

HITA GUÅHAN!



TESTIMONIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 2017



This booklet was compiled and published by Independent Guåhan and the Independence for Guam Task Force.

Independent Guåhan's involvement in this historic trip to the UN was made possible through generous donations, love and encouragement from decolonization supporters in Guam and throughout the world.

Saina yan Si Yu'os Ma'åse.

INDEPENDENT GUÅHAN AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Independent Guåhan organized a group of twelve of its members and volunteers, who petitioned the United Nations' Special Political and Decolonization Committee (4th Committee) the first week of October at their annual meeting to discuss the continued colonization of Guam. This trip was especially historic, because the Commission on Decolonization also sent a strong delegation of its members – Governor Eddie Baza Calvo, Vice Speaker Therese Terlaje, Senator Telen Nelson and Dr. LisaLinda Natividad all testified before the 4th Committee. Senator Fernando Esteves, who is also a member of the Commission, attended the 4th Committee meeting and joined



Independent Guåhan delegates and members of the Commission on Decolonization bring Guam's flag to the UN.

both Commission and Independent Guåhan members in several days of meetings with ambassadors and representatives from a dozen independent nations and other non self-governing territories.

Every year, the UN votes on a resolution concerning the decolonization of Guam. This year's resolution boldly brought to light issues plaguing the island's environment, natural resources, and decolonization efforts. Independent Guåhan's delegates affirmed the language in the resolution in their testimonies and suggested the inclusion of an amendment supporting Governor Calvo's request for a UN Visiting Mission to Guam. Their testimonies covered a wide range of topics including the North Korean threat to Guam, the Davis plebiscite case, the assault on the Chamoru Land Trust, Global Warming, the Mariana Islands Testing and Training Range, and the threats to Litekyan and the land and waters of Northern Guam from increasing U.S. militarization.

Fourth Committee Chairperson Rafael Darío Ramírez Carreño, the Permanent Representative of Venezuela to the United Nations, was so moved by the testimonies from Guam that he met with Independent Guåhan and Commission on Decolonization delegates to draft amendments to the resolution calling for both a UN Visiting Mission and a UN-led study on the environmental impacts resulting from over a century of U.S. militarization and colonization in Guam.

A critical goal of the trip to New York was to build regional and international solidarity. Independent Guåhan delegates met with representatives from Pacific nations including Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Nauru, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia. They also met with groups representing independence movements in New Caledonia, French Polynesia, and West Papua.

Independent Guåhan also organized presentations about Guam at several universities in the area including Columbia University, New York University, Rutgers University, Barnard College, and Baruch College at City University of New York. Members of both Independent Guåhan and the Commission on Decolonization were able to talk with diverse groups of students and professors at these campuses about Guam's quest for decolonization.

The following compilation of testimonies is arranged in the order in which they were delivered October 3-4, 2017 at the United Nations in New York.

HITA GUÅHAN!





GOVERNOR EDDIE BAZA CALVO

GUAM COMMISSION ON DECOLONIZATION

Honorable Chairman. World leaders. Distinguished delegates. Dignitaries, and ladies and Gentlemen.

Before I begin, I'd like to offer a moment of silent reflection for the victims of the Las Vegas tragedy; and for peace within our hearts, our nation, and within the world.

May eternal rest be granted on to them; and may perpetual light shine upon them.

Håfa Adai. Guahu si Eddie Baza Calvo. Today, I stand here not only as the Governor of Guam. I stand before you as a native son and as the maga'låhi of an island that has long awaited the pursuit of self-determination.

I'd like to share the story of my great grandfather, Tomas Anderson Calvo. He had a vision for Guam – one that centered on the American aspiration for self-governance, a dream he hoped would one day become reality for our island. At the opening of the Guam Congress, he said this: "It is high time that there be granted to the people [of Guam], respectful, loyal and devoted to the great American nation, the same rights that have been granted to the different States, territories and possessions ... that we may know whether we are to be members of the American people or their servitors."

My great grandfather spoke these powerful words 100 years ago as he represented the interests of the Chamorro people. A century later, we are still fighting for those same rights, speaking the same message, with hopes for the same political future – one of self-governance.

I am not the first leader who has taken up our island's cause for self-determination, and I certainly hope I will not be the last. Just like my great grandfather, I recognize the virtues of the United States – and I ask the same question: we have been loyal to the American nation, when will we be held as equals and given the same rights as other Americans, instead of being viewed as second-class citizens?

As Governor, I am no stranger to our relationship with the United States. During my six and a half years in office, I have met with numerous representatives from the United States' government and talked with federal officials. I have shared the burdens Guam experiences as a territory, like unfunded mandates such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Compact of Free Association that have left us in debt.

Additionally, as a public servant, I cannot ignore the strain the U.S. laws have put on our native rights. Since a U.S. court decided our plebiscite on political status was unconstitutional because it limited voting to native inhabitants, we are once again at a standstill in exercising our right to self-determination. Then, there's the issue of our land. As the U.S. government returned our native lands, the Chamorro Land Trust Program was created to give Chamorro descendants of the original inhabitants who did not have land on their own island the opportunity to lease property for \$1 for 99 years. Native inhabitants owned these estates before the U.S. government took it as its own; yet just this past week, the U.S.'s Department of Justice handed us a lawsuit. The U.S. federal government contends that giving back land to the rightful owners violates the U.S.' Fair Housing Act. The housing act is supposed to protect U.S. citizens from discrimination in terms of public housing. Both of these issues are brought up in the resolution on Guam adopted by the Special Committee on Decolonization. Our question is: Who then protects the native inhabitants of Guam from being marginalized in their own home?

I understand the United States' interests and we have respected its laws – but I also ask that the federal government understand the interests of our island and respect our wishes. As I Maga'låhen Guahan, I have a duty to my people. This is why I have made decolonization a major initiative in our government,

and six years ago, I reconvened the Commission on Decolonization, after years of inactivity. As the Chairman of Guam's Commission on Decolonization, I'd like to update you on our efforts:

In history classes, the next generations of Guamanians learn about their rights as Americans, rights that are not guaranteed because we are an unincorporated territory of America. Soon, we hope to see decolonization as a part of our schools' curriculum, so that our students may learn about their intrinsic right to self-determination, one that has been beyond reach for our people for far too many years.

Just a few months ago, I sent a letter to the United Nations' Special Committee on Decolonization, inviting a visiting mission to our island; something that hasn't happened since my father was Governor in 1979. Today, we face new challenges when it comes to decolonization and our self-governance – and a visiting mission could shed new light on Guam's pursuit for self-determination, not only for the United Nations and our island, but for the United States as well.

I would like to make one thing clear: Our decolonization is not based on enmity for America. I have affection and love for the United States, and I am proud of my heritage as an American. Our hope for self-determination is not a lack of patriotism. Rather, it's our hope to experience the ideals of democracy, liberty, opportunity and equality that are the foundation of the American dream – the same ideals for which many sons and daughters of Guam have proudly fought, and continue to fight for as members of the United States' armed forces.

The people of Guam are Americans – yet the rights that other Americans may take for granted are not a right for us, but an impossibility: the ability to vote for president, among them. This is an example of the injustices Guam experiences at the hands of the United States; and I will not pretend our island has not felt such inequality in the past. For example, it was not too long ago that a son of Guam, like me, could not be governor. Instead, people like my grandparents were not led, but were ruled-by governors appointed by the Navy who would pass arbitrary laws based on their personal likes and dislikes, such as whistling on the streets or speaking our native language, Chamorro, at work.

But I will not let the blemishes of the past overshadow the possibilities of the future. And the words our President spoke to the General Assembly a few weeks before I speak to you here today brings me hope: "If we desire to lift up our citizens, if we aspire to the approval of history, then we must fulfill our sovereign duties to the people we faithfully represent."

"We the People" are the three most recognized and powerful words of the U.S. Constitution, the framework on which America's greatness has been built. Those three simple words are the start of what established justice, rights, and equality for all citizens – yet somehow, Guam has been forgotten when it comes to this.

Whatever course our self-determination may take us – whether it means choosing to relax the relationship with the United States, becoming the 51st state, or pursuing the uncharted waters of independence – at this moment, we are Americans. President Trump said: "In America, the people govern, the people rule, and the people are sovereign." Only when the people of Guam are able to reach self-determination will we truly be able to say, "We the People."

For the last 71 years, Guam has been on the United Nations' list of non-self-governing territories; and as we come to the end of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism in 2020, we hope to see Guam take its next steps toward decolonization.

I love America, lao Hu Guiaya Hao Guahan mäs! I love Guam more; and I ask your support in my island's quest for self-determination.





DIETRIX JON ULUKOA DUHAYLONSOD
DESCENDANT OF THE FAMILIES OF SOLEDAD LEON
GUERRERO BALAJADIA & JUAN MESA MANIBUSAN

Hafa adai, Chair Carreño, and to all gathered here to support the decolonization of the Non-self-governing territories, with a special acknowledgement to the original peoples of this land upon which we meet today. My name is Dietrix Jon Ulukoa Duhaylonsod, i lahen Frederick Duhaylonsod yan Frances Villafuerte, i hagan Maria Manibusan Cepeda, i hagan Soledad Leon Guerrero Balajadia yan Juan Mesa Manibusan. As a child of the

Taotao Latte from the sands of Chief Mata'pang and Chief Hurao, I submit the following recommendations:

- 1) That the UN approves in its entirety the draft resolution on the Question of Guam.
- 2) That the UN sends a mission to Guam and uses its influence to ensure cooperation by the United States for genuine decolonization.
- 3) That the UN condemns the destructive activities proposed by the administering power on the natural, cultural, and archaeological resources throughout the Mariana Islands.
- 4) That the UN urges the return of Guam lands to the original land owner families, or the just compensation of said lands in agreement with the families.
- 5) That the UN supports the movement toward an election to facilitate a vote on the topic of reunification for the Mariana Islands.

In the UN Document on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 11 affirms that we have the right to maintain and protect our archaeological and historical sites; Articles 26 and 29 affirm that we have the right to conserve and protect our environmental resources and their productive capacities; and Articles 30 and 32 both champion the constructive ways our land may be utilized according to our interests as the first peoples of our islands. Yet, these rights, along with many others not listed here, have systematically been denied, and we have been powerless to correct this injustice due to our continued colonial status. (UN 2008:6,10,11,12)

My own great-grandparents were farmers and ranchers in the area of Ukudu known as A'gi, and they shared their crops and cattle with the American military on Guam. In an abrupt about face, the friendly American troops confiscated my great-grandparents' land when the war broke out. Over 50 years after the war had ended, the government finally returned the Ukudu land to our family, and we still have other unreturned lands in Tiyan and Haga'ña. (Simeon Manibusan Palomo, personal communication, 2017) But there are countless other Chamoru families who have yet to see any of their ancestral properties returned. This is our reality as a 21st century colony.

Instead of living in an ideal democracy where capitalism supports a voluntary exchange of properties, our people have experienced a different style of rule which has not only stolen our lands, but has also poisoned our drinking water, killed our off-shore environments, polluted our air, and historically disparaged our native language, customs, and cultural sites. All of these, the tangible and intangible, are now in need of restoration. This is our reality as a 21st century colony.

