

DOCUMENT 1

New Zealand lawmakers reject proposed law to redefine the country's founding Treaty of Waitangi

APNews, by Charlotte Graham-McLay, April 10, 2025

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — New Zealand lawmakers dealt an overwhelming defeat Thursday to a controversial proposed law seeking to redefine the country's founding treaty between Māori tribes and the British Crown.

The Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi bill was rejected by Parliament in a 112 to 11 vote in Wellington, halting its progress to a third and final vote. Cheers and applause erupted before lawmakers and the public sang a waiata — a traditional Māori song — after the result was announced.

The sweeping reinterpretation of the 1840 treaty signed by British representatives and 500 Māori chiefs during New Zealand's colonization was never expected to become law. But the measures provoked a fraught debate about Indigenous rights and last November prompted the biggest race relations protest in the country's history.

But its defeat did not spell the end for scrutiny of Māori rights in New Zealand law.

What is the Treaty of Waitangi?

The Treaty guides the relationship between the government and Māori, with its meaning established through decades of legislation and court rulings. It promised tribes broad rights to retain their lands and protect their interests in return for ceding governance to the British.

But two versions of the document were signed — one in English and one in Māori — and while both promised Māori the rights and privileges of British citizens, the documents differed on what authority the chiefs were ceding. Crown breaches of both created steep disenfranchisement for Māori, who still face stark inequities.

Since an Indigenous protest movement surged in the 1970s, Treaty considerations have been a growing part of New Zealand law. Redress efforts have bolstered a dwindling Māori language and culture — now experiencing a resurgence — and resulted in billion-dollar settlements for stolen Māori land.

What did the Treaty Principles Bill say?

The bill sought to end the 185-year conversation about the Treaty's meaning by enacting in law particular definitions for each clause and specifying that any rights should apply to all New Zealanders. Its author — libertarian lawmaker David Seymour, who is Māori — has decried what he said were special rights and privileges on the basis of race.

In his speech to lawmakers Thursday, Seymour said New Zealanders should all have “the same rights and duties.”

He urged lawmakers outside his party to break ranks and endorse the bill. None did.

What did opponents say?

Parliamentary opposition leader Chris Hipkins lambasted the bill as “a stain on this country” and accused its supporters of spreading “the myth of Māori special privilege.” He cited the disadvantage of Māori on almost every metric — including higher rates of poverty and ill-health and lower life expectancy.

The Treaty of Waitangi “is not about racial privilege or racial superiority,” said opposition lawmaker Willie Jackson. “It is and always has been about legal rights Māori have in their contract with the Crown.”

Parliament received 300,000 written submissions from members of the public — more than a proposed law had ever received before — 90% of them opposed to the measures.

“This bill has been absolutely annihilated,” said Hana-Rāwhiti Maipi-Clarke, an opposition lawmaker from Te Pāti Māori, the Māori political party.

Maipi-Clarke faces disciplinary proceedings at Parliament for her protest of the bill’s first vote last November, when she tore up a copy of the measures while performing a haka — a Māori chant of challenge — as she and colleagues walked towards Seymour. The lawmakers refused to attend a hearing on their conduct this month, because they said Parliament does not respect tikanga — Māori cultural protocols.

Why did the measures get so far?

Despite its unpopularity, the proposed law passed its first vote due to a quirk of New Zealand’s political system that allows tiny parties to negotiate outsized influence for their agendas.

Prime Minister Christopher Luxon agreed his lawmakers would endorse the bill at its first reading to fulfil a political deal with Seymour that handed Luxon power. Without enough seats to govern after the 2023 election, Luxon negotiated support from two minor parties, including Seymour’s, in return for political concessions.

They included Luxon’s early support for the Treaty Principles bill, although the New Zealand leader always said he would later oppose it. Luxon’s opponents on Thursday derided his political dealings.

What happens next?

The Treaty Principles Bill was not the only measure Luxon agreed to that will scrutinize the Treaty’s influence on New Zealand law and policy. Another of Seymour’s initiatives, already enacted, directed public agencies to stop targeting policies to specifically redress Māori inequities.

