindu Dharma followers (up from 39,798 to 64,392) increased by 61.8 per cent

Islam (up from 23,631 to 36,072) also increased by 52.6 per cent

- The increases in people affiliating with these non-Christian religions is mainly attributed to migrants, particularly from Asia. Almost 8 in 10 people (78.8 %) affiliated with the Hindu Dharma were born overseas, particularly in Southern Asia and the Pacific Islands. A similar proportion of people affiliating with Islam (77.0 %) were born overseas, mainly in Southern Asia, but also in the Middle East.