May I call your attention to the stolen lands of Ritidian (Litekyan) which abound with latte stone house sites, burials, traditional pottery and other artifacts, rare pictographs and subsurface archaeological

layers. The Ritidian descendants want their lands back. An archaeological report by Dr. Mike Carson states that “Ritidian has been instrumental in defining the full chronological sequence of cultural periods and landscape transformations of the Marianas... In the context of a preserved ecosystem, Ritidian, or Litekyan, has become a spiritual retreat and a place for people to connect with Chamorro heritage and traditions.” (Carson 2017:30,161)

Dismissively, military officials endanger Ritidian with plans to build a firing range there. Let me give you concrete examples of how other lands have been destroyed this way. The Navy took Kaho’olawe Island to use as target practice, and after spending a decade trying to sweep the island clean, they walked away leaving 1/4 of the island’s surface unsafe to walk on and almost 65% of the subsurface still uncleared. (Boyd 2015) In another example, at the former firing range of Mākua Valley, a young man accidentally triggered an unexploded bomb even though the valley had not seen live-fire in over a decade. (KHON 2015) And in still another example on the Central O’ahu lands of Wai’anae Uka, I witnessed Hawaiian elders and cultural practitioners denied access to a heiau (a traditional temple) because of unexploded ordnances nearby. This is the future of Ritidian and other culturally significant places such as Pagat, Tinian and Pagan, places which also sustain our unique flora and fauna. Our Chamoru people have spoken against the plans which will destroy these places, but officials blatantly deny the facts. This is our reality as a 21st century colony.

These are unpredictable times that we live in. The rhetoric of our administering power has moved our islands into the crosshairs of nuclear weaponry. With good reason, we lack confidence that any federal help would be ample or quick enough in case of a military attack or a natural disaster. As a people, our future is not secure. Since the time of the Spanish-Chamoru Wars in the 1600s to the takeover by the U.S. government in 1898 and until today, we have been robbed of our sovereignty and not fully supported by a representative government. This continues to be our reality as a 21st century colony.

The traditional name of our island, “Guahan”, can be interpreted as “We have.” It is a powerful name that says so much. But due to our lingering colonial status, our reality is “We have not.” We seek to right this wrong, and we ask for your support. Na’tachu i latte. Our toppled latte stones need to be set upright once again.

Saina ma’ase na en ekungok i hinasso-ku, thank you for letting me share my thoughts.

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TIARA R. NA'PUTI, PH.D.
GUÅHAN COALITION FOR
PEACE & JUSTICE

Buenas yan Håfa Adai your excellency Rafael Darío Ramírez Carreño, distinguished committee members, and petitioners. Saina ma'åse to the peoples of this place, and to everyone who journeyed here across miles of ocean and land to speak and listen here today. Guahu si Tiara Naputi (familian Kaderon yan familian Robot), I offer this testimony on behalf of Guåhan

Coalition for Peace and Justice an organization dedicated to demilitarization and indigenous rights. I am also here in my capacity as a Chamoru (Chamorro) engaged in self-determination advocacy, and as a communication scholar at the University of Colorado Boulder. My work is invested in how communication enables us to be strong advocates and take meaningful actions to achieve justice for our communities; specifically, decolonization for Guåhan one of the seventeen Non-Self-Governing Territories.

My previous two times addressing this very committee have also occurred during this Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2011-2020)—a time in which the number of non-self-governing territories increased and colonialism has been sustained rather than eliminated. I spoke then of our inalienable right to self-determination, our educational campaign for a self-determination plebiscite, and hyper-militarization by the administering power. I implored the committee then, as I do today, to exercise your authority by holding the administering power accountable for the principles of self-determination and decolonization—a universally path for guaranteeing protection of fundamental freedoms within our global community. I urge you to continue taking concrete actions to the target to eradicate colonialism by 2020.

Truly, four minutes is not enough time to address all the petitions of our people of Guåhan who are continuously inundated with threats to our decolonization efforts. However, in these four minutes I will voice some of the numerous issues we face as one of the world's oldest colonies. We are a colony that seems destined to remain in perpetuity by the administering power; however, with your attention and direct action, we urge you to help us change this colonial course. Supporting and respecting our right to self-determination, in words, actions, and deeds.

Guam Resolution & Military Contamination

I strongly urge this committee to approve the June 19, 2017 draft resolution on the Question of Guam (A/AC.109/2017/L.18) and to approve it in full with the language that condemns the serious, irrevocable damage that the administering power is planning in the Northern part of Guam to build facilities and firing ranges for U.S. Marines.

Section 14 calls for the administering power to take all measures necessary to protect and conserve our “environment against any degradation and the impact of militarization on the environment.” And, it repeats our ongoing requests for specialized agencies to monitor our environmental conditions and to provide direct assistance to Guam as we struggle with a legacy and ongoing contamination by the U.S.

We know that the U.S. Department of Defense is both the nation's and the world's worst polluter. As one of the most extensive industrial enterprises it generates huge quantities of hazardous wastes and virtually every other toxic substance known to humanity. This toxic legacy is left throughout our island

and the region in the form of Agents Orange and Purple, PCBs, and other chemicals.

Yet, the U.S. military has been using “environmental protection initiatives” as international security to reinforce political control over our archipelago – all the while ignoring existing Superfund sites defined as “the nation’s most contaminated land” by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Andersen Air Force Base and Ordot Landfill are listed Superfund sites, and Cocos Island is also heavily contaminated. Andersen Air Force Base consists of chemical weapons storage areas, landfills, firefighting training areas and others that negatively impact the environment through releases and accidents. There are ninety-five toxic sites on military bases (Andersen and the Naval Base).

The U.S. Navy is responsible for the contamination located at Ordot Landfill, they owned and operated the dump before and after World War II. Seventeen Toxic Chemicals found in the dump belong to the 2002 EPA’s list of “Priority Toxic Pollutants” including arsenic, lead, aluminum, barium, antimony, cadmium, chromium, manganese, pesticides, PCBs, toluene, ethylbenzene, xylenes, zinc, and cyanide.

At Cocos Island the U.S. military used PCBs in electrical equipment, the contamination of Cocos Lagoon is a direct result from their PCB equipment that was left discarded in the land and water. We continue to see elevated PCB levels there today.

Furthermore, nature reserves, such as the Guam National Wildlife Refuge, located around militarized and contaminated sites are serving as political cover for US military occupation of this colonized territory. To justify the continued and increasing seclusion of our lands for military-security purposes is greenwashing.

We are in mourning for our land, a sadness for places that people from my generation may never see cleaned up within our lifetime. Today, I cannot even begin to tell you the deeper stories of our lands’ contamination – or the aftermath of radiation. But, I can hope that you will listen and help us restore and heal our islands and our environment.

We really cannot and should not expect the administering power to care for our environment or provide any genuine protection of our lands, waters, and skies. For generations, our families have endured this false promise of security, while our collective natural resources have been seized, contaminated, and left in the military’s paths of irrevocable destruction.

As you also know, this deplorable situation is in blatant violation of resolution 57/140 (2002), that calls upon the administering power to “terminate such activities and to eliminate the remaining military bases in compliance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly” (Guam Resolution, p.4).

Rather than terminate these activities, the administering power has been engaged in a massive military buildup. And it continues its intentions to deny us access to our sacred sites – shutting us out of our own lands and threatening our ongoing connections to these deeply significant cultural and historical places, the places of our ancestors. There is no respect the environment, the administering power plans to destroy over 1,000 acres of limestone forest – a distinctive and irreplaceable forest formation. These military plans will also contaminate our island’s largest source of drinking water for their security interests and – again all without our consent or any active involvement in the process.

This level of destruction is a blatant violation of resolution 1514 (XV) and resolution 57/140 which further reiterates “military activities and arrangements should not run counter to the rights of our peoples, especially the right to self-determination” (Guam Resolution, p.4). The US military is not a capable steward of marine environments, instead their actions threaten our natural resources and the health of our community. It is clearly a violation of international law and our human rights. We urge you to take a strong position against these destructive plans.

We are taotao tano’, people of the land. And yet over and over again we are inundated by the adminis-

tering power's systematic efforts to remove us from our lands and destroy our environment – putting all of our lives in danger by threatening access to clean water, air, and a sustainable future in our islands. We urge you to help ensure a brighter future, we simply cannot keep our heads above water against these ongoing cycles of militarization that hold us all in a constant sakkan pakyō (typhoon season).

Decolonization is absolutely crucial for our people and our environment, it is a process that would, among other things, facilitate our efforts to heal the wounds in places like Ordot, Andersen, Cocos Island, and prevent the impending destruction in Litekyan. It would mean reorienting from the way the administering power has held our lands hostage. It would mean reorienting us back to our lands, and allowing us to care and treat the land. By healing the land, we can heal ourselves.

UN Visiting Mission

I also urge the United Nations to continue its decolonization imperative by honoring the request by the Guam Governor Eddie Calvo sending a UN visiting mission to Guam.

This is one very important way to immediately address escalating tensions between North Korea and the United States that continue putting the people of Guåhan at danger, caught in the crosshairs of this without our own sovereign power to intervene.

Actions in the short term on the part of the Fourth Committee and the General Assembly, not just endorsements or more long-term aspirations will make significant contributions to decolonizing the 17 non-self-governing territories in the world today.

Such actions are an absolute necessity. The UN must use its influence to engage the United States in Guam's decolonization process in a way that ensures genuine decolonization and cooperation.

Our delegation is here today to voice an expansive range of our decolonization issues and to offer recommendations. They demonstrate the need to take meaningful actions to end the unequal and unjust situation of territories and to ensure that the people of our island have the opportunity to exercise our inherent human right to political self-determination.

Saina ma'åse for this opportunity and for your genuine support to approve the Guam Resolution in full, to end military activities and the practice of treating our natural resources as expendable dumpsites, and for your support to send a UN visiting mission to Guam. Saina ma'åse for your words, actions, and deeds to eradicate colonialism and work toward a decolonized sustainable future for Guam.



MELVIN WON PAT-BORJA
INDEPENDENT GUÅHAN



Hafa Adai members of the UN 4th Committee.

Guåhu si Melvin Won Pat-Borja
I represent Independent Guåhan

duct tape
plastic sheeting
two weeks worth of non-perishable food
and drinking water

I kiss my daughter,
thankful for another day
and consider calling in sick to work
fearful that a bomb could drop
while I'm away
this is not how the average American
starts their day
but for us, it's just another painful reminder
that we are someone's territory
The Office of Civil Defense says that in the event of a nuclear attack,
residents should stay in their homes.
When North Korea first announced that they had a nuclear missile capable of reaching
Guam, officials did their best to contain panic by reassuring residents that Guam is ready.
We have survived the worst kind of natural disasters,
but there is nothing natural about a man-made disaster such as this.
The head of Civil Defense and Homeland Security claims that though a nuclear missile
could reach Guam, it would most likely miss.
My family finds no comfort in this as my heart goes out to our brothers and sisters in the
Marshall Islands who know that radioactive ash, mistaken for snow, can be worse than
the blast itself, because it kills you slow --
it melts your skin and eats at you from within...
and if the explosion and cancer don't get you, the guilt will.
It is survivors who bear the burden because mushroom cloud memories kill.
flashlights
batteries
rain coat
mask
gloves
two sets of clothes in each car -- just in case we get separated
The Governor says we are safe, that America will protect us --
just like they protected us in WWII when they pulled out every single American just
before Japan came through and invaded our shores.
Like they "liberated" us from that same tragedy only after dropping enough bombs to
level the entire island and everyone on it.
I guess the bombs were more humane because at least they don't discriminate --
they kill everything in their path.
They can't differentiate between ally and enemy.