Luxon also agreed to consider and either replace or repeal mentions of the Treaty of Waitangi throughout most New Zealand laws.

DOCUMENT 2

UN sounds alarm on NZ racism and Māori rights

Te Ao Maori News, by Te Aniwaniwa Peterson, December 7, 2025

CERD highlights urgent concerns over youth justice and persistent hate speech by politicians and public figures.

In its longest and most critical review of New Zealand to date, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) has raised alarm over sweeping government reforms it says risk breaching Māori rights.

CERD monitors, reviews, and guides State Parties, such as New Zealand, on how they are implementing the legally binding International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

Commenting on the report, Lady Tureiti Moxon said: "This report is unprecedented in both its length and its language. CERD is clear: New Zealand is moving backwards on racial equality, and Māori rights are under serious threat.

Māori land rights and environmental concerns

The committee expressed serious concern about Māori land rights in Aotearoa. To date, only a small fraction of land, resources, and territories have been returned, with redress often limited to symbolic measures like apologies or monetary compensation.

The committee highlighted that Māori participation in decisions affecting their traditional lands and resources is often limited, with insufficient opportunities for meaningful engagement or free, prior, and informed consent. It called on New Zealand to improve settlement processes, expand redress options, and ensure that legislation, regulations, and administrative practices fully respect Māori rights to self-determination, ownership, use, and control of traditional lands and resources.

The report noted that environmental degradation and climate change pose additional threats to Māori health, livelihoods, and cultural identity. The committee urged for measures to address the disproportionate impacts on Māori. Its recommendations included ensuring full participation in policy and decision-making, strengthening protections for land, waterways, coastal areas and taonga species, and committing to long-term restoration and climate-adaptation planning.

Obligations to Te Tiriti o Waitangi

The committee recalled its previous recommendations for New Zealand to uphold its commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and to take measures to counter misinformation and divisive narratives regarding the Treaty, promoting public understanding of its role in advancing harmony and equality.

CERD expressed concern that recent initiatives to reinterpret the Treaty and its established principles have been made without ensuring free, prior, and informed consent or meaningful engagement of Māori.

Despite these international concerns, the Minister for Māori Crown Relations, Tama Potaka, has denied that the government is dismantling Te Tiriti-based frameworks.

In October, Green Party MP Teanau Tuiono asked Potaka in Parliament about concerns raised by Te Hunga Rōia Māori and other groups regarding alleged erosion of Māori rights and racial discrimination in government reforms.

Tuiono cited statements describing these reforms as undermining Te Tiriti o Waitangi and potentially breaching international obligations, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The Minister rejected these characterisations and also denied any “coordinated campaign of Treaty racism” or efforts to delegitimise Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Racism and hate-motivated violence

The committee expressed grave concern about the 2019 terrorist attack in Christchurch. While welcoming the establishment of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the attacks, it noted limited progress in implementing the Commission’s recommendations, which aimed to improve social cohesion and prevent hate-motivated crimes and hate speech, both online and offline.

The committee highlighted the ongoing problem of racist hate speech by politicians and public figures, expressing concern about its persistence and calling for unequivocal condemnation and effective accountability measures to address it.

The report stated that although most reported hate-motivated offences target a person’s ethnicity, hate motivation is rarely invoked as an aggravating factor in prosecutions and sentencing, noting continuing incidents of racially motivated attacks targeting Māori, Pasifika, people of Asian, African, and Middle Eastern descent, as well as Muslim and Jewish communities.

The committee recommended accelerating implementation of the Royal Commission’s recommendations, strengthening legislation to respond to hate crimes, improving data collection on hate speech, and ensuring all cases are impartially investigated. Awareness-raising and education programmes should also be enhanced, the committee stressed.

The report noted that far-right extremism and white supremacism remain significant national security threats, yet these groups have often been able to promote racial discrimination with limited accountability. The committee urged New Zealand to bring legislation fully in line with Article 4 of the Convention, declaring illegal and prohibiting far-right extremist, white supremacist, and other racist organisations and propaganda.

