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Statement to the high-level plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly to commemorate and promote the International Day against Nuclear Tests, September 2021.

My name is Sue Coleman. I am a senior Kokatha woman from Ceduna on the far west coast of South Australia. I was about two years old when nuclear testing started at Maralinga and Emu Fields. I wasn't on ground zero, but the wind brought the radiation fallout to us and the rest of Australia. We didn't know the dangers of the fallout, and no one told my old people about it, but they knew it was poisonous stuff coming our way. It was their instincts telling them.

All of Australia has been contaminated through these nuclear testings that was done by the British and Australian governments. They did it in secret. There is so much cancer around my country, as well as thyroid disease, defects in babies.

There is a threat of a nuclear waste dump on country now, which to me is another form of radiation poisoning just waiting to happen.

The impacts of the Maralinga and Emu Fields testing is still being felt today, over 60 years later. Radiation is not prejudiced. It doesn't care if you are black, white or brindle, rich or poor – it will get you.

I travelled to Vienna, New York and Japan to tell my story and to push for change throughout the world. It's great that the nuclear weapons ban has come into force. Now we must push for all countries to join this Treaty, including Australia.

Just remember the future forever belongs to the next generations, and it would be great if they had animals to share it. It's up to us now to make sure that we finally put these destructive weapons where they belong – in the past.

Thank you for listening.

September 2021