They don't check your citizenship papers before sending you to a cemetery.
Forgive me if I do not find comfort in President Trump's threats of "fire and furry."
There is no solace in the promise of more violence.
Retaliation will not resurrect our children back from the dead.
I do not feel safe when he calls our Governor to pay his respects.
No one has even launched an attack,
yet my people are being buried under the rhetoric.
North Korea doesn't see the Chamoru people as a threat,
but as long as our island is a military asset, Guåhan will always remain a target.
How easily we forget the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
It seems like only the victims can remember that America is the only country to ever use
a nuclear weapon in war, and yet it still remains a member
of these United Nations.
If this body can place strict sanctions on Pyongyang, but the United States still walks
around with enough bombs to obliterate the planet, then some of you need to look in the
mirror and ask yourselves "what the hell is going on?"
My people have been making this holy pilgrimage to this place, to seek your grace, since
the 1980's. We are their babies and yet we are still crossing the ocean to tell this story, to
plead our case.
How many times can you smile in our face and do nothing?
Please tell me that the idea of peace and human dignity still mean something.
When you are caught in the middle of nuclear threats, it doesn't matter who's bluffing.
Prove to us that coming here was not a waste of breath.
Better yet, come to Guam and smell the stench of death.
Yes, my friends, we are dying.
In wars that aren't ours, that earn us stripes, but no stars.
We are dying behind bars and in the back of cop cars.
We are dying of cancer from nuclear radiation.
We are dying from the effects of over 500 years of uninterrupted colonization.
By the time I finish this testimony, someone back home will die.
This body stands for peace and humanity, yet our colonizer's flag still flies outside this
building and ours is missing.
When I kiss my kids before they sleep, I will look them in the eye and they will know,
that Daddy did everything to fight for peace and justice in our home.
What will you tell your kids when you tuck them in at night?
Because you can't fight the monsters in their closets if you cannot fight for what is right.
Saina ma'åse' for your time and your courage.





VICTORIA-LOLA LEON GUERRERO

OUR ISLANDS ARE SACRED

Hafa Adai, Honorable Members of the United Nations Special Political and Decolonization Committee.

Saina yan Si Yu'os Ma'åse for taking the time to hear from the people of Guåhan today. Saina Ma'åse lökkue to the people of Guåhan who helped fly members of our delegation over nearly 8,000 miles of ocean to get here.

Guåhu si Victoria-Lola Leon Guerrero. I speak as a humble daughter of Guåhan, a mother of two visionary manhoben, and a sister in a sovereignty movement that seeks voice and justice for our people. I also greet you on behalf of the grassroots organization Our Islands Are Sacred and as a member of Independent Guåhan and the co-chairperson of the Independence for Guam Task Force.

We come seeking peace in our homeland. Not as a lofty idea, but as a genuine plea that carries as much urgency today as was necessary when the United Nations was chartered in 1945. Just as the leaders of the world did not want another nuclear war then, we must do everything in our power to prevent one from happening now. Guåhan would be caught dead in the middle and our people would face genocide.

The United Nations, this powerful gathering of global unity that you are, made a promise "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" and to "reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights." Please keep your promise to the people of Guåhan, where the gray cloud of war hovers in the distance darkening the imagination of my babies.

Picture kissing your son before he goes to bed and he stares up at you and asks, "Will a bomb drop on us tonight, Mama?" And you can't say with confidence that it won't, because on the news a man you did not choose to lead your homeland, whose government is colonizing you, has threatened one of your neighbors with "fire and fury like the world has never seen." And the response is a plan to fire four missiles into your surrounding waters.

What would you say to your child?

To my children, who are 6 and 3 years old, I say they are loved and that I will do everything I can to protect them. Petitioning you today is part of me doing everything I can for them.

This body was created to give voice to all nations big and small. Well, colonization has stripped the people of Guåhan of our voice. No matter how loudly we declare we want peace in the face of war, we want our water to remain clean, we want the Chamoru people to always have a homeland we can thrive in, we want to respect our ancestors, we are told what we want does not matter. We are told to make way for the military, because the U.S. needs us for their defense. In the name of protection, we are put in harms way and are denied the sovereignty to stop it. But you represent sovereign nations and many of you fought for your sovereignty just like we are fighting for it today.

In 1945, there were only 51 founding members of the United Nations. Today, there are 193. Guåhan has the right to join you. I look around with pride as I recognize the names of our sister islands throughout Oceania, knowing the hard work it took for them to gain their seat in this room.

Please use your voice and the promise you have made to help the people of Guåhan attain the fundamental rights to be independent, to protect our natural resources, to maintain our homeland, and to live in peace and prosperity. We cannot wait another decade to eradicate colonialism.

We support Governor Eddie Baza Calvo's request for a UN Visiting Mission and invite you to see what is happening in Guåhan and how the United Nations can play a larger, more active role in working with the United States to uphold its commitment to decolonize Guåhan.

In the draft resolution concerning Guåhan, we ask you to vote boldly and condemn actions that run counter to your mission and put the people and natural resources of Guåhan, and the world, at risk of destruction. Let us please work together to decolonize Guåhan and bring peace to the world.

Saina Ma'åe for hearing us today. We present Guåhan's flag as a gift to this committee and a hope that very soon it will fly alongside the flags of nations outside.

Many blessings to you and your families.





MICHAEL LUJAN BEVACQUA, PH.D.

INDEPENDENCE FOR GUAM TASK FORCE

Buenas yan hãfa adai todus hamyo ko'lo'ña si Maga'taotao Rafael Ramirez Carreño i gehilo' para i kumuiten Mina'Kuãtro, gi este na gefpã'go na ha'ãni. Magof hu na gaige yu' guini pã'go para bai hu kuentusi hamyo yan kuentusiyi i taotao Guãhan put i halacha na sinisedi gi islan-mãmi. (Hello to all of you on this beautiful day. I am grateful to be here now so that I can speak to you, in particular H.E. Rafael Ramirez Carreño, Chair of the C24, and speak on behalf of the people of Guam about recent events that transpired in our island home.)

My name is Michael Lujan Bevacqua and I am a professor of Chamorro Studies at the University of Guam. I am also the co-chair for the Independence for Guam Task Force, a community outreach organization tasked with educating our island about the possibilities should we at last achieve self-determination and become an independent country of our own. I have testified before this body once before in 2007 and I have provided interventions as an academic and expert on affairs in Guam to the Committee of 24 in its most recent regional seminars in Ecuador (2013), Nicaragua (2015 and 2016) and St. Vincent and the Grenadines (2017).

Today I will discuss the ways in which the administering power of our island, the United States has not faithfully sought to fulfill its sacred trust to assist Guam and in particular its indigenous people the Chamorros, on a process towards decolonization. This has manifested most prominently around the administering power ignoring resolutions and calls from the United Nations to refrain from implementing immigration and militarization policies in their territories that would likely become impediments towards meaningful decolonization.

Guam has been a territory of the United States for 119 years now and on the list of non-self-governing territories for 71. The administering power's policies have continually delayed, deferred or minimized efforts by local activists and the Guam government to make progress in this regard. As we come to the close of the Third International Decade of the Eradication of Colonialism, it is more important than ever that the administering powers be willing to work with their territories, other nations and the UN to bring about an end to this wicked period of human history. This can only happen if administering powers are willing to cooperate and also recognize that certain policies delay or inhibit these efforts.

Calls by the UN on administering powers to not pursue particular immigration or militarization policies in their territories represent one of the guiding principles of the UN. Namely that international cooperation and restraint in the name of peace and the protection of the most foundational rights that humans have come to recognize and cherish, must take priority over narrow national interests. Should administering powers implement policies that increase the number of settlers in a non-self-governing territory or increases its military presence, it creates the conditions by which that same administering power will resist fulfilling its sacred duty to support decolonization. It may claim that such a process cannot happen because of new populations that have settled in the non-self-governing territory or because of the role the territory now plays in its strategic interests.

Guam has been used as a port of entry to the United States since World War II and in that time tens of thousands of migrants from Asia and other islands in Micronesia have made the island their home. In 1946 when Guam was listed with the UN by the US, the population of the island close to 20,000 with 90% being Chamorro. Today Chamorros have become a minority and now represent 37% out of a total population of 166,000.

All on Guam, Chamorros included are proud of the multicultural tapestry that our island has become. We do not begrudge anyone who came to Guam seeking a new or a different life. But the government

of the administering power has recently come to use the diversity of the island as a means of depriving the Chamorro people of their basic human rights. In the past year federal courts and agencies have begun to try to erase the rights of Chamorros in their own land. This began in March when a federal court ruled that any decolonization plebiscite must include the participation of all US citizens on island, even if they have only been on the island for a few days or weeks. Current Government of Guam law had sought to limit participation in this non-binding albeit important plebiscite to native inhabitants. The Government of Guam is currently appealing this decision in US federal courts.

Secondly, just this past week the Government of Guam is being sued by the US Department of Justice in an attempt to eliminate a Guam program meant to provide land to landless Chamorros. This program, the Chamorro Land Trust was created as an attempt to fix the injustices created when the US military displaced thousands of Chamorros in the years following World War II. In both examples the US government claims that these activities or programs violate the US Constitution and that the only rights allowed in Guam for Chamorros are those determined by the US Congress.

The problem with this position should be apparent to anyone, even absent any legal training. In general, a process of decolonization that must follow the rules of the colonizer is not decolonization: it is an extension of colonization. It is a transformation of colonization into a seemingly different form, while protecting the same structures of power and inequality.

A similar situation has emerged in terms of Guam's military value to the US. Since WWII the island has been referred to as Fortress Guam, an unsinkable aircraft carrier, the world's largest gas station and most recently The Tip of America's Spear. With current proposals to transfer US Marines stationed in Okinawa to Guam and the construction of new training areas in cultural and environmentally treasured sites, the US has been keen on sharpening its spear.

Taking advantage of Guam's non-self-governing status, the US enjoys Guam's harbor, airways, location and proximity to Asia, without the people having any representation in the halls of Congress or these stories chambers at the UN. It is part of Guam's strategic value to the US, is that it has no voting politicians to meddle or foreign governments to interfere.

The position of the United Nations on this issue has always been clear, but is scarcely reported locally in particular territories or something acknowledged by the administering powers themselves. In its resolutions, military increases or strategic military importance should not be considered as reason to not decolonize territories, but this is generally used as an excuse to delay or deny action. We can find this point made in their numerous resolutions on the Question of Guam, such as this one from 1984:

The General Assembly of the United Nations "Reaffirms its strong conviction that the presence of military bases and installations in the Territory [of Guam] could constitute a major obstacle to the implementation of the Declaration and that it is the responsibility of the administering Power to ensure that the existence of such bases and installations does not hinder the population of the Territory from exercising its right to self-determination and independence in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations."

