

Jessica Cruz



**Prutehi Litekyan - Save Ritidian
A Direct-Action Group**

April 1, 2021

Hon. Lourdes A. Leon Guerrero
Maga'håga, Islan Guåhan
Office of the Governor of Guam
Ricardo J. Bordallo Complex
513 West Marine Corps Drive
Hagåtña, Guam 96910

RE: United Nations Affirms Violations of Human Rights Mandates Against the Indigenous CHamoru People in response to a filing by Attorney Julian Aguon, Blue Ocean Law, and Prutehi Litekyan: Save Ritidian

Buenas yan Håfa Adai Governor Leon Guerrero,

For the first time in our history, the United Nations (UN) is communicating to the United States government on behalf of the CHamoru people citing numerous violations against our human and indigenous rights - the desecration of our sacred places and ancestors, the destruction of our environment, a long history of military contamination, adverse effects on Guam's main source of clean drinking water, risks to the health and safety of our people and future generations of Guåhan, and existing and resulting barriers to our right to self-determination. This communication by the UN to the US is in response to an international filing submitted to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by Atty. Julian Aguon and Blue Ocean Law on behalf of Prutehi Litekyan: Save Ritidian (PLSR) in Aug. 2020.

The official communication is addressed to President Joe Biden and was submitted by UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights David R. Boyd, Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples José Francisco Cali Tzay, and Marcos A. Orellana, Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes. The communication identifies the impacts of the United States of America's increased military presence in Guam and the failure to protect the indigenous CHamoru people from the loss of our traditional lands, territories, and resources; serious adverse environmental impacts; the loss of cultural artifacts and human remains; the denial of the right to free, prior and informed consent, and additional concerns that the Government of the United States of America has not supported self-determination for the CHamoru people of Guam. The communication highlights the obligations of the United States government as outlined in binding international human rights treaties. As such, the representatives are requesting the following actions:

1. For the U.S. to provide information or comments on allegations regarding military build-up in Guam; destruction of indigenous CHamoru sacred sites and cultural resources; and associated environmental impacts.

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2. For the U.S. to report what measures have been taken to ensure that the CHamoru can engage in cultural and religious practices and protect our cultural heritage in view of the growing militarization.
3. For the U.S. to provide information on steps taken to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of indigenous peoples to life, health, food, safe drinking water, their right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment in Guam.
4. For the U.S. to provide information on current or planned measures to ensure the participation of CHamoru people in all decision-making affecting our community, to obtain our free prior informed consent to projects that affect their lands and territories, and to support and promote the CHamoru peoples' right to self-determination.
5. Information on progress achieved in the clean-up of Superfund sites, and whether there are other sites in the process of being identified as Superfund.
6. Information on any measures taken by the State to initiate a dialogue with the CHamoru people for the resolution of past human rights violations and to prevent further violations.

Moreover, the letter from the UN Special Rapporteurs urges that all necessary interim measures be taken to **halt** the alleged violations and prevent their re-occurrence while they wait for a reply from President Biden.

At this time, we humbly ask to meet with you to discuss the implications of this official and direct communication from the United Nations to the United States Government, and furthermore for your support in echoing the requests of this letter. We respectfully beseech your leadership in engaging with the Department of Defense and Joint Region Marianas Guam to pause all activities in sites of impact in order to prevent further devastating impacts to our lands and waters and the defilement of our ancestors as we wait for a response from President Biden. This request is urgent and as the international human rights community casts its gaze on our island, we implore you to consider the substantial evidence of several violations of the United States government presented by the Special Rapporteurs in response to our filing made in August 2020.

We are facing many challenges in this difficult and unprecedented time and we feel it is crucial to quickly come together to acknowledge the significance of this official communication for our people and examine the exhaustive evidence that supported it. We have enclosed with this letter for your review, a copy of the official communication from the UN Special Rapporteurs to President Biden, as well as our initial filing from last August. We look forward to receiving your response at your earliest convenience and we thank you for your time and consideration. Un Dângkolo' na Si Yu'os Ma'âse'.

Ginen respetu,



Mōraeka Flores

Prutehi Litekyan - Save Ritidian

Email: save.ritidian@gmail.com

Attachments:

Official Communication from the UN Special Rapporteurs to President Biden

Submission Filed on Behalf of Prutehi Litekyan: Save Ritidian by Attorney Julian Aguon, Blue Ocean Law, and the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO)

Prutehi Litekyan: Save Ritidian, a direct action group dedicated to the protection of natural and cultural resources in all sites identified for DOD live-fire training on Guam. We oppose the establishment of any military firing range, stand in solidarity with community groups throughout the Marianas Islands including Guardians of Gani', PaganWatch, Tinian Women's Association, and Alternative Zero Coalition by preventing environmental degradation and destruction on sacred and native lands, and promote the continued pursuit for return of ancestral lands.