Finally, the committee expressed concern about persistent racial stereotypes and recommended intensifying efforts to prevent and counter them, including revising educational curricula to promote understanding of historical injustices and the legacies of colonialism.

The committee also called attention to the lack of progress in adopting a National Action Plan Against Racism and the absence of a national plan to implement the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). It urged New Zealand to fully give effect to the Convention, including through the implementation of both frameworks, to strengthen efforts to combat racism and uphold Indigenous rights.

Children and youth at risk

CERD expressed concern over proposals under the Oranga Tamariki (Responding to Serious Youth Offending) Amendment Bill (2024), especially the introduction of military-style “boot camps” for young people, citing documented risks of harm and abuse. The committee urged New Zealand to adopt holistic, human-rights-based, community-focused approaches that prioritise rehabilitation, support, and addressing the root causes of youth offending in collaboration with affected communities.

The committee highlighted the risk that the repeal of Section 7AA of the Oranga Tamariki Act exposes Māori children to abuse, neglect, and further alienation from Māori structures, cultural identity, and whakapapa, and believed it should be restored to enable a “whanau-first” placement approach.

The disestablishment of Te Aka Whai Ora and budget cuts

CERD criticised the disestablishment of Te Aka Whai Ora and significant budget reductions affecting the Ministry for Ethnic Communities, the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, and Te Puni Kōkiri, warning that these weaken New Zealand's institutional framework and risk systemic discrimination.

It recommended revitalising the Māori Health Authority or establishing similar bodies composed of Māori and Pacific health experts to reduce health disparities.

Human Rights Commission and Māori Wards

The committee also noted serious threats to the independence of the New Zealand Human Rights Commission, including calls by politicians to dismantle it, reduced resources, and a lack of an explicit mandate to monitor human rights violations. CERD urged strengthening the Commission and protecting it from political interference.

Political participation was also highlighted, with the committee warning that the removal of Māori wards and certain legislative proposals may undermine the political rights of Māori and Pacific peoples.

DOCUMENT 3

'The government doesn't care': Māori greet New Zealand PM with indifference at muted Waitangi

The Guardian, by Eva Corlett, February 6, 2026

Subdued tone as political leaders spoke on eve of Waitangi Day amid some fatigue in Māori communities over divisive coalition policies

When New Zealand's political leaders gathered to speak at the Waitangi treaty grounds where Māori chiefs and the British Crown forged a nation 186 years ago there was a striking absence: the public.

As a light rain fell on the green peninsula in the far north of New Zealand on Thursday, fewer than 100 people gathered to watch the leaders welcomed onto the grounds, and only a handful of people heckled ministers as they spoke.

The muted tone on the eve of Waitangi day, which commemorates the signing of the nation's founding document the Treaty of Waitangi, marked a dramatic shift from a year earlier. In 2025, protesters turned their backs on government ministers and twice removed a microphone from David Seymour, the Act party leader and architect of the divisive treaty principles bill that sought to radically alter the way the treaty was interpreted. A year earlier, the rightwing coalition government faced record crowds and heated protests over their policies that many fear are undermining the treaty and rolling back Māori rights.

The absence of protest does not necessarily mark a shift of sentiment in favour of the coalition government, which faces an election in November. Rather, it signals fatigue within the Indigenous population, a breakdown in trust in the government, and a desire to refocus attention towards Māori communities, visitors to the grounds tell the Guardian.

"People are tired," says Edward Ellison, an esteemed leader from the southern tribe Ngāi Tahu. "We've been beavering away on submissions, select committees ... and the pace, rate and persistent aggressiveness on the treaty – it hasn't lowered the passion – but there is that exhaustion."

Ngāi Tahu chose to forgo its usual celebrations in the South Island to attend Waitangi for the first time in years as a mark of solidarity and unity with northern iwi, or tribes.

"It was the events of this government, the impact they are having on the treaty and our people, the divisive approach they are taking and pitting New Zealanders against New Zealanders," Ellison says.

Kassie Hartendorp, the director of community campaigning organisation Action Station Aotearoa, says protests have partly subsided because the government had already shown Māori "exactly who they are" and Māori were sick of their time and energy being taken up.