UN Resolution 1514 (X/V) in 1960 called upon all colonial powers to assist their colonial possessions in moving towards decolonization. It does not mention specifically military bases or military training. But by 1964 the United Nations had begun to notice that in non-self-governing territories like Guam, the colonial power's military controlled a great deal of resources and had a great deal of sway over the destiny of the colonies. Since 1965 the United Nations has approved numerous resolutions calling upon all administering powers (including the United States) to withdraw their military bases as they represent series obstacles to the exercising of self-determination by colonized peoples.

Bases help to enable to colonial power to see an island like Guam, not as a place in need of decolonization and redress, but as a strategically valuable piece of real estate, one necessary for the projection of

military force and the maintaining of its geopolitical interests. Military facilities help colonial powers to deemphasize the inalienable human rights of colonized peoples and instead focus on the instrumentality and necessity of controlling their lands. Current proposals by the administering power to expand their training areas and in the process destroy or cut off public access to environmentally and culturally rich locations are exactly the type of activities the United Nations has long cautioned against.

In light of recent threats to Guam from North Korea, we must also recall that the United Nations has long called upon member states such as the US to refrain from using their colonies in offensive wars or aggression actions against other nations as could lead to retaliation against the people in the colony and could also potentially make enemies on behalf of the colony when it achieves decolonization.

Community members in Guam have regularly informed the US Department of Defense about these concerns and the way their attempts to increase their military presence on Guam affect the basic human rights of Chamorros. But as with most concerns related to the United Nations and decolonization they have chosen to wash their hands of this and argue they have no responsibility or obligation in the matter.

The most compelling evidence for why military value and militarization negatively impacts decolonization efforts can be found in this building and this body. Namely the flags of those countries from Micronesia that can be found here and those that cannot. Guam's strategic military value has long affected what we can and cannot get from our administering power. For decades the members of the Trust Territory of Micronesia negotiated with the United States, a process that led to the formation of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and three nation-states that have seats at the United Nations: the Republic of Belau (Palau), the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia. The United States did not allow Guam to participate in similar negotiations as its strategic value to the United States as a base, has consistently led to a denial of this basic human right.

The more the US increases its presence, the troops it moves, buildings it constructs and vehicles it stations, the less likely it is to take seriously its obligation, its sacred trust to faithfully assist the colonized people through their process of decolonization. The more it militarizes, the less likely it is to take seriously its own alleged ideals of liberty, democracy or freedom. In conclusion, I offer the following two recommendations.

1. Considering the escalating tensions between the United States and North Korea, which continue to put the people of Guam's lives at risk and a lack of meaningful engagement from the United States in Guam's decolonization process, it is imperative for the United Nations to send a UN visiting mission to Guam as was requested by Guam Governor Eddie Calvo in a letter dated August 1, 2017 to Chairman Ramirez Carreño. The UN must use its influence to engage the United States in Guam's decolonization process in a way that ensures genuine decolonization and cooperation.

2. We offer our support of the draft resolution on the Question of Guam and ask that this body approve it in full with the inclusion of language specifically condemning the serious, irrevocable damage that the administering power is planning in the Northern part of Guam to build facilities and firing ranges for U.S. Marines. The U.S. intends to destroy over 1,000 acres of limestone forest, prevent access to an incredibly significant historic, cultural and sacred site, and will contaminate the island's largest source of drinking water for their military interests and without our consent. This threatens our natural resources and the health of our community and violates international law and our human rights. We urge you to take a strong position against these destructive plans.

Si Yu'us Ma'åse para i tiempon-miyu.



SAMANTHA BABAUTA TENORIO BARNETT

PRUTEHI LITEKYAN: SAVE RITIDIAN



Hafa Adai, guahu si Samantha Babauta Tenorio Barnett. I am a native CHamoru woman and I am speaking here on behalf of Prutehi Litekyan, a direct action group dedicated to the protection of natural and cultural resources in all sites identified for the United States Department of Defense live-fire training ranges on Guåhan, my home island.

This summer, as we were consumed with media and foreign men and women from countries near and far announcing the North Korea threat, my five year old brother asked me if my baby sister will get to grow up if our island is bombed. I have listened to the stories of my elders who survived the Japanese occupation of Guåhan during World War II. An elder told me that he watched a Japanese soldier beat his mother with a bamboo stick until the stick was broken by the force of his blows. He said his mother held onto her strength and her pain and refused to cry in front of the soldier. He said it was only later, as he watched his mother show her bruised and bloodied back to her sister that he realized his mother's pain and her resilience, her determination to survive, and to, on a most basic level, not let her child see her fear while she was being beaten. It is because this mother did not scream then that I am speaking out now. As a daughter of her island, I have inherited her resilience, and I will not be silent.

Two generations later, I try to protect my brother from the fear of war, to tell him stories to calm his fears about nuclear warfare. War is a memory like a scar over the body of my great-grandmother, whose land was taken from her for use as a US military base. War is a memory over our island, carried on our shoulders, it is acted out when the administering power conducts "training" and testing"-- words which mean that they are using explosives in our ocean, building firing ranges over the lands where our ancestors raised families and villages.

Two generations after World War II, my people and my island are still the target of wars in which we are voiceless, possible wars determined by countries that are oceans away from our shores. Two generations later, our sacred sites are still being stolen by the United States military and our island is still being poisoned by the administering power.

The story of land contamination, theft, and seizure is a familiar, intimate weight that almost every CHamoru family knows. As I speak, the administering power is planning to move forward with a massive live firing training range complex at Northwest Field which overlooks the sacred village of Litekyan, where the CHamoru people have been thriving for over 3,500 years.

The US federal government stole this sacred land from original land-owners, who were never justly compensated. Today, generations of Litekyan descendants are actively fighting for the return of their homelands and the protection of this sacred place from the destruction that would be caused by US military activity.

Located in northern Guåhan, Litekyan is one of the most ancient sites in the entire Marianas archipelago. It is where the CHamoru people can go to witness how our ancestors lived by visiting the latte they used to lift their homes, the cave art they used to tell their stories, pottery, and shell artifacts that still contain bits of the food and medicine that nourished them.

When land is stolen, culture is threatened, and we lose the ability to experience the history of our people. According to the US Navy, more than 79 ancestral and historical sites on land and in the ocean will be bulldozed or adversely impacted at or near Northwest Field and Litekyan. Furthermore, the excavation and soil removal will adversely impact 20 known archaeological sites. Constructing the firing range and other facilities for the Marines will destroy over 1,000 acres of some of the last 5% of our

pristine limestone forests, and threaten the lives of endangered and threatened animals and plants. The firing range will have more adverse and harmful effects on Litekyan than on any of the other proposed sites that they considered.

At a recent public hearing, a white resident of Guam argued that the US military takes better care of the land than the CHamoru people do. However, it was the US military that bombed Guam after the war, bulldozed tens of thousands of acres of limestone and other forest, and sprayed Agent Orange over our island. The military is responsible for several dumpsites of toxic chemicals around the island. The military, not the CHamoru people, are the ones planning the Mariana Islands Training and Testing area, which will harm our coral reef, one of our most precious resources. And now, the firing range presents a huge threat to our main source of drinking water. According to the military's studies, 6.7 million bullets will be fired at Litekyan every year--bullets containing lead and other toxics, above our primary aquifer that supplies 80-90% of our island's drinking water. The military plans to drill eleven more wells to support the incoming personnel and dependents, and damage from saltwater intrusion due to over-pumping is another serious threat to our water resource.

Just last week, the youth of Guåhan held hands and blocked access to Andersen Air Force Base, to protest further contamination and violation of our homelands, and the firing range at Litekyan. A few days later, thirteen of Guam's fifteen senators approved a resolution demanding the US halt plans to construct the firing range. The voice of our people is clear: our ancestors did not intend for our home to be a place of wargames, they did not suffer through war and the violence of colonization to have our sacred places used for foreign soldiers to practice killing.

The proposed firing range at Litekyan clearly violates international law that forbids administering powers from destroying the natural and cultural resources of a people while they are decolonizing. As a daughter of Guåhan, I ask the United Nations to work with the Chamoru people to ensure that the militarization of our island is halted so we may begin our long-overdue self-determination process.

Saina ma'ase.





LISALINDA NATIVIDAD, PH.D.
GUAM COMMISSION ON DECOLONIZATION

Hafa dai (greetings) your Excellency Mr. Rafael Darió Ramírez Carreño and distinguished members of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (C-4). *Un dangkulo na si Yu'os ma'ase* (a sincere thank-you) for the opportunity to address the committee.

I am Dr. LisaLinda Natividad, an at-large member of the Guam Commission on Decolonization. I present testimony to reaffirm the draft resolution on the Question of Guam dated June 19, 2017. This draft reminds us that 57 years after the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, my home and my people remain a colony today. We applaud the United Nation's ambitious goal to eradicate colonialism

by 2020 and urge this committee to act forcibly and decisively to support Guam and the 16 other Non-Self-Governing Territories throughout the world to exercise our right to self-determination.

Arnold Davis vs. Government of Guam, Guam Election Commission, and Guam Attorney General (Civil Case No.: 11-00035)

The draft resolution on Guam notes with concern, a ruling by a U.S. court that, "a plebiscite on self-determination could not be limited to native inhabitants, which has brought the plebiscite to a halt". This U.S. court decision has nullified components of Guam Law, which established the Guam Commission on Decolonization "for the implementation and exercise of Chamorro Self-Determination." The case had been brought by a retired American Army officer who settled in Guam and who attempted to register for the Decolonization Registry in order to participate in the Guam decolonization plebiscite. He was denied because he did not meet the legal criteria of "native inhabitant of Guam". Guam law (PL 23-147) defines native inhabitants on the basis of their residency in the territory by 1950 when the Organic Act was extended to Guam by the administering power.

The U.S. court ruling was erroneously based on U.S. civil rights. This is a grossly misinformed position. The decolonization process is not a matter of civil rights, but rather an exercise of the inalienable human right to self-determination for those who have collectively experienced colonization. This case is a glaring example of the unilateral misapplication of U.S. law to the territory, therefore inhibiting the self-determination of the CHamoru people. The Government of Guam has filed an appeal to this ruling, but voter registration of eligible voters has been halted. The ruling on this case is flawed and indicative of the U.S.'s violation of the inalienable right of the people of the territory to self-determination under international law.

Four generations of our people have come before the United Nations pleading for your intervention. The stories we share today are not new ones. If the past is a predictor of the future- my unborn grandchildren will continue to revisit this place as though our words are falling on deaf ears today. So as you hear the dismal realities of our island home, we ask that you do something different. We ask that you focus on the specific actions that can be taken by the United Nations and this esteemed committee to bring about change and resolution to the Question of Guam.

Recommendations

The Guam Commission on Decolonization offers the following recommendations:

1. That the UN use its influence to force engagement from the United States in Guam's decolonization process in a way that embodies cooperation and implements the principles of decolonization that is consistent with international law and norms- particularly in the application of the aforementioned case ruling;

2. That the UN take a strong position against the US's destructive plans to irrevocably damage the Northern part of Guam to build facilities and firing ranges by destroying over 1,000 acres of limestone forest, preventing access to an incredibly significant historic, cultural and sacred site, and contaminating the island's largest source of drinking water for their military interests and without our consent; which threatens our natural resources and the health of our community and violates international law and our human rights; and
3. That the United Nations send a UN visiting mission to Guam as was requested by Guam Governor Eddie Calvo in a letter dated August 1, 2017 to Chairman Carreño to see for yourselves the extent of the injustices occurring on our homeland.

