

NEW ZEALAND

Tena koutou and greetings,

My name is Kris Faafoi and I am the Minister of Justice for the New Zealand government.

It is a privilege to address the UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on behalf of New Zealand today.

I would like to thank Japan for hosting this congress and congratulate them on the adoption of the Kyoto Declaration.

The Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated how interconnected our world is, and how many of the challenges we face are truly global. In these times, our support for organisations like the UN and the multilateral rules-based order becomes even more important.

For this address, I would like to cover some of our Government's broad priorities in crime prevention. However, I first need to acknowledge the tragic terrorist attack on Christchurch mosques which happened on March the fifteenth of 2019.

In our response, we banned military-style semi-automatic weapons, increased sentences for firearms crimes, and passed legislation to introduce a fire-arms register.

In May of 2019, our Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, with French President, Emmanuel Macron, brought together Heads of State and leaders from the tech sector to adopt the 'Christchurch Call' – aimed at eliminating terrorist and violent extremist content online.

We have also announced measures focused on tackling discrimination and other harmful behaviour, as well as measures to strengthen New Zealand's counter-terrorism laws.

Our Government is also addressing inequality and discrimination in the criminal justice system, and we're committed to reducing offending and improving rehabilitation.

In 2018 we launched a programme focused on improving the connection between the community and the justice system, reducing the disproportionate impact on our indigenous Māori population, reducing family violence and sexual violence, and reassessing the balance between rehabilitation and punishment, and early prevention.

We acknowledge the importance of comprehensive, evidence-based approaches to crime prevention. The Government's trans-national organised crime strategy brings together agencies to tackle organised crime with greater coordination.

New Zealand is currently undergoing its review - under the second cycle of the UN Convention against Corruption review mechanism - and we are looking forward to beginning a review under the UN convention against Trans-national Organised Crime later this year.

New Zealand also supports effective international cooperation on issues such as cybercrime, and recently we announced our decision to accede to the Budapest Convention.

Like all countries, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented many issues for operating our justice system.

Our response has included the rapid adoption of technology, changing processes in our courts, and introducing social distancing.

COVID has changed so much in the world, and has added another dimension to keeping each other safe. So imagine if that could underpin an effective, inclusive, and humane justice system which better supports victims and their families.

I wish you all the very best for this congress.

So from New Zealand, thank you – and take care.