

Hafa Ilek-mu ... SELF-DETERMINATION??

| self-determination | [self-di-tur-muh-ney-shuhn] | n. |

1. Determination of one's own fate or course of action without compulsion; free will.
2. Freedom of the people of a given area to determine their own political status; independence.

WHO IS THE SELF?

People whose lands and governments have been controlled by larger, outside powers and were never allowed to choose their political destiny.

On Guam, these people are legally defined to be those who were made citizens by the signing of the Organic Act in 1950, and their descendent. According to Guam law, this group is entitled to vote in a self-determination plebiscite.

WHAT IS TO BE DETERMINED?

Guam's political destiny.

Those who vote in the plebiscite will choose Guam's political status – whether it will become an independent nation, integrated into the United States, or freely associated with another country.

WHEN WILL THIS HAPPEN?

Guam has a Decolonization Commission whose role is to determine an appropriate date for the plebiscite to be conducted. The Commission will also lead an education campaign prior to this plebiscite. No date has been set.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT/NECESSARY? ... WHY SHOULD I CARE?

Chamorus have been deprived of this human right for almost 400 years. Self-determination will allow the people of Guam to evolve politically and culturally...a self-determined Guam will be better for everyone, mas maolek.

For 3,500 years, the Chamorus lived in the Marianas and governed themselves without the control of other powers. Spanish, American and Japanese control took the human right of self-governance away from Chamorus. While hundreds of other colonies similar to Guam have become self-determined, our island remains a possession of the United States and our people remain colonized. In fact, Guam is one of only 16 places in the world that have not been allowed to exercise the right to self-determination. A change in Guam's political status will allow the island to grow from an unincorporated territory (not apart of, but controlled by the United States) to a thriving, self-determined community with greater possibilities for economic and political growth.

So long as Guam remains colonized it will be unable to grow beyond its current status.

As an unincorporated territory our needs are not prioritized by the United States.

A self-determined Guam will be an empowered Guam. It will prioritize the needs of its people over the interests of others. It will also be able to form better relationships with other nations and/or a more equal relationship with the United States.

An empowered people is a thriving people, and self-determination will allow future generations of Chamorus to prosper in their land.

HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

Educate yourself and others about self-determination and Guam's history. If you are eligible, sign up for the Decolonization Registry, which will allow you to vote in the plebiscite. If you are not eligible, support those who are and understand that a self-determined Guam will benefit everyone including you.