In closing, *un dangkulo na si Yu'os ma'ase* (many thanks) for the opportunity to share the most recent impediments to the self-determination of Guam and the CHamoru people. We evoke members of this committee to exercise its authority to hold administering powers of the world accountable to the principles of decolonization and true self-determination.





VICE SPEAKER THERESE M. TERLAJE
34TH GUAM LEGISLATURE
GUAM COMMISSION ON DECOLONIZATION

Håfa Adai distinguished members of the United Nations Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) and Your Excellency Mr. Chairman Rafael Darió Ramírez Carreño.

I am Therese M. Terlaje, Vice Speaker of the 34th Guam Legislature and Vice Chairperson of Guam's Commission on Decolonization. Si Yu'os Ma'åse' and Thank you for the opportunity to represent the people of Guam before this esteemed Committee for action and on the question of decolonization of the non-self-governing territory of Guam under the Administering Authority, the United States of America.

The hallmark of self-determination must be the safeguarding of a non-self-governing people's right to its own natural resources and the right to participate freely in any decision-making concerning those limited resources. It is also critically important in this time of climate change that Guam, a small island, be allowed to protect its existing resources that will increase the absorption of carbon dioxide, increase the protection of shores against rising tides, and maintain its biodiversity as a hope for the future wellness and economic independence of its community. Our situation on Guam is urgent, as access and control of our resources is impeded by the delay in decolonization.

Changing Guam's Border

In 2014, the U.S. without consultation with Guam entered into a "Treaty Between the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Government of the United States of America on the Delimitation of a Maritime Boundary," between Guam, and the outlying islands of the FSM.

The new demarcation indicates that the deepest known point in the Marianas Trench, known as the "Challenger Deep" now falls on the FSM side of that line. Guam has long understood Challenger Deep as falling within Guam's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), as is described in a 2005 U.S. Geological Survey publication.

The Marianas Trench is approximately 940 nautical miles long and 38 nautical miles wide within the Guam and the CNMI Exclusive Economic Zones and contains the deepest known points in the global ocean, with unique objects of scientific interest and essential to long-term study of tropical marine ecosystems, including the largest active mud volcanoes on Earth. The waters of Marianas archipelago are among the most biologically diverse and include the greatest range of seamount and hydrothermal vent life yet discovered - pristine coral ecosystems with large numbers of sharks, distinct collections of stony corals in the Western Pacific, and largest biomass of reef fishes in the Marianas archipelago.

As Guam's Administering Power, the U.S. should have been significantly more diligent in discharging its duties to Guam, and, more specifically, should have provided a mechanism for the meaningful consultation of the people of Guam prior to executing a treaty that potentially divests Guam and her people of a significant part of their natural resources, biodiversity, and ecosystem inventory.

Establishing Conservation Areas subject to mining and military activity

The Administering Power also established through action of its President alone, the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument, without consultation with Guam or consent of the government of the

CNMI. This Monument restricts fishing and other activity within a 95,216 square mile area by the designation of a conservation area, but makes a glaring exception for all U.S. military activity.

Military Contamination of Aquifer, Farmland, and Fish

Studies have found over 100 contaminated sites on Guam. Almost all of these are from U.S. military activity and dumping, and result in the people of Guam's continued exposure to many cancer-causing agents, including radiation from nuclear testing, Agent Orange, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

One third of Guam that the U.S. military controls and uses for its continued activity, expansion, and nuclear storage, includes areas above the aquifer, adjacent to the fresh water lake, and along the coast, while designated cleanup sites are ignored.

Guam has sought but been denied in U.S. compensation programs for radiation exposure despite high levels of cancer rates and findings by the Board on Radiation Effects Research (BRER) Committee that the people of Guam were exposed as downwinders of the U.S. nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands from 1945 to 1962. Similarly, the U.S. denies Agent Orange use on Guam during the war despite the accounts of military personnel admitting to staging, transporting, and spraying the herbicide on Guam.

Destruction and Loss of Access to Ocean Resources

In 2010, the U.S. Navy established the Mariana Islands Range Complex (MIRC) a half-billion-square nautical mile live-fire training range that surrounds Guam, and other Marianas Islands. The MIRC authorized live-fire on and in the land, air, and sea throughout the training range, and at the time of its establishment, was described by the Department of Defense as its largest live-fire training range in the world.

In 2015, the Navy established the Mariana Islands Training and Testing (MITT) area, which almost doubled the MIRC sea-based ranges and land-based areas and allowed the Navy to conduct sonar and live-fire training with explosives.

Pursuant to the MITT, a Letter of Authorization (LOA) from the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service permitted the Navy to conduct 12,580 detonations of various magnitudes per year for 5 years. Furthermore, the LOA allows 81,962 takings of 26 different marine mammal species (including whales and dolphins) per year for 5 years due to detonation, sonar, and other training and testing activity within the MITT study area. The MITT also allows damage or kill of over 6 square miles of endangered coral reefs in the waters surrounding Guam and the Marianas, plus an additional 20 square miles of coral reef around the island of Farallon de Medinilla (FDM) through the use of highly explosive bombs.

The Navy is currently attempting to extend these activities and more within the MITT area beyond 2020. The large volume and expanse of these exercises is a threat to our entire and unique island ecosystems, and overbearing while Guam remains without a choice as an unincorporated territory of the United States.

Destruction and Loss of Access to Land

In addition to the establishment of the MIRC and the MITT ranges, the U.S. military is planning to establish a Live-Fire Training Range Complex (LFTRC) on Guam near Ritidian/Litekyan, the site of a 3500-year-old ancient village. The Live-Fire Training Range requires the removal of approximately 187 acres of some of the last remaining primary limestone forests, and the habitat for several endangered species found only in Guam and within the CNMI.

The LFTRC expands the military footprint over a current wildlife refuge and cuts off public access to the people of Guam for 273 days out of the 365 days of the year. The building of U.S. military bases and infrastructure has placed a high demand for cliffside property best suitable for quarrying and mining of limestone.

The history, the values, and prosperity of indigenous Chamorros are uniquely tied to the land, landscape and ecosystems of Guam. However, under U.S. Law, the Guam Legislature is prohibited from putting restrictions on the purchase of land by foreign investors. Undoubtedly, our land is a resource for sustainability, but as outlined here, it is increasingly under threat.

A week ago, the U.S. filed yet another lawsuit against the government of Guam seeking to invalidate the Chamorro Land Trust Act, a 40-year-old Guam law that reserves land in trust, forever, for the native inhabitants of Guam, and allows them to reside and farm on this land. This Act was intentionally established by the Guam Legislature to address the loss of land through forced land takings and the forced resettlement of Chamorros during periods of colonization and especially after WWII, when more than two thirds of Guam's land was taken by the U.S. military.

At the time the Chamorro Land Trust Act was passed by the Guam Legislature, the U.S. Congress reviewed each of Guam's bills for possible veto. U.S. Congress made no objection to this Land Trust for the past 40 years. The Chamorro Land Trust program was also included in the Draft Commonwealth Act without notable objection by the U.S. 25 years ago.

It is ironic and unjust that the U.S. is allowed years of inaction on decolonization, but may suddenly and unilaterally, after 40 years, attempt to dismantle a program that safeguards a homeland for the native inhabitants in its territory. I hope you can agree that this is contrary to the highest regard in which nations of the world and this esteemed body hold indigenous peoples and the protection of their land and natural resources, and we ask for your immediate acknowledgement and assistance in this urgent situation that impedes our growth as a people, culture, and as a sovereign land.

The U.S. argument that the Chamorro Land Trust law is discriminatory is inconsistent with the establishment of similar programs in U.S. states and other territories. The claim also contrasts with arguments by the U.S. in cases challenging the U.S. unilateral establishment of firing ranges in Guam, where, the U.S. argues that its courts are precluded from stopping the firing ranges because it is a political question to be determined by U.S. Congress alone; and because of an international agreement made between the U.S. and Japan (without consultation with Guam).

Equally ironic is the Trans Pacific Partnership agreement forged by the U.S. and other countries of the world whereby the U.S. would use the armed might it builds in the Pacific, through the exploitation of Guam's resources, and without consultation of Guam, to secure safe passage of trade vessels for partnering countries through the Pacific, while Guam's economy languishes under the restrictions prohibiting non-U.S. vessels from entering Guam's Port and prohibiting Guam from entering into independent economic and trade agreement with other nations.

Guam's repeated calls for repeal of the U.S. Jones Act preference for U.S. ships and U.S. economy at the expense of the standard of living and quality of life of the people of Guam have been ignored even after inclusion in the Draft Commonwealth Act.

Despite the foresight of the people of Guam as to how to increase its self-sustainability and quality of life, we have been forcibly strangled in this game of no action. We watch with great concern and empathy while the decades delayed removal of restrictions in other U.S. territories (such as Puerto Rico and CNMI) comes too late to save the territories from vulnerability and economic distress.

Conclusion

Make no mistake: the indigenous people of Guam do not agree and have never freely agreed nor

requested, voted, or negotiated that our land and waters be subjected to radiation, nuclear waste, PCBs, Agent Orange, Agent Purple, and other contamination; or that our fishing grounds and farmlands and ocean resources be taken away or restricted; or that homes be relocated; or that firing ranges be built over or adjacent to ancient villages and sacred burial grounds, all in support of U.S. military testing or military training.

We urge the assistance of this distinguished committee in the protection of our resources and in ensuring the future sustainability and survival of the people of Guam, through a resolution demanding immediate protection of Guam's resources by the Administering Authority and demanding immediate agreement of the Administering Authority on the Decolonization of Guam before any more resources are lost.

Dangkulo na si Yu'os Ma'åse' (Thank you very much) for the opportunity to present this most urgent petition in my capacity as an elected representative of the people of Guam.





SENATOR TELENA CRUZ NELSON
34TH GUAM LEGISLATURE
GUAM COMMISSION ON DECOLONIZATION

Decolonization: A Call to Action

Hafa Adai distinguished members of the United Nations Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), Dangko-lu na si Yu'os ma'ase (Thank you) for the invitation to speak to you today.

Guahu si Senadora (Hello, I am Senator) Telena Cruz Nelson from the 34th Guam Legislature. I am a daughter of Guahån (Guam), a Chamoru, and a veteran of the United States Army. I am here to address the, "The Question of Guam." We are an unincorporated United States (U.S.) territory.

The U.S. military occupies over one-third of our island's landmass. One in eight adults on the island are U.S. military veterans. Guam has the highest military enlistment rate per capita in comparison to the U.S. mainland, yet we rank last nation-wide for veteran medical care. These statistics are very alarming. The United States fully supports the enlistment of our people, yet we do not have their full support to self-determination. We fight for freedom for other countries yet we return to a home that is not free.

You see Fourth Committee; there have been deep-rooted issues that are plaguing our fight to self-determination that I want to make absolutely clear. Firstly, colonial control, the United States has control over us as a governing body- our policies, laws, lands and socio-economic livelihood. Secondly, we lack the United States support in the quest for self-determination. Is it right that we have an impending military build-up in a place that has not yet been decolonized? Does this not question peacekeeping operations and the review of special political missions? Thirdly, our right to hold a plebiscite has been pilfered by the United States court system.

