



**UNITED NATIONS
WORKING GROUP ON INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS
*Geneva 18 to 22 July 2005***

Mr. President,

I am here to speak for the Breton traditional community of “Menhirs Libres”, that wishes to present to this Assembly an appeal for help to support of spiritual identity of Native europeans.

It is not common to speak of the Indigenous peoples of Europe, because we generally think that Indigenous peoples exist only on other continents, and because there is nothing that physically distinguishes them from those who are not indigenous peoples.

History has mixed them up with national powers born from processes of forced integration, starting with the persecutions of the Roman Empire and the subsequent cultural absorption of Christianity, up to today's order of the modern states of Europe.

However, many of these cultures still exist today and their people continue to practise their ancient traditions in a dignified and proud silence, in no way contradicting nor opposing the course of history, shared by majority cultures.

In France, at Carnac, there is one of these traditional communities, whose people are today subjected to intimidations and are not permitted to freely exercise their spiritual identity. These people are asking you for help.

Even though the French State does not provide for identities different from its national integrity, the people of this community, which could be defined as Native europeans, tied to their ancient millenary traditions, declare their specific identity and ask that access be restored to the megalithic area that they have always believed to be their sacred site, the symbol for thousands of years of their identity. Access to the site today is closed to them along with its free traditional uses.

It is a type of situation that is not new; it replicates what has been happening for years in Arizona where the Apache Indians are no longer allowed by the American Government free access to Mount Graham, for thousands of years considered by them a sacred site of worship.

The megalithic area of Carnac in question has been requisitioned by the French government, which, with the pretext of preserving it from the damage of tourism, has fenced it in with metal structures and has forbidden the people who live in the area to have free access to the site.

For the inhabitants of Carnac, and for Bretons in general, the megalithic site of the “alignments” of Menhir is a spiritual and cultural reference point. For centuries the inhabitants celebrated among the Menhirs all their principal ceremonies, from weddings to funerals, from baptisms to the investiture of their Druids. City assemblies were held there, among the Menhir, as well as their cultural, artistic and religious events.

Beyond the declared intentions to safeguard the megalithic site, the French government has also planned to transform the site into a theme entertainment park, attempting an extensive expropriation of land and homes, in agreement with a United States company, to set up a large residence for tourists and vacationers. Already now, around the site, they have begun setting up games and commercial structures, that have purposes little to do with archaeology.

The traditional community of Carnac immediately declared its opposition to the intentions of the French government, and since the 1970s, its people have been combating to prevent this project from being carried out.

Many protest demonstrations have been organised, but up to now they have had no effect and the site is still today surrounded by a fence of metal bars.

This action of the French State has provoked protests not only from the traditional community of Carnac, but also from scholars, who from all over Europe, used to visit the site to study and perform research on the roots of ancient Europe.

The traditional community of Carnac is asking for your help. The people do not pretend that the site should not be protected for its archaeological value. They are asking simply that the construction project be blocked, and that the metal barrier surrounding the site be removed - the barrier that excludes them from the place which for them is sacred.

The native people are desperate, because they are aware that if they lose the moral and spiritual relationship with the symbol represented by this megalithic site, they will risk losing, after thousands of years of historical continuity, their particular moral and social identity.

If this should happen, not only the soul of continental Europe, but we believe, all humanity would find futilely impoverished forever a traditional testimony of its roots, in the loss of the precious spiritual legacy of the historical community of Carnac.

Thank you, Mr President

I thank all of you for listening to my appeal.

Giancarlo Barbadoro

Chairperson Ecospirituality Foundation

Representative Apache Survival Coalition

Representative of the Breton "Menhirs Libres" community