"This coalition government largely doesn't care what Māori think of them ... if they did, we wouldn't have had this absolute onslaught of anti-tiriti [treaty] policies."

The treaty, signed by Māori chiefs and the British Crown in 1840 is considered New Zealand's founding document and is instrumental in upholding Māori rights. It has been commemorated as a public holiday on 6 February since 1974, with events around the country, and a formal multi-day celebration held at the Waitangi grounds.

On Thursday, prime minister Christopher Luxon acknowledged the atmosphere surrounding Waitangi Day had "sometimes been very heated".

“New Zealand must continue to evolve in a way that empowers iwi and Māori while steadfastly protecting the unity of the country,” he said, while listing the articles of the treaty and how his government’s policies were fulfilling its promises.

The leader of the opposition, Labour’s Chris Hipkins said the prime minister’s speech was “a missed opportunity ... to speak specifically to the theme that we were given, which was working together and bringing people together”.

‘Time for us to celebrate each other’

Ellison, meanwhile, found the politicians’ speeches were mostly “underwhelming”.

“I was disappointed with the kōrero (talk) from the politicians – it didn’t inspire confidence that they had a way forward or a clear path that unites us or brings the best out of us,” Ellison said.

On Friday, the mood shifted from muted to celebratory at the treaty grounds as tens of thousands descended to revel in the festivities. It is as much a time for celebration, music, food and community as it is a forum for political discussion about sovereignty, equality and history.

At the dawn ceremony, thousands of visitors nursing hot drinks and wrapped in rugs, spilled over the peninsula. Some held tino rangatiratanga flags – symbols of Māori sovereignty – while others took the chance to boo Seymour, as he delivered a prayer. Later as the sun broke over the bay and the formalities gave way to festivities, the attention turned elsewhere – to music, community and a celebration of Māori culture.

As Hartendorp spoke with the Guardian, waiata (traditional song) rang out from a large forum tent behind her. Stalls selling traditional food, woven bags and carved jewellery heaved with customers. Children darted between their family members and elders fanned themselves in the shade of gazebos. In the bay, thousands lined the banks to watch waka – traditional canoe – slip through the water.

“That’s the beauty of Waitangi, we can come here and be exactly who we are and not have to fight and question it,” Hartendorp said.

“We’ve already had hundreds of thousands of people hīkoi [march], we’ve already broken historical records of submissions, we are a political force ... and right now is a time for us to celebrate each other.”

DOCUMENT 4



Bob Brockie captures the ambiguities and inadequacies of one of New Zealand's founding documents. It appeared in the National Business Review, 8 February 1982.

DOCUMENT 5

♥♥ Join Now Māori group 🇳🇿👑 Koroneihana 2026 Official

Did you know Aotearoa New Zealand has its own Māori monarch? The position comes from the Kingitanga movement, which was created in 1858 to unite different Māori tribes during a time of rapid colonisation and land pressure. Rather than replacing tribal leadership, the monarch acts as a symbolic figure who represents unity and cultural identity for many Māori communities, especially those connected to the Waikato region.

Today, the role is held by Nga wai hono i te po, who became the Māori Queen in September 2024 following the death of her father, King Tūheitia. She was selected by tribal leaders during traditional succession discussions and formally acknowledged at Tūrangawaewae Marae in Ngāruawāhia. Her appointment made her the eighth monarch of the Kingitanga and only the second woman to hold the role in the movement's history.

The Māori monarch does not hold political power in New Zealand's government system. Instead, the position carries cultural and symbolic significance, with the monarch often representing Māori interests at national events and gatherings. The role continues to play an important part in maintaining the traditions and unity of the Kingitanga movement more than 160 years after it was first established.



♥ Join Now Māori group 🇳🇿👑 Koroneihana 2026 Official

HRH The Prince of Wales met with Māori Queen Te Arikinui Kuini Nga wai hono i te po today at Windsor Castle.

The Royal Family Kiingitanga

[#newzealand](#) [#unitedkingdom](#) [#royals](#) [#kingdoms](#) [#sharedvalues](#)