The Governance Study for our island is pending however; our people have made their voices loud and clear. There have been rally's challenging the courts decision on who is eligible to vote in our plebiscite. People have taken to the streets to protest, including the youth- challenging the military's plan to develop a firing range that will impact hundreds of acres of pristine limestone forests which hosts our natural aquifers and endangered animal and plant species.

Fourth Committee, we need you to become the driving force to our decolonized island. We are not free from colonialism, we have no ability to vote, no ability to fully govern ourselves, and as it stands, until the United States government says so, we have no voice.

Which is why I implore the Fourth Committee to take action.

The first action is to place Guam under the UN Security Council so we are no longer hidden behind our colonizer, and the ethnic cleansing of our people can cease now. Second, the UN General Assembly needs to pressure the U.S. utilizing all its influence to have Guam removed off the colonial states listing. Lastly, the Fourth Committee must have the U.S. release all pertinent government materials in relation to negotiations and agreements for the three status options.

There is confidence that the Fourth Committee will complete these actions to protect and save our Chamorro people. We are an indigenous people, an unheard territory, which is washed out by the sounds of the military training sites desecrating and polluting our land and water, the large bombers that fly our skies, and the warships that sit at the edge of our reefs while they fight to protect not our people, but their nuclear bases.

Our request and wishes have always been the same. Freedom to be our own governing body, the right to choose our political status, the right to make economic and environmental decisions that will preserve our Chamorro people. This embodies us as an indigenous people. Without this, we do not exist.

“Para bai hu prutehi, yan hu Difende i Hinengge,

i Kottura,

i Lengguahi,

i Aire,

i Hanom yan i tano’ Chamoru

ni’Irensiã-ku Direchu ginen as Yu’os Tãta.”

I offer myself to protect and defend

the beliefs,

the culture,

the language,

the air,

The water and the land of the Chamorro,

Which are our inherent God-given rights

And I repeat,

Which are our inherent God given rights

God bless!





KERRI ANN NAPUTI BORJA

SAGAN KOTTURAN CHAMORU

Hafa adai distinguished members of the United Nations Special Political and Decolonization Committee (4th Committee), and Chairman, His Excellency Mr. Rafael Carreño.

Guåhu si Kerri Ann Naputi Borja familian Caderon yan familian Daso. Saina ma'åse for allowing me to be here and speak to you all today. I, along with my sisters and brothers are here today to testify on the Question of Guam. Our island is the longest colonized nation within Oceania, with the United States being our current administering Power. US imperialism, colonization, and militarization has had many adverse effects not only to our island, but also to our language, culture, and ultimately our identity as Chamorus, the indigenous peoples of Guam.

I address you this afternoon on behalf of Sagan Kotturan Chamoru, a grassroots organization and cultural center, whose purpose is to protect, promote, and perpetuate the Chamoru language and culture. Our organization and cultural center were created because our people needed a place where we could remember, know, and cultivate our roots through the learning of our true history, the speaking of our Chamoru language, and the practice of our traditions for future generations.

Our identity as Chamorus continues to be threatened by the colonization and militarization of our island by our administering Power, both physically and mentally. In order to colonize a land, one must colonize the minds of the people. The miseducation of our people has worked to marginalize our language, beliefs, history and practices in our spaces of learning to near invisibility. Today, we are working daily to reclaim these spaces and create new ones where our culture and people can thrive.

When the US first gained control of our island in 1898, the Naval government would begin the process of colonizing the minds of our people through US public schools. Our people were forced to learn English and forbidden to speak Chamoru. To speak their native tongue in school would result in fines to their family for every Chamoru word spoken or even, physical harm. When US control resumed in 1944, their language ban continued and was more strictly enforced. Not only were students kept from speaking Chamoru, they were denied the right to learn about themselves. Instead children were taught about US American culture and history in English from a white Western dominant narrative.

The English language would continue to be the official language of our island until the 1970s, when Chamoru leaders legally adopted the Chamoru language as an official language. Eventually, recognizing that generations of Chamorus had been raised without learning their language, lawmakers mandated that Chamoru language and culture be taught in public schools. However, after decades of forcing people to speak English, most Chamorus had stopped using the language with their children and there has not been enough emersion in the schools or homes to create fluency. Thus, English remains the dominant language spoken on Guam today.

Being an indigenous Chamoru woman and educator, I know the importance of knowing one's language and culture. Although I grew up off-island most of life, only visiting my home island on holidays, it was through learning my language and culture that I was able to find my identity and deep connection to my ancestors, peoples, family, culture, and island. It is this connection that led me to move home so that I could continue to learn who I am as a Chamoru and to teach young Chamorus. Through teaching in Guam public schools, I saw first hand how we are still feeling the effects of the past, as a majority of my Chamoru students and parents were unable to speak and understand Chamoru.

US Census data from 1990, 2000, and 2010 show that the number of Chamoru speakers has dwindled to 17 percent, and a vast majority of those who speak our language fluently are over the age of 55 and are dying. Although our language may be in danger of dying completely, it is not dead yet. There is a proverb from our Tongan sisters and brothers which says, “Where there is no language, there is no culture...Where there is no culture, darkness befalls and village is no more.” I use this simply to show how language and culture are directly linked to the existence of a people and the land in which they live, they are all intertwined and one cannot survive without the other.

There is a new generation of Chamorus, some of us who are here today, who understand this and know the importance of our language, culture, people, and land, who speak to their children in Chamoru. We are fighting to sustain and preserve all that we have and all that makes us who we are. We will continue to fight for what is destined for us, our right to self-determination. However we cannot do this alone. We need the help of the 4th Committee.

We offer our support of the draft resolution on the Question of Guam with emphasis on the urgent need for the administering power “to recognize and to respect the political and the cultural and ethnic identity of the Chamoru people of Guam.” Part of this identity involves access to our sacred spaces, and we ask that you include language in the resolution condemning the administering Power’s plans to build a firing range above Litekyan.

We support our governor’s request for a UN Visiting Mission to Guam and invite you to our beautiful island to learn more about our language and culture and help in efforts to keep them alive and thriving.

Saina Ma’åse.





JULIA FAYE MUNOZ

PACIFIC WOMEN'S INDIGENOUS NETWORK

Hafa adai distinguished members of the United Nations Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) and Chairman, His Excellency Mr. Rafael Darío Ramírez Carreño. Gahu si Julia Faye Munoz. I speak before you as a representative of the Pacific Women's Indigenous Network. Dangkulu na Si Yu'us ma'ase for allowing me to testify on this critical issue of decolonization, in relation to Guam's political status – and the right of the Chamorro people – to address an issue that affects us all: climate change.

The effects of climate change to Guam and our Pacific islands are alarming and projected to become even more severe. According to a 2007 study by the University of Oxford and Missouri Botanical Garden, although our islands represent only 3% of land on earth,

island endemism is extremely high and the majority of extinctions on earth are on islands. Thus, our island biodiversity is already in a precarious state. Since 2013, Guam and the Western Pacific have experienced record-breaking coral bleaching due to warming oceans. By 2100, a significant number of reef-dwelling fish are likely to lose their coral habitats in Guam and throughout the Pacific, ensuring the death of fish species. Since 1993, sea level has risen by about four inches in relation to Guam's shoreline and is likely to rise one to three feet in the next century. The rising sea level submerges low-lying areas, erodes our beaches, and intensifies coastal flooding from typhoons and tsunamis. During droughts, it could make fresh water less available – particularly groundwater which provides 80% of Guam's water supply, and could cause salt water to infiltrate farther into the island's groundwater. Because Guam's economy is dependent on tourism, a major concern regarding climate change impact is how reef damage could affect a \$1.4 billion tourism sector that accounts for 60% of the island's annual business revenue and approximately one-third of its nonfederal employment.

As a Chamorro, an indigenous woman of Guam, I am gravely concerned about the vulnerability and survival of our island and people, and for future generations to come. Like our sisters and brothers of the Pacific, Chamorros were and continue to be close to the land, regarding land – and all its meaning, offerings and provisions to sustain life – as sacred and to be respected, and as a profound part of our heritage, lineage, and culture. Holding these beliefs and values to heart, Chamorros lived in harmony with the land and survived on the natural resources of our island for centuries. Despite our colonial history, the Chamorros continue to identify as a distinct indigenous people with a distinct living culture and language, which we honor and continue to practice and speak today.

Thus, when we speak about climate change, peace and poverty in the global arena, it is an imperative that the voice of the indigenous people, Chamorros, be recognized as powerful change agents in climate justice. Members of the international and scientific communities have acknowledged and supported this critical imperative.

U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz stated if indigenous peoples' rights are not secured and protected, it will be impossible for the world to deliver on the promises of the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. Secure land rights for indigenous peoples is a proven climate change solution, and denying indigenous land rights and self-determination is a threat to the world's remaining forests and biodiversity, and a primary cause of poverty. This has also been recognized by Pope Francis who stated that indigenous peoples have the right to "prior and informed consent" regarding their lands and territories, and that when indigenous peoples' rights to their lands are protected, they are the best guardians of the world's forests and biodiversity.

As a U.S. territory, Guam and the indigenous people, Chamorros, are subjected and held hostage to the

U.S.' decisions regarding climate change – most recently, President Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. The plenary authority of the administering power continues to have major implications and can gravely contradict and undermine how Guam believes it should respond to the increasingly complex issues of climate change locally – such as the possibility of being a host to climate change refugees from the Western Pacific. A further illustration of the complete disconnect between the administering power and Guam's indigenous people, is the U.S. federal lawsuit against the Government of Guam and the Chamorro Land Trust Commission alleging the Chamorro Land Trust Act – reflective and symbolic of the Chamorro people's connection with and determination to preserve and transmit to future generations "ancestral lands" – is a violation of the Fair Housing Act.

If our indigenous voices are to be heard, and our island and her people are to meaningfully participate in local, regional, and global climate change efforts, it is imperative that the political status and framework under which we operate, are addressed and resolved, and our human right to self-determination recognized and realized.

We support and ask this body to approve the draft resolution on the Question of Guam, inclusive of language specifically condemning the serious, irrevocable damage that the administering power plans for Northern Guam to build facilities and firing ranges for U.S. Marines. The U.S. intends to destroy over 1,000 acres of limestone forest, prevent access to a significant historic, cultural and sacred site, and will contaminate the island's largest source of drinking water for military interests and without our consent. This threatens our natural resources and the health of our community, and violates international law and our human rights. We urge the U.N. to take a strong position against these destructive plans.

Considering the escalating tensions between the U.S. and North Korea which continue to place the people of Guam's lives at risk, and the lack of meaningful engagement from the U.S. in Guam's decolonization process, it is imperative for the U.N. to send a U.N. visiting mission to Guam as was requested by Governor of Guam Eddie Calvo. The U.N. must use its influence to engage the U.S. in Guam's decolonization process in a way that ensures genuine cooperation and decolonization.

Dangkulu na Si Yu'us ma'ase.





PIM LIMTIACO FAMOKSAIYAN

Destroying Homes to Protect the Assets

Hafa Adai Chairman Rafael Carreño and distinguished delegates of the Fourth Committee.

Guahu si Pim Limtiaco, and I come to speak on behalf of the indigenous Chamorro people of Guam.

