



International Indian Treaty Council

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE INTERNATIONAL INDIAN TREATY COUNCIL (IITC) AND THE NATION OF HAWAII CALL FOR INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT TO STOP THE DESECRATION OF MAUNA KEA SACRED MOUNTAIN

Waimanalo Hawaii, April 13, 2015: The Indigenous People of Hawaii (Kanaka Maoli) and their supporters continue to protest the desecration of Mauna Kea Sacred Mountain located on the Big Island of Hawaii. They are committed to block development of the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMC) project by the Thirty Meter International Observatory (TIO), Goodfellow Bros, the University of Hawai'i (UH), the Office of Mauna Kea Management, the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, and the Hawai'i State Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR). The University of California, California Institute of Technology, National Astronomical Observatories of China and Japan and other international institutions are also providing funding for the project which plans to construct an 18-story high industrial complex telescope, the largest in the world. Thirteen other telescopes currently are located on Mauna Kea.

DLNR's Division of Conservation and Resource Enforcement and county police officers arrested thirty-one defenders, including elders, protesting the development on April 2, 2015. An encampment of defenders has been established at the site and vows to block equipment sent to begin the construction.

Head of State of the Nation of Hawaii and IITC Board member Pu'uuhonua "Bumpy" Kanahale shared his views after participating in the protests on April 7th and 8th: "After I reached the top of the summit at 13,769 ft., I could feel the pain and destruction done to Mauna Kea and realized how much damage had been done to her all this time. The University of Hawaii, State of Hawaii and the scientific community need to stop the desecration of Mauna Kea, NOW!"

The IITC joins the Nation of Hawaii in calling the desecration of Mauna Kea a violation of international law. The United States has illegally occupied Hawaii since 1893 and annexed it as a State in 1959 in violation of its 1826 Peace and Friendship Treaty with the Hawaiian Kingdom. The US continues to claim jurisdiction over the Hawaiian Islands, but has failed to uphold its international obligations to respect the human rights of the Hawaiian People which include preventing the desecration of sacred sites and areas.

The US reversed its position and expressed support for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on December 13th, 2010. The US qualified its support for certain provisions of the Declaration at that time, but has expressed no qualifications of its commitment to uphold the rights affirmed in Article 12 which states "*Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practise, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites...*"

In 2014, in their reviews of US compliance, two international treaty monitoring bodies to which the US is legally accountable also called upon the US to take stronger measures to protect Indigenous Peoples' sacred areas. The United Nation Human Rights Committee which monitors compliance with the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in its March 28th, 2014 Concluding Observations regarding the US, expressed its concern "*about the insufficient measures being taken to protect the sacred areas of indigenous peoples against desecration, contamination and destruction as a result of urbanization, extractive industries, industrial development, tourism and toxic contamination.*" The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the Treaty Monitoring body for the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, in its Concluding Observations issued on August 29th, 2014 called for the US to "*Adopt concrete measures to effectively protect the sacred sites of indigenous peoples...*"

Despite this commitment, the US government has failed intervene to halt the desecration of Mauna Kea. Other countries which are involved in the project through financing or direct engagement must also be held accountable to uphold their international human rights commitments in this regard.

The IITC is requesting that the UN Special Rapporteurs on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Freedom of Religion or Belief, and Cultural Rights as well as the CERD Early Warning and Urgent Action Procedures to call upon the US and other governments to rescind their support for the TMT based on their international human rights obligations. IITC also calls upon the 14th Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues meeting from April 20th through May 1st 2015 to address this critical and urgent situation in its report and recommendations which will be submitted to the UN Economic and Social Council.

The protests will continue as long as the plans for this development move forward. Bumpy Kanahale commits the support of the Nation of Hawaii, while affirming that the only long term solution to this and others cases of sacred sites desecration in Hawaii is to restore the National Sovereignty and implement the full rights of Self-Determination and Governance for the Hawaiian People: “The Nation of Hawaii stands in full support of the frontline action to stop the cultural genocide of Mauna Kea. But in my opinion, the only solution that will stop the construction of the TMT and ongoing desecration of Mauna Kea is to form a Provisional Government of National Unity (PGNU) immediately, a Hawaiian government with all the powers of an independent state. Under public law 103-150, the “Apology Law”, section 1, (5) the Hawaiian government could call upon the President of the United State of America to reopen the Peace Treaty with the U.S. that continues to be violated”.

Address statements of support for the protection of Mauna Kea and to protest the new telescope construction to:

United States State Department:

Ambassador of the United States to the United Nations Human Rights Council Hon. Keith Harper, c/o Leslie Marks, MarksLE@state.gov
Deputy Director and Senior Advisor Lynn Sicade, DRL/MLGA (Office of Multilateral and Global Affairs, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor), SicadeLM@state.gov ; or Deputy Assistant Secretary Scott Busby, BusbySW@state.gov

State of Hawaii:

Governor, State of Hawaii, the Honorable David I. Ige, Phone: (808) 586-0034, Fax: (808) 586-0006, Governor.hawaii.gov/contact-us/contact-the-governor
Lieutenant Governor, the Honorable Shan S. Tsutsui, Phone: (808) 586-0255; Fax: (808) 586-0231, Shan.Tsutsui@hawaii.gov

Office of Hawaiian Affairs, OHA, Robert Lindsey, Chairperson, robertl@oha.org

US Congressional Delegation for Hawaii:

U.S. Senator Mazie Hirono, <http://www.hirono.senate.gov/contact/email>
U.S. Senator Brian Shatz, <http://www.schatz.senate.gov/contact>
Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard, gabbard@house.gov
Congressman Mark Takai, <https://takai.house.gov/contact>

For more information on the current situation in Hawaii, contact Pu’uhonua “Bumpy” Kanahale (808) 551-5056, email: puuhonua13@gmail.com or Brandon Makaawaawa (808) 221-6906, bird.bran07@gmail.com

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The International Indian Treaty Council is an organization of Indigenous Peoples from North, Central, South America, the Arctic, Pacific and Caribbean in General Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)