I appeal to you today to address the magnitude of the situation regarding the ongoing colonization and militarization of our island. The United States military still plans to relocate 5,000 marines and their dependents from Okinawa to Guam between 2024 and 2028, based on its \$8

billion international agreement with Japan. As a result, more of Guam's ancestral lands have been taken from the indigenous Chamorro people to be used for firing ranges, detonation testing, and training. Even decades after World War II, many have been waiting and fighting for their land to be returned. And these approved colonial agendas continue to go unnoticed and allow little to no consideration of the Chamorro people's input, leaving them displaced from their homes.

Over the years, our people of Guam have been fighting to put an end to using our ancient sites as training grounds. Among these sites include Pãgat, and more recently, Litekyan. The United States plans to destroy over 1,000 acres of limestone forest, prevent access to an incredibly significant historic and sacred site, and contaminate the island's largest source of drinking water for their military interests, without our approval. Our people have come together to peacefully rally and negotiate against the efforts to construct the Live-Fire Training Range Complex (LFTRC) in the northwestern portion of our island. And yet, we have been labeled as terrorists, traitors, and even "Anti-American", simply because we exercised our rights to take action in having our voices heard.

In addition, the United States Department of Defense is sadly seen as using Litekyan as a distraction from an even larger threat – a project that will not only affect all our families in Guam, but also those living in the rest of the Mariana Islands. This operation is known as the Mariana Islands Testing and Training, or the MITT. With its final Environmental Impact drafts passed in 2015, the MITT's purpose is to expand the Department of Defense's training area range to 984,469 nautical miles, equivalent to eight U.S. states combined. The Department of Defense attempts to make this operation less menacing by breaking it into smaller projects, as exhibited in sites located in the islands of Tinian, Pãgan, Farallon de Medinilla, Saipan, and Guam.

The MITT will harm Guam environmentally and economically. It will be permitted to perform 12,580 detonations of numerous magnitudes annually for the next 5 years and is also projected to result in 81,962 mortalities of 26 distinct marine mammal species every year within those 5 years. The MITT will also be permitted to destroy over 6 square miles of endangered coral species by utilizing extremely volatile explosives and hazardous chemicals, which contaminate our aquifers.

Guam's lack of sovereignty and control over its own land, waters and airspace means that training may be taking place in the MITT that we are unaware of, but furthermore than other nations allied with the US may be using our resources without our knowledge. In April of this year, residents and tourists in our island's tourist district of Tumon were surprised when a Canadian military helicopter soared dangerously low over them. People were surprised to learn not only that there were Canadian military visiting the island, but also that the US frequently invites the militaries of other nations to also use our waters and airspace for exercises and training.

These destructive practices will not only be detrimental to our environment, but will also further provoke and raise tensions with North Korea. According to the Guam Visitors Bureau, Guam has already suffered a \$10 million loss in its tourism because of the recent threats to our national security. Our visitors, whom we welcome very warmly, cancel their bookings because we, as a colony, are caught in the middle of the crosshairs between the ongoing affairs of the United States and North Korea. The MITT and related projects threaten our natural resources and the health of our community and violates international law and our human rights. We urge you to take a strong position against these destructive plans.

We also urge you, distinguished delegates of the Fourth Committee, when considering these escalating tensions between the United States and North Korea, which continually put the people of Guam's lives at risk and hinder significant engagement from the United States in Guam's decolonization process, to send delegates on a UN visiting mission to Guam, as requested by Guam Governor Eddie Calvo in a letter dated August 1, 2017 to Chairman Carreño. The UN must use its influence to involve the United States in Guam's decolonization process in a way that guarantees genuine decolonization and cooperation.

Si Yu'us Ma'ase yan minaolek binendisi.





SAMUEL CHARLES TOM

DIABLO VALLEY COLLEGE PACIFIC ISLANDS STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Hafa adai, hello to all eminent members of the 4th Committee of the United Nations. Mas dankulu na si yu'os ma'ase, thank you, for granting the opportunity to stand before you as a proud native of Guam. Here, I lay out not just my heart, but the heart and soul of my people. A people that have connected, cultivated, and cherished the land they have inhabited for more than four thousand years. A land that for nearly 500 years, has felt the touch of foreign hands and consequently an irreversible change in its identity.

My name is Samuel Charles Tom, a son of the Chamorro people. I represent the Pacific Islands Students Association of Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill, California. This organization founded to create unity amongst Pacific Island students as a means of promoting Pacific Island culture, language, history and to further the understanding of Pacific Island traditions amongst the general population. My testimony today is meant to supplement the remarks of others and provide an overall picture of the difficult position that the Chamorro people find them in relation to the United States. My focus will be on current US government efforts to deprive Chamorros of their native lands, which along with other assaults on their rights and their natural resources, symbolize an exigency to decolonize the island.

The Chamorro Land Trust Commission (CLTC) is a Guam agency that was created to deal with a tragic event in our recent history and our relationship to the US, our administering power. World War II brought violence and suffering to Chamorros as Japanese and US forces fought over our 212 sq. miles and thousands of our people died in the process. The Chamorro people were grateful when the US forces pushed out the Japanese ending their brutal occupation, but the US military took advantage of our gratitude. In order to use our island as a base to attack Japan and later develop their strategic defense against threats from Asia, the US military displaced thousands of Chamorros, forcing them from their lands in order to create huge bases in the North and the South of the island. In just a few years the Chamorro people went from one where almost everyone rich or poor had land of their own to work on, to an island where thousands of families suddenly lost their livelihood.

The Chamorro Land Trust was created to provide leases to landless Chamorros. It was formed as a means of alleviating the historical injustice against the Chamorro people that separated them from their lands and still affects our people up until today.

Just last week, the island was shocked to hear that the US Department of Justice has filed a pernicious lawsuit, charging the Chamorro Land Trust as discriminatory and seeking to terminate it. The irony is quite overt. It smacks of our continued colonization. How is it just to have an entity dictate the use of a land that did not originally belong to it?

The CLTC is accused of violating the Fair Housing Act Title VIII in the Civil Rights Act of 1968. This is part of our colonial predicament. The Government of Guam and the Chamorro people are being accused of violating laws that we have no part in creating and which the US Congress and Federal Government can pick and choose in terms of how they apply to us. We are consistently asked to submit to the dominance of US Federal decisions, while having no voice and no rights.

In comparison, the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920. This was enacted in order to “ enable native Hawaiians to return to their lands in order to fully support self-sufficiency for native Hawaiians and the self-determination of native Hawaiians in the administration of this Act, and the preservation

of the values, traditions, and culture of native Hawaiians. “ as stated in Title 1A: Purpose § 101. This begs the question as to why we the indigenous people are not entitled to the same opportunities.

Of the 212 square miles of the island, a mere 15% of that land is set aside by this agency to lease to native applicants. Why should Guam’s native inhabitants have receive approval from the US Federal government to use lands that are rightfully theirs? This program was created to try to deal with the unjust acts of the US in the past and rather than help the Chamorro people, the US in this lawsuit is seeking to bury the past and at the same time, erase the rights of the indigenous people of Guam.

In a recent online poll conducted by Guam’s largest newspaper *The Pacific Daily News*, they asked the question as to whether the Chamorro Land Trust violates US Federal law. 383 respondents said it does, while an overwhelming 6,021 or 94% said it does not. Many people, especially those who have received leases through the CLTC are worried. Does the US plan to take the lands from them? Does it plan to evict them and displace them as the military did to many of their ancestors in the 1940s? This is a tragedy that can be avoided however if the administering power, the US were to take the rights of the Chamorro people seriously and its role in assisting us with the decolonization of our island.

I ask that the Fourth Committee and the United Nations organize a visiting mission to Guam in order to meet with the Chamorro people and learn more about their struggles. It is also imperative that the UN engage with the people of Guam more directly that coordinating programs to educate the public, more importantly the Chamorros, shedding light on what it means to have the power of self-determination.

The freedom of our people has come at a substantial cost, the concession of our native lands to the hands of the American government. Sacred lands have been taken, not given, and transformed into unrecognizable premises of development alien to our land. Many thanks for this gracious opportunity.





ALAINA AFLAGUE ARROYO
UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO PACIFIC
ISLANDER COLLECTIVE

Håfa adai guahu si Alaina Aflague Arroyo. I am a Native Chamoru and Latina woman and I am here on behalf of the University of San Francisco's Pacific Islander Collective, a grass-roots organization focusing on the voices and representation of the Indigenous Peoples of Oceania. Dankolo na si yu'os ma'åse' for your invitation to share my testimony and to speak upon the Indigenous Chamorus to the

United Nations Fourth Committee on Decolonization. I am also here today representing the voices of my ancestors, family, friends, fellow Chamorus and future generations of Guåhan who continue to fight for independence and self-determination. I was born and raised in the Bay Area region of California where I have lived all my life. My first time re-turning home to Guåhan was when I was at the age of seventeen, and today I am nineteen years old.

My testimony today will be focusing on the impacts of how militarization has forcibly removed, and continues to remove Chamorus from their motherland of Guåhan into the United States starting at the end of the second world war, and how this shapes Chamoru identity and experiences away from the island.

I would like to begin with my experience returning home for the first time. Growing up being Chamoru in the diaspora, I was always surrounded by storytelling. I was told memories of growing up on the island, stories of practicing traditional Chamoru ways, and life during and after the war. I had envisioned what my homeland was like, however, when arriving to Guam in the summer of 2015 it was not what I imagined it to be. There were large hotel buildings, tourists in every village, and fences all around the island. One day we went to visit Haputo, which is a pristine beach on Anderson Air Force base up north of the island, where there is an ancient Chamoru village still standing in the jungle. I did not understand why it was essential to have a military identification card to enter this sacred site where my ancestors once lived. I have never once seen my history in front of my eyes, I have never seen a standing latte stone, or felt the presence of the spirits of my ancestors. I could not grasp the fact that Chamorus who do not have a military ID cannot ever visit this secluded, lush, and preserved region that contains cultural and historical significance, however those who are settlers of the land due to military purposes can have access to the land that belongs to us and our ancestors.

As we were driving up to Litekyan one day, my family wanted to make sure that we could make it before the time restrictions since I wanted to see the caves, beaches, limestone forest, and villages that are still remaining. While driving once again, I witness nothing but fences. Why is our history gated off? Why are there barriers to witnessing what it means to be Chamoru? Why does the United States restrict Chamorus to connecting with their culture and land? Why do they not want us to witness and connect with our history and what our ancestors left behind? Why do our people need military identification cards to have the privilege of connecting with their identity?

It was not until after WWII that the Mariana Islands which were predominantly populated by Chamorus, started to become a region where non-Chamorus occupied. Access to alternative ways of living off island, and the internalization of the "American Dream" started the foundation for Chamorus leaving their island to improve their lives and settle in an environment different from their own. United States militarization, occupation, and ways of living has removed Chamorus from spiritually connecting to

their history and being forced to relocate to other regions due to economic situations and lack of resources, thus created by our administrative power post the second world war. Due to Chamorus being forcibly removed from their ancestral lands for the purpose of hyper-militarization, tourism, development, and capitalism, the homelessness and dependency of United States benefits through the military, is what continues the cycle of displacement of Chamorus from their Native lands and into the diaspora. It is an involuntary move from Guam into the diaspora for the sole purpose of survival amongst the Chamoru population specifically because of economic opportunity, healthcare, and social mobility. Brain drain, meaning the departure from one country, economic sector, or field, for another usually for better pay or living conditions, is the purpose for diaspora and military enlistment. Chamorus in Guåhan are heavily recruited due to these many factors.

Not only are Chamorus being forcibly removed from the islands, but now the question is will we ever be able to return? The rising of prices of plane tickets to Guåhan has become only one of the many essential barriers for Chamorus in the diaspora to return home. As much as Chamorus want to return home especially our *manåmko'*, it becomes something that is more difficult to happen due to the healthcare provided in Guam and the financial barriers that come with that. Not only does the health care in Guam make it difficult for Chamorus in the diaspora to re-turn home, but it makes it difficult for Chamorus in Guam to maintain a healthy living in the is-land without making it necessary to travel to other nations, such as: the Philippines, Hawaii, and the United States. Not only is the health care in Guam doing a disservice to the Chamoru people, but it has caused our people to move further away from Indigenous methods of healing, reciprocity, and medicinal plants and into the dependency of western medicine. How are we supposed to move away from western medicine and back into decolonial ways of healing when the militarization of our lands is destructing the very plants that allows us to move back to Indigenous practices?

Generations of Chamorus who are born and raised in the United States grow up with a disconnection to the land of the Mariana Islands. Without the direct connection with the land and all that embodies it, how are we supposed to thrive as a Chamoru nation when Chamorus are continuously becoming more of a minority in our motherland? Making up 37.3% of Guam's population, and the native language of the Chamoru people embodying 17.8%, and there are more Chamorus living in the diaspora than there are in our homeland. This decrease in percent-age of Chamoru speakers is the product of forced removal of the Chamoru language and the banning after the United States re-occupied Guam. This forced removal of the language within the education system has created a sense of shame, trauma, and pain within our *manåmko'* generation, thus not enforcing the Chamoru language to be spoken inside and outside of the household. Not only are the Native peoples of Guåhan increasingly becoming a minority in our ancestral land, but our language as well.

Once settling in the United States, generations who are raised in the U.S. experience an education system that erases all Native histories and accurate narratives, especially with the Indigenous Peoples on this very land of Turtle Island. Chamorus then do not have access to historical content that represents their own identity and history, in the United States history textbook we embody one sentence that entails the "discovery" of Guåhan by our colonizer Ferdinand Magellan.

This erasure of Guam history in the United States dismisses the imperative information that acknowledges the history of the relationship between Guam and the United States, which further colonizes the minds of Chamorus in the diaspora because of the lack of information surrounding U.S. colonialism amongst our people and the trauma that comes with those relationships. This lack of acknowledgment of Guam history in the diaspora thus shapes a specific notion surrounding cultural pride and representation of Chamorus, in a way that focuses on specifically the culture and not the history of our relationships with our several eras of colonialism; which then challenges if this is a conversation surrounding

history when we are still living through the colonization of the United States beginning in the year of 1898. Due to this lack of knowledge surrounding histories of colonialism in Guam, younger generations of Chamorus in the diaspora are then dependent on the experiential knowledge and perspectives from our elders. Our elders' perspectives on our continued history of colonialism, especially with our current administering power impacts, shapes, and internalizes our viewpoints on our colonizers, history, and cultural consciousness. If our elders are the ones who have adopted the "American Savior Complex" but are conscious of the violations with our land and the ban of the Chamoru language when the U.S. reoccupied Guam, this then creates a confusion of pride between being "American" or being Chamoru. These factors produce a sense of confusion with identity, consciousness, and pride.

Considering the escalating tensions between the United States and North Korea, which continue to put the people of Guam's lives at risk along with the lack of meaningful engagement from the United States in Guam's decolonization process, it is imperative for the United Nations to send a visiting mission to Guam to engage the United States in the genuine decolonization process of Guåhan.

We offer our support of the draft resolution on the Question of Guam and ask that this body approve it in full with the inclusion of language specifically condemning the serious damage that the United States is planning in the Northern part of Guam to build facilities and firing ranges for U.S. Marines. The U.S. intends to destroy over 1,000 acres of limestone forest, prevent access to a sacred site, and will contaminate the island's largest source of drinking water without our consent. This threatens our natural resources and violates international law and our human rights. We urge you to take a strong position against these destructive plans.

I encourage the United Nations to take into consideration the causes and effects of how United States militarization is continuing the destruction of the Chamoru people through identity, culture, language, education, history, and location. Si yu'os ma'åse' yan biba tao'tao' tano'.





GLENN PETERSEN, PH.D.

CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIOLOGY & ANTHROPOLOGY

I come before the Special Political and Decolonization Committee in my capacity as Professor of Anthropology and International Affairs at the City University of New York and as a former Delegate in the Federated States of Micronesia's Permanent Mission to the United Nations. I have been engaged in formal research in the region known generally as Micronesia—the old United States Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and what are now the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, the Marshall Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands—for nearly a half-century. I have published extensively

on traditional forms of social and cultural life and political processes in the islands, the Micronesian peoples' efforts to end American colonial rule over them, and the formation and growth of government in the newly independent Micronesian nation-states. I am fluent in Lokaiahn Pohnpei, the language of Pohnpei, in the FSM, have lived for years with families in its villages, and was appointed by President Leo Falcam in 1999 to represent the FSM at the United Nations.

My purpose in addressing the Committee is to briefly outline aspects of the Micronesian peoples' autonomy, self-government, and independence in the context of Guam's Chamorro peoples' quest for self-determination. Although Guam's colonial history has taken some different turns, all these islands and their peoples have had essentially similar experiences of colonial occupation, war, and struggles for self-determination. The historical experiences of Palau, the FSM, the Marshall Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands have direct relevance to the case now before the Committee.

In my experience, two issues are most salient here, land rights and strategic location. The leaders of the islands in the old U.S. Trust Territory worked slowly and deliberately towards achieving a measure of self-government and bringing an end to American trusteeship through their representative legislative body, the Congress of Micronesia, in the 1960s and early 1970s. This careful process was ruptured in 1974-1975 when the U.S. government insisted that no matter what resolution to the issue of political status the parties reached, the "public lands" in the islands, that is, the approximately seventy percent of land in the islands then under the direct possession and control of the Trust Territory's administration, would remain under direct U.S. control. The people of the islands and their elected leaders deemed this entirely unacceptable. Unless title to all Micronesian lands was returned to the Micronesian peoples, there could be no satisfactory resolution to the question of U.S. colonial rule over the islands.

While many complex issues were entailed in this process, it was this question of sovereignty over Micronesian land that drove Palau, the Marshalls, and the FSM away from permanent annexation by the U.S. and instead toward independence, via the status known as free association. I observed much of this history firsthand, especially at the Micronesian Constitutional Convention of 1975, but I have also conducted detailed research on all aspects of this history and have interviewed at length many of the Micronesian leaders involved in the political status negotiations with the U.S. Again, a range of issues are entailed, but several particularly stand out in the current context.

Many of the Congress of Micronesia's leaders—those who were responsible for negotiating with the U.S. government—had been sent as young men to study at the University of Hawai'i. They consistently reported the same sorts of experiences there. While living in Honolulu, they said, they saw firsthand that the Native Hawaiian peoples occupied the lowest strata in Hawai'i's social class system. They

observed the Hawaiians suffering from multiple economic, social, health, and problems. More to the point, the reason for the Native Hawaiians' status was immediately clear to Micronesians: they had lost their lands. It was obvious to these students that if the U.S. were able to retain legal title to their lands, the Micronesians would suffer a fate identical to that of the Hawaiians: they would be disenfranchised in their own homelands.

These Micronesians had also studied enough U.S. history to understand that Native Americans were subjected to identical processes of disenfranchisement. They had been driven from their lands and deprived of most of their rights.

The Congress of Micronesia's leaders were unwilling to acquiesce to any political status agreement that transferred ultimate land rights away from Micronesia's peoples. They couched their arguments in terms of what is in English known as sovereignty, and in the languages of the Caroline Islands as "manaman" or "mana." From that point on, Micronesia's leaders proceeded to negotiate with the U.S. with an unyielding insistence on a status that fully recognized Micronesians' sovereignty over their lands.

The issue on Guam closely parallels that of its neighbors, that is, the indigenous peoples' rights to sovereignty and control over their lands. The indigenous peoples and their representatives are only ones who possess the moral authority necessary to negotiate ultimate questions of political status with the United States government.

This brings me to my second key point, strategic location. The United States government and military have, since America's colonial expansion into the Central and Western Pacific regions in the late nineteenth century, been obsessed with obtaining and maintaining permanent military outposts in the region. Facilities in Japan and the Philippines have always been subject to bilateral treaties, and the U.S. military establishment deems them problematic. Although Guam was annexed outright, the U.S. military views its isolated location as untenable, and has repeatedly insisted on political outcomes that would guarantee it unimpeded access to facilities in the neighboring Micronesian islands.

In the course of negotiating their political status with the U.S. government, several FSM leaders described their islands as "the hole in the doughnut." The U.S. insists on preserving access, not immediate occupation, to the line of islands lying between Guam and the sprawling U.S. missile base on Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands. The FSM comprises this chain of islands lying along what the U.S. military sees as its direct route to the South China Sea and the waters running along the East Asian littoral. As a consequence, the FSM's political relationship with the United States has a certain vague quality to it, and the U.S. insists that it retains military basing rights on its islands. But the FSM's leaders made it very clear to me that as members of the United Nations their sovereignty is internationally recognized and that any disputes over land must be addressed in international courts, not before American venues.

This issue of strategic location entails more than just prospective military actions. It is precisely because of their experiences with Japanese occupation of their islands during World War Two, and with the bombings, amphibious invasions, and long sieges of the islands, that Micronesians understand quite acutely what lies in store for them if armed conflict should break out again. My colleagues Lin Poyer, Lawrence Carucci, and Suzanne Falgout have described in tremendous detail the trials Micronesians underwent during World War Two in their books, *The Typhoon of War* and *Memories of War*.

Micronesians understand with far great acuity than any U.S. leaders both the danger their islands' strategic location poses for them, and the character of destruction any attacks would wreak upon them. The Micronesian atolls are now under dire threat from climate change-induced rises in sea level, but current level of armed hostilities in East and Southeast Asia pose a much more immediate threat.

Because of vagaries of historical circumstance that inhere in all colonial situations, Guam's Chamorro

people have been denied an elementary right to make their own decisions about their political status, a right that the other Micronesian peoples were able to exercise only because of the oversight provided by the Fourth Committee and its predecessors. It is clear that without the Committee's efforts, the Trusteeship Council's weak authority would never have been sufficient to require that true exercises in self-determination be held in Micronesia, in a series of referendums and plebiscites. The U.S. government has proven itself, time and again, unable to perceive that people subject to it might have valid reasons to object to American rule.

It is imperative, therefore, that the Fourth Committee continue in its historical trajectory, and insist that the United States recognize that Guam's Chamorro people possess the same rights to self-determination that all the other Micronesian peoples have been able to exercise.

Among my publications concerning these issues, two are most relevant:

"Lessons Learned: The Micronesian Quest for Independence in the Context of American Imperial History." *Micronesian Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences* 3:45-63, 2004.

"Strategic Location and Sovereignty: Modern Micronesia in the Historical Context of American Expansionism." *Space & Polity* 2:179-205